THE SHORTER POEMS OF
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INCLUDING
THE TWO LATIN ELEGIES AND ITALIAN SONNET TO DIODATI, AND THE EPITAPHIUM DAMONIS
ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, WITH PREFACE, INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES
BY
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New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.
1898
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Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith.
Norwood Mass. U.S.A.
To

DAVID MASSON, M.A., LL.D.

WHOSE COMPLETE AND SCHOLARLY WORKS
ON MILTON
HAVE WON THE ADMIRATION OF ALL
STUDENTS OF ENGLISH LETTERS
THIS EDITION
IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED
"After I had for my first years, by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father, (whom God recompense) been exercised to the tongues, and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers, both at home and at the schools, it was found that whether aught was imposed me by them that had the overlooking, or betaken to of mine own choice in English or other tongue, proing or versing, but chiefly by this latter, the style, by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live. . . . I began thus far to assent to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intent study, (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes as they should not willingly let it die. . . . I applied myself to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue."

—The Reason of Church Government.
PREFACE

In June, 1891, I received a letter from Senator George F. Hoar, in which occurs the following: “I should like to make a suggestion to you which I think would enable you to do a service to the lovers of good literature of the same character as that rendered by your Wordsworth’s ‘Selections’ and edition of the ‘Prelude,’—that is, that you publish a carefully annotated edition, with full explanations, of Milton’s ‘Shorter Poems,’ including all the poems, except ‘Paradise Lost,’ ‘Paradise Regained,’ and ‘Samson Agonistes.’ I read ‘Lycidas’ aloud to my wife last evening, and we were both surprised to find so great a number of allusions and phrases, the meaning of which we did not in the least comprehend. I do not refer merely to the classical or historic names, or the places in and about the English seas and rivers, to which Milton makes reference, but also to the meaning of some of the lines.”

At that time I was not ready to act upon Mr. Hoar’s suggestion as I had not determined what was the best form the work ought to assume. In the six years which have followed, I have been watching the various lines along which the mind of the student naturally works, in gathering what is needful for an appreciation of the “Shorter Poems,” and I have
found that what Rev. F. D. Maurice said at Birmingham, in 1862, is fundamentally sound.

"I believe you cannot understand Milton, or his works," said he, "in any way, so well as by connecting them with the stages of his life: in what place, at what time, under what impulses, amidst what society, the thoughts were breathed and the words came forth."

The aim of this volume is to present the poems which preceded the great epics in the order and under those influences in the home and the school, in the university and the world, which formed the mind and fashioned the art of the poet. The notes give each poem its appropriate setting of natural, personal, and historical associations. It is hoped that the book will be found representative and fairly complete in its biography, history, and criticism, and that it will serve as a natural and healthful incentive to those who wish to extend their researches in any of these lines. I have found by experience that this method of reading the "Shorter Poems" creates such an interest in Milton, as man and poet, that it carries one naturally, and with no abrupt transition, to the great epics.

It must be confessed that the editor who follows Professor Masson is like "the Turk who builds his cabin out of Grecian or Roman ruins," and I wish to record my indebtedness to his complete and scholarly works. While a large part of the notes needed are such as have grown out of my teaching of the poems, yet, in very many cases, the material could not be found elsewhere than in the volumes of Professor Masson, and in every case, where I have been so indebted, credit has been given.
My thanks are due to Professor Masson for the privilege, so graciously given, of associating his name with this edition.

The Latin poems and Italian sonnet to Diodati, with Cowper's translation, have been included because it is believed they will add to the interest of the work by revealing a most significant influence in the life of the poet.

The dates which precede the notes to each poem refer, if there are two, to the date of composition of the poem and its first publication by Milton; and if three, the second refers to date of first publication by some one other than Milton. The letters K., T., and M., in brackets, refer to Keightley, Todd, and Masson respectively.

If errors, biographical, historical, or textual, are found in this edition, I shall be glad to have my attention called to them.

A. J. G.

Brookline, Mass.,
March, 1898.
INTRODUCTION

The period intervening between the destruction of the Spanish galleons in 1588 and the battle of La Hogue, which gave England her dominion of the seas in 1692, witnessed the glorious reign of Queen Elizabeth close in an evening of extraordinary splendor and beauty,—

"From worlds not quickened by the sun,
A portion of the gift is won;
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
On ground which British shepherds tread,"

and the splendor penetrated into the dark night of the Stuarts, illuminating a solitary peak which in its turn threw the fire across the waste of the eighteenth century, and in its light arose Wordsworth and Coleridge, those

"Twin morning stars of the new century's song."

The two great influences at work in England at the time of Milton's birth were Hellenism, which came through the Renaissance, and revived the spontaneity of consciousness out of which literature and art were recreated; and Hebraism, which came through the Reformation, and revived the strictness of conscience out of which the spirit of righteousness was quickened. The former gave us Elizabethan England, with
INTRODUCTION

Spenser, Sidney, and Shakespeare; the latter Puritan England, with Butler, Bunyan, and Milton. If we would understand the forces which created and nurtured Milton the man and poet we must turn to the history of the closing years of Elizabeth and the period of James I. and Charles I. His work previous to the Commonwealth is distinguished for its Renaissance spirit, its charm of childhood and grace of youth, while revealing at the same time a sublime dignity born of early Puritanism; but after the Commonwealth it became militant and is itself a history of the time, yet is still true to the two great articles of Milton’s creed,—Art and Faith. Carlyle has said that Milton was the child of Shakespeare and John Knox. He may be called the last of the Elizabethans and the first of the moderns.

Elizabethan England was characterized by marvellous expansion in literary, religious, and commercial interests which led to a spirit of independence in the nation as a whole. She was “a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam.” London was the centre of all these interests, and Elizabeth the object of chivalrous loyalty. When the midday splendor of the literary impulse revealed itself in the Faerie Queene instinct with the vital soul of the age, it became “the delight of every accomplished gentleman, the model of every poet, the solace of every soldier.” In it were embodied those principles of literary, political, and religious activity which were destined to shake
the foundations of the Church and the kingship in the moral earnestness which was developing out of the Renaissance and the Reformation; for it was in the last years of Elizabeth's reign, years of splendor at home and triumph abroad, that England passed through that mighty change due to her becoming a nation of a single book,—the Bible. The Bible, clothed in the language of Shakespeare, and enthroned in the home which Puritanism had created, fostered manners, virtue, freedom, power, in society, politics, religion, and literature. From it came the new conception of the dignity of the individual, in which humanity rediscovered its patent of nobility; it revealed the divinity of humanity to "every boy that driveth the plough," as well as to every theologian in his study.

It is difficult for us in the nineteenth century to realize how complete was the union of the literary, political, and religious spirit under the influence of the teaching of the Bible. From it came that noble enthusiasm for one God, one Law, which meant no divine right for kings which was not a divine right for every man. Every political act affected both literature and religion; every literary production carried a political and a religious message; while every observance of religion looked to the creation of a purer political and literary activity. The crowds which flocked to St. Paul's to listen to the reading of Bonner's Bibles, and the tenant, the farmer, and the shopkeeper who reverently read a chapter from the "big book" around the family hearth, were being trained in literary and political principles by which of old the poet, the statesman, and the prophet—heroes all—
had been nurtured. "Legends and annals, war song and psalm, state rolls and biographies, the mighty voices of prophets, the parables of evangelists, stories of mission journeys, of perils by sea and among the heathen, philosophic arguments, apocalyptic visions,—all were flung broadcast over minds unoccupied, for the most part, by any rival learning." Such was the temper of the Puritan at the accession of James I.

The natural disposition of James, and the training which he received during the stormy times in Scotland, make it easy to forecast what will be the characteristics of his reign at a time when Episcopacy is established in England, and Presbyterianism in Scotland; when the two antagonistic parties, Catholics and Puritans, each ready for the death struggle, are watching his every movement; and the civilized world interested spectators. Where Elizabeth had been wise, temperate, judicious, serious, he was foolish, radical, rash, and trifling. Early in his reign his temper of mind was revealed at the Hampton Court Conference called to consider the petition of Puritans for some changes in the methods of the Episcopacy by which it would be more in harmony with the democratic idea of the Reformers. On that occasion he said, "A Scottish Presbyter as well fitteth with monarchy as God and the Devil," and ordered the ten who presented the petition (signed by more than a thousand of their ministers) to be imprisoned. His next step was to assert the doctrine of Divine Right of Kings by dictating to the House of Commons; the result of which was the reaction of the Commons against the Catholics,
INTRODUCTION

the exodus of Pilgrims and Puritans to the New World and the beginning of a New England.

Notwithstanding the political and religious ferment of the time, the principles of the Renaissance and the Reformation, which created Elizabethan England, still remained, although the old enthusiasm for England gradually died out in the strife of parties, and imitation took the place of creation. No great work appears in this period of exhaustion and transition which does not owe its inspiration to the atmosphere of the previous period. It is significant that in 1623, the year of the publication of the first folio of Shakespeare, Waller published his earliest couplets and ushered in the era of the Classicists with their brilliant conceits, their servility to foreign models, and their learned emptiness.

"Ye were dead
To things ye knew not of,—were closely wed
To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
And compass vile; so that ye taught a school
Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit
They tallied. Easy was the task:
A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
Of Poesy."

Charles was heir not only to his father's failings, but to all the mischief which those failings had produced. The breach between King and Parliament grew wider because of the excesses of the Duke of Buckingham and the marriage of Charles with a French Catholic princess. Hampden and Sir John Eliot led the attack upon the king; Parliament refused to grant money, and declared that in matters of
religion and politics it must be consulted, and that if the king refused "he was a betrayer of the liberty of England and an enemy to the same." Charles soon demonstrated that he was both of these by establishing the Star Chamber, the Court of High Commission, and by attempting to force the prayer-book upon the Scotch Covenanters. We must not forget that at this time, when Charles was at the height of his tyranny and England was tossing upon the wave of civil war, Milton was resting from his first flight and pluming himself for a second, "of highest hope and hardest attempting," in the quietude of classic Italy; and that on learning the direction affairs were taking, his love of freedom made but one course clear for him,—to return and enter the contest for liberty "when the Church of God was at the foot of her insulting enemies."

After Charles found that he could not scare Parliament into submission, he threw down the gauntlet at the foot of the royal standard at Nottingham, and war began. Edgehill, Marston Moor, and Naseby reveal the course of that struggle which ended on the scaffold, and the Commonwealth began its work with a prohibition against the proclaiming of any person king of England or Ireland, and the abolition of the House of Lords. Government was vested in a Council of State, and Cromwell was head of the army. Milton became Latin Secretary; and here begins that struggle of twenty years for the defence of the one thing he holds dearest,—liberty; "religious liberty against the prelates, civil liberty against the crown, the liberty of the press against the executive, liberty of conscience
against the Presbyterians, and domestic liberty against the tyranny of canon law.” The poet becomes philosopher and statesman; and the glory of English literature, the champion and martyr of English liberty. As recreation from the severe strain of composing the prose controversial pamphlet, Milton threw off those sonnets so charged with the personal note that they bring us into the passion and the pathos that constituted his deepest life during these memorable years.

The splendid prophecy of the future of English literature which the Milton of these two periods presents, is that of intellectual and moral earnestness revealed in the highest type of beauty—the union of sweetness and light.

We are wont to give a too great proportion of attention to the Milton of Paradise Lost, and the result is a belief that Milton lacked the finer and sweeter qualities with which we associate Spenser and Shakespeare. The historian has emphasized certain types of the Puritan revealed in the political and religious activity of the time, and has given us for the most part the formal, rather than the real, Puritan. Hence he has become a symbol of an austere, harsh and canting reformer, who finds little in the nature of existing politics and religion which is to his mind. And although between Clarendon and Macaulay we have a great variety of types, they severally need supplementing by a careful study of that furnished by the Milton of the Shorter Poems. Here will be found nothing of religious cant, no hatred of art and beauty even when they are misused, no frowning upon wholesome gaiety, but a generous recognition of all those elements that tend to make life
stronger in hope, more perfect in temper, and finer in spirit.

The love of nature and man, and the pleasures afforded by a life of ease and social converse revealed in *L'Allegro*; the love of art and philosophy, and the delights of solitude in *Il Penseroso*; the tribute paid to noble men and gentle women in song, action, and all the magnificent appointments of the Masque, with its splendid condemnation of the fanaticism of Prynne; the tender and delicate passion in the poems on Diodati; and the passion for liberty, the prayers for toleration, and the religious rapture set in the strong framework of the political sonnets, present us a truer type in heart and intellect of that real Puritanism which lay beneath the less attractive manifestations. Here is the type of all that was deepest and most permanent in English life between the luxuriousness of the Elizabethan and the licentiousness of the Restoration.

The highest note of the prose of these periods confirms the revelation of the verse. "Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose," says he in the *Areopagitica*, "to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?... How many other things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief stronghold of our hypocrisy to be ever judging one another?"
APPRECIATIONS

"Nor second He, that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secrets of th’ Abyss to spy.
He pass’d the flaming bounds of Place and Time:
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,
Where Angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw; but blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night."

Gray.

"Milton! thou should’st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life’s common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

Wordsworth.

"O mighty-mouth’d inventor of harmonies,
O skill’d to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages;
xix
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,  
Starr’d from Jehovah’s gorgeous armouries,  
    Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean  
    Rings to the roar of an angel onset —  
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,  
    And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
    Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
Where some refulgent sunset of India  
Streams o’er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
    And crimson-hued the stately palm woods  
    Whisper in odorous heights of even.”

**Tennyson.**

“He left the upland lawns and serene air  
Wherefrom his soul her noble nurture drew,  
    And reared his helm among the unquiet crew  
Battling beneath; the morning radiance rare  
Of his young brow amid the tumult there  
    Grew grim with sulphurous dust and sanguine dew;  
Yet through all soliure they who marked him knew  
The signs of his life’s dayspring, calm and fair.  
But when peace came, peace fouler far than war,  
    And mirth more dissonant than battle’s tone,  
He, with a scornful sigh of his clear soul,  
Back to his mountain clomb, now bleak and frore,  
    And with the awful night he dwelt alone,  
In darkness, listening to the thunder’s roll.”

**Ernest Myers.**

“The egoism with which all Milton’s poetry is impregnated is the egoism of a glorious nature. If we were asked who in the eighteen Christian centuries stands before us as the highest approximation to what we conceive as Christian manhood, in which are rarely blended purity and passion, gracefulness and strength, sanctity and manifold fitness for all the worldly duties
of the man and the citizen, we should scarcely hesitate to answer—John Milton."

Rev. F. W. Robertson.

"The genius and office of Milton were to ascend by the aids of his learning and his religion—by an equal perception, that is, of the past and the future—to a higher insight and more lively delineation of the heroic life of man. This was his poem; whereof all his indignant pamphlets and all his scaring verses are only single cantos or detached stanzas. It was plainly needful that his poetry should be a version of his own life, in order to give weight and solemnity to his thoughts, by which they might penetrate and possess the imagination and the will of mankind. . . . His own conviction it is which gives such authority to his strain. Its reality is its force. If out of the heart it came, to the heart it must go."

Emerson.

"Milton's sublimity is in every man's mouth. Is it felt that his poetry breathes a sensibility and tenderness hardly surpassed by its sublimity? We apprehend that the grandeur of Milton's mind has thrown some shade over his milder beauties; and this it has done, not only by being more striking and imposing, but by the tendency of vast mental energy to give a certain calmness to the expression of tenderness and deep feeling. A great mind is the master of its own enthusiasm, and does not often break out into those tumults which pass with many for the signs of profound emotion. Its sensibility, though more intense and enduring, is more self-possessed and less per-
turbed than that of other men, and is therefore less observed and felt, except by those who understand, through their own consciousness, the workings and utterance of genuine feeling.”

Channing.

"Milton’s more elaborate passages have the multitudinous roll of thunder, dying away to gather a sullen force again from its own reverberations, but he knew that the attention is recalled and arrested by those claps that stop short without echo and leave us listening. There are no such vistas and avenues of verse as his. In reading him one has a feeling of spaciousness such as no other poet gives. Milton’s respect for himself and for his own mind and its movement rises wellnigh to veneration. He prepares the way for his thought and spreads on the ground before the sacred feet of his verse tapestries inwoven with figures of mythology and romance. There is no such unfailing dignity as his."

Lowell.
THE STATIONER TO THE READER.

"It is not any private respect of gain, Gentle Reader (for the slightest Pamphlet is nowadays more vendible than the works of learnedest men), but it is the love I have to our own Language, that hath made me delight to collect and set forth such Pieces, both in Prose and Verse, as may renew the wonted honour and esteem of our English tongue; and it's the worth of these both English and Latin Poems, not the flourish of any prefixed encomions, that can invite thee to buy them — though these are not without the highest commendations and applause of the learnedest Academicks, both domestic and foreign, and, amongst those of our own country, the unparalleled attestation of that renowned Provost of Eton, SIR HENRY WOOTTON. I know not thy palate, how it relishes such dainties, nor how harmonious thy soul is: perhaps more trivial Airs may please thee better. But, howsoever thy opinion is spent upon these, that encouragement I have already received from the most ingenious men, in their clear and courteous entertainment of Mr. WALLER'S late choice Pieces, hath once more made me adventure into the world, presenting it with these ever-green and not to be blasted laurels. The
Author's more peculiar excellency in these studies was too well known to conceal his Papers, or to keep me from attempting to solicit them from him. Let the event guide itself which way it will, I shall deserve of the age by bringing into the light as true a birth as the Muses have brought forth since our famous SPENSER wrote; whose Poems in these English ones are as rarely imitated as sweetly excelled. Reader, if thou art eagle-eyed to censure their worth, I am not fearful to expose them to thy exactest perusal.

"Thine to command,

"HUMPH. MOSELEY."
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SHOR TER POEMS OF JOHN MILTON

A PARAPHRASE ON PSALM CXIV

This and the following Psalm were done by the Author at fifteen years old

When the blest seed of Terah's faithful son
After long toil their liberty had won,
And passed from Pharian fields to Canaan-land,
Led by the strength of the Almighty's hand,
Jehovah's wonders were in Israel shown,
His praise and glory was in Israel known.
That saw the troubled sea, and shivering fled,
And sought to hide his froth-becurlèd head
Low in the earth; Jordan's clear streams recoil,
As a faint host that hath received the foil.
The high huge-bellied mountains skip like rams
Amongst their ewes, the little hills like lambs.
Why fled the ocean? and why skipped the mountains?
Why turnèd Jordan toward his crystal fountains?
Shake, Earth, and at the presence be aghast
Of Him that ever was and aye shall last,
That glassy floods from rugged rocks can crush,
And make soft rills from fiery flint-stones gush.
PSALM CXXXVI

Let us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord for he is kind;
   For his mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Let us blaze his name abroad,
For of gods he is the God;
   For his, &c.

O let us his praises tell,
Who doth the wrathful tyrants quell;
   For his, &c.

Who with his miracles doth make
Amazed heaven and earth to shake;
   For his, &c.

Who by his wisdom did create
The painted heavens so full of state;
   For his, &c.

Who did the solid earth ordain
To rise above the watery plain;
   For his, &c.

Who, by his all-commanding might,
Did fill the new-made world with light;
   For his, &c.

And caused the golden-tracèd sun
All the day long his course to run;
   For his, &c.
The hornèd moon to shine by night
Amongst her spangled sisters bright;
    For his, &c.

He, with his thunder-clasping hand,
Smote the first-born of Egypt land;
    For his, &c.

And, in despite of Pharao fell,
He brought from thence his Israel;
    For his, &c.

The ruddy waves he cleft in twain
Of the Erythraean main;
    For his, &c.

The floods stood still, like walls of glass,
While the Hebrew bands did pass;
    For his, &c.

But full soon they did devour
The tawny king with all his power;
    For his, &c.

His chosen people he did bless
In the wasteful wilderness;
    For his, &c.

In bloody battle he brought down
Kings of prowess and renown;
    For his, &c.

He foiled bold Seon and his host,
That ruled the Amorcean coast;
    For his, &c.
And large limbed Og he did subdue,
With all his over-hardy crew;
For his, &c.

And to his servant Israel
He gave their land, therein to dwell;
For his, &c.

He hath, with a piteous eye,
Beheld us in our misery;
For his, &c.

And freed us from the slavery
Of the invading enemy;
For his, &c.

All living creatures he doth feed,
And with full hand supplies their need;
For his, &c.

Let us, therefore, warble forth
His mighty majesty and worth;
For his, &c.

That his mansion hath on high,
Above the reach of mortal eye;
For his mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.
ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT
Dying of a Cough

Anno ætatis 17

I
O fairest flower, no sooner blown but blasted,
Soft silken primrose fading timelessly,
Summer's chief honour, if thou hadst outlasted
Bleak Winter's force that made thy blossom dry;
For he, being amorous on that lovely dye
That did thy cheek envermeil, thought to kiss,
But killed, alas! and then bewailed his fatal bliss.

II
For, since grim Aquilo, his charioteer,
By boisterous rape the Athenian damsel got,
He thought it touched his deity full near,
If likewise he some fair one wedded not,
Thereby to wipe away the infamous blot
Of long uncoupled bed and childless eld,
Which 'mongst the wanton gods a foul reproach was held.

III
So, mounting up in icy pearled car,
Through middle empire of the freezing air
He wandered long, till thee he spied from far;
There ended was his quest, there ceased his care:
Down he descended from his snow soft chair,
But, all unwaried, with his cold-kind embrace,
Unhoused thy virgin soul from her fair biding-place.
IV

Yet art thou not inglorious in thy fate;
For so Apollo, with unweeting hand,
Whilom did slay his dearly-lovèd mate,
Young Hyacinth, born on Eurotas' strand,
Young Hyacinth, the pride of Spartan land;
But then transformed him to a purple flower:
Alack, that so to change thee Winter had no power!

V

Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead,
Or that thy corse corrupts in earth's dark womb,
Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed
Hid from the world in a low-delvèd tomb;
Could Heaven, for pity, thee so strictly doom?
Oh no! for something in thy face did shine
Above mortality, that showed thou wast divine.

VI

Resolve me, then, O Soul most surely blest
(If so it be that thou these plaints dost hear)!
Tell me, bright Spirit, where'er thou hoverest,
Whether above that high first-moving sphere,
Or in the Elysian fields (if such there were),
Oh, say me true if thou wert mortal wight,
And why from us so quickly thou didst take thy flight.

VII

Wert thou some star, which from the ruined roof
Of shaked Olympus by mischance didst fall;
Which careful Jove in nature's true behoof
Took up, and in fit place did reinstal?
Or did of late Earth's sons besiege the wall
     Of sheeny Heaven, and thou some goddess fled
Amongst us here below to hide thy nectared head?

VIII

Or wert thou that just Maid who once before
Forsook the hated earth, oh! tell me sooth,
And camest again to visit us once more?
Or wert thou [Mercy], that sweet smiling Youth?
Or that crowned Matron, sage white-robèd Truth?
     Or any other of that heavenly brood
Let down in cloudy throne to do the world some good?

IX

Or wert thou of the golden-wingèd host,
Who, having clad thyself in human weed,
To earth from thy prefixèd seat didst post,
And after short abode fly back with speed,
     As if to show what creatures Heaven doth breed;
     Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire
To scorn the sordid world, and unto Heaven aspire?

X

But oh! why didst thou not stay here below
To bless us with thy heaven-loved innocence,
To slake his wrath whom sin hath made our foe,
To turn swift-rushing black perdition hence,
Or drive away the slaughtering pestilence,
     To stand 'twixt us and our deservèd smart?
But thou canst best perform that office where thou art.
Then thou, the mother of so sweet a child, 
Her false-imagined loss cease to lament, 
And wisely learn to curb thy sorrows wild; 
Think what a present thou to God hast sent, 
And render him with patience what he lent: 
This if thou do, he will an offspring give 
That till the world's last end shall make thy name to live.

AT A VACATION EXERCISE IN THE COLLEGE, PART LATIN, PART ENGLISH

Annus aetatis 19

The Latin Speeches ended, the English thus began:

Hail, Native Language, that by sinews weak
Didst move my first endeavouring tongue to speak,
And mad'st imperfect words with childish trips,
Half unpronounced, slide through my infant lips,
Driving dumb Silence from the portal door,
Where he had mutely sat two years before:
Here I salute thee, and thy pardon ask
That now I use thee in my latter task!
Small loss it is that thence can come unto thee;
I know my tongue but little grace can do thee. 10
Thou need'st not be ambitious to be first;
Believe me, I have thither packed the worst:
And, if it happen as I did forecast,
The daintiest dishes shall be served up last.
I pray thee then deny me not thy aid,
For this same small neglect that I have made;
But haste thee straight to do me once a pleasure,
And from thy wardrobe bring thy chiefest treasure;
Not those new-fangled toys, and trimming slight
Which takes our late fantasies with delight;
But cull those richest robes and gayest attire,
Which deepest spirits and choicest wits desire.
I have some naked thoughts that rove about,
And loudly knock to have their passage out,
And, weary of their place, do only stay
Till thou hast decked them in thy best array;
That so they may, without suspect or fears,
Fly swiftly to this fair assembly’s ears.
Yet I had rather, if I were to choose,
Thy service in some graver subject use,
Such as may make thee search thy coffers round,
Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound:
Such where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and at Heaven’s door
Look in, and see each blissful deity
How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,
Listening to what unshorn Apollo sings
To the touch of golden wires, while Hebe brings
Immortal nectar to her kingly sire;
Then, passing through the spheres of watchful fire,
And misty regions of wide air next under,
And hills of snow and lofts of piled thunder,
May tell at length how green-eyed Neptune raves,
In heaven’s defiance mustering all his waves;
Then sing of secret things that came to pass
When beldam Nature in her cradle was;
And last of kings and queens and heroes old,  
Such as the wise Demodocus once told  
In solemn songs at king Alcinous’ feast,  
While sad Ulysses’ soul and all the rest  
Are held, with his melodious harmony,  
In willing chains and sweet captivity.  
But fie, my wandering Muse, how thou dost stray!  
Expectance calls thee now another way.  
Thou know’st it must be now thy only bent  
To keep in compass of thy Predicament.  
Then quick about thy purposed business come,  
That to the next I may resign my room.

Then Ens is represented as Father of the Predicaments,  
his ten Sons; whereof the eldest stood for Substance  
with his Canons; which Ens, thus speaking, explains:

Good luck befriend thee, Son; for at thy birth  
The faery ladies danced upon the hearth.  
The drowsy nurse hath sworn she did them spy  
Come tripping to the room where thou didst lie,  
And, sweetly singing round about thy bed,  
Strew all their blessings on thy sleeping head.  
She heard them give thee this, that thou shouldst still  
From eyes of mortals walk invisible.  
Yet there is something that doth force my fear;  
For once it was my dismal hap to hear  
A sibyl old, bow-bent with crooked age,  
That far events full wisely could presage,  
And, in Time’s long and dark prospective-glass,  
Foresaw what future days should bring to pass.  
"Your son," said she, "(nor can you it prevent,)  
Shall subject be to many an Accident."
O'er all his brethren he shall reign as king;  
Yet every one shall make him underling,  
And those that cannot live from him asunder  
Ungratefully shall strive to keep him under.  
In worth and excellence he shall outgo them;  
Yet, being above them, he shall be below them.  
From others he shall stand in need of nothing,  
Yet on his brothers shall depend for clothing.  
To find a foe it shall not be his hap,  
And peace shall lull him in her flowery lap;  
Yet shall he live in strife, and at his door  
Devouring war shall never cease to roar;  
Yea, it shall be his natural property  
To harbour those that are at enmity.”  
What power, what force, what mighty spell, if not  
Your learned hands, can loose this Gordian knot?  

_The next, Quantity and Quality, spake in prose: then Relation was called by his name._  

Rivers, arise: whether thou be the son  
Of utmost Tweed, or Ouse, or gulfy Dun,  
Or Trent, who, like some earth-born giant, spreads  
His thirty arms along the indented meads,  
Or sullen Mole, that runneth underneath,  
Or Severn swift, guilty of maiden’s death,  
Or rocky Avon, or of sedgy Lea,  
Or coaly Tyne, or ancient hallowed Dee,  
Or Humber loud, that keeps the Scythian’s name,  
Or Medway smooth, or royal-towered Thame.  

_The rest was prose._
ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

Composition 1629

I

This is the month, and this the happy morn,
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King,
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages once did sing,
That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

II

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside, and, here with us to be,
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

III

Say, Heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain,
To welcome him to this his new abode,
Now while the heaven, by the Sun's team untrod,
Hath took no print of the approaching light,
And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?
IV
See how from far upon the eastern road
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet!
Oh! run; prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;
Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,
And join thy voice unto the Angel Quire,
From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.

THE HYMN

I

It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature, in awe to him,
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

II

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.
But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace:
She, crowned with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;
The hooked chariot stood,
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovrán Lord was by.

But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
His reign of peace upon the earth began.
The winds, with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kissed,
Whispering new joys to the mild Ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmèd wave.
VI

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence,
And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,
Or Lucifer that often warned them thence;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

VII

And, though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
The Sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
The new-enlightened world no more should need:
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne or burning axletree could bear.

VIII

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or ere the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they than
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below:
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.
When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet
As never was by mortal finger strook,
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringed noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly
  close.

Nature, that heard such sound
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's seat the Airy region thrilling,
  Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling:
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all Heaven and Earth in happier union.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shamefaced Night arrayed;
The helmèd cherubim
And sworded seraphim
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born Heir.
XII

Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the Sons of Morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced World on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

XIII

Ring out, ye crystal spheres!
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow;
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

XIV

For, if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back and fetch the Age of Gold;
And speckled Vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould;
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.
XV

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orbed in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace-hall.

XVI

But wisest Fate says No,
This must not yet be so;
The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss,
So both himself and us to glorify:
Yet first, to those ychained in sleep,
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep,

XVII

With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang,
While the red fire and smouldering clouds outbrake:
The aged Earth, aghast
With terror of that blast,
Shall from the surface to the centre shake,
When, at the world’s last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.
SHORWER POEMS OF JOHN MILTON

XVIII

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is,
But now begins; for from this happy day
The Old Dragon under ground,
In straiter limits bound,
Not half so far casts his usurped sway,
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

XIX

The Oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the step of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathèd spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

XX

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring, and dale
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.
XXI

In consecrated earth,
   And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
   In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power forgoes his wonted seat.

XXII

Peor and Baalim
   Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-battred god of Palestine;
   And mooned Ashtaroth,
Heaven’s queen and mother both,
Now sits not gilt with tapers’ holy shine:
The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn;
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn.

XXIII

And sullen Moloch, fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue;
   In vain with cymbals’ ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue;
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.
Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud;
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest;
Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud;
In vain, with timbrelled anthems dark,
The sable-stolèd sorcerers bear his worshiped ark.

He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded Infant's hand;
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide,
Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damned crew.

So, when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail,
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave,
And the yellow-skirted fays
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.
XXVII

But see! the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest.
Time is our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven’s youngest-temèd star
Hath fixed her polished car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending;
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harnessed Angels sit in order serviceable.

—

UPON THE CIRCUMCISION

Ye flaming Powers, and wingèd Warriors bright,
That erst with music, and triumphant song,
First heard by happy watchful shepherds’ ear,
So sweetly sung your joy the clouds along,
Through the soft silence of the listening night,
Now mourn; and, if sad share with us to bear
Your fiery essence can distil no tear,
Burn in your sighs, and borrow
Seas wept from our deep sorrow.
He who with all Heaven’s heraldry whilere
Entered the world now bleeds to give us ease.
Alas! how soon our sin
Sore doth begin
His infancy to seize!

O more exceeding love, or law more just?
Just law, indeed, but more exceeding love!
For we, by rightful doom remediless,
Were lost in death, till he, that dwelt above
High-throned in secret bliss, for us frail dust
Emptied his glory, even to nakedness;
And that great covenant which we still transgress
Entirely satisfied,
And the full wrath beside
Of vengeful justice bore for our excess,
And seals obedience first with wounding smart
This day; but oh! ere long,
   Huge pangs and strong
      Will pierce more near his heart.

---

THE PASSION

I

EREWHILE of music, and ethereal mirth,
Wherewith the stage of Air and Earth did ring,
And joyous news of heavenly Infant’s birth,
My muse with Angels did divide to sing;
But headlong joy is ever on the wing,
   In wintry solstice like the shortened light
Soon swallowed up in dark and long outliving night.

II

For now to sorrow must I tune my song,
And set my harp to notes of saddest woe,
Which on our dearest Lord did seize ere long,
   Dangers, and snares, and wrongs, and worse than so,
Which he for us did freely undergo:
   Most perfect Hero, tried in heaviest plight
Of labours huge and hard, too hard for human wight!
III
He, sovran Priest, stooping his regal head,
That dropt with odorous oil down his fair eyes,
Poor fleshly tabernacle enterèd,
His starry front low-roofed beneath the skies:
Oh, what a mask was there, what a disguise!
Yet more: the stroke of death he must abide;
Then lies him meekly down fast by his brethren's side.

IV
These latest scenes confine my roving verse;
To this horizon is my Phœbus bound.
His godlike acts, and his temptations fierce,
And former sufferings, otherwhere are found;
Loud o'er the rest Cremona's trump doth sound:
Me softer airs befit, and softer strings
Of lute, or viol still, more apt for mournful things.

V
Befriend me, Night, best patroness of grief!
Over the pole thy thickest mantle throw,
And work my flattered fancy to belief
That heaven and earth are coloured with my woe;
My sorrows are too dark for day to know:
The leaves should all be black whereon I write,
And letters, where my tears have washed, a wannish white.

VI
See, see the chariot, and those rushing wheels,
That whirled the prophet up at Chebar flood;
My spirit some transporting cherub feels
To bear me where the towers of Salem stood,
Once glorious towers, now sunk in guiltless blood.
There doth my soul in holy vision sit,
In pensive trance, and anguish, and ecstatic fit.

VII

Mine eye hath found that sad sepulchral rock
That was the casket of Heaven's richest store,
And here, though grief my feeble hands up-look,
Yet on the softened quarry would I score
My plaining verse as lively as before;
For sure so well instructed are my tears
That they would fitly fall in ordered characters.

VIII

Or, should I thence, hurried on viewless wing,
Take up a weeping on the mountains wild,
The gentle neighbourhood of grove and spring
Would soon unbosom all their echoes mild;
And I (for grief is easily beguiled)
Might think the infection of my sorrows loud
Had got a race of mourners on some pregnant cloud.

This Subject the Author finding to be above the years he had when he wrote it, and nothing satisfied with what was begun, left it unfinished.

---

ON TIME

Fly, envious Time, till thou run out thy race:
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping Hours,
Whose speed is but the heavy plummet's pace;
And gut thyself with what thy womb devours,
Which is no more than what is false and vain,
And merely mortal dross;
So little is our loss,
So little is thy gain!
For, whenas each thing bad thou hast entombed,
And, last of all, thy greedy self consumed,
Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss
With an individual kiss,
And Joy shall overtake us as a flood;
When every thing that is sincerely good
And perfectly divine,
With Truth, and Peace, and Love, shall ever shine
About the supreme throne
Of Him, to whose happy-making sight alone
When once our heavenly-guided soul shall climb,
Then, all this earthy grossness quit,
Attired with stars we shall for ever sit,
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee, O
Time!

\[\ldots\]

\[\ldots\]

AT A SOLEMN MUSIC

Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy,
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ,
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce;
And to our high-raised phantasy present
That undisturbèd song of pure concert,
Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout and solemn jubilee;
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row

\[\ldots\]
Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow,  
And the Cherubic host in thousand quires  
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,  
With those just Spirits that wear victorious palms,  
Hymns devout and holy psalms  
Singing everlastingly:  
That we on Earth, with undiscording voice,  
May rightly answer that melodious noise;  
As once we did, till disproportioned sin  
Jarred against nature’s chime, and with harsh din  
Broke the fair music that all creatures made  
To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed  
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood  
In first obedience, and their state of good.  
O, may we soon again renew that song,  
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long  
To his celestial consort us unite,  
To live with Him, and sing in endless morn of light!

---

SONG ON MAY MORNING

Now the bright morning-star, Day’s harbinger,  
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her  
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws  
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.  
    Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire  
    Mirth, and youth, and warm desire!  
    Woods and groves are of thy dressing;  
    Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.  
Thus we salute thee with our early song,  
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.
ON SHAKESPEARE 1630

What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in pile'd stones?
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument.
For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavoring art,
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving,
And so sepulchred in such pomp dost lie
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER,

Who sickened in the time of his Vacancy, being forbid to go to London by reason of the Plague

Here lies old Hobson. Death hath broke his girt,
And here, alas! hath laid him in the dirt;
Or else, the ways being foul, twenty to one
He's here stuck in a slough, and overthrown.
'Twas such a shifter that, if truth were known,
Death was half glad when he had got him down;
For he had any time this ten years full
Dodged with him betwixt Cambridge and The Bull.
And surely Death could never have prevailed,
Had not his weekly course of carriage failed;
But lately, finding him so long at home,
And thinking now his journey's end was come,
And that he had ta'en up his latest inn,
In the kind office of a chamberlin
Showed him his room where he must lodge that night,
Pulled off his boots, and took away the light.
If any ask for him, it shall be said,
"Hobson has supped, and's newly gone to bed."

ANOTHER ON THE SAME

Here lieth one who did most truly prove
That he could never die while he could move;
So hung his destiny, never to rot
While he might still jog on and keep his trot;
Made of sphere-metal, never to decay
Until his revolution was at stay.
Time numbers motion; yet (without a crime
'Gainst old truth) motion numbered out his time;
And, like an engine moved with wheel and weight,
His principles being ceased, he ended straight.
Rest, that gives all men life, gave him his death,
And too much breathing put him out of breath;
Nor were it contradiction to affirm
Too long vacation hastened on his term.
Merely to drive the time away he sickened,
Fainted, and died, nor would with ale be quickened.
"Nay," quoth he, on his swooning bed outstretched,
"If I mayn't carry, sure I'll ne'er be fetched,
But vow, though the cross doctors all stood hearers,
For one carrier put down to make six bearers."  
Ease was his chief disease; and, to judge right,
He died for heaviness that his cart went light.
His leisure told him that his time was come,
And lack of load made his life burdensome,
That even to his last breath (there be that say't),
As he were pressed to death, he cried, "More weight!"
But, had his doings lasted as they were,
He had been an immortal carrier.
Obedient to the moon he spent his date
In course reciprocal, and had his fate
Linked to the mutual flowing of the seas;
Yet (strange to think) his wain was his increase.
His letters are delivered all and gone;
Only remains this superscription.

AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER

This rich marble doth inter
The honoured wife of Winchester,
A Viscount's daughter, an Earl's heir,
Besides what her virtues fair
Added to her noble birth,
More than she could own from Earth.
Summers three times eight save one
She had told; alas! too soon,
After so short time of breath,
To house with darkness and with death! 10
Yet, had the number of her days
Been as complete as was her praise,
Nature and Fate had had no strife
In giving limit to her life.
• Her high birth and her graces sweet
Quickly found a lover meet;
The virgin quire for her request
The god that sits at marriage-feast;
He at their invoking came,
But with a scarce well-lighted flame; 20
And in his garland, as he stood,
Ye might discern a cypress-bud.
Once had the early matrons run
To greet her of a lovely son,
And now with second hope she goes,
And calls Lucina to her throes;
But, whether by mischance or blame,
Atropos for Lucina came,
And with remorseless cruelty
Spoiled at once both fruit and tree. 30
The hapless babe before his birth
Had burial, not yet laid in earth;
And the languished mother's womb
Was not long a living tomb.
So have I seen some tender slip,
Saved with care from winter's nip,
The pride of her carnation train,
Plucked up by some unheedy swain,
Who only thought to crop the flower
New shot up from vernal shower;
But the fair blossom hangs the head
Sideways, as on a dying bed,
And those pearls of dew she wears
Prove to be pressaging tears
Which the sad morn had let fall
On her hastening funeral.
Gentle Lady, may thy grave
Peace and quiet ever have!
After this thy travail sore,
Sweet rest seize thee evermore,
That, to give the world increase,
Shortened hast thy own life's lease!
Here, besides the sorrowing
That thy noble house doth bring,
Here be tears of perfect moan
Weep't for thee in Helicon;
And some flowers and some bays
For thy hearse, to strew the ways,
Sent thee from the banks of Came,
Devoted to thy virtuous name;
Whilst thou, bright Saint, high sitt'st in glory,
Next her, much like to thee in story,
That fair Syrian shepherdess,
Who, after years of barrenness,
The highly-favored Joseph bore
To him that served for her before,
And at her next birth, much like thee,
Through pangs fled to felicity,
Far within the bosom bright
Of blazing Majesty and Light:
There with thee, new-welcome Saint,
Like fortunes may her soul acquaint,
With thee there clad in radiant sheen,
No Marchioness, but now a Queen.

---

ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE
OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew’th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu’th.
Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master’s eye.

---

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

O NIGHTINGALE that on yon bloomy spray
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the lover’s heart dost fill,
While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love. O, if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh;
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.
Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

L'ALLEGRÓ

Hence, loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles,
Nods and Becks and wreathèd Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe’s cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreproved pleasure free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o’er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures:
Russet lawns, and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied;
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
Are at their savoury dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he, by Friar’s lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,
And, stretched out all the chimney’s length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Tower’d cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson’s learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy’s child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild,
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus’ self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

IL PENSEROSEO

Hence, vain deluding Joys,
    The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,
    Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
    And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
    As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
    The fickle pensioners of Morpheus’ train. 10
But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O’erlaid with black, staid Wisdom’s hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon’s sister might be seem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty’s praise above
The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn’s reign
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida’s inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove’s altar sing;
And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o' er the accustomed oak.
Sweet bird, that shunn' st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek;
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canacé to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear. 120
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchief in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves. 130
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look, 140
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister’s pale,
And love the high embow’d roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give;
And I with thee will choose to live.
ARCADES

Part of an Entertainment presented to the Countess Dowager of Derby at Harefield by some Noble Persons of her Family; who appear on the Scene in pastoral habit, moving toward the seat of state, with this song:

I. Song

Look, Nymphs and Shepherds, look!
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook?
    This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend:
Here our solemn search hath end.
Fame, that her high worth to raise
Seemed erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise:
    Less than half we find expressed;
    Envy bid conceal the rest.

Mark what radiant state she spreads,
In circle round her shining throne
Shooting her beams like silver threads:
This, this is she alone,
    Sitting like a goddess bright
    In the centre of her light.

Might she the wise Latona be,
Or the towered Cybele,
Mother of a hundred gods?
Juno dares not give her odds:
Who had thought this clime had held
A deity so unparallelled?

As they come forward, the Genius of the Wood appears, and, turning toward them, speaks.

Gen. Stay, gentle Swains, for, though in this disguise,
I see bright honour sparkle through your eyes;
Of famous Arcady ye are, and sprung
Of that renowned flood, so often sung,
Divine Alpheus, who, by secret sluice,
Stole under seas to meet his Arethusa;
And ye, the breathing roses of the wood,
Fair silver-buskined Nymphs, as great and good.
I know this quest of yours and free intent
Was all in honour and devotion meant
To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
Whom with low reverence I adore as mine,
And with all helpful service will comply
To further this night's glad solemnity,
And lead ye where ye may more near behold
What shallow-searching Fame hath left untold;
Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,
Have sat to wonder at, and gaze upon.
For know, by lot from Jove, I am the Power
Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower,
To nurse the saplings tall, and curl the grove
With ringlets quaint and wanton windings wove;
And all my plants I save from nightly ill
Of noisome winds and blasting vapours chill;
And from the boughs brush off the evil dew,
And heal the harms of thwarting thunder blue,
Or what the cross dire-looking planet smites,
Or hurtful worm with cankered venom bites.
When evening grey doth rise, I fetch my round
Over the mount, and all this hallowed ground;
And early, ere the odorous breath of morn
Awakes the slumbering leaves, or tasselled horn
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,
Number my ranks, and visit every sprout
With puissant words and murmurs made to bless.
But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I
To the celestial Sirens' harmony,
That sit upon the nine infolded spheres,
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the adamantine spindle round
On which the fate of gods and men is wound.
Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,
To lull the daughters of Necessity,
And keep unsteady Nature to her law,
And the low world in measured motion draw
After the heavenly tune, which none can hear
Of human mould with gross unpurgèd ear.
And yet such music worthiest were to blaze
The peerless height of her immortal praise
Whose lustre leads us, and for her most fit,
If my inferior hand or voice could hit
Inimitable sounds. Yet, as we go,
Whate'er the skill of lesser gods can show
I will assay, her worth to celebrate,
And so attend ye toward her glittering state;
Where ye may all, that are of noble stem,  
Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's hem.

II. Song
O'er the smooth enamelled green,  
Where no print of step hath been,  
Follow me, as I sing  
And touch the warbled string:  
Under the shady roof  
Of branching elm star-proof  
Follow me.  
I will bring you where she sits,  
Clad in splendor as befits  
Her deity.  
Such a rural Queen  
All Arcadia hath not seen.

III. Song
Nymphs and Shepherds, dance no more  
By sandy Ladon's liled banks;  
On old Lycaeus, or Cyllene hoar,  
Trip no more in twilight ranks;  
Though Erymanth your loss deplore,  
A better soil shall give ye thanks.  
From the stony Mænalus  
Bring your flocks, and live with us;  
Here ye shall have greater grace,  
To serve the Lady of this place.  
Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,  
Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.  
Such a rural Queen  
All Arcadia hath not seen.
COMUS

"A MASQUE PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634, &c."

(For the Title-pages of the Editions of 1637 and 1645 see Notes at p. 174 and p. 175.)

DEDICATION OF LAWES' EDITION OF 1637.

(Reprinted in the Edition of 1645, but omitted in that of 1673.)

"To the Right Honourable John, Lord Brackley, 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 public view, and now to offer it up, in all rightful devotion, to those fair hopes and rare endowments of your much-promising youth, which give a full assurance to all that know you of a future excellence. Live, sweet Lord, to be the honour of your name; and receive this as your own from the hands of him who hath by many favours been long obliged to your most honoured Parents, and, as in this representation your attendant Thyrsis, so now in all real expression

"Your faithful and most humble Servant,

"H. Lawes."

"The Copy of a Letter written by Sir Henry Wotton to the Author upon the following poem."

(In the Edition of 1645: omitted in that of 1673.)

"Sir,

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

"Since your going, you have charged me with new obligations, both for a very kind letter from you dated the 6th of this month, and for a dainty piece of entertainment which came therewith. Wherein I should much commend the tragical part, if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Doric delicacy in your Songs and Odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language: Ipsa mollities. But I must not omit to tell you that I now only owe you thanks for intimating unto me (how modestly soever) the true artificer. For the work itself I had viewed some good while before with singular delight; having received it from our common friend Mr. R., in the very close of the late R.'s Poems, printed at Oxford: whereunto it was added (as I now suppose) that the accessory might help out the principal, according to the art of Stationers, and to leave the reader con la bocca dolce.

"Now, Sir, concerning your travels; wherein I may challenge a little more privilege of discourse with you. I suppose you will not blanch Paris in your way: therefore I have been bold to trouble you with a few lines to Mr. M. B., whom you shall easily find attending the young Lord S. as his governor; and you may surely receive from him good directions for the shaping of your farther journey into Italy where he did reside, by my choice, some time for the King, after mine own recess from Venice.

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

"At Siena I was tabled in the house of one Alberto Scipioni,
an old Roman courtier in dangerous times; having been steward
to the Duca di Pagliano, who with all his family were strangled,
save this only man that escaped by foresight of the tempest.
With him I had often much chat of those affairs, into which
he took pleasure to look back from his native harbour; and,
at my departure toward Rome (which had been the centre of
his experience), I had won his confidence enough to beg his
advice how I might carry myself there without offence of others
or of mine own conscience. 'Signor Arigo mio,' says he, 'I
pensteri stetti ed il viso sciolti will go safely over the whole
world.' Of which Delphian oracle (for so I have found it)
your judgment doth need no commentary; and therefore, Sir,
I will commit you, with it, to the best of all securities, God's
dear love, remaining

"Your friend, as much to command as any of longer date,

"Henry Wotton."

Postscript

"Sir : I have expressly sent this my footboy to prevent your
departure without some acknowledgment from me of the re-
cipient of your obliging letter; having myself through some busi-
ness, I know not how, neglected the ordinary conveyance. In
any part where I shall understand you fixed, I shall be glad
and diligent to entertain you with home-novelties, 'even for
some fomentation of our friendship, too soon interrupted in
the cradle.'"
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 which presented were:

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

[This list of the Persons, &c., appeared in the Edition of 1645, but was omitted in that of 1678.]
Comus

The first Scene discovers a wild wood

The Attendant Spirit descends or enters

Before the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live insphered
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,
Confined and pestered in this pinfold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants
Amongst the enthroned 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,
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-haired deities;
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble Peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with temperèd awe to guide
An old and haughty nation, proud in arms:
Where his fair offspring, nurséd in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father’s state,
And new-intrusted sceptre. But their way
Lies through the perplexèd paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandèring passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,
I was despatchéd 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
Crushed the sweet poison of misusèd wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transformèd,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
On Circe’s island fell. (Who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmèd cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape
And downward fell into a grovèlling swine?)
This Nymph, that gazéd upon his clustèring locks
With ivy berries wreathèd, 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 named:
Who, ripe and frolic of his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And, in thick shelter of black shades imbowered,
ExceLS his mother at her mighty art;
Offering to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phoebus; which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human count’nance,
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,
Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were.
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do. But first I must put off
These my sky-robcs spun out of Iris’ woof,
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith,
And in this office of his mountain watch
Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

Comus enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other;
with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts,
but otherwise like men and women, their apparel 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
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigour now is gone to bed;
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sour Severity,
With their grave saws, in slumber lie.
We, that are of purer fire,
Imitate the starry quire,
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;
And on the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain-brim,
The wood-nymphs, decked with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:
What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come, let us our rites begin;
'Tis only daylight that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark-veiled Cotytto, to whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns! mysterious dame,
That ne'er art called but when the dragon womb
Of Stygian darkness spits her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air!
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou ridest with Hecat', and befriend
Us thy vowed 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 cabined loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale Sun descry
Our concealed solemnity.
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,  
And to my wily trains: I shall ere long  
Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed  
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl  
My dazzling spells into the spongy air,  
Of power to cheat the eye with bear illusion,  
And give it false presentments, lest the place  
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,  
And put the damsel to suspicious flight;  
Which must not be, for that’s against my course.  
I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,  
And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,  
Baited with reasons not unpleasable,  
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,  
And hug him into snares. When once her eye  
Hath met the virtue of this magic dust  
I shall appear some harmless villager,  
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.  
But here she comes; I fairly step aside,  
And hearken, if I may her business hear.  

The Lady enters

Lady. This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,  
My best guide now. Methought it was the sound  
Of riot and ill-managed merriment,  
Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe  
Stirs up among the loose unlettered 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 swilled insolence
Of such late wassailers; yet, oh! where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines,
Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket-side
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then when the grey-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer’s weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phæbus’ wain.
But where they are, and why they come not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts. ’Tis likeliest
They had engaged 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 filled their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear;
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy 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
By a strong siding champion, Conscience.
O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemished 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 unassailed...

Was I deceived, 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 hallo to my brothers, but
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
I'll venture; for my new-enlivened spirits
Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

Song

Sweet echo, sweetest nymph, that liv’st unseen
Within thy airy shell
By slow Meander’s margent green,
And in the violet-embroidered 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 Parley, Daughter of the Sphere!
So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies!

Comus. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiled! 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 imprisoned soul,
And lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause.
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,
And in sweet madness robbed it of itself;
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen. — Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan or Sylvan, by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood. 270

Lady. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
That is addressed to unattending ears.
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
How to regain my severed company,
Compelled 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 leavy labyrinth.

Comus. Could that divide you from near-ushering
guides?

Lady. They left me weary on a grassy turf. 280

Comus. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

Lady. To seek i' the valley some cool friendly
spring.

Comus. And left your fair side all unguarded,
Lady?

Lady. They were but twain, and purposed quick
return.

Comus. Perhaps forestalling 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 unrazored lips.

Comus. Two such I saw, what time the laboured
ox

In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swinked 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 faery vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-strook,
And, as I passed, I worshipped. 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-practised feet.

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 lodged,
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise,
I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.

Lady. Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds,
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was named,
And yet is most pretended. In a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
To my proportioned strength! Shepherd, lead on... 330

The Two Brothers

Eld. Bro. Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades;
Or, if your influence be quite dammed 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 levelled rule of streaming light, 340
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian Cynosure.

Sec. Bro. Or, if our eyes
Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks, penned in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.
But, oh, 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 unpillowed 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!

Eld. Bro. Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;
For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
Where, with her best nurse Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings.
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impaired.
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

Sec. Bro. 'Tis most true
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,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his grey 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 unsunned heaps
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on Opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjured 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.

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

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

Eld. Bro. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own.
'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:
She that has that is clad in complete steel,
And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,
May trace huge forests, and unharboured heaths,
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,
No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer,
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.
Yea, there where very desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shaggèd with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblenchèd majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say no evil thing that walks by night,
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn un laid ghost,
That breaks his magic chains at curfew 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?
Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen for ever chaste,
Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o’ the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
Wherewith she freezeed her foes to congealed stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dashed 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,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul’s essence,
Till all be made immortal. But, when lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,
Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it loved,
And linked itself by carnal sensualty
To a degenerate and degraded state.

Sec. Bro. 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 nectared sweets,  
Where no crude surfeit reigns.  

_Eld. Bro._ List! list! I hear  
Some far-off hallo break the silent air.  

_Sec. Bro._ Methought so too; what should it be?  
_Eld. Bro._ For certain,  
Either some one, like us, night-foundered here,  
Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,  
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.  

_Sec. Bro._ Heaven keep my sister! Again, again,  
and near!  
Best draw, and stand upon our guard.  

_Eld. Bro._ I’ll hallo.  
If he be friendly, he comes well: if not,  
Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us!  

_The Attendant Spirit, habited like a shepherd_  

That hallo I should know. What are you? Speak.  
Come not too near; you fall on iron stakes else.  

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

_Sec. Bro._ O brother, ’tis my father’s Shepherd, sure.  
_Eld. Bro._ Thyris! whose artful strains have oft  
delayed  
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,  
And sweetened every musk-rose of the dale.  
How camest thou here, good swain? Hath any ram  
Slipped from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,  
Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?  
How couldst thou find this dark sequestered nook?
\textit{Spir.} O my loved master's heir, and his next joy, 
I came not here on such a trivial toy 
As a strayed 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, oh! my virgin Lady, where is she? 
How chance she is not in your company?
\textit{Eld. Bro.} To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame 
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.
\textit{Spir.} Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.
\textit{Spir.} I'll tell ye. 'Tis not vain or fabulous 
(Though so esteemed 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, 
Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells, 
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus, 
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries, 
And here to every thirsty wanderer 
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup, 
With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison 
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks, 
And the inglorious likeness of a beast 
Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage 
Charactered in the face. This have I learnt
Tending my flocks hard by i’ the hilly crofts
That brow this bottom glade; whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate
In their obscured haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta’en their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, 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 filled the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceased, and listened them awhile,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy-flighted steeds
That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death. But, oh! ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honoured Lady, your dear sister.
Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear;
And 'O poor hapless nightingale,' thought I,
'How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!'
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place
Where that damned wizard, 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 wished prey;
Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbour villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here;
But further know I not.

Sec. Bro. O night and shades,
How are ye joined with hell in triple knot
Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, brother?

Eld. Bro. 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 assailed, but never hurt,
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;
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,
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,
The pillared firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on!
Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven
May never this just sword be lifted up;
But, for that damned magician, let him be girt
With all the griesly legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,
And force him to return his purchase back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Cursed as his life.

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

Eld. Bro. Why, prithee, Shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so near
As to make this relation?

Spir. Care and utmost shifts
How to secure the Lady from surprisal
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled
In every virtuous plant and healing herb
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray.
He loved 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 culled me out.

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 esteemed, 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 called it Hæmony, and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sovran use
’Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
Or ghastly Furies’ apparition.
I pursed it up, but little reckoning made,
Till now that this extremity compelled.
But now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised,
Entered the very lime-twigs of his spells,
And yet came off. If you have this about you
(As I will give you when we go) you may
Boldly assault the necromancer’s hall;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood
And brandished blade rush on him: break his glass,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground;
But seize his wand. Though he and his curst 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.

_Eld. Bro._ 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 delici-
ousness: soft music, 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 chained up in alabaster,
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 vexed, 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 680
Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.
And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
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
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 received on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tired all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.

Lady.
'Twill not, false traitor! 690
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,
These oughly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With vizored falsehood and base forgery?
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
With liquorish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None
But such as are good men can give good things;
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite.

Comus. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence!
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk,
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutchéd the all-worshipped ore and precious gems,
To store her children with. If all the world
Should, in a pot of temperance, feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
Not half his riches known, and yet despised;
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 surcharged with her own weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility:
The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with
plumes,
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 inured to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozened
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin; must not be hoarded,
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself.
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languished head.
Beauty is Nature’s brag, and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
It is for homely features to keep home;
They had their name thence: coarse complexions
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the huswife’s wool.
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts;
Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet.

Lady. I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason’s garb.
I hate when vice can bolt her arguments
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance. She, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare Temperance.
If every just man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and beseeching share
Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature’s full blessings would be well-dispensed
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no with encumbered with her store;
And then the Giver would be better thanked,
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 enow? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity
Fain would I something say; — yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
The sublime notion and high mystery
That must be uttered 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 rhetoric,
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence;
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.
Yet, should I try, the uncontrolléd worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence
That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures, reared so high,
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.

\textit{Comus.} She fables not. I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior 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.
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 Bishops rush in with swords drawn, sever 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

Spir. What! have you let the false enchanter escape?
O ye mistook; ye should have snatched his wand,
And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixed and motionless.
Yet stay: be not disturbed; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
The soothest shepherd that e'er piped 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 sceptre from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enraged stepdame, Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood
That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water-nymphs, that in the bottom played,
Held up their pearled wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall;
Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,
And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectared lavers strewed with asphodil,
And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived,
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 elf delights to make,
Which she with precious vial'd liquors heals:
For which the shepherds, at their festivals,
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invoked in warbled song;
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard-besetting need. This will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

Song

Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;

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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 majestic pace;
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard's hook;
By scaly Triton's winding shell,
And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell;
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands;
By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,
And the songs of Sirens sweet;
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance;
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answered have.
Listen and save!

Sabbina rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings

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

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

_Sabr_. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help ensnared chastity.
Brightest Lady, look on me.
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 marbled venomed seat,
Smearèd with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold.
Now the spell hath lost his hold;
And I must haste ere morning hour
To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

_SABRINA descends, and the Lady rises out of her seat_

_Spir_. Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises' line,
May thy brimmèd waves for this
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth or singèd air
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head be crowned
With many a tower and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

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

*Song*

*Spir.* Back, shepherds, back! Enough your play
Till next sun-shine holiday.
Here be, without duck or nod,
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,
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 ended, the Spirit epilogues*

*Spir.* 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 crispèd shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The Graces and the rosy-bosomed Hours
Thither all their bounties bring.
There eternal Summer dwells,
And west winds with musky wing
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfèd 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,
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen.
But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced,
Holds his dear Psyche, sweet entranced
After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done;
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth’s end,
Where the bowed 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 climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

LYCIDAS

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1687; and, by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Y e myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening bright
Toward heaven’s descent had sloped his westering wheel.

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;
Tempered to the eaten flute
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damætus loved to hear our song.

But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o’ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream.
Ay me! I fondly dream
"Had ye been there," . . . for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Næra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)  
To scorn delights and live laborious days;  
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,  
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,  
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,  
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phæbus replied, and touched my trembling ears:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistening foil  
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."

O fountain Arethusa, and thou honoured flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea,
That came in Neptune's plea.
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beaked promontory.
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:—
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy hidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers, 140
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pausy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth:
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals grey:
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.
WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY

CAPTAIN or Colonel, or Knight in Arms,
Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,
If deed of honour did thee ever please,
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
He can requite thee; for he knows the charms
That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower:
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
Went to the ground; and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet had the power
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

TO A VIRTUOUS YOUNG LADY

LADY, that in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hast shunned the broad way and the green,
And with those few art eminently seen
That labour up the hill of heavenly Truth,
The better part with Mary and with Ruth
Chosen thou hast; and they that overween,
And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.
Thy care is fixed, and zealously attends
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure
Thou, when the Bridegroom with his feastful friends
Passes to bliss at the mid-hour of night,
Hast gained thy entrance, Virgin wise and pure.

TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY

Daughter to that good Earl, once President
Of England’s Council and her Treasury,
Who lived in both unstained with gold or fee,
And left them both, more in himself content,
Till the sad breaking of that Parliament
Broke him, as that dishonest victory
At Chæronea, fatal to liberty,
Killed with report that old man eloquent,
Though later born than to have known the days
Wherein your father flourished, yet by you,
Madam, methinks I see him living yet:
So well your words his noble virtues praise
That all both judge you to relate them true
And to possess them, honoured Margaret.

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED
UPON MY WRITING CERTAIN TREATISES

A Book was writ of late called Tetrachordon,
And woven close, both matter, form, and style;
The subject new: it walked the town a while,
Numbering good intellects; now seldom poured on.
Cries the stall-reader, "Bless us! what a word on
   A title-page is this!"; and some in file
Stand spelling false, while one might walk to
   Mile-End Green. Why, is it harder, sirs,
than Gordon,
Colkito, or Macdonnel, or Galasp?
Those rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek
That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.
Thy age, like ours, O soul of Sir John Cheek,
Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,
When thou taught'st Cambridge and King Edward
Greek.

---

ON THE SAME

I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs
   By the known rules of ancient liberty,
When straight a barbarous noise environs me
   Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs;
As when those hinds that were transformed to frogs
   Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,
Which after held the Sun and Moon in fee.
   But this is got by casting pearl to hogs,
That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
   And still revolt when Truth would set them free.
Licence they mean when they cry Liberty;
For who loves that must first be wise and good:
   But from that mark how far they rove we see,
For all this waste of wealth and loss of blood.
ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE
UNDER THE LONG PARLIAMENT

Because you have thrown off your Prelate Lord,
And with stiff vows renounced his Liturgy,
To seize the widowed whore Plurality
From them whose sin ye envied, not abhorred,
Dare ye for this adjure the civil sword
To force our consciences that Christ set free,
And ride us with a Classic Hierarchy,
Taught ye by mere A. S. and Rutherford?
Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent,
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul
Must now be named and printed heretics
By shallow Edwards and Scotch What-d’ye-call!
But we do hope to find out all your tricks,
Your plots and packing, worse than those of Trent,
That so the Parliament
May with their wholesome and preventive shears
Clip your phylacteries, though baulk your ears,
And succour our just fears,
When they shall read this clearly in your charge:
New Presbyter is but old Priest writ large.

---

TO MR. H. LAWES ON HIS AIRS

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

\[ h \]
Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng,
With praise enough for Envy to look wan;
To after age thou shalt be writ the man
That with smooth air couldst humour best our
tongue.
Thou honour'st Verse, and Verse must send her wing
To honour thee, the priest of Phœbus' quire,
That tunest their happiest lines in hymn or story.
Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella, whom he wooed to sing,
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.

ON THE RELIGIOUS MEMORY OF MRS.
CATHERINE THOMSON, MY CHRISTIAN
FRIEND, DECEASED DEC. 16, 1646

When Faith and Love, which parted from thee never,
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthy load
Of death, called life, which us from life doth sever.
Thy works, and alms, and all thy good endeavour,
Stayed not behind, nor in the grave were trod;
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Followed thee up to joy and bliss forever.
Love led them on; and Faith, who knew them best
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,
And speak the truth of thee on glorious themes
Before the Judge; who thenceforth bid thee rest,
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.
ON THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX, AT THE
SIEGE OF COLCHESTER

FAIRFAX, whose name in arms through Europe rings,
   Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,
   And all her jealous monarchs with amaze,
   And rumours loud that daunt remotest kings,
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
   Victory home, though new rebellions raise
   Their Hydra heads, and the false North displays
   Her broken league to imp their serpent wings.
O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand
   (For what can war but endless war still breed?)
   Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And public faith cleared from the shameful brand
   Of public fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed,
   While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

———

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL,
   MAY, 1652,

ON THE PROPOSALS OF CERTAIN MINISTERS AT THE
COMMITTEE FOR PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL

CROMWELL, our chief of men, who through a cloud
   Not of war only, but detractions rude,
   Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
   To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crowned Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots im-
brued,
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than War: new foes arise,
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.

TO SIR HENRY VANE THE YOUNGER

Vane, young in years, but in sage counsel old,
Than whom a better senator ne'er held
The helm of Rome, when gowns, not arms, repelled
The fierce Epirot and the African bold,
Whether to settle peace, or to unfold
The drift of hollow states hard to be spelled;
Then to advise how war may best, upheld,
Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,
In all her equipage; besides, to know
Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
What severs each, thou hast learned, which few have done.
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe:
Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans
In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.
ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

---

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

TO MR. LAWRENCE

LAWRENCE, of virtuous father virtuous son,
Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won?
From the hard season gaining? Time will run
On smoother, till Favonius reinspire
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of those delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

TO CYRIACK SKINNER

CYRIACK, whose grandsire on the royal bench
Of British Themis, with no mean applause,
Pronounced, and in his volumes taught, our laws,
Which others at their bar so often wrench,
To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench
In mirth that after no repenting draws;
Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,
And what the Swede intend, and what the French.
To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way;
For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

---

TO THE SAME

Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's
vain mask
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.
ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
  Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
  Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
  Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint
  Purification in the Old Law did save,
  And such as yet once more I trust to have
  Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
  Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight
  Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear as in no face with more delight.
  But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
  I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.
CHRONOLOGICAL

1608–1639. First Period: Education and Early Poems

1608  Born at the Spread Eagle, Bread Street, Cheapside, London, December 9.
      Early education at home.
         Paraphrase on Psalms cxiv. and cxxxvi.
1625  Enters Christ College, Cambridge.
1626  On the Death of a Fair Infant dying of a Cough.
         Elegia Prima, Ad Carolum Diodatum.
1628  At a Vacation Exercise in the College.
1629  Degree of Bachelor of Arts.
         On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity.
         Elegia Sexta, Ad Carolum Diodatum.
1630  Upon the Circumcision.  The Passion.  On Time.
         At a Solemn Music.  Song on May Morning.  On Shakespeare.
1631  On the University Carrier.  Another on the Same.
         An Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester.  On his having arrived at the Age of Twenty-three.
1632  Leaves Cambridge.
1632–38  At Horton, Buckinghamshire.
1633  To the Nightingale.  L’Allegro.  Il Penseroso.
1634  Arcades.  Comus.
1637  Death of his mother.  Lycidas.
1638–39  Journey to the Continent.  Italian Sonnets.
         Returns to St. Bride’s, Fleet Street, London.
         Epitaphium Damonis.
1640-1660. Second Period: Prose Works and Sonnets

1640 At Aldersgate Street. Becomes tutor to his nephews. First plan of Paradise Lost.
1641 First of a series of pamphlets on social and political questions. Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England.
1642 When the Assault was intended to the City.
1643 Marriage to Mary Powell. She deserts him and he writes The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.
1647 At High Holborn, Lincoln’s Inn Fields.
1648 On the Lord General Fairfax.
1649 Tenure of Kings and Magistrates.
Becomes Latin Secretary to Cromwell. Eikonoklastes.
1651 Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio.
1652 At Petty France, Westminster.
Loss of sight. To the Lord General Cromwell. To Sir Henry Vane the Younger.
Death of his wife.
1653 The Protectorate.
1654 Defensio Secunda.
1655 On the Late Massacre in Piedmont. On his Blindness. To Mr. Lawrence. To Cyriack Skinner. To the Same.
1656 Marriage to Catherine Woodcock.
1658 Death of Catherine Milton. On his Deceased Wife.
1659–60  Last pamphlets.
1660  The Restoration.  Milton in hiding and in custody.

1660–1674.  Third Period: The Great Epics

1660  At High Holborn and Jewin Street.
1663  Marriage to Elizabeth Minshul.
       Friendship of Thomas Ellwood.
1664  At Artillery Walk, Bunhill-fields.
1665  *Paradise Lost* completed.
1667  *Paradise Lost* published.
1671  *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* published.
1674  Death.
THE CAMBRIDGE MSS.

The most interesting of the personal relics of Milton is the collection of Mss. now in possession of the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

From the last years of Milton's student life at Cambridge he kept a note-book or folio sheets in which he kept first drafts of his English pieces or copies of them. These drafts, or emendations of them, and others of his Latin pieces were the basis of the first edition of his poems "printed by his true copies." The original Mss. remained in Milton's possession until 1658. The latest work is not in his own hand but in that of an amanuensis who assisted him during his blindness. These and other Mss. after his death in 1674 descended to his wife, but became dispersed about the time of her return to her native place in Cheshire. A portion of these Mss. came into the possession of Sir Henry Newton Puckering.

"It is just possible," says Masson, "that he may have known Milton," as his uncle and aunt were neighbors of Milton in Aldersgate Street. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was a lover of books. At the age of eighty he returned to Trinity, had rooms assigned, and spent some time there. At his death in 1700 he left his library of 4000 volumes to his old college. In this collection were
many Mss. of Milton's poems. They were neglected for a long time until Charles Mason, a Fellow of the College, sorted and arranged them. In 1736 Thomas Clarke, another Fellow of the College, had them handsomely bound in morocco; making a volume of fifty-four pages, folio size. On the inside of one of the covers was the following inscription: "Membra haec eruditissimi et poene divini Poetae, olim miserè disjecta et passim sparsa, postea vero fortuito inventa, et in unum denuo collecta a Carlo Mason, ejusdem Collegii socio, et inter Miscellanea reposita, deinceps eà quà decuit religione servari voluit Thomas Clarke, nuper-rimè hujusce Collegii, nunc vero Medii Templi Londini, Socius, 1736." ("These relics of a most learned and almost divine poet, formerly miserably separated and scattered, but afterwards by chance found, and lately arranged by Charles Mason, Fellow of the same College, and placed among the Miscellanies, are at last to be preserved with becoming piety by the desire of Thomas Clarke, very recently of this College, now of the Middle Temple, London, 1736.") This sacred volume is shown to visitors at Trinity College Library in a glass case. It cannot be removed from the case for examination except by permission of the Master and Fellows, and in presence of one of the Fellows.
NOTES

1624–1645

Paraphrases on Psalms cxiv. and cxxxvi.

Little is known of Milton's remote genealogy beyond the fact that Mylton, or Milton, was a distinct surname in the fourteenth century. In the reign of Elizabeth there were various branches of this family in Oxfordshire and adjoining counties. It was from the Oxfordshire Miltons, of the village of Great Milton in the Hundred of Thame, eight miles from Oxford, that the poet derived his pedigree. His grandfather, Richard Milton, was a substantial yeoman of Stanton St. John, about five miles from Oxford, within the forests of Shotover, of which he was under-ranger. He was a firm Catholic, although it is said he sent his son John to Christ Church, Oxford. John had strong tendencies toward the Established Church, and, as Aubrey says, "because he was found reading a Bible in English in his room," he was disinherted by his father. He then went up to London, where by the assistance of friends he established himself in the business of a scrivener, attorney and law stationer, whose chief business was the execution of deeds, leases, wills, etc.

His shop was in Bread Street, Cheapside, and bore the sign of the Spread Eagle, which was either the family crest or the insignia of the Scriveners Company. Being a man of industry and integrity in the conduct of his affairs, he was soon in the way of substantial, even of a plentiful fortune. He became possessor of the Spread Eagle, and, according to Aubrey, "of another house in that street, called the Rose, and other houses in other places." In 1600, when he was about thirty-seven years of age, he married Sarah Jeffrey, a woman who proved to be in every way worthy of her husband. Milton speaks of her
as "a most excellent mother, and particularly known for her charities in the neighborhood." They lived over the shop, and there six children were born to them, of whom only three lived beyond infancy, — Anne, John, and Christopher. The poet was the third child. According to the Register of the parish of Allhallows, "The 20th daye of December 1608 was baptized John, the Sonne of John Mylton Scrivenor." The young Milton was educated at home by a tutor, Thomas Young, a Scotchman and a Puritan, and was also a day scholar at St. Paul's. It is in this home, in this old Classical school, and in the sights and sounds of the London of Shakespeare and Jonson, that the young poet is being nurtured.

It is an interesting fact that the Revival of Learning which came into England from Italy stimulated not only the love of art and literature but quickened the conscience as well. Colé lost in St. Paul's school the inscription: "Hear ye Him." Tyndale affirmed, "Ere many years I will cause that the boy that driveth the plow shall know the Scriptures." This was being realized in the century in which Milton was born, for it has been called a century of Bibles, there having been published between 1611 and 1711 no less than five hundred and twenty-five editions. Alluding to the influence of the Bible at this time Taine says: "Hence have sprung much of the English language, and half of the English manners; it was these big books that had transformed Shakespeare's England. To understand this great change (from 'Pagan to Christian Renaissance'), try to picture these yeomen, these shopkeepers, who in the evening placed this Bible on their table, and bareheaded with veneration heard or read one of its chapters, ... not for amusement but to discover in it their doom of life and death.' ... They understand it with the imagination and the heart." Breathing the atmosphere of a Puritan home where life was deep and rich, where music was heard daily, and where the Bible was the chief textbook in morals, and Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas' Divine Weekes and Worke was the chief collection of poems, it is no wonder that his genius was kindled at the altar of Hebrew psalmody,
and shone through the medium of English undefiled. "He was of a family in which courage, moral nobility, the love of art, were present to whisper the most beautiful and eloquent words about his cradle." It may be, as Johnson said, that these paraphrases raise no great expectations, and yet they form no inconsiderable evidence that a "mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies" was being trained in the humble home over the shop in Bread Street.

Lowell has said that in no other English author is the man so large a part of his work. The earliest revelation of this most interesting of the sons of the Muses is to be found in these paraphrases. Here is the first gleam of the poet's mind shining through his art. They are probably relics from many early performances at home and at St. Paul's. The fact that Milton included them in the first edition of his poems is sufficient reason for giving them here.

No study is more interesting or profitable than that which reveals the forces of heredity and early environment which have contributed to the forming of the mind and the fashioning of the art of those who have made our literature fresh and strong. Especially rewarding is such study in the life and work of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, and those who have given such lustre to the literature of this century,—Burns, Carlyle, and Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Tennyson. Such study of the great writers would relieve much of the tedium in the reading at home, in the school, and in the university, because it would reveal the great truth, "That he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem, that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things."—Milton.

"The child is father of the man." — WORDSWORTH.

"Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring." — TENNYSON.
"These first years are the most impressionable (nothing that happens after we are twelve matters very much): they are also the most vivid years when we look back, until at the end what lies between bends like a hoop, and the extremes meet." — Barrie.

Perhaps the chief interest which these paraphrases have for us is that they reveal how carefully Milton had read Sylvester and the older poets. "Apart from the imitative faculty, these paraphrases," says Masson, "have real poetic merit; they are clear, finely-worded, and harmonious."

Psalm cxiv.

3. Pharian. Egyptian: from Pharos, the island in the bay of Alexandria.
8. froth-becurlèd. It will be well to note carefully the Homeric double words in Milton’s verse, as they constitute a singularly beautiful and effective element. Cf. H. Van Dyke, The Poetry of Milton (Milton and Tennyson).

The rhymes in 9 and 10, 17 and 18 Masson says are among Sylvester’s stereotyped rhymes, while lines 13 and 14 "look as if Sylvester had written them." Cf. Walton’s Compleat Angler, Chap. I., for interesting allusions to Sylvester’s translation of Du Bartas.

Psalm cxxxvi.

10. Who. The initial pronoun here and in the four following stanzas was "That" in first edition in 1645. (M.)
45, 46. ruddy waves . . . of the Erythraean main. Both phrases are from Sylvester:

"Where th’ Erythraean ruddy billows roar." (M.)

Erythraean, Gr. for red. 49. walls of glass. From Sylvester.

"Sihon King of the Amorites."

— Authorised and Revised Versions.
NOTES

89. Og. Cf. Numbers xxi. 33.
89. warble forth. Cf. Sylvester:

"O Father, grant I sweetly warble forth," etc. (M.)

1626-1673.

ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT.

Aubrey says, "Milton was a poet at eleven," and Milton himself writes that under the guidance of his tutor, Thomas Young, he "penetrated into the recesses of the Muses, saw the sacred and green places on Parnassus, and drank the Pierian cups." In 1625 he entered Cambridge, but before that time he had studied Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French and Italian. His knowledge of Italian was due to his friendship with Charles Diodati, son of an Italian father and English mother, who was his schoolmate at St. Paul's. Diodati entered Oxford shortly before Milton entered Cambridge. At Cambridge Milton continued hard at work, "tied night and day to his books" in studious and select reading. He had no great admiration for the University which acted the part of "Decency and Custom starving Truth, and blind Authority beating with his staff the child that might have led him." Because of a quarrel with his tutor he was sent to London for a time. Writing to his friend Diodati of this experience he says: "If this be exile gladly do I enjoy my state of banishment." It was during this visit that his first English poem was written, on the death of his niece who died during the Plague in London. In this poem we find the wholesome beauty of the Greek, and the nobly reverent earnestness of the Hebrew, revealed in the verse of Spenser, "whose poems in these English ones are as rarely imitated as sweetly excelled." Taine says: "Milton was not born for the drama, but for the ode." In this and the following poems "the broad river of lyric poetry streams from him, impetuous, with even flow, splendid as a cloth of gold."

In a pamphlet published in 1642, where Milton defends his Cambridge career against the imputations of those who had insinuated that it was "inordinate and violent," we have some
very interesting biographical material. He says that his early
and favorite authors were the elegiac poets, but that on finding
they were not always chaste he turned to the "two famous
renouncers of Beatrice and Laura (Dante and Petrarch), who
never write but honour of them to whom they devote their
verse." Not long after, he was "confirmed in the opinion, that
he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well here-
after in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem. . . .
Next, for hear me out now, readers, that I may tell ye whither
my younger feet wandered, I betook me among those lofty
fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds
of knighthood founded by our victorious kings. . . . I read in
the oath of every knight, that he should defend to the expense of
his best blood, or of his life, if it so befel him, the honour and
chastity of virgin or matron. From whence even then I learned
what a noble virtue chastity ever must be." The divine volumes
of Plato taught him that "Love begins and ends in the soul, and
produces those happy twins of her divine generation — Know-
ledge and Virtue." It is to reveal this divine Love, Knowledge
and Virtue that the college poems were written.

Cf. Sonnet, On his having arrived at the age of Twenty-
three, p. 33.

Milton never swerved from this lofty ideal of what a poet
should be. His instinct for knowledge and his instinct for con-
duct and beauty kept him true. Believing that truth is beauty,
beauty truth, he felt that it was enough, and so

"Set his eye upon the goal,
Not on the prize."

"The nearest poet to Milton in this respect," wrote Masson,
in 1851, "has undoubtedly been Wordsworth." We are now
adding to the followers of Milton in this respect another great
name, and are associating Wordsworth and Tennyson as he did
Milton and Wordsworth.

"Perhaps there are few clearer signs of a strong character than
the wisdom to perceive, and the determination to follow, that
course by which the individual may best reach the ideal that he
is intended to reach. Wordsworth is another great example of this; he had the strength to give up a career and to live on a pittance in solitude that he might brood over and bring to perfect expression the thoughts which have made him immortal."

ROBERTSON NICOLL, Review of Tennyson’s Memoir.

"Poetic numbers came
Spontaneously to clothe in priestly robe
A renovated spirit singled out,
Such hope was mine, for holy services."

WORDSWORTH, Prelude, i. 51–54.

"Ah! need I say, dear friend! that to the brim
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated spirit."

Prelude, iv. 333–337.

"I agree with Wordsworth that art is selection. The higher moral imagination enslaved to sense is like an eagle caught by the feet in a snare baited with carrion, so that it cannot use its wings to soar." — TENNYSON (Memoir).


As one who has some conception of the fundamental laws of music will be all the more likely to enjoy the work of great composers, so one who knows some of the principles of English verse will be more likely to enjoy the marshalling of melodious words as revealed in Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth and Tennyson. While a consideration of the means should never be allowed to obscure the great end of the study of poetry — enjoyment, it may be wisely allowed as an important adjunct.

A very simple method of indicating the grouping of syllables in the verse is to let $z$ stand for the unaccented, and $a$ for the accented syllables. A verse like that of this poem is composed
of five groups of xa syllables. The stanza is modified Spenserian—six 5xa verses and an Alexandrine, 6 xa. The rhyme-scheme is ab, ab, bcc. The normal Spenserian stanza is eight 5xa verses and an Alexandrine. With this key it will require but little effort to master the verse of this ‘Godgifted organ-voice of England.’

A study of the verse of a few poems, together with careful oral reading, will do much toward creating a quick perception by eye and ear.

1. O fairest flower, etc. Cf. Shakespeare, _Passionate Pilgrim_, x.: 

> Sweet rose, fair flower, untimely plucked, soon vaded.  
> Plucked in the bud, and vaded in the spring!  
> Bright orient pearl, alack, too timely vaded!  
> Fair creature, killed too soon by death’s sharp sting.”

“Milton’s taste had now outgrown Sylvester,” says Masson.

5. _amorous on_. Cf. _Much Ado_, ii. 1. “Amorous on Hero.”

6. _envermeil_. To make red as with vermilion. Cf. _Comus_, 752.

6, 7. _thought to kiss_, etc. “He thought to kiss him, and hath kill’d him so.” _Venus and Adonis_, 1110.

8–10. _grim Aquilo_, etc. Boreas (Aquilo) carried off Oreithyia, daughter of Erechtheus the Athenian king.


15. _icy-pearled_. Lowell says, “Milton loved phrases of towering port, in which every member dilated stands like Teneriffe or Atlas.”

23–27. _For so Apollo_, etc. Hyacinthus of Sparta was accidentally killed by Apollo, and from his blood grew the flower that bears his name.

36. _Resolve me_. Inform me. “Resolve me whether you will or no,” _Richard III_. iv. 2.

"They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,  
And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs  
The trepidation talked, and that first moved."

43-46. **Wert thou**, etc. An allusion to the war of the Titans against Jove.

47. **Earth’s sons**. The Titans.

50. **just Maid**. Astraea, daughter of Zeus and Themis, lived on earth in the golden age, but forsook it at last for her home among the stars.

53. **Mercy**. In the original this line is two syllables short, so this word was inserted at the suggestion of Mr. John Heskin, Christ Church, Oxford. (M.) Cf. **Ode on the Nativity**, 141-148.

55. **heavenly god**. The personified virtues. (K.)

58. **weed**. Apparel. Cf. **L’Allegro**, 120.

59. **prefixed**. Ordained.

68. **pestilence**. The Plague.

"When, first, arose the image in my breast  
Of England’s suffering by that scourge, the Pest."

**Elegy iii.**

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**1628-1673**

**At a Vacation Exercise in the College**

Milton was not long absent from the University. On his return another tutor was assigned him, and "pervaded with pleasure" he continued his work.

This fragment was a part of his **Prolusiones Oratoriae** (Rhetorical Essays) in Latin, which were first published in 1674, and was itself first printed in the edition of 1673. The essays were seven in number and were upon scholastic and philosophical subjects, such as, **Whether Day or Night is More Excellent, Of the Music of the Spheres**, etc. The sixth, in which this fragment in English is found, was a speech delivered by Milton in the hall of Christ’s College, Cambridge, on the occasion of a periodical revel after the close of the Easter term on July 4th. The translation of the Latin title is: "**In the Summer Vacation of the College, but in the presence, as usual,**"
of a concourse of nearly the whole youth of the University, an
Oration to this effect: That occasional sportive exercises are
not inconsistent with philosophical studies." Milton had been
elected Master or Father of the revel. It was the custom of
this Father to make a speech full of humor and personalities.
He called those in the audience his sons, and gave them such
suggestive names as Beef, Pork and Mutton; Head, Neck and
Breast; Sack, Rhenish and Sherris. But Milton broke this
custom. He divided his speech into three parts, first a seria-
comic discourse on the theme "that sportive exercises on occa-
sion are not inconsistent with the studies of Philosophy";
secondly, the harangue in which he assumed the character of
Father; and thirdly, the conclusion in English verse and verse.
In the first part he thanks them for the honor they have con-
ferred upon him; in the second he assigns names to his sons,
but they are names taken from Aristotle's *Predicaments*, heads
under which all things thinkable must fall. Ens or Being was
father to Substance, Quality, Quantity, Relation, etc. Thus
we see how distinctly autobiographical this poem with its Latin
introductions is. Here we have those inward springs of his
character revealed: the love of *sportive exercises* on the one
hand, and the joy of thoughtfulness on the other. These
unfolded in all their beauty will give us *L'Allegro* and *Il
Penseroso*.

Rev. F. D. Maurice says: "It is only a boyish effort, with
much of boyish redundancy in style and thought; but I know
few more striking proofs that the boy is father of the man."

It is worth noting here that in using the English Milton
defied a law of the University which required that only Latin
should be used on such occasions.

1–10. *Hail, Native Language*, etc. Emerson says: "He pre-
ferred his own English, so manlike he was, to the Latin, which
contained all the treasures of his memory. 'My mother bore
me,' he said, 'a speaker of what God made mine own, and not
a translator.' He told the Parliament that, 'the imprimiturs
of Lambert House had been writ in Latin; for that our English,
the language of men ever famous and foremost in the achieve-
ments of liberty, will not easily find servile letters enow to spell such a dictatory presumption.'"

12. thither. In the Latin part of the exercise.

20. our late fantastics. An allusion to the Poetical Euphuists who followed John Lyly.

"He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument. I abhor such fanatical phantasms, such insociable and point-devise companions." — Loves Labours Lost, v. 1.

"Such antic lisping, affecting fantasticoes, these new tuners of accents." — Romeo and Juliet, ii. 4.

"Easy was the task:
A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
Of Poesy." — Keats, Sleep and Poetry.

29-46. Yet I had rather, etc. This very noble passage, in form and content, suggests Paradise Lost. [In Milton's cosmogony (Ptolemaic) the earth was surrounded by ten spheres representing the orbits of seven Planets: Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn; the orbit of fixed stars; the crystalline sphere; and the primum mobile] — the outer rim or shell which separated the universe from empty space. Heaven lies outside of these spheres, above the "wheeling poles." After looking into this Homeric Pantheon, he returns through the "watchful fire," or fixed stars, and the spheres of the seven planets to the "misty regions" of our atmosphere, to sea and earth. Cf. Tennyson, In Memoriam, Lxxvi.

"Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end."

31. coffers. Chests.

42. piled thunder. Thunder clouds.

47-52. And last of kings, etc. An allusion to Odyssey, viii., where King Alcinoüs entertains Ulysses at a feast at which the blind bard Demodocus sings the story of the Trojan war:
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"So sang renowned Demodocus; the strain
Melted to tears Ulysses, from whose lids
They dropped and wet his cheeks. As when a wife
Weeps her beloved husband, slain before
His town and people."

52. **In willing chains.** Cf. Sylvester, "The willing chains of my captivity." (M.)

56. **keep in compass.** Keep to the assigned part.

59. **Good luck, etc.** Masson says: "The reader must distinctly fancy Milton in person turning at this point to some book of a student."

66. **walk invisible.** According to Aristotle mortals knew not substance or existence, only phenomena.

74–88. **Shall subject be to many an Accident.** A play upon the theory of Aristotle that Ens, or Being, was divided into *Ens per se*, or Substance, and *Ens per accidens*, or Accident. Accident is thus the condition which reveals Being as phenomenon. The idea is that Being, or Substance, cannot be revealed without the aid of his brothers, Quantity, Quality, etc., and that they are useless without him.

91–100. **Rivers arise.** The name of the youth who took the part of Relation is thus associated with the rivers of England. Masson tells us that until 1859 it was not known that a youth of this name took part, and hence the passage disturbed the critics. Tweed, the river dividing England from Scotland; Ouse and Don, Yorkshire rivers. Drayton in his *Polyolbion* alludes to the "thirty streams" of Trent. Severn in *Surrey*, cf. *Comus*, 824, note. Avon, in *Bristol*; Lea, near London; Dee, near Chester; Humber, in north of England.

Milton's fondness for the pun is obvious in all his works. Perhaps the best illustration of it is in *Paradise Lost*, vi. 610 fol. Alluding to their victory, due to the invention of guns and gunpowder, Satan says:

"To entertain them fair with *open front*
And breast (what could we more?) *propounded* terms
Of *composition*," etc.
Again:

"The terms we sent were terms of weight
Of hard contents and full of force urged home
Such as we might perceive amused them all
And stumbled many," etc.

Cf. *Faerie Queene*, IV. xi. 20:

"And after him the famous rivers came,
Which doe the earth enrich and butifie."

95. *Mole that runneth underneath*. Cf. *Faerie Queene*, IV. xi. 32:

"And a mole that like a nousling mole doth make
His way still underground."

"Camden tells us of a river in Surrey, it is called the Mole, that after it has run several miles, being opposed by hills, finds or makes itself a way underground, and breaks out again so far off, that the inhabitants thereof boast, as the Spaniards do of their river Anus, that they feed divers flocks of sheep upon a bridge."—WALTON, *Compleat Angler*, Chap. I.

1629-1645

**On the Morning of Christ's Nativity**

Milton sent this poem with a letter to his friend Diodati. "It is a gift," he says, "I have presented to the natal day of Christ. At daybreak of that very morning it was conceived."

In Latin, Elegy vi., *To Charles Diodati*, we find the following:

"Wouldst thou (perhaps 'tis hardly worth thine ear),
Wouldst thou be told my occupation here?
The promised King of peace employs my pen,
The eternal covenant made for guilty men,
The new-born Deity with infant cries
Filling the sordid hovel, where he lies;"
The hymning Angels, and the herald star,  
That led the Wise who sought him from afar,  
And idols on their own unhallowed shore  
Dashed, at his birth, to be revered no more."

That Milton was early a dedicated spirit, set apart for holy services, is revealed in this poem. Masson in his delightful essay Milton's Youth says: "As nature had endowed him in no ordinary degree with that most exquisite of her gifts, the ear and the passion for melody, he had studied music as an art, and had taught himself not only to sing in the society of others, but also to touch the keys for his solitary pleasure."

In the mingling of Hebraism and Hellenism with Christianity and the emphasis put upon the blight of the Fall as revealed in Nature as well as in Man, we have the elements of Paradise Lost:

"All my mind was set  
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,  
What might be public good; myself I thought  
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,  
All righteous things."

Paradise Regained, i. 202-206.

"In spite of his classical culture and his Renaissance sense of beauty, Milton saw as the prime fact of the world, Diabolus at odds with Immanuel." — Dowden.

The influence of Spenser and Shakespeare may be seen in the poems of this period of Milton's work, but it is the influence of teachers, not masters. The one great gift — a vital soul, "certain vital marks" — is everywhere present in this poem, although at the same time there is excess of ornament and lack of artistic proportion characteristic of youth.

Mr. Saintsbury says: "Nowhere even in Milton does the mastery of harmonies appear better than in the exquisite rhythmical arrangement of the piece, in the almost unearthly beauty of the exordium, and in the famous stanzas beginning, 'The oracles are dumb.' It must be remembered that at this time the English lyric was in a very rudimentary and ill-organized condition."
Rev. F. D. Maurice cites this poem as an illustration of Milton's habit of making "all the stories of Heathen Mythology unfold and illustrate the truth; which we are apt to use only for the exposure and confutation of their absurdity. I think Spenser and Milton have done more both to counteract the mischief of paganism and to vindicate the use of the treasures which it has bequeathed to us than all the Apologists."

Mr. Richard Garnett alluding to the last stanza says: "By an exquisite turn the poet sinks back into his original key, and finally harmonizes his strain by the divine repose of a concluding picture worthy of Correggio."

1. **This the happy morn, etc.**:

"That happy morn
When angels spake to men aloud,
And Thou and peace to earth were born."

Tennyson.

5. **holy sages. Prophets.**


"The antique wizards well invented
That Venus of the foamy sea was bred."

24. **Oh! run, etc.** Cf. Drummond of Hawthornden's *Flowers of Sion*:

"Run, Shepherds, run where Bethlem blest appears." (M.)

**prevent.** To get before them. Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, i. 1:

"I had stayed till I had made you merry
If worthier friends had not prevented me."


28. **secret altar.** *Isaiah* vi. 6.

36. **wanton with the Sun, etc.** Cf. *Elegy* v.:

"Earth now desires thee, Phoebus! and to engage
Thy warm embrace, casts off the guise of age."

39. **guilty front.** The Medievæal idea that nature was evil.
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For contrast to this see Wordsworth or Coleridge, who do not degrade nature even to extol God.

48. turning sphere. Here Milton views the ten spheres as one universe.

50. turtle. Turtle-dove. Cf. Winter's Tale, v. 3:

"I, an old turtle,
Will wing me to some wither'd bough."

53-60. No war, etc. The world in contrast to this Babe.

hook'd. Scythe-bearing.

64, 65. The winds with wonder whist, etc. Hushed. Cf. "Ariel's Song":

"Curtsied when you have, and kiss'd
The wild waves whist."

Tempest, i. 2.


68. birds of calm. Halcyons. Sea is calm at time of their incubation in winter solstice.

71. precious influence. Allusion to astrology.

73. For all, etc. Cf. Macbeth, iv. 2:

"My father is not dead for all your saying."

77-84. And, though the shady gloom, etc. Cf. Spenser, Shepheards Calendar (April):

"He blushed to see another Sun below,
Ne durst again his fiery face outshow.
Let him if he dare,
His brightness compare
With hers, to have the overthrow."

85. lawn. Clear place in the forest.

86. Or ere. Cf. Hamlet, i. 2:

"Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio."

88. than. Old form of then.
89. mighty Pan. The real being so long dreamt of as Pan, the god of shepherds. (M.) Cf. Shepheard's Calendar (May):

“When great Pan accent of shepherdes shall aske.”

95. strook. Old form for struck. Cf. Paradise Lost, vi. 863:

“The monstrous sight
Strook them with horror backward.”

Cf. Paradise Regained:

“So strook with dread and anguish fell the Fiend.” — iv. 576.

“And thou were the kindest man that ever strake with sword.” — Malory, Morte D’Arthur.

97. noise. Cf. Ancient Mariner:

“Yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon.”

98. As all. Suppose “such” of line 93 repeated before “divinely warbled.” (M.)

100. close. Cadence.

106. its. Used by Milton only three times. Paradise Lost:

“The mind is its own place,” etc.—i. 254.

“returns
Of force to its own likeness.” — iv. 813.

116. unexpressive. Unexpressible. Cf. As You Like It, iii. 3:

“The fair, the chaste, the unexpressive she.”

117–124. Such music, etc. Cf. Job xxxviii. 4–12:

“Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened?
Or who laid the corner stone thereof;
When the morning stars sang together?” etc.

Cf. Paradise Lost, vii. 561, 562:

“The heavens and all the constellations rung,
The planets in their stations listening stood,” etc.
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125–132. Ring out, etc. Masson tells us that about the time of writing this poem, Milton wrote a prose piece, De Sphaerarum Concentu, in which he held that celestial music might be perceived by minds duly prepared.

130. And let the bass, etc. "The instruments which Milton preferred as a musician were the organ and the bass viol." (M.)

—132. consort. Fellowship. Cf. Faerie Queene, III. i. 46: "Wonder was to hear their trim consort."

136. speckled. Covered with plague spots.

141, 142. Truth and Justice, etc. As Astraea was to return to earth, according to the old myth, when the Golden Age should come again.

147, 148. And Heaven, etc. Cf. Tennyson, In Memoriam, lxxxv.:

"The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there."

155. ychaired. Ye is basis of the Earth's composition.


172. Swinges. Lashes.

173. The Oracles are dumb. The gods of the heathen are extinct.

185. poplar pale. White poplar.

191. Lars and Lemures. God of the family; and spirits, ghosts and goblins.

194. flamens. Priests.

195. chill marble, etc. A prodigy common among the ancients.

197–220. Peor and Baalim, etc. Cf. Paradise Lost, i. 392–489, for these Phoenician, Assyrian and Egyptian gods.

201. queen and mother both. In Selden's De Diis Syris, Ashtaroth is alluded to as regina coeli and mater deum. (M.)

223. eyn or eyne. Old plural of eye. Common in Chaucer, Spenser and Shakespeare.

Milton and Tennyson were fond of phonetic spelling where it would aid the music.

199. Saca is goddess of the Phœnicians, Baal, the god of the Philistines. Of Par. Lost, i. 576 ftr.
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226. Typhon huge. Greek name for Egyptian god Set, or Suti, one of the brothers of Osiris. (M.)

232–234. The flocking shadows, etc. Cf. Midsummer Night's Dream, ili. 2:

"And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
At whose approach ghosts wandering here and there
Troop home to churchyards."

Cf. also Hamlet, i. 4:

"Fare thee well at once!
The glow worm shows the matin to be near."

235, 236. the yellow-skirted fays, etc. The fairies haste away at morn, following the nightmares or nighthags. (M.)
Cf. Paradise Lost, ii. 662, 663:

"Nor uglier fellow, the nighthag, when called
In secret, riding through the air she comes."

240. youngest teemèd. Latest born, Star of Bethlehem. Cf. Macbeth, iv. 3:

"Each minute teems a new one."

244. Bright-harnessed. Bright armored. Cf. Macbeth, v. 5:

"We'll die with harness on."

1630–1645

UPON THE CIRCUMCENSION

(In Milton's own hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

The year 1630 gives us this and the following five poems which are sufficient to establish the Miltonic tone, because of their richness of epithet, originality of diction, and suggestiveness of phrase.

The first stanza of the poem reveals the fact that it was intended as a sequel to the previous poem in the Nativity. Masson assigns it to the Feast of Circumcision (January 1) following the Christmas of 1629.

The reader should study what Mr. Stopford Brooke has called
“the abrupt and powerful rhythm which suits so well the quick rush and quick closing of condensed thought.”

M. Edmond Scherer, the French critic, says: “There is nothing (in the Milton of the early poems) repulsive or morose. He is pure without too much severity, grave without fanaticism; full of original dainties, of gracious strength. He is a son of the North who has felt the Italian influence: an aftergrowth of the Renaissance, but a growth full of strange and novel flavor.”


2–6. That erst with music, etc. Milton thus connects this poem with the preceding.

7–9. Your fiery essence, etc. If it is impossible for your angelic constitutions, formed as they are of fire, to yield tears, yet by burning as you sigh, you may borrow the water of our tears turned into vapor. (M.)

10. while ere. A while since.

"Will you troll the catch

You taught me but while-ere?"

Tempest, iii. 2.

15–20. O more exceeding love, etc. Cf. Browning, Saul:

"All’s love yet all’s law."

24. excess. Transgression.

1630–1645

The Passion

The opening stanza of this poem reveals its relation to the poem on the Nativity. Masson says this was probably written for Easter. Perhaps the fact that the Plague ravaged Cambridge during the Easter-term may have lent color to the poem.

It is naturally very difficult to eliminate from these poems impressions brought from associating with the Milton of Paradise Lost, but it must be done if we are to read the poems in the atmosphere which produced them. Masson says that the habitual seriousness of Milton at this time was not that of “the
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noble party of Puritans, but a constitutional seriousness ratified
and nourished by rational reflection."

It seems that Milton early planned a series of poems in cele-
bration of each division of the Christian Year, but that (as the
note appended to this reveals) he found the task too great for
him.

1. Erewhile. Allusion to the Ode on the Nativity.
4. divide to sing. To share the song.
19. mask. Masque or drama, thus carrying out the idea of
line 2.
23. my Phoebus. My song.
25, 26. otherwhere are found, etc. By Marco Girolamo
Vida of Cremona in his Latin Poem The Christiad. (M.)
34, 35. The leaves should all be black, etc. "In old elegies
the pages were black and the letters white," (M.)
36-39. See, see the chariot, etc. Ezekiel i.
43. sepulchral rock. The Holy Sepulchre.
51. Take up a weeping, etc. Jeremiah ix. 10.

1630–1645

ON TIME

(In Milton's own hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

The title of this poem in the Cambridge Mss. of Milton is:
On Time — To be set on a Clock Case. This explains the
"plummet's pace" in the third line.

Compare the movement of this poem with that of The Cir-
cumcision. Which is the more powerful?


"Thou by thy dial's shady stealth mayst know
Time's thievish progress to eternity."

12. individual. Here and elsewhere in Milton in the sense
of not to be separated from. Cf. Paradise Lost:

"Henceforth an individual solace dear." — iv. 480.
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"With thousand lesser lights dividual holds." — vii. 382.

"And from her hath no dividual being." — xii. 85.

18. happy-making sight. "Beatific vision." Cf. Paradise Lost, iii. 62:

"And from his sight receiv'd
Béatitude past utterance."

1630-1645

AT A SOLEMN MUSIC

(Three drafts in Milton's own hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

The title might well be At a Symphony. Milton was nurtured in an atmosphere of song. His father was a musician and composer of some reputation. His compositions have found a place in collections of the best music. He composed the tunes of York and Norwich so universal now. He contributed to a volume of Madrigals known as The Triumphes of Oriana, sung before Queen Elizabeth; and his music appears in many other collections.

"Thyself
Art skilled to associate verse with airs
Harmonious, and give the human voice
A thousand modulations, heir by right
Indisputable of Arion's fame.
Now say, what wonder is it if a son
Of thine delight in verse, if so conjoined
In close affinity, we sympathise
In social arts, and kindred studies sweet."

Ad Patrem.

In his Tractate on Education Milton said of the interim between exercise and meat: "It may, both with profit and delight, be taken up in recreating and composing their (the pupils) travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music, heard or learned; either while the skilful organist plies his grave and fancied descant in lofty fugues, or the whole symphony with artful and unimaginable touches adorn and grace
the well-studied chords of some choice composer; sometimes
the lute or soft organ-stop waiting on elegant voices, either to
religious, martial, or civil ditties; which, if wise men and
prophets do not extremely err, have a great power over disposi-
tions and manners to smooth and make them gentle."

Masson says: "Often must Milton as a child have bent over
his father while composing, or listened to him as he played.
Not unfrequently of an evening, if one or two of his father's
musical acquaintances dropt in there would be voices enough in
the Spread Eagle for a little household concert. Then might
the well printed and well kept set of Orianas be brought out;
and each one present taking a suitable part, the child might
hear, and always with fresh delight his father's own madrigal:

' Then sang those shepherds and nympha of Diana,
Long live fair Oriana, long live fair Oriana.'

Nor would the opening words of the 27th Psalm, doubtless often
sung in the family to York tune, be without a deeper significance:

' The Lord is both my health and light;
Shall men make me dismayed? ' etc.

Joining with his young voice in these exercises of the family
the boy became a singer as soon as he could speak. We see
him going to the organ for his own amusement, picking out
little melodies by the ear, and stretching his tiny fingers in
search of pleasing chords."

Green says: "Milton's youth shows us how much of the
gayety, the poetic ease, the intellectual culture of the rena-
cissance lingered in the Puritan home."

De Quincey was the first to compare the Miltonic movement
to the qualities of an organ voluntary, and Tennyson in his
magnificent tribute has elaborated the figure.

Mr. Richard Garnett says: "This is perhaps the most perfect
expression of Milton's ideal of song."

Mr. Stopford Brooke says: "The spirit and power of this
poem may be best expressed by saying that Milton

' His loud uplifted angel trumpet blew.' "
"In the Abbey Church of Tewksbury are still heard the tones of the very organ on which Milton played before Cromwell at Hampden Court; and the picture thus evoked from the past symbolizes the true influence of poets such as Dante and Milton on the conduct of a commonwealth." — Ernest Myers.

Wordsworth in his sonnet on the Sonnet uses this expression referring to Milton:

"In his hand
The thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains — alas, too few."

It is not unlikely that Milton had in mind the music of King’s College Chapel to which Wordsworth alludes:

"List! O list!
The music bursteth into second life;
The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed
With sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy strife;
Heart-thrilling strains, that cast before the eye
Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy."

*Inside King's College Chapel.*

Tennyson on revisiting Cambridge says:

"And heard once more in College fanes,
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophets blazon’d on the panes."

*In Memoriam, LXXXV.*


By comparing the three drafts of this poem in the Cambridge Mss. we get a good idea of Milton’s care in recasting.

3. This line originally was: “Mix your choice words, and happiest sounds employ.”

4, 5. Between these lines there was in the first draft the following:

"And whilst your equal raptures, temper’d sweet,
In high mysterious spousal meet,
Snatch us from earth a while,
Us of ourselves and native woes beguile."


10. *burning*. This was "princely" in first, and "trifled" in second draft.

11. This line has three forms:
   (1) "Their loud immortal trumpets blow."
   (2) "Loud symphony of silver trumpets blow."
   (3) "High-lifted, loud, and angel-trumpets blow."

12. Originally:
   "And Cherubim, sweet wingèd squires,"

14. *victorious*. Originally "the blooming."


After line 16 in the first draft was a couplet now omitted:

   "While all the starry rounds and arches blue
   Resound and echo Hallelu."

18. After this line in first draft there were three lines, now omitted, in place of the seven we now have:

   "By leaving out those harsh ill-sounding jars
   Of clamorous sin that all our music mars:
   And in our lives and in our song
   May keep in tune with Heaven," etc.

In the second draft, the first two lines here are:

   "By leaving out those harsh chromatic jars
   Of sin that all our music mars."

19. *did*, originally "could." This line reminds us of the first in *Paradise Lost*:

   "Of man's first disobedience," etc.


28. Originally:

   "To live and sing with Him in ever-endless light."
Other variations are:
"To live and sing with Him in ever-glorious light."
"To live and sing with Him in un eclipsed light."
"To live and sing with Him where Day dwells without Night."
"To live and sing with Him in endless morn of light."
"To live and sing with Him in cloudless birth of light."
"To live and sing with Him in never-parting light." (M.)

1630–1645

Song on May Morning

This little poem reminds us of those exquisite snatches in the Elizabethan dramatists, and suggests the charm of L’Allegro.

"And fresscher than the May with flo'res newe, —

For May wole han no soggardye anight.
The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,
And seith, ‘Arys, and do thin observaunce,’
To don honour to May."

CHAUCER, Knight’s Tale.

Mr. Augustine Birrell says: "A study of these minor poems will enable us half sadly to realize how much went and how much was sacrificed to make the author of Paradise Lost."

1630–1632–1645

On Shakespeare

This perfect little poem first appeared printed anonymously in the Second Folio of Shakespeare’s Works, 1632, with the title, An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatick Poet, W. Shakespeare. The First Folio was published in 1623, two years before Milton entered Cambridge, and we must believe that he would not be long without one of these in his possession. How carefully he read it, and how completely he was in sympathy with the mind of the great dramatist is revealed in this poem, perhaps the greatest of all great tributes paid to this child of Fancy. Masson
has given a suggestive hint as to the origin of the poem. He thinks that it was probably written in Milton's copy of the First Folio. In the original editions of Milton's poems it bears the date 1630.

It is but natural to compare this poem with Ben Jonson's prefixed to the First Folio:

To the Memory of my beloved,

THE AUTHOR,

MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE;

AND

WHAT HE HATH LEFT US.

"Soule of the Age!
The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage!
My Shakespeare, rife: I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lye
A little further, to make thee a roome:
Thou art a Moniment, without a tombe,
And art alive stille, while thy Booke doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.

Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appeare,
And make those flights upon the bankes of Thames,
That so did take Eliza, and our James!
But stay, I see thee in the Hemisphere
Advanc'd, and made a constellation there!
Shine forth! thou Starre of Poets, and with rage,
Or influence, chide, or cheere the drooping Stage;
Which, since thy flight fro hence, hath mourn'd like night,
And despairs day, but for thy Volumes light."

It would be interesting to know the occasion of this poem. Was it that about this time a monument to Shakespeare was being proposed? The Stratford monument was erected as early as 1623, for, in the First Folio, we have the lines of Leonard Digges:
"Shakespeare, at length thy pious fellowes give
The world thy Workes; thy Workes, by which outlive
Thy Tombe thy name must: when that stone is rent
And Time dissolves thy Stratford Moniment,
Here we alive shall view thee still. This Book,
When Brass and Marble fade, shall make thee look
Fresh to all Ages."

4. star-ypointing. This is of Milton's coining, as the prefix y belongs only to past passive participle. Cf. L'Allegro, 12:

"In heaven yclept Euphrosyne."

8. livelong. In the print of Second Folio this is lasting. (M.)
9, 10. to the shame of slow-endeavoring art, etc. Does this imply that Milton wrought with slowness?

Heminge and Condell, the editors of the First Folio of Shakespeare's works, said: "His mind and hand went together; and what he thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot on his papers." Ben Jonson says: "He was indeed honest, of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions; wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped."

11. unvalued. Invaluable.


14. Dost make us marble, etc. Masson says: "'Dost turn us into marble by the effort of thought to which thou compellest us,' a very exact description of Shakespeare's effect on his readers. The sense being that we, Shakespeare's readers, are the true marble of his tomb, or monument."

1631-1645

On the University Carrier

These two pieces are interesting more from their subject, than from any real merit which they possess.

Thomas Hobson was an important character in the life of the University for more than sixty years. During that time he had
made weekly trips to Bull Inn, Bishopgate Street, as carrier of parcels, letters and passengers. Such a man was likely to get very close to the students, for he kept a stable and let horses. When a student was riding too fast, Hobson would cry out, "You will get there sooner if you don't ride too fast."

It is recorded that he required every student to take the horse nearest the door of the stable, "so that every customer was alike well served according to his chance, and every horse ridden with the same justice." Hence the common saying, "Hobson's choice."

He continued his trips until he was eighty-six, and then the Plague broke out in Cambridge; the colleges were closed and the town quarantined. He escaped the Plague, but, according to Milton, enforced idleness caused his death, Jan. 1, 1631. He left quite a fortune, and provided that a town conduit be perpetually maintained, and this, known as Hobson's Conduit, can be seen at the present time.

Milton was not very successful in his attempts to be humorous, but amends are made for this in the fact that he reveals his love for the old man. Cf. Wordsworth's Waggoner, and Cowper's "Post-boy" in The Task.

5. 'Twas. He was.
11-18. But lately, finding, etc. Death is of course the omitted subject here.

**Another on the Same**

5. **Sphere-metal.** As enduring as the spheres.
14. **Too long vacation hastened on his term.** A play upon the contrast of Long Vacation in college and Term time.
20. **six bearers:** of the coffin containing the University Carrier.
29, 30. **Obedient to the moon.** Hobson made four journeys a month, two round trips. (M.)
32. **wain.** Waggon. The play is on the sound of wain and wane.
1631-1645

AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER

Masson tells us that in an old Ms. volume of poems transcribed for private use by some lover of poetry early in the sixteenth century, now in the Ayscough collection in the British Museum, is this poem with the inscription, "On the Marchioness of Winchester, who died in childbed, April 15, 1631. Jo. Milton, of Chr. Coll. Cambr."

The beautiful and accomplished lady was the daughter of Thomas, Viscount Savage, and Elizabeth, daughter of the Earl of Rivers. Her husband was John Paulet, fifth Marquis of Winchester. Paulet was a Roman Catholic and took a prominent part in the civil wars. The fact that Milton wrote this poem shows conclusively that he had no strong antipathy to Catholics at this time. Ben Jonson, then poet-laureate, wrote an elegy upon the same occasion, which appears as the one hundredth in his collection entitled Underwoods:

"What gentle ghost, besprent with April dew,
Hails me so solemnly to yonder yew?
And beckoning woos me from the fatal tree
To pluck a garland for herself and me?
I do obey you, beauty, for in death
You seem a fair one.

Her sweetness, softness, her fair courtesy,
Her wary guards, her wise simplicity,
Were like a ring of Virtues 'bout her set,
And Piety the centre where all met.
A reverend state she had, an awful eye,
A dazzling, yet inviting majesty.

Let angels sing her glories, who did call
Her spirit home to her original;
Who saw the way was, made it, and were sent
To carry and conduct the compliment
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'Twixt death and life, where her mortality
Became her birthday to eternity.'

Mr. Stopford Brooke, speaking of Milton's poem, says: "The metre, the seven-syllabled trochaic, the trick of which as used with wonderful sweetness by Shakespeare and the Elizabethans we seem to have lost, was never, even by Milton himself, more exquisitely used than in this little lyric."

Throughout these poems we notice the foundation laid in religion pure and undefiled. The superstructure is of the enduring quality of Greek and Latin, while the decorations are of the Renaissance.

7, 8. Summers three times eight, etc. She died when but twenty-three years of age.

13. had had no strife. She would have lived to old age.

14-24. In the original Ms. instead of these lines the following are found:

    . . . "to her life
    Seven times had the yearly starre
    Of everie signe sett upp his carr
    Since for her they did request
    The god that sitts at marriage feasts,
    When first the earlie matrons runne
    To greet her of her lovelie sonne.
    And now," etc. (M.)

17. The virgin quire. Bridesmaids.

22. cypress-bud. Cypress, the symbol of mourning. Cf. In Memoriam, lxxxiv.:

    "But that remorseless iron hour
    Made cypress of her orange-flower."

24. lovely son. He became sixth Marquis of Winchester.


28. Atropos. The three Fates were Clotho, who spun the thread of life; Lachesis, who decided its length; and Atropos, who cut it off. ("slits the thin-spun life." — Lycidas, 76.)
35. slip. Plant.

50. seize. In the legal sense of possess.


58. hearse. Tomb.

59. Came. Cambridge. Masson suggests that this may have been but one of many elegies written on this occasion at Cambridge.


1631–1645

On His having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-Three

(In Milton’s own hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

Among the Italians there originated a form of verse combination in which a special rhyme arrangement prevailed; to this the name “sonnet” was given. It was a short poem limited to the expression of a single idea; soon fourteen lines became the fixed length, and later these lines were combined according to intricate rules. Following these rules the ideal sonnet should conform to the following conditions: It must consist of fourteen 5 \( x a \) verses divided into two systems—the major system, consisting of the first eight lines, complete in themselves; and then the minor system, with six concluding lines. The major system should contain but two rhymes: 1, 4, 5, 8, and 2, 3, 6, 7, concluding with a pause in the sense. In the minor system there should be only two rhymes: 9, 11, 13, and 10, 12, 14. Other rules were laid down, many of which were merely capricious, but these were insisted upon.

The earliest forms of the sonnet belong to the thirteenth century. Fra Guittone d’Arfezzo furnished the model for Dante and Petrarch, who perfected this form of writing, the one giving it strength, the other beauty. That period of English literature which was the prelude to the age of Spenser and Shakespeare received its main impulse from Italy. The influence of Chaucer had declined, and intellectual life disappeared with religious liberty.

Toward the end of the fifteenth century the nobility, possibly
NOTES

shamed by the contrast to the Scottish court, began to give some thought to the education of their children. The literary centre of Europe was at the brilliant court of Lorenzo de Medici, and hither flocked the scholars of all countries. When Englishmen returned filled with enthusiasm, and became tutors, they stimulated their pupils with a desire to visit Italy, the land of promise.

It was to this secondary influence of the Revival of Learning that the new movement in literature was due. The heralds of the dawn were Sir Thomas Wyatt, and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, "who had tasted the sweet and stately measures and style of Italian poesy." To them belongs the honor of reforming the literature and introducing the sonnet into our language. Petrarch was their model, and love their theme. Wyatt followed the Italian model very closely, and his work is characterized by strength and dignity. Surrey introduced some changes into the form of the sonnet: he divided it into three independent quatrains, and closed with a couplet. His work was distinguished for grace and beauty.

During the last ten years of the sixteenth century and the first ten of the seventeenth there was a most remarkable production of sonnets. The list, headed by Sidney, contains the names of Daniel, Constable, Lodge, Watson, Drayton, Spenser, and Shakespeare.

It was the Renaissance which gave charm and refreshment to English poetry, and Spenser is a child of the Renaissance. His sonnets — the story of his "patient wooing and happy winning of the lady of his love" — are characterized by ardor, grace and tenderness. The following is a dedication of all his "leaves, lines, and rymes" bearing the message of love:

"Happy, ye leaves! when as those lilly hands,
Which hold my life in their dead-doing might,
Shall handle you, and hold in love's soft hands,
Lyke captives trembling at the victor's sight.
And happy lines! on which, with starry light,
Those lamping eyes will deigne sometimes to look,
And reade the sorrowes of my dying spright,
Written with tears in harts close-bleeding booke.
And happy rymes! bath'd in the sacred brooke
Of Helicon, whence she derived is;
When ye behold that Angels blessed looke,
My soules long-lacked foode, my heaven's bliss,
Leaves, lines, and rymes, seeke her to please alone,
Whom if ye please, I care for other none!"

Spenser often devoted the three quatrains of a sonnet to a single figure, as in this:

"Lyke as a huntsman after weary chace,
Seeing the game from him escapt away,
Sits downe to rest him in some shady place,
With panting hounds beguil'd of their pray:
So, after long pursuit and vaine assay,
When I all weary had the chace forsooke,
The gentle deare returned the selfe same way,
Thinking to quench her thirst at the next brooke.
There she, beholding me with mylder looke,
Sought not to fly, but fearlesse did bide,
Till I in hand her yet halfe trembling tooke,
And with her own goode-will her fyrmely tied.
Strange thing, me seemd, to see a beast so wyld,
So goodly wonne, with her own will beguyld."

These sonnets consist of three quatrains and a couplet. The quatrains are linked together by a peculiar rhyme scheme, ab ab, bc bc, cd cd, ee.

Shakespeare used the sonnet as a great sculptor might use the precious stone upon which to cut the cameo. In it he half revealed and half concealed his attachment for the darkhaired, darkeyed Master, — mistress of his passion.

"When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
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Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate:
   For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
   That then I scorn to change my state with kings."

"Thine eyes I love, and they as pitying me,
Knowing thy heart torments me with disdain,
Have put on black and loving mourners be,
Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
And truly not the morning sun of heaven
Better becomes the gay cheeks of the east,
Nor that full star that ushers in the even
Doth half that glory to the sober west,
As those two mourning eyes become thy face:
O, let it then as well beseeem thy heart
To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,
And suit thy pity, like in every part.
   Then will I swear beauty herself is black,
   And all they foul that thy complexion lack."

In these sonnets we have three quatrains, each with its own system of rhyme, and a couplet. This is a striking departure from the sonnet proper, and yet it produces the greatest artistic effect. The rhyme scheme is ab ab, cd cd, ef ef, gg. With Shakespeare the use of the fourfold division of the sonnet ceases.

Milton's sonnets, although few in number, are of the finest quality. In structure they follow the Petrarchian model, which divides the sonnet into two unequal parts, the major and the minor. This is the second form of the English sonnet, —

1, 4, 5, 8, 2, 3, 6, 7, || 9, 11, 13, 10, 12, 14.
abba, abba || cd cd cd, or

Rhyme scheme: abba, abba || cde, cde.
abba, abba || cde, dce.
We are not surprised that Milton should choose the sonnet as a means of revealing his mind and art. He was a learned and elegant classical scholar; he was acquainted with Rabbinical literature; he knew every language of modern Europe; and whenever reason seemed to justify it he appropriated such forms as would serve his purpose. Pattison says: "He had put his poetical genius to school to the Italians, Dante, Petrarch and the rest. The tradition of the sonnet, coming from what had not ceased to be regarded as the home of learning, appealed to his classical feelings."

Macaulay says: "Traces, indeed, of the peculiar character of Milton may be found in all his works; but it is most strongly displayed in the sonnets. Those remarkable forms have been undervalued by critics who have not understood their nature. They are simple but majestic records of the feelings of the poet, as little tricked out for the public eye as his diary would have been. The unity of sentiment and severity of style which characterize these little pieces remind us of the Greek Anthology, or perhaps still more of the collects of the English Liturgy."

Hitherto the sonnet had been confined to a single theme—love, but in Milton's hands it was made to reveal the personal, the national, and the universal, as these ideas shaped themselves in his mind.

The title of this sonnet reveals the date of composition, Dec. 9, 1631, while the contents reveal the experience through which the university student was passing as he approached the end of his course and must choose his profession. That there were those of his friends who believed his duty was to enter the Church or some of the active professions; who considered a studious life somewhat aimless, is revealed very clearly in a letter written by him upon the subject. In the Cambridge Mss. there is a letter of which this sonnet was a part. He says: "That you may see that I am something suspicious of myself, and do take notice of a certain belatedness in me, I am the bolder to send you some of my nightward thoughts some little while ago, because they came in not altogether unfitly, made up in a Petrarchian stanza which I told you of." Alluding to choice of
a profession, he says that a "Sacred reverence and religious advisement, not taking thought of being late so it gave advantage to be more fit," had held him back. "Coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded in the Church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure or split his faith, I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing."

"Nurse
My heart in genuine freedom—all pure thoughts
Be with me; so shall thy unfailing love
Guide and support and cheer me to the end."

Wordsworth, Excursion, Introduction.

Something has already been said regarding the moral quality of the creator of high art, and in these days when we hear so much of the moral indifference of art, it is refreshing and reassuring to turn to the revelations which such artists as Milton, Wordsworth, Ruskin and Tennyson are giving us. Masson says that he who does not know and lay stress upon the moral earnestness of Milton the youth, "the outward manifestation of which was a life of pure and devout observance, knows not and loves not Milton. Fancy, ye to whom the moral frailty of genius is a consolation, or to whom the association of virtue with youth and Cambridge is a jest—fancy Milton at the age of twenty-three returning to his father's house from the University, full of its accomplishments and its honors, an auburn-haired youth, beautiful as the Apollo of a northern clime, and that beautiful body the temple of a soul pure and unsoiled. Truly, a son for a mother to take to her arms with joy and pride."

Wordsworth alludes to the young Milton in his Cambridge days thus:

"His rosy cheeks
Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,
And conscious step of purity and pride."
It is of no little significance, it seems to me, that the poet of serene and blessed moods, who a century and a half later was a student of Christ’s College, Cambridge, should have had a similar experience at the same time in his life. At the age of twenty-three Wordsworth was urged to take orders, or to enter the law, by those who were anxious about his future worldly maintenance. For neither of these professions did he have any natural taste. While he was correcting and revising some of his early poems in order to demonstrate that he could do something, an event happened by which he was enabled to continue a life of plain living and high thinking with his noble sister—

“She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon earth.”

The event was the death of his young friend and admirer, Raisley Calvert, who left him £900.

Calvert! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name, that I to thee
Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem—
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where’er I liked; and finally array
My temples with the Muse’s diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth;
If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
In my past verse; or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood which now I meditate,
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived Youth!
To think how much of this will be thy praise.

After Milton we see no more of the sonnet in its power until we come to Cowper; following him is that illustrious company of singers contemporary with the French Revolution,—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Keats, each of whom
made substantial contributions to sonnet literature. Among these Wordsworth's work is by far the most significant, not only in the nature and variety of the subjects treated, but also in the manner of composition. He restored the sonnet to the place it held in Milton's time.

At a time when the spirit of revolution had penetrated all ranks of society and all forms of art, we find the chief of the revolutionary brotherhood asserting the principles of a true conservatism, — respect for that which was beautiful and useful in life and art. Wordsworth, who "saw with unerring instinct into the great moral forces which determine the currents of history," saw with the same instinct into the great moral forces which make for noble art. At a time when the new thought of man and nature was asserting itself and looking askance at everything old as unsuited to its nature, he taught a noble reverence for the old which had been consecrated by use at the hands of the masters. The most striking illustration of this element in Wordsworth's nature was his defence of a literary form which, although associated with the glory of Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, was likely to suffer undeserved slight at the hands of the reformers. He accordingly wrote those two masterpieces of literary art in defence of the Sonnet:

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.
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"Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honors; with this key
Shakspeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camoens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow; a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land,
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!"

Each of these sonnets runs the major part over into the first verse of the minor.
The rhyme scheme of the first is abba, abba, cdd, ccd; while that of the second is abba, abba, cd, cd, ee.
The birthday of the Wordsworthian sonnet was May 21, 1802.
While his sister read to him some of Milton's sonnets his genius kindled and he at once composed three sonnets, the beginning of a series unsurpassed for practical wisdom, dignity and beauty of conception, grave and lofty harmony.

1633–1645

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

Milton took his degree of M.A. in 1632 but he did not return to the city of his birth. The sights and sounds with which he was now to be conversant were those of the beautiful English Midlands. His father had retired to the rural village of Horton, seventeen miles from London, in that part of Buckinghamshire known as Chiltern Hundreds. "Here," says Milton, "I, with every advantage of leisure, spent a complete holiday in turning over the Greek and Latin writers; not but that sometimes I exchanged the country for the town, either for the purpose of
buying books, or for that of learning something new in Mathematics or in Music.” Here this sonnet was probably written. It is pervaded with the atmosphere of thoughtful youth. It has the passion of Keats and the contemplation of Wordsworth.

“Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale.
She all night long her amorous descant sung.”

Paradise Lost, vi. 598–603.

“From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings,
Till even; nor then the solemn nightingale
Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays.”

Paradise Lost, vii. 433–436.

The following from Walton's Compleat Angler is worthy of a place here:

“But the nightingale, another of my airy creatures, breathes such sweet loud music out of her little instrumental throat, that it might make mankind to think miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very laborer sleeps securely, should hear, as I have very often, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, Lord, what music hast Thou provided for the saints in heaven, when Thou affordest bad men such music on earth.”

The Skylark and the Nightingale are favorites with the poets; the one symbolic of the song that “like a cloud of fire” springeth from the earth into the blue deep of the heavens; the other, a type of the lover's passion:

“A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews and silent night.”
Cf. Wordsworth:

"O, Nightingale! thou surely art
A creature of a "fiery heart"—
These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!"

Cf. Coleridge:

"And hark! the Nightingale begins its song,
'Most musical, most melancholy' bird!
A melancholy bird? Oh idle thought!
In nature there is nothing melancholy.
But some night-wandering man whose heart was pierced
With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
Or slow distemper, or neglected love,
(And so, poor wretch! fill'd all things with himself,
And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
Of his own sorrow) he, and such as he,
First named these notes a melancholy strain."

*The Nightingale.*

Cf. Shelley:

"One nightingale in an interfluous wood
Satiate the hungry dark with melody."

*The Woodman and the Nightingale.*

Cf. Keats:

"Thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of Summer in full-throated ease."

*Ode to a Nightingale.*

Cf. Tennyson:

"And all about us peal'd the nightingale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare."

*The Princess,* i. 217–218.

Mrs. Anne Thackeray Ritchie says: "As Tennyson was walking at night in a friend's garden, he heard a nightingale
singing with such a frenzy of passion that it was unconscious of everything else, and not frightened though he came and stood quite close beside it; he could see its eye flashing, and feel the air bubble in his ear through the vibration."

3. *Thou with fresh hope*, etc. To hear the nightingale before the cuckoo was considered to "portend success in love." Cf. Chaucer, *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale.*
— 4. jolly. Joyful. Cf. *Faerie Queene*, I, i, 1:

"Full jolly knight he seemed."


1633–1645

L'ALLEGRO

The situation of Horton is beautiful for prospect. The eye ranges over dewy meadows, rich tillage land and green pasture, with abundant beech, elm, poplar and cedar; numerous streamlets hurry to lose themselves in the Colne, while the Thames, Eton and Windsor are not far away. The beautiful old church of the 12th century stands in the centre of the little village, and near it is the site of the poet's home.

In this poetic springtime we fancy our Scholar Gipsy — such heart was in him — to be abroad in the primal burst of day's bloom; as the lark sings at heaven's gate, he wanders wherever nature leads, drinking in with pure organic pleasure the beautiful forms and colors in earth and sky, while his ear catches the sounds of bellowing kine and bleating sheep, as the herd drives them afield, and the whistle of the plowboy and the song of the milkmaid is in the air. When the sun is shining high he seeks some retired spot where the laborer leaves

"His coat, his basket and his earthen cruise."

And as the troop of hunters jovial, talking, saunter by, he escapes to yonder lawn where young and old keep holiday with dance and song and hoodman blind. Thus through

"All the live murmur of a summer's day"
he is gathering

"Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness."

Such a day we have revealed to us in L’Allegro, a day of joyous mirth.

The slow and stately introduction, the rushing, joyous music of the body of the poem, the vividness of picture, the playful humor and the master melody, reveal the best of Shakespeare and Spenser and yet they are not of either master, but truly Miltonic.

The modern visitor at Horton feels the atmosphere of that olden time.

"Here cam’st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields."

1–3. Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born, etc. This figure is partly classical, and partly the creation of later poets. In classical mythology Nyx, or Night, is made the mother of Thanatos, or Death, Hypnos, or Sleep, and other children. Spenser, in Tears of the Muses, included Ignorance among the children.

"Ignorance,
Born in the bosom of the black Abyss,
And fed with Furies’ milk for sustenance
Of his weake infancie, begot amisse
By yawning Sloth on his own mother Night."

In the old mythology Darkness son of Chaos is husband of Night. In Milton’s lurid picture of Hell-Gate and the region beyond, Paradise Lost, book ii., we have:

"Where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy,” etc. — (894–896.)

"behold the throne
Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide in the wasteful Deep. With him enthroned
Sat sable-vested Night.” — (959–962.)
3. **Stygian.** Cf. *Paradise Lost*, ii. 574–577:

> "Along the banks
> Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
> Into the burning lake their baleful streams —
> Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate."

6. **jealous wings.** "The watch which fowls keep when they are sitting." — **Warburton.**


> "The raven himself is hoarse
> That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
> Under my battlements."

8, 9. **As ragged as thy locks.** The term ragged applied to rocks is common in Shakespeare.

> "ragged prison walls." — *Richard II*, v. 5.

> "on the ragged stones break forth." — *Titus Andronicus*, v. 3.

10. **dark Cimmerian desert.** In the *Odyssey*, xi., 14, the Cimmerians are dwellers "beyond the ocean" in perpetual darkness.

> "There lies the land, and there the people dwell
> Of the Cimmerians, in eternal cloud
> And darkness."

12. **yclept.** The old past participle of verb *clepen*, to call.

> "They clepe us drunkards." — *Hamlet*, i. 4.

**Euphrosyne.** Mirth, one of the Graces.

14–23. **Whom lovely Venus, etc.** Milton creates these figures. In the old mythology Euphrosyne is daughter of Zeus.

22. **fresh-blown roses, etc.**

> "Morning roses newly washed with dew."

— 24. **debonair.** *De bonâ* aër.

25–32. **Haste thee, Nymph, etc.** An allusion to the merry-
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making of Elizabethan England. Cf. Ben Jonson’s masque, 
Pan’s Anniversary.

Nym. “Thus, thus begin the yearly rites
Are due to Pan on these bright nights;
His morn now riseth and invites
To sports, to dances, and delights:
All envious and profane, away,
This is the shepherds’ holyday.”

27. Quips and Cranks. Smart and odd sayings.
33, 34. Come, and trip it, etc.

“Before you can say ‘Come’ and ‘Go’,
And breathe twice, and say ‘so, so’,
Each one tripping on his toe
Will be here with mop and mow.” — Tempest, i. 1.

40. unreproved. Not to be found fault with, innocent.
41. To hear the lark, etc. Compare this and the following
lines in respect of direct and musical description with Tenny-
son’s Ode to Memory.

“The seven elms, the poplars four,
That stand beside my father’s door,” etc.

Cf. Cymbeline, ii. 2.

“Hark, hark! the lark at Heaven’s gate sings,
And Phoebus ’gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes.”

44. dappled dawn.

“and look the gentle day,

Before the wheels of Phoebus round about
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of gray.”

Much Ado About Nothing, v. 3.

59. eastern gate.

“Even till the Eastern gate, all fiery-red.”

Midsummer Night’s Dream, iii. 2.
62. **dight.** Set in order, arrayed.

67. **tells his tale.** Warton suggests that this means "makes his reckoning," counts his sheep, rather than the commonly understood, tells his story. This seems plausible from the fact that the morning was not the time for story-telling.

69. **Straight.** At once, suddenly. Common in Shakespeare.

"About your business straight." — *Richard III.* i. 2.
"Straight to stop the rumour." — *Henry VIII.* ii. 1.
"We'll have a speech straight." — *Hamlet,* ii. 2.


"The landskip darken'd."

76. **daisies pied.**

"When daisies pied and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver-white," etc.

*Loves Labours Lost,* v. 2.

77–80. **Towers and battlements.** While the descriptions are not true to Horton in every detail it is not unnatural that we should understand this to be an allusion to Windsor Castle.

83–88. **Corydon and Thyrsis . . . Phillis . . . Thestylia.**

Familiar names for shepherds.

—91. **secure.** Untroubled.

94. **rebecks.** Stringed instrument like a fiddle.

96. **chequered shade.**

"The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind
And make a chequered shadow on the ground."

*Titus Andronicus,* ii. 3.

98. **sunshine holiday.**

"Many years of sunshine days." — *Richard II.* iv. 1.

100. **spicy, nut-brown ale.** Wassail bowl of sweet, warm, spiced ale with roasted crab-apples in it.

102. **How Faery Mab the junkets eat.**

"She is the fairy midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
NOTES

On the forefinger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies,” etc.

_Romeo and Juliet_, i. 4.

“This is Mab, the mistress Fairy,
That doth nightly rob the dairy,
She that pinches country wenches.”

_Ben Jonson_, _The Satyr._

**junkets.** Cream cheese.

103, 104. **She . . . And he.** The two shepherds who are telling the story.

104. **Friar’s lantern.** Jack-o’-the-Lantern, _Will-o’-the-Wisp._

105. **drudging goblin.** Robin Goodfellow, a favorite with Elizabethan story-tellers.

The fairy speaking to Puck says:

“Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call’d Robin Goodfellow; are you not he
That frights the maidens of the villagery:” etc.

_Midsummer Night’s Dream_, ii. 1.

110. **the lubber fiend.** The fairy in _Midsummer Night’s Dream_, ii. 1, addresses Puck as “thou lob of spirits.”

117. **Towered cities please us then.** The youth now retires to his country cottage and amuses himself with stories of a life quite in contrast to that of the rustics with whom he has been associating.

120. **weeds . . . triumphs.** The old meaning of weeds, clothing. Triumphs, one of the forms of entertainment where are tournaments, etc.

129. **Rain influence.** Cf. _Ode on the Nativity_, 71.

125. **let Hymen oft appear.** As in Masques in honor of marriage. Cf. _Ben. Jonson’s Hymenaei._

126. **In saffron robe.** In _Ben Jonson’s Hymenaei_ we have:

“Entered Hymen the God of Marriage in a saffron-coloured robe.”

132–134. **If Jonson’s learned sock be on, etc.** Sock was a low-heeled shoe worn in comedy.
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"I visit, or to smile, or weep,
The winding theatre's majestic sweep,
The grave or gay colloquial scene recruits
My spirits, spent in learning's long pursuits."

_Elegy i._

"If poets may be divided into two exhaustive but not exclusive classes—the gods of harmony and creation, the giants of energy and invention—the supremacy of Shakespeare among the gods of English verse is not more unquestionable than the supremacy of Jonson among the giants."—A. C. Swinburne.

136. **Lydian airs.** Soft and light as compared with the Dorian, which are more suited to revealing contemplation.

139. **boult.** Turn.

145–150. **That Orpheus' self,** etc. According to the myth which reveals Orpheus as the master musician who, on the death of his wife Eurydice, went to the lower world to recover her. His music charmed even Pluto, who released Eurydice on the condition that Orpheus would not look upon her until they had reached the earth. Orpheus turned to see if she were following him and she was lost to him.

151, 152. These lines remind one of the last lines of Marlowe’s _The Passionate Shepherd to his Love_:

> "If these delights thy mind may move,
> Then live with me and be my love."

1633–1645

**IL PENSEROZO**

When the merry-making was over, and the sun,

> "which doth glorify
> The orange and pale violet evening sky;"

sank to rest, and the 'mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells’ ceased,

> "No chair remained before the door; the bench
> And threshold steps were empty; fast asleep
> The laborer, and the old man who had sate
> A later lingerer."
The new day now begins, the day which is characterized by wise activity, as the other had been by wise passiveness; for nature and books are the joys of the poet, and by these a healthy activity is secured between What Does, What Knows, What Is. The mood here is that of joy in thoughtfulness, when the world is shut out and the mind shut in upon itself. Each experience here has its complement in those of the previous poem; and as a result the movement is slow and measured where the other was rapid and careless. One hardly knows where to look for a happier union of natural magic and moral profundity, of child-like mirth and the joy of mature manhood.

The treatment of nature in these poems is not that of Chaucer with its freshness of the early world, nor that of Wordsworth with its spiritual revelation; but it is pure description of things seen by the poet in a special mood.

M. Scherer says: "For rendering things Milton has the unique word,—the word which is a discovery: he has not only the image and the word, he has the period also, the large musical phrase...an unfailing level of style, power indomitable."

These are the elements which make the poems a delight to young and old alike.

Mr. Henry Van Dyke says: "I do not think that L’Allegro, Il Penseroso, and Comus have any lower place in the world, or any less enduring life, than Paradise Lost. We have thought so much of Milton’s strength and sublimity that we have ceased to recognize what is also true, that he, of all English poets, is by nature the supreme lover of beauty."

"Never were ideas of such dignity embodied in verse so easy and familiar, and with such apparent absence of effort."

R. Garnett.

Mr. F. T. Palgrave says: "L’Allegro and Il Penseroso, the earliest great lyrics of the landscape in our language, despite all later competition, still remain supreme for range, variety, lucidity and melodious charm within their style."

1–30. Hence, vain deluding Joys, etc. These lines should be compared in detail with the first twenty-four of L’Allegro. We must remember that these are complementary moods, but
not contrary,—not inconsistent with the nature of a true man. It is usually assumed that Milton is the Milton of *Il Penseroso* and *Paradise Lost*, but a careful study of the shorter poems will reveal how wholesome and holy was the nature of the young poet. Cf. Masson, *Milton's Youth*.


"I never saw a fellow worse bestead
Or more afraid to fight."  

2 *Henry VI*. ii. 3.

7-10. *And fancies fond*, etc.

"Confusedly about the silent bed
    Fantastick swarms of dreams were hovered,

Som sacred, som profane, som false, som true.

They make no noise, but right resemble may
    Th'unnumbered moats which in the sun do play."

*Sylyester's Du Bartas* (The Vacation).


10. *pensioners*. Living upon the bounty of others, retinue. Possibly alluding to the famous body-guard of Elizabeth.

"And I serve the Fairy Queen,
    To dew her orbs upon the green.
    The cowslips tall her pensioners be."

*Midsummer Night's Dream*, ii. 1.

12. *Divinest Melancholy*. We must keep to the Miltonic idea here: Thoughtfulness.

14. To hit the sense.

"Delicate odour as ever hit my nostril." — *Pericles*, iii. 2.

"From the barge
    A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
    Of the adjacent wharves."

*Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 2.

18. *Prince Memnon's sister*. Memnon was the beautiful
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prince of the Ethiopians who came to help Priam. Milton makes the sister as beautiful. Homer alludes to Eurypylus as,

“The noblest
Of men, in form, whom I have ever seen,
Save Memnon.” — Odyssey, xi.

19–21. that starred Ethiop, etc. Cassiope challenged the Nereids in a contest for beauty. They in anger induced Poseidon to send a ravenous monster into her country. Andromeda her daughter was about to be sacrificed to the monster when she was rescued by her lover Perseus. Cassiopea was raised to heaven and turned into the constellation Cassiopoeia.

23–30. bright-haired Vesta, etc. Milton here creates the genealogy of Melancholy as he has done for Mirth in the previous poem. The emphasis upon the word solitary would seem to reveal the fact that Milton desired to reveal that Melancholy was the daughter of Solitude and the Vestal-affection or Domestic happiness.

33. grain. Color.
35. stole. Scarf.
cypress lawn. In early editions Milton printed this with a capital, indicating that the lawn was from Cyprus. In Winter's Tale Autolycus sings of his wares:

“Lawn as white as driven snow,
Cyprus black as e'er was crow.”

42. Forget thyself to marble. Cf. On Shakespeare, 14 and note.
43. leaden. The star Saturn has a leaden or dispiriting influence on shepherds, or sons of the Muses. Cf. Epitaphium Damonis, 79, 80, and translation. (M.)
46. Spare Fast. Cf. Sonnet To Mr. Lawrence.
51–54. But first and chiefest, etc. Cf. Ezekiel x. Milton names one of the four cherubs of Ezekiel’s vision, Contemplation. By Contemplation one reached the heights of vision. (M.)
56, 56. hist along. . . , 'Less Philomel, etc. Telling the Silence to continue unless the Nightingale shall choose to break it. (M.)

"Thou veiled in opening foliage, lead'st the throng
Of feathered minstrels, Philomel! in song."

Elegy v.

59, 60. While Cynthia, etc. While the moon, entranced with the song, is seen to check her pace over a particular oak-tree. (M.) Milton has transferred the idea, "Dragon yoke," drawn by dragons, from the old Mythology of Demeter. The accustomed oak, seems to imply some particular oak in which the poet had seen the moon couched.

61-64. Sweet bird, etc. Masson cites:

"And yet, methinks in a thick thorn I hear
A nightingale to warble sweetly clear."

Sylvester's Du Bartas (First Week).

Cf. sonnet To the Nightingale, and note.

73-76. Oft, on a plat of rising ground, etc. The figure in the first couplet might have direct application to Horton, but that in the second could not; but we need not make literal identification of every allusion in a poem so rich in imagination. Masson says: "The sound of the eight o'clock bell from Christ Church is still one of the characteristics of Oxford, and is heard afar."

77. air. Weather.

83, 84. the bellman's drowsy charm, etc. Charm, cry. The bellman was policeman and fireman in one, and at times shouted the state of the weather, as, "Half-past nine and a fine cloudy evening"; or he blessed the sleepers, as in Herrick's The Bellman:

"From noise and scare-fires rest ye free,
From murder, Benedict!"

85, 86. Or let my lamp, etc. A beautiful figure of Contemplation. Milton believed in the necessity of shade in which to grow ripe, and leisure in which to grow wise. He writes to
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Diodati: "I am letting my wings grow, and preparing to fly, but my Pegasus has not yet feathers enough to soar aloft in the fields of air."

"When Contemplation, like the night-calm felt Through earth and sky, spreads widely, and sends deep Into the soul its tranquilizing power."

Wordsworth, Prelude, v.

87. outwatch the Bear. Studying until the stars are put to flight.

88. thrice, great Hermes. Hermes Trismegistus, a Greek appellation given to the Egyptian philosopher Thot.

88, 89. unsphere the spirit of Plato. Return Plato to the earth by understanding his works.

91, 92. The immortal mind, etc. An allusion to the Phædo, where the doctrine of immortality is discussed.

93-96. And of those demons, etc. The Mediæval doctrine of the four elements, Earth, Air, Fire and Water.

97-100. let gorgeous Tragedy, etc. With Platonic Philosophy and Mediæval Alchemy we have the great truths of the Classic drama.

101, 102. of later age, etc. Shakespeare. Cf. L’Allegro, 131-134.


109-115. Or call up him, etc. Chaucer, whose Squire’s Tale is unfinished.

"At Sarra, in the lond of Tartarie, Ther dwelt a king that werreied Russie, Thurgh which ther died many a doughty man: This noble king was cleped Cambuscan."

Cf. Tennyson:

"Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath Preluded those melodious bursts that fill The spacious times of great Elizabeth With sounds that echo still."
In the *Palace of Art* Tennyson has portraits hung above the throne of Contemplation:

"For there was Milton like a seraph strong,  
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;  
And there the world-worn Dante grasped his song  
And somewhat grimly smiled."

116–120. great bards, etc. Spenser and the *Faerie Queene*.

"Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspir'st  
The human Soul of universal Earth  
Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess  
A metropolitan temple in the hearts of mighty poets."

*Wordsworth, Excursion*, Introduction.

122. civil-suited. Plainly attired, not in court costume.

124. Attic boy. Cephalus, who was in love with Eos, Morning.

134. Sylvan. Sylvanus, god of the woodlands.

135. monumental. Old.

142. honeyed thigh.

"Each bee with honey laden to the thigh." — *Drayton, Owl*.

146. dewy-feathered. "Feathers steeped in Lethean dew."

(K.)

147–150. And let some strange, etc. Let some strange mysterious dream move to and fro at Sleep's wings, in airy stream. (M.)

156–166. To walk, etc. This should be read with *At a Solemn Music*. Milton is in admiration of the symbols of spiritual contemplation. Here is nothing of the Puritan.

158. massy-proof. The idea here is not quite clear. It may mean, sufficient to sustain the mass of roof, etc. Cf. Wordsworth, Sonnets, *Inside King's College Chapel*.

159. storied. Illustrating Scripture story in stained glass.

167–176. And may at last my weary age, etc.

"O blest seclusion! when the mind admits  
The law of duty; and can therefore move
Through each vicissitude of loss or gain
Link’d in entire complacency with her choice;
When youth’s presumptuousness is mellow’d down,
And manhood’s vain anxiety dismissed;
When wisdom shows her seasonable fruit,
Upon the boughs of sheltering leisure hung.”

WORDSWORTH, Excursion, iv.

“If age had tamed the passions’ strife,
And fate had cut my ties of life,
Here, have I thought, ’twere sweet to dwell,
And rear again the chaplain’s cell,
Like that same peaceful hermitage,
Where Milton long’d to spend his age.”

Scott, Marmion, Introduction to Canto ii.

Mr. F. T. Palgrave, alluding to Keats’ poem Fancy, says:
“I know no other poem which so closely rivals the richness
and melody,—and that in this very difficult and rarely at-
temptsed metre,—of Milton’s Allegro and Penseroso.”

1634–1645

Arcades

(In Milton’s own hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

The history of the Masque, its form and function in English
literature, is varied and interesting. The men we most natu-
really associate with the Masque are, that incomparable Master of
Revels Ben Jonson — its inventor, Inigo Jones its scene painter,
and Henry Lawes the composer of its music. Early in the reign
of Elizabeth, when the Miracle Plays and Mysteries were evolv-
ing into the Pageant and the drama of Shakespeare, there was
also evolved a ceremonial in which actors represented allegorical
characters and accompanied Lords and Ladies on great occa-
sions for the purpose of lending interest by action, dialogue,
music and dance. In the reigns of James I and Charles I these
entertainments were frequent and magnificently apportioned.
Artists, musicians, poets and managers were commissioned to
prepare the pageant for a marriage, a birthday, a royal visitor, or the reception of distinguished foreigners, and the pastoral or idyl of Spenser appeared as a pastoral drama or masque. Jonson created no less than thirty masques between 1600 and 1635.

The Masque has its own laws as clearly defined as those of the drama itself. As in the Greek drama the central idea—the occasion—was familiar to the average spectator, so here the occasion with all its attendant incidents must be a familiar one. The poetry, music and decorations must be used to intensify this occasion. The result is, as Taine says: “A true eye feast, like a procession of Titian.”

In 1632 Puritanism gave a new impetus to such pageants by the publication of the famous Histrio-Mastix: The Player’s-Scourge, in which the stage and all its associations were denounced as “the very pomp of the Divell.” The result was a singular demonstration on the part of the lovers of good cheer, and the most gorgeous of all the royal masques was prepared by the Society of the Four Inns of Court, and presented in the Banqueting House at Whitehall, February, 1634. The masque was entitled The Triumph of Peace. In this masque, costing £21,000, Mr. Henry Lawes acted as master of music. We have already seen that while Milton was at Horton he was studying music in London; now this Mr. Lawes was his teacher, and it is probable that Milton took no little interest in this distinguished performance. Soon after this, another masque, Cælum Britannicum, was given at the same place. Lawes arranged the music, and Inigo Jones had charge of the decorations. In it two sons of the Earl of Bridgewater acted, and it is through them that Lawes and Milton became associated in Arcades.

In Spenser’s Colin Clout’s Come Home Again, we have the following:

“Ne less praisewithie are the sisters three,
The honor of the noble familie
Of which I meanest boast myself to be
And most that unto them I am so ne
Phyllis, Charillis and Sweet Amaryllis.”
These sisters are the three married daughters of Sir John Spencer. In Elizabeth's time the poet, then young, had dedicated to each, one of his early poems, *Muiopotmos*, *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, and *The Teares of the Muses*. The "sweet Amaryllis" was Alice, who married Ferdinando, Lord Strange. In the dedication of his *Teares of the Muses* Spenser says: "The things that make ye so much honoured are your excellent beauty, your virtuous behavior and your noble match with the very pattern of right nobility."

Lord Strange was a patron of literature and somewhat of a poet. He succeeded to the earldom of Derby, and on his death in 1594 his wife became known as Countess-Dowager of Derby. Spenser thus alludes to his death:

"Amyntas quite has gone, and lies full low,  
Having his Amaryllis left to mone.  
Helpe, O ye shepheards, helpe ye all in this,  
Helpe Amaryllis this her losse to mourne;  
Her losse is yours, your losse Amyntas is,  
Amyntas, floure of shepheards pride forlorne:  
He whilst he lived was the noblest swaine,  
That ever piped on an oaten quill."

*Colin Clout's Come Home Again.*

In 1600 she married Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal to Elizabeth. They purchased the beautiful estate of Harefield in Middlesex on the river Colne. In 1602 the Queen paid them a visit of four days, when masques of various kinds were given in her honor, and Burbidge's players acted for the first time Shakespeare's *Othello*. Masson says, "Shakespere himself probably present and taking part." The avenue of elms where the pageant met the Queen was afterwards known as the "Queen's Walk."

In the reign of James I Sir Thomas was made Lord Chancellor, and Lord and Lady Egerton were even more closely identified with literature. Warton says: "The peerage book of the Countess is the poetry of her times." In 1617 his Lordship died. The Countess remained at Harefield and gave her-
self to deeds of charity and hospitality. The Countess' first husband had been married twice prior to his marriage to her, and her second husband had been married once before; their children had intermarried, and at the date of this masque she (at seventy) had numerous children and grandchildren. It was they who planned this entertainment in memory of the many which the venerable lady had witnessed. The two sons of the Earl of Bridgewater already mentioned as taking part in Cætum Britannicum, now the Countess' sons, were pupils of Lawes, and it was therefore natural that they should want him to take charge of the music; it was also natural that he should ask Milton to furnish the text,—speeches and songs being a part of the extensive pageant, Arcades.


8–13. Fame that . . . erst, etc. An allusion to the tributes to the Countess by Spenser and those who had written masques in her honor.

14–19. Mark what radiant state, etc. An allusion to the actual surroundings of the Countess in the masque. (M.)

20. Latona. The mother of Apollo and Diana.

21. the towered Cybele. Cybele, the wife of Saturn and "the mother of the gods," wore a diadem of three towers. Cf. Æneid, vi. 784–786:

"The Berycinthian mother rides tower-crowned through the towns of Phrygia, proud of the gods that have sprung from her." Cf. Faerie Queene, IV. xi. 28:

"Old Cybele, arrayd with pompous pride,
Wearing a Diademe embattild wide
With hundred turrets," etc.

23. Juno dares not give her odds. Could not afford to give her any advantage in a contest for beauty. Masson gives an interesting interpretation of this passage. He says it should be read with the picture of the venerable lady before us as she appeared on that evening of the masque, throned, and surrounded by two generations of her descendants. "Does it not
then mean, even now, the handsomest of her daughters must do her best to keep up with her?"


27. honour. Nobility of birth.

30, 31. Divine Alpheus, etc. Alpheus was the name of a river in Arcadia which ran underground for some distance. The legend was that Alpheus, a young hunter, was in love with a nymph Arethusa, and when she fled from him to Ortygia in Sicily, he was turned into a river and followed her under the sea, rising again in Ortygia where the waters blended with those of a fountain called after her, Arethusa. Cf. Lycidas, 85, 132, and Æneid, iii. 694-696:

"Alpheus the river of Elis made himself a secret passage under the sea; and he now, through thy mouth, Arethusa, blends with the waters of Sicily."

33. silver-buskined Nymphs. The ladies of the masque wearing buskins, as did Diana and her nymphs. Cf. Æneid, i. 266-267:

"Tyrian maidens like me are wont to carry the quiver and tie the purple buskin high up the calf."

34. free. noble or generous.

46. curl. Drayton, in his PolioTBion, alluding to a grove says, "Where she her curled head unto the eye may show."

47. wanton windings wove. Cf. Faerie Queene, I. ii. 13, for alliteration:

"Whose bridle rung with golden bells and bosses brave." (M.)

51. thwarting. Athwart or zigzag. (M.)

52. cross dire-looking planet. Alluding to the malignant influence of planets. Cf. Hamlet, i. 1:

"Then no planets strike," etc.


57. tasselred horn. Cf. Faerie Queene, I. viii. 3:
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"Then tooke that Squire an horne of bugle small,
Which hong adowne his side in twisted gold
And tasselles gay."


63–73. the celestial Sirens' harmony, etc. Milton's idea of the music of the spheres is that each of the nine spheres is presided over by a Muse. As the spheres revolve, the Muses sing in harmony, while the Fates are turning the spindle of Necessity (adamantine) on which the threads of human and divine lives are wound. Cf. Plato, Republic, x. Chap. 14.

70. unsteady Nature. Such Nature seemed until the law of the whole was understood.

72, 73. which none can hear, etc. Cf. Merchant of Venice, v. 1:

"But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it."

Cf. Tennyson, Higher Pantheism:

"And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?"

--- 81. state. Throne.

88, 89. shady roof, etc. Cf. Faerie Queene, I. i. 7:

"Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommer's pride,
Did spred so broad, that heaven's light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starr."

97–100. Ladon's, etc. Ladon was a river in Arcadia. Lycaeus, Cyllene and Mænalus, mountains of Arcadia. Syrinx, a nymph who, being pursued by Pan, was changed into a reed of which Pan made his pipe.

Masson thinks the allusion here is to the masque of Ben Jonson's, which the Countess may have seen many years before at her home, Althorpe.

"And the dame hath Syrinx' grace;
O that Pan were now in place."
TEXTUAL

The more important readings in the Cambridge Mss. are as follows:

1, 2. Milton originally used a different metre:

"Look, Nymphs and Shepherds, look! here ends our quest,
Since at last our eyes are blest."

These lines were dashed out with a cross line to begin as now.

10–14. These four lines were:

"Now seems guilty of abuse
And detraction from her praise:
Less than half she hath expressed;
Envy bid her hide the rest."

"Her hide" is erased and "conceal" written over it.

18. Sitting, was "seated."

23. Juno. This was erased and "Ceres" substituted, and again "Ceres" erased and "Juno" restored.

24. had, was "would have."

41. What shallow-searching, was "Those virtues which dull."

44. am, was "have."

47. With, was "In."

49. and, was "or."

50. boughs, was "leaves."

52. Or, was "that."

59. This line was, "And number all my ranks and every sprout."

62. locked up mortal sense, was "chained mortality."

81. ye, was "you."

91. you, was "ye."

1634–1637–1645

COMUS

(Two copies, one, Lawes’ stage-copy; and the other in Milton’s own hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

Green says: "The historic interest of Milton’s Comus lies in its forming part of a protest made by the more cultured Puritans
at this time against the gloomier bigotry which persecution was fostering in the party at large.”

In respect of the time, nature of the occasion, and the characters involved, Comus and Arcades are closely connected. Sir John Egerton, first Earl of Bridgewater, was the son of the Countess-Dowager’s second husband, Sir Thomas Egerton, by a previous marriage; he married Frances, daughter of the Countess by her first husband, Lord Strange. Their children were the two sons who acted in the masque Cætum Britannicum, and who were concerned in the previous masque Arcades; two married daughters, and the beautiful Lady Alice, unmarried. Sir John was appointed Lord President of the Council in the principality of Wales in June, 1631. The official seat was at Ludlow Castle in Shropshire, built by the descendants of the Conqueror. The site of the castle, on the rocky heights above the green valley where two rivers meet, is beautiful and commands a magnificent outlook over the surrounding country. Its associations are those of the old wars of Welsh and Norman, the Wars of the Roses, and the history of the Prince of Wales.

“Child of loud-throated War! the mountain stream
Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest
Is come, and thou art silent in thy age.”

The Earl did not assume the duties of office until 1634. The festivities of inauguration were enlivened by the performance of a masque in the great hall of the castle by members of the Earl’s family, in the presence of a distinguished assembly of guests, on Michaelmas Night, September 29.

The association of the two young sons of the Earl with Lawes in the Cætum Britannicum, and with Lawes and Milton in Arcades, is sufficient to account for their respective parts in this distinguished pageant. Lady Alice took the part of The Lady, the two brothers the parts of first and second Brother respectively, and Lawes himself that of the Attendant Spirit.

The name Comus was not applied to the masque during Milton’s life. In the Cambridge Ms. it is—“A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord
President of Wales." In the Bridgewater Ms., which probably Lawes used as a stage-copy, the masque begins with a song of twenty lines, which in Milton's arrangement occupies lines 976–999; he made it a song of arrival by changing To the Ocean into From the heavens, and Where young Adonis oft reposes into Where a cherub soft reposes. It is evident from this that Lawes thought it would be more effective for the Attendant Spirit to descend into the wood with a song than with a speech. On his departure he sang the song as it is now in the epilogue.

We can never know whether or not Milton was present at this splendid performance, but we know that if he were it was not as the known author of the masque, for the authorship was a secret known only to Lawes and the Earl's family. But the author of such a success could not long be concealed. Inquiries were made in regard to the production; copies of the songs were asked for, and then of the entire masque. At last in 1637 Lawes published it with this title-page:

"A Maske presented at Ludlow Castle 1634, on Michaelmas Night, before the Right Honourable John, Earl of Bridgewater, Viscount Brackley, Lord President of Wales, and one of His Majesties' Most honourable Privy Counsell.

"Eheu quid volui misero mihi / floribus Austrum Perditus."

"London: Printed for Humphrey Robinson, at the signe of the Three Pidgeons in Paul's Churchyard, 1637."

Masson thinks that the Latin motto on the title-page was supplied by Milton, and that in it he expressed a fear that he may have been foolish in letting the masque be published.

The volume was dedicated to the Earl's son, young Viscount Brackley, who took the part of First Brother (cf. p. 52). The music which Lawes composed for the songs in Comus exists in the Mss. of the British Museum, written in his own hand, with the heading:

"Five Songs set for a Mask presented at Ludlo Castle before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of the Marches: October 1634."

Cf. sonnet, To Mr. H. Lawes on his Airs.

Milton first published the masque in the edition of 1645, with this title-page: A Masque of the Same Author, presented at
Ludlow Castle, 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater, then President of Wales: Anno Dom., 1645. Lawes' dedication and the letter from Sir Henry Wotton were included (cf. p. 49).

Those who show "how to make careful literal identification of stories somewhere told ill and without art, with the same stories told over again by the masters, well and with the transfiguring effect of genius," tell us that this most original poem of its kind in English literature, owes much to Peele's Old Wives' Tale, Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess, Ben Jonson's Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue, and Hendrik van der Puttens' Latin extravaganza Comus. What Tennyson said of this class of critics is to the point:

"There is, I fear, a prosaic set growing up among us, editors of booklets, book-worms, index-hunters, or men of great memories and no imagination, who impute themselves to the poet, and so believe that he, too, has no imagination, but is forever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate."

On the whole, Time treats great things greatly. This reveals how close to the great world's heart noble poetry lies. It has been said that we are all poets when we read a poem well. This poem has been well read and worthily praised. Here is a great subject so penetrated by the imagination as to reveal its soul, its inward harmony with those "primal sympathies which having been, must ever be." It is perhaps the finest illustration in English literature of what Carlyle calls "Musical Thought."

"All we see before us passing,
Sign and symbol is alone;
Here, what thought can never reach to,
Is by semblances made known;
What man's word may never utter
Done in act—in symbol shown."

Goethe, Faust.

Mr. Stopford Brooke says: "It is in the full-weighted dignity of the blank verse that the poem was then unparalleled. It was marked by a greater grandeur of style and thought, by a
graver beauty, and a more exercised and self-conscious art than any poem of its character which England had as yet known. It belonged to the Elizabethan spirit, but it went beyond it, and made a new departure for English poetry.

All the kinds of poetry which Milton touched he touched with the ease of great strength, and with so much energy that they became new in his hands. He put a fresh life into the masque, the sonnet, the elegy, the descriptive lyric, the song, the choral drama; and he created the epic in England.”

Professor George Saintsbury says: “The versification is the versification of Paradise Lost and has a spring, a variety, a sweep and rush of genius which are but rarely present later. If poetry could be taught by the reading of it, then indeed the critic’s advice to a poet might be limited to this: ‘Give your days and nights to the reading of Comus.’”

Sir Henry Wotton, Provost of Eton College, was perhaps the first to express to Milton his appreciation of the poem (cf. p. 49).

“Comus,” says Hallam, “was sufficient to convince any one of taste and feeling that a great poet had arisen in England and one partly formed in a different school from his contemporaries.”

Emerson says: “Milton is rightly dear to mankind, because in him—among so many perverse and partial men of genius—humanity rights itself: the old eternal goodness finds a home in his breast, and for once shows itself beautiful. Among so many contrivances to make holiness ugly, in Milton at least it was so pure a flame that the foremost impression his characters make is that of elegance. He said, ‘Every free and gentle spirit, without the oath of chastity, ought to be born a knight: nor needed to expect the girt spur, or the laying a sword upon his shoulder, to stir him up, by his counsel and his arms, to secure and protect innocence.’ This native honor never forsok him. It is the spirit of Comus, the loftiest song in praise of chastity that is in any language.”

Mr. Henry Van Dyke says: “The Lady in Comus is the sweet embodiment of Milton’s youthful ideal of virtue clothed with the fairness of opening womanhood, armed with the sun-clad power of chastity.”
NOTES

"No courtier of Charles I," says F. D. Maurice, "felt the attraction of the masques and entertainments in which the monarch and his wife delighted, more than the young Puritan. In the masque of 'Comus' the object was to exhibit in richer and more glorious verse than had ever been consecrated to courtly tastes and courtly indulgences, the battle of virtue with its tempters, and the Divine help which is sustaining it against them."

4. serene. Some critics think this should be accented on the first syllable, but Masson prefers the usual pronunciation of the word.
5. pestered. From in and pastorium, a clog upon a horse at pasture, hence to encumber.
6. pinfold. Anglo-Saxon pyndan, to shut in; hence a pound in which stray beasts are put.
7. enthroned. A disyllable.
8. golden key. Cf. Lycidas, 111.

"The air is Zeus, Zeus earth, and Zeus the heaven, Zeus all that is, and what transcends them all."
Æschylus, Fragment, 293, Plumptre.

23. unadornèd. Supply before this, "otherwise."
24. several. Separate.
25. this Isle, etc. Great Britain. Cf. Richard II. ii. 1:

"This royal throne of kings," etc.

blue-haired. An epithet relating to them as of the sea.

"The blue-haired ocean." — Munsos.

27. this tract, etc. Western Britain or Wales.
28. noble Peer, etc. The Earl of Bridgewater.

mickle. Much.
33. old and naughtt. The Welsh, proud of being descendants of the Celts.

34. nursed. Educated.

43-45. for I will tell, etc. Cf. A Midsummer Night’s Dream, v. 1:

“Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?

What masque, what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?”

45. hall or bower. Large public room and private apartments.

46-50. Bacchus, etc.

“Think not that wine against good verse offends;
The Muse and Bacchus have been always friends.”

Elegy vi.

48. After the Tuscan mariners transformed. After the transformation of the Tuscan mariners. Alluding to the seizure of Bacchus by pirates and their transformation into dolphins as given in Homer’s Hymn to Bacchus.

50. Circe’s island. Cf. Odyssey, x.

54-58. This genealogy of Comus is a creation of Milton.

60. Celtic and Iberian. France and Spain.

65. orient. Shining.

67. fond. Foolish.

74. Not once perceive, etc. This is a variation from the Homeric account, where the companions of Ulysses are conscious of their state.

83. spun out of Iris’ woof. Cf. Paradise Lost, xi. 244:

“Iris had dipt the woof.”

84-91. a swain, etc. A compliment to Henry Lawes, who was the actor of the part.
88. of less faith. Not less trustworthy than he is skilled in music. (M.)

92. viewless. Cf. Paradise Lost, iii. 516–518:

"Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to Heaven sometimes
Viewless."

95–97. the gilded car of day, etc. Alluding to the ancient idea that the ocean hissed when the setting sun dropped into it.

98. slope. Declining, aslope.

105. rosy twine. Wreaths of roses.

110. saws. Maxims.

"I’ll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books," etc. — Hamlet, i. 5.


129. Cotytto. A Thracian divinity whose rites were associated with impurity.

132. spets. Old form of spits.

135. Hecat’. Hecate. Presiding genius of witchcraft, sorcery, etc. Cf. Macbeth, ii. 1:

"witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate’s offerings."

144. fantastic round. Cf. L’Allegro, 34, note.

151. trains. Allurements.

154. dazzling spells, etc. Some device is here resorted to for producing brilliant scintillations which the air (spongy) sucks up.

167. Whom thrift, etc. This line is omitted in ed. of 1673 and the next two are transposed.

175. granges. Granaries.

188. grey-hooded Even. Cf. Wordsworth, Sonnet:

"It is a beauteous evening calm and free:
The holy time is quiet as a nun."
204. single. Pure, unmixed. Cf.
207. calling shapes. Cf. Fletcher, *Faithful Shepherdess*
(Newton):

"Or voices calling me in dead of night
To make me follow."

237. Narcissus. The beautiful youth in love for whom Echo
pined away till only her voice was left, and who was changed
into a flower.

253. with the Sirens. This is invented by Milton.
254. flowery-kirtled. Wreathed in flowers.
267. Unless. Supply after this, "thou be."
293. swinked. Fatigued.
299. element. Air or sky.
301. plighted. Pleated, folded.
313. bosky. Woody.
315. attendance. For attendants.

317. low-roosted. The lark’s nest is on the ground. That
dear old poet, Izaak Walton, says: "At first the Lark, when
she means to rejoice, to cheer herself and those that hear, she
then quits the earth and sings as she ascends higher into the
air; and having ended her heavenly employment grows mute
and sad to think she must descend to the dull earth which she
would not touch but for necessity."

334. disinherit. Dispossess.
341, 342. star of Arcady, etc. Alluding to the Great Bear
being as Tyrian Cynosure to the pole-star in it; Callisto,
daughter of the King of Arcady, was changed into the Great
Bear. The Tyrian sailors steered by Cynosure — the pole-star.

360. To cast the fashion. To anticipate the form.
366. so to seek. So helpless.

— 367. unprincipled. Unlearned.
380. all to-ruffled. Ruffled very much, completely.
382. i' the centre. Of the earth. Cf. Hamlet, ii. 2:

"I will find
Where truth is hid, even though it were hid indeed
Within the centre."

385. Himself is his own dungeon. Cf. Samson Agonistes:

"Thou art become (O worse imprisonment !)
The dungeon of thyself."

393. Hesperian tree. That bore the golden apples in the
garden of the Hesperides watched by the dragon which Her-
cules slew.
395. unenchantèd. Not to be enchanted.
398. unsunned. Hidden.
401. wink on. Fail to see.
407. unowned. Unprotected.
408. Infer. Argue.
413. squint suspicion. Spenser in Faerie Queene, III. xii. 15,
says of Suspicion:

"His rolling eies did never rest in place."

423. trace. Traverse.
unharboured. Not affording shelter.
432. Some say no evil thing. Cf. Hamlet, i. 1:

'Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad."

434, 435. unlaid ghost, etc. Cf. Tempest, v. 1:

"whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew."

436. swart. Black.
439. **Antiquity.** Up to this time allusion had been made only to Mediaeval legend.

463. **So dear to Heaven.** Now the speaker passes into Platonic philosophy with a touch of Christianity. (M.)


"So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are."

Cf. Tennyson, *By an Evolutionist*, and Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

476–479. **How charming, etc.** An allusion to Plato, whom Milton admired.

491. **you fall on iron stakes else.** A caution to those who may be friendly. (M.)

494, 495. **Thyrisis, etc.** A compliment to Henry Lawes.

495–512. Note the rhyme scheme here. The purpose is to prolong to feeling of pastoralism by calling up the cadence of known English pastorals. (M.)

515–518. **What the sage poets, etc.** An allusion to the stories of Homer and Virgil.

520. **navel.** Centre.

526. **murmurs.** Spells.

529. **unmoulding.** Destroying.

531. **hilly crofts.** Upland pastures.

534. **stabled wolves.** Wolves in pens.

552–554. **Till an unusual stop.** Alluding to line 145. drowsy-flighted. Startled from their drowse.

555–562. **At last, etc.** A beautiful compliment to the singing of Lady Alice.

604. **Acheron.** The infernal river, here used for Hell. Cf. Phineas Fletcher’s *Locusts*:

"All hell run out, and sooty flags display." (M.)

605. **Harpies.** Cf. *Aeneid*, iii. 216–218:

"Birds with maidens’ faces, a foul discharge, crooked talons, and on their cheeks the pallor of eternal famine."

606. **Ind.** India: the region of black enchantments. (M.)
608. **curls.** Comus the voluptuary god wore curls. (K.)
627. **simples.** Medicinal herbs.
635. **clouted shoon.** Mended shoes.
636. **Moly.** Cf. *Odyssey*, x. By this plant Ulysses is made proof from the charms of Circe.

> “The root is black,
The blossom white as milk. Among the gods
It’s name is Moly.”

638. **Hæmony.** Milton invents this. It may be from *Hæmonia*, the old name for Thessaly, the land of magic. (M.)
646. **lime-twigs.** Snares smeared with bird lime.
655. **like the sons of Vulcan, vomit smoke.** Cf. *Aeneid*, viii. 251–253, where the giant Cacus, son of Vulcan, is alluded to:

> “Cacus, half man, half brute.
This monster’s father was Vulcan. Vulcan’s
Were the murky fires that he disgorged from his mouth.”

661. **Daphne.** Who when Apollo pursued her was turned into a laurel tree.

672. **julep.** Rose-water, here a cordial.
675. **Nepenthes.** A drug which Helen gave to Menelaus. Cf. *Odyssey*, iv. 220:

> “Helen, Jove-born dame,
With the wine they drank mingled a drug,
An antidote to grief and anger.”

**wife of Thone.** Polydamna an Egyptian.
698. **vizored.** Disguised.
707. **those budge doctors of the Stoic fur.** Budge was an old name for lamb’s fur, as worn on scholastic gowns.
**Stoic.** Who despised the pleasures of the senses.
708. **Cynic tub.** Of Diogenes.
711. **unwithdrawing.** Liberal.
719. **hutched.** Put in a chest.

721. **pulse.** Beans, pease, etc.

739–755. **Beauty is Nature's coin, etc.** Cf. Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, i.–vi.

750. **sorry grain.** Poor color.

750. **ply the sampler.** Make needle work for samples. Cf. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, iii. 2:

"We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler."

756–761. These lines are an *Aside*.

760. **bolt.** Refine.

791. **fence.** Thrusts. The figure is from fencing.

800–806. These lines are an *Aside*.

803. **wrath of Jove.** In the war of the Titans.

804. **Erebus.** Infernal regions.

809, 810. 'tis but the lees, etc. An allusion to the old idea that the gases of the stomach rose and affected the brain.

816. **rod reversed.** According to the old customs of undoing the spell by reversing the rod and pronouncing the words of the charm backwards. (M.)

822. **Meliboeus.** Common name for shepherds. Here for Geoffrey of Monmouth.

823. **soothe**. Truest.

824–827. **There is a gentle Nymph, etc.** Milton at one time meditated a poem on the settlement of Britain. He wrote a history of Britain as far as the Conquest. He here alludes to the old legend in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Britons*, which makes Brutus the second founder of Britain. One of his sons, Locrine, although he was engaged to Guendolen of Cornwall, fell in love with Estrildis, a German princess. Guendolen's father forced him to marry her, but Estrildis lived in his palace and bore him a daughter, Sabre, or Sabrina. He divorced Guendolen and acknowledged Estrildis and her daughter, but Guendolen rallied the Cornish people to her support, defeated Locrine and commanded Estrildis and her daugh-
ter to be drowned in the river, now called Severn from the
daughter's name. Cf. Faerie Queene, II. x. 14–19:

"The one she slew upon the present floure;
But the sad virgin, innocent of all,
Adowne the rolling river she did poure,
Which of her name now Severne men do call." (19.)

It was a very effective compliment to the people of Wales. Milton varies the legend a little in the interest of Sabrina.

835. aged Nereus' hall. Milton blends classic mythology with the British legend. Nereus was father of the sea nymphs, Nereids.

838. asphodil. A flower which grew in the Elysian fields.

845. Helping all urchin blasts. The urchin or hedgehog was the form often assumed by mischievous elves. Helping is currying. Cf. Tempest, ii. 2. Caliban alluding to Prospero's Spirits says:

"Sometimes like apes they mow and chatter at me,
And after bite me; then like hedgehogs which
Lie tumbling in my barefoot way," etc.


852. old swain. Melibœus.

858. After praising the speeches, Macaulay says: "The interruptions of the dialogue impose a constraint upon the writer, and break the illusion of the reader. The finest passages are those which are lyric in form as well as in spirit. . . . When he is at liberty to indulge his choral raptures without reserve, he rises even above himself. . . . He stands forth in celestial freedom and beauty."

863. amber-dropping. Amber-colored and dripping with wet.

867–889. Listen and appear to us, etc. Allusions to the classical mythology here are: Oceanus, god of the great stream which encircled the habitable world; Neptune is a later sea king. Tethys is the wife of Oceanus and mother of the river gods. Nereus, see note to line 835. Carpathian Wizard is
Proteus, who could change into any shape; he lived in a cave in Carpathus in the Mediterranean. He was a sea shepherd and his flock was of sea calves. Cf. Virgil, Georgics, iv.: 507-509.

"In the sea gods’ Carpathian gulf there lives a seer, Proteus, of the sea’s own hue, who takes the measure of the mighty deep with his fishes, even with his harnessed two-legged steeds."

Triton, son of Neptune, rode on sea horses, blowing his "wreathed horn."

Glaucus was a fisherman who, having eaten a certain herb, was changed into a sea god, and roved about islands uttering oracles for sailors. Leucothea (white goddess) was Ino, daughter of Cadmus. She threw herself and her son into the sea and was changed into a sea deity. Cf. Paradise Lost, xi. 135:

"Leucothea waked and with fresh dews embalmed the Earth."

Her son was god of ports and harbors. Thetis, one of the daughters of Nereus, was mother of Achilles; Homer calls her silverfooted. Parthenope and Ligea were Sirens; the tomb of the former was at Naples. The golden comb seems to suggest the mermaids of northern mythology seen "combining their golden hair." (M.)

"With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair."

Tennyson, The Mermaid.

893. azurn. Azure.
894. turkis. Turquoise.
895. strays. Moved along by tide.
897. printless feet. Cf. Tempest, v. 1:

And ye that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune."

921. Amphitrite’s bower. Chamber of Amphitrite, the wife of Neptune.
923. Anchises’ line. Anchises was the founder of the line through Aeneas, Brutus, etc.
929. tresses. Foliage on thy banks.
934. lofty head. Source of the river, and possibly put for the river itself.
958. Back, shepherds. The country dancers are interrupted by the arrival of this party.

959. sun-shine holiday. Compare this merrymaking with that in L’Allegro, 92–98.

960. without duck or nod. They are now to lay aside their country ways and assume the manners of the courtly dancers.

976–979. To the ocean, etc. Cf. Ariel’s song in Tempest, v. 1:

"Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In a cowslip’s bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat’s back I do fly,” etc.

Compare these closing lines of Comus with “Thence through the gardens,” etc. Cf. Tennyson’s Recollections of the Arabian Nights.

981. the gardens, etc. Cf. 393, note.

990. cedarn. Of cedar.

998. Beds of hyacinths. Cf. Faerie Queene, iii. vi. 46. Adonis lies

“Lapped in flowres and pretious spycery.”


1004. Cupid, etc. Cf. Faerie Queene, iii. vi. 50:

“And his trew love faire Psyche with him playes,” etc.

1009. side. Cf. Tennyson’s Rizpah:

“They are mine — not
Their — they had moved in my side.”

1010. blissful twins. Spenser gives but one child to Psyche:

“Pleasure, the daughter of Cupid and Psyche late.”

1017. corners of the moon. Cf. Macbeth, iii. 5:

“Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporeous drop profound.”

1022. Or, if Virtue feeble were. Masson gives an interesting anecdote in connection with the last two lines of Comus.
When Milton was returning home from his continental travel in 1639, he met in Geneva a teacher of Italian, Cerdogni or Cardouin, a Neapolitan by birth, and probably a Protestant. Cardouin asked Milton to write in his album. He complied and wrote—

“If Virtue feeble were
Heaven itselfe would stoope to her.

“Coelum non animum mutò dum trans mare curro.

“IOANNES MILTONIUS.

Anglus.”

“Junii 10, 1639.

Masson says, “If we combine the English lines with the Latin addition, it is as if he said: “The closing words of my Comus are a permanent maxim with me.”

The album was sold in Geneva in 1834 for a few shillings, and after passing through several hands came into the possession of Hon. Charles Sumner. It is now in the Sumner collection, Harvard College Library.

**Variations in Stage-Direcions**

Stage-directions in the Cambridge Ms., afterwards changed by Milton, are: Instead of the opening stage-direction, “The Attendant Spirit descends or enters,” we have—

* A Guardian Spirit or Daemon.

After line 92: *Goes out.* — Comus enters, with a charming-rod and glass of liquor, with his rout all headed like some wild beasts, their garments some like men’s and some like women’s. They come in a wild and antic fashion. *Intrant κωμάροις.*

After 144: *The Measure, in a wild, rude, and wanton Antic.*

After 147, where there is no stage-direction now, we have: *They all scatter.*

After 243, where there is no stage-direction now, we have: *Comus looks in and enters.*

After 330: *Exeunt.* — *The Two Brothers enter.*

After 489: *He hallos: the Guardian Daemon hallos again and enters in the habit of a shepherd.*
NOTES

After 658. The present reading is the same as in the Cambridge Mss., with the exception that Soft music is omitted from first sentence; and the second reads: Comus is discovered with his rabble, and The Lady set in an enchanted chair: she offers to rise.

After 813: The Brothers rush in, strike his glass down; the Shapes make as though they would resist, but are all driven in. Dæmon enters with them.

After 866, where there is no stage-direction now, we have: To be said, and after 937 there is, Song ends.

After 957: Exeunt. — The Scene changes, and then is presented Ludlow town, and the President's Castle; then enter Country Dances and such like gambols, etc. At these sports the Daemon, with the Two Brothers and The Lady enter. The Daemon sings.

After 965, we have merely, 2 Song.

TEXTUAL

The following readings are found in the Cambridge Mss.: After 4, the Cambridge draft has, crossed out:

"Amidst the Hesperian gardens, on whose banks,
Bedewed with nectar and celestial songs,
Eternal roses grow, and hyacinths,
And fruits of golden rind, on whose fair tree
The scaley-harnessed dragon ever keeps
His unenchanted eye, around the verge
And sacred limits of this blissful Isle
The jealous Ocean, that old river, winds
His far-extended arms, till with steep fall
Half his waste flood the wild Atlantic fills,
And half the slow unfathomed Stygian pool.
But soft! I was not sent to court your wonder
With distant worlds and strange removed climes.
Yet thence I come, and oft from thence behold."

5. "The smoke and stir of this dim narrow spot."

After 7: "Beyond the written date of mortal change."
21. "The rule and title of each sea-girt isle."
28. main, was "his empire."
68. "Which therefore she brought up and Comus named."
90. "Nearest and likeliest to give present aid."
97. Atlantic, was "Tartarian."
99. dusky, was "Northern."
108. Advice with, was "quick Law with her."
123. hath, was "has."
133. This line has two forms:
   (1) "And makes a blot of nature."
   (2) "And throws a blot o'er all the air."
134-137 was:
   "Stay thy polished ebon chair
   Wherein thou rid'st with Hecate,
   And favour our close joondry,
   Till all thy dues," etc.
144. With a light and frolic round.
150. charms, was "trains."
151. my wily trains, was "my mother's charms."
154. dazzling, was "powdered."
164. snares, was "nets."
170. mine, was "my."
175. granges, was "garners."
181. mazes, was "alleys," and tangled, was "arched."
190. wain, was "chair."
194. To the soon-parting light and envious Darkness.
195. stole, was "stolne."
208. that syllable men's names, was "that lure night-wanderers."
214. hovering, was "fittering."
215. unblemished, was "unspotted."
216. For this line there was:
   "I see ye visibly; and, while I see ye,
   This dusky hollow is a Paradise,
   And Heaven gates o'er my head: now I believe."
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219. guardian, was "cherub."
231. shell, was "cell."
243. give resounding grace, was "hold a counterpoint."
252. it, was "she."
257. wept, was "would weep."
258. And chid, was "Chiding."
270. prosperous, was "prospering."
279. Near-ushering guides, was "their ushering hands."
310. the sure guess, was "sure steerage."
316. Or shroud within these limits, was "within these shroudy limits."
326. And yet most pretended, was "And is pretended yet."
352. Amongst rude burs and thistles, was "in this dead solitude."
355–366 was:

"She leans her thoughtful head, musing at our unkindness;
Or, lost in wild amazement and affright,
So fairs as did forsaken Proserpine,
When the big rolling flakes of pitchy clouds
And darkness wound her in.

1 Br. Peace, brother, peace!
I do not think my sister," etc.

376. sweet retired solitude, was "solitary sweet retire."
384, 385:

"Walks in black vapours, though noon-tide brand
Blaze in the summer solstice."

390. weeds, was "beads."
391. His few books, or his beads, was "His books, or his hair gown."
403. wild surrounding waste, was (1) "wide surrounding waste," and (2) "vast and hideous wild."
409, 410. For these lines there was the following:

"Secure without all doubt or question. No:
I could be willing, though now i' the dark, to try
A tough encounter with the shaggiest ruffian
That lurks by hedge or lane of this dead circuit,
To have her by my side, though I were sure
She might be free from peril where she is;
But, where an equal poise,” etc.

422, 423. For these lines we have:

“And may, on every needful accident,
Be it not done in pride or wilful tempting,
Walk through huge forests,” etc.

425. rays was “awe.”
After 429 was the following:

“And yawning dens, where glaring monsters house.”

432. Some say, was “Nay more.”
434. meagre, was “wrinkled.”
465. lewd and lavish, was “the lascivious.”
471. sepulchres, was “monuments.”
472. Lingering, was “Hovering.”
485. roving robber, was (1) “curled man of the sword,”
and (2) “hedger.”

490. “Had best look to his forehead: here be brambles.”
491. iron, was “pointed.”
496. dale, was “valley.”
497. swain, was “shepherd.”
498. Slipped from the fold, was “Leap’t o’er the pen.”
513. ye, was “you.”
531. hilly crofts, was “pasturèd lawns.”
555, 556:

“At last a soft [still, sweet] and solemn breathing sound
Rose like the soft steam of distilled perfumes.”

605. monstrous forms, was “monstrous bugs.”

607-609:

“And force him to release his new-got prey,
Or drag him by the curls and cleave his scalp
Down to the hips.”

614. unthread, was “unquilt.”
627. names, was "hues."
636. That Hermes once, was "Which Mercury."
650. dauntless hardihood, was "sudden violence."
658. "And good Heaven cast his best regard upon us."
661. or as Daphne, was "fixed as Daphne."
After 678 there was:
"Poor Lady, thou hast need of some refreshing."
707. fur, was "gown."
713. Thronging, was "Cramming."
After 713 there was:
"The fields with cattle, and the air with fowl."
732-734. For these there were five lines:
"The sea o'erfraught would heave her waters up
Above the stars, and the unsought diamonds
Would so bestud the centre with their star-light
And so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
Were they not taken thence, that they below."
744. with languished head, was "and fades away."
749. complexions, was "beetle brows."
806. Come, no more, "Come, y'are too moral."
807-809. Here we have only two lines:
"This is mere moral stuff, the very lees
And settlings."
816. rod, was "art."
821. Some other means I have, was "There is another way
that."
834. pearled, was "white," and took, was "received."
After 846 was: "And often takes our cattle with strange
pinches."
851. "Of pansies and of bonnie daffodils."
853. "Each clasping charm and secret holding spell."
860. Art sitting, was "sit'st."
895. That in the channel stays, was "That my rich wheels
inlays."
910. Brightest, was "Virtuous."
921. "To wait on Amphitrite in her bower."
957. sits, was "reigns."
962, 963:
"Of nimbler toes, and courtly guise,
    Such as Hermes did devise."
979. broad, was "plain."
983. There was first here:
"Where grows the high-borne gold upon his native tree,"
but it was struck out.
990, 991:
"About the myrtle alleys fling
    Balm and cassia's fragrant smells."

After 995 is the following, crossed for erasure:
"Yellow, watchet, green, and blue."

996. Elysian, was "Sabæan."
999. young Adonis oft, was "many a cherub soft."
1012. Task is smoothly, was "message well is."
1014. green Earth's end, was "Earth's green end."
1015. Slow, was (1) "low," (2) "clear."
1023. stoop, was "bow."

1637–1638–1645

LYCIDAS

(In Milton's hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

For three years after the composition of Comus Milton lived
a quiet life at Horton with books and Nature, but the year 1637
brought him his first great grief. His mother, who had been
an embodiment of woman nobly planned, passed away on the
third of April. She was of sweet and tender disposition, of
gracious household ways, and we must believe that she had
much to do in opening the mind of her son to beautiful thoughts.
We believe he had her in mind when he wrote the following:
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"Yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuouesest, discreetest, best.
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; Wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanced, and like Folly shows;
Authority and Reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally; and to consummate all,
Greatness of mind and nobleness their seats
Build in her loveliest, and create an army
About her, as a guard angelic, placed."

Paradise Lost, viii. 546-559.

She was buried in the Parish Church of Horton. On the plain slab in the floor of the chancel may be read—"Heare lyeth the Body of Sara Milton, the wife of John Milton, who died the 3rd of April, 1637."

It is worth while here to refer to those other noble tributes to mothers in the works of Wordsworth and Tennyson:

"Early died my honoured mother, she who was the heart
And hinge of all our learnings and our lives:

She, not falsely taught,
Fetching her goodness rather from times past,
Than shaping novelties for times to come,
Had no presumption, no such jealousy,
Nor did by habit of her thoughts mistrust
Our nature, but had virtual faith that He
Who fills the mother's breast with innocent milk,
Doth also for our nobler part provide
Under His great correction and control,
As innocent instincts, and as innocent food:
This was her creed, and therefore she was pure
From anxious fear of error or mishap
And evil overweeningly so called.

Such was she. Not from faculties more strong
Than others have, but from the times, perhaps,
And spot in which she lived, and through a grace
Of modest meekness, simple-mindedness,
A heart that found benignity and hope,
Being itself benign.”

_Elizabeth Barrett Browning_ "Prelude, v.

"‘Alone,’ I said, ‘from earlier than I know,
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
I loved the woman: he, that doth not, lives
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
Or keeps his wing’d affections clipt with crime:
Yet was there one thro’ whom I loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Who look’d all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seem’d to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sway’d to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girdled her with music. Happy he
With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and tho’ he trip and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay.’”


Hardly had Milton gathered himself from the shock of this
affliction when he was called to face another in the death of his
college friend Edward King. In the association of Milton and
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King we have an illustration of those significantly touching attachments of man to man which have so often quickened the pulse and chastened the spirit of English poetry; as in the case of Spenser and Sidney, Shakespeare and "W. H., the only begetter of the Sonnets," Shelley and Keats, Tennyson and Hallam, Arnold and Clough, Wordsworth and Coleridge.

King was one of the students of Milton’s time of whom much was to be expected. He had written some respectable Latin verse, and was appointed to a Fellowship in Christ’s College. In the long vacation of 1637 he started on a visit to his family and friends in Ireland, and while passing from Chester to Dublin the vessel struck on the rocks, and he, with other passengers, was drowned. A volume of memorial verses was proposed at the reassembling of the College in October, and early in 1638 was published in two sections, one in Latin and Greek, and the other in English; the title of the latter was "Obsequies to the Memorie of Mr. Edward King, Anno Dom., 1638." In this collection Milton’s poem stands last.

Among the Sicilian and Alexandrian Greeks there arose a form of poetry which idealized country life, in which the beauty and freshness of simple primary affections and passions were the centre of interest. Theocritus the Syracusan was the most important of the creators of this poetry.

"Nay, but, Galatea, come!
Come thence, and having come, forget henceforth,
As I, (who tarry here) to seek thy home!
And may’st thou love with me to feed the flocks
And curdling their milk with rennet."

THEOCRITUS.

They gave the name Eclogues (Eklogai), Goatherd’s Tales, to these simple productions.

Virgil copied from the Greeks and gave the name Bucolic or Pastoral to his work. He says: "Muses of Sicily, let us strike a somewhat loftier strain... at length a new generation is descending from heaven." And again: "First of all, my muse
deigned to disport herself in the strains of pastoral Syracuse, and disdained not to make her home in the woods, goddess as she was."

*Eclogues* iv. and vi.

"Cruel Alexis! have you no care for my songs? no pity for me? You will drive me to death at last. It is the hour when even cattle are seeking the shade and its coolness—the hour when even green lizards are sheltering themselves in the brakes, and Thestyris is preparing for the reapers, as they come back spent with the vehement heat, her savory mess of garlic and wild thyme."

*Eclogue* ii.

As Virgil copied from the Greeks, so the Italians of the Renaissance imitated Virgil, but added an element of moralizing verging on satire. With the Renaissance the pastoral entered England, with Sydney and Spenser it reached its finest type in the *Arcadia, The Shepheard's Calendar*, and *The Faerie Queene*.

"Shepheards, that wont, on pipes of oaten reed,  
Oft times to plaine your loves concealed smart;  
And with your piteous layes have learnd to breed  
Compassion in a countrey lasses hart  
Hearken, ye gentle shepheards, to my song,  
And place my dolefull plaint your plaints emong."

*Astrophel*.

Writing to a friend at this time, Milton says: "What God has resolved concerning me I know not, but this I know at least—He has instilled into me a vehement love of the beautiful. . . . You ask what I am thinking of? So may the Good Deity help me; of immortality—I am pluming my wings and meditating flight." He may have been meditating upon his epic when the death of his friend called him away for a time. The poem is pastoral in form, with prologue and epilogue, and a body of monody by a shepherd mourning. That Milton's feelings tended to cause him to violate this form we are sure, as twice he checks himself for passing beyond the limits of a pastoral.
Alluding to the mingling of national and social philosophy with the pastoral mourning, Mr. Stopford Brooke says: “One of its strange charms is its solemn undertone rising like a religious chant through the elegiac music... the sense of Christian religion pervading the classical imagery.” The tone of religious earnestness, which is manifest as a subordinate element in the early poems, becomes primary in the poems of the Horton period. It is in the L’Allegro and Il Penseroso as a plea for a “reasonable life”; in Comus as a condemnation of the license of the court, and a hymn in praise of temperance and chastity; in the Lycidas as a fierce denunciation of the corruptions of the church—that “grim wolf with privy paw.”

Lowell says: “The strain heard in the ‘Nativity Ode,’ in the ‘Solemn music,’ and in ‘Lycidas’ is of a higher mood, as regards metrical construction, than anything that had thrilled the English ear before, giving no uncertain augury of him who was to show what sonorous metal lay silent till he touched the keys in the epical organ-pipes of our various languages.”

Emerson says: “No individual writer has been an equal benefactor of the English language by showing its capabilities.”

1. Yet once more, etc. Three years had elapsed since Milton had written Comus. He had written nothing in the interim.

3–5. I come to pluck, etc. The symbolism here evidently is that he is compelled to write when but for the sad event he would be gathering himself for work which would merit the laurel wreath in due season.

8–9. Lycidas is dead... young Lycidas. The name Lycidas is taken from classic pastorals by Ovid and Virgil. The reflection here is common. Cf. Spenser, Astrophel:

“Young Astrophel, the pride of shepheard’s praise,
Young Astrophel, the rusticke lasses love.”

10, 11. he knew, etc. Cf. supra.

15. Begin then. Cf. Spenser, Teares of the Muses:

“Rehearse to me, ye sacred Sisters ninè,” etc.
sacred well. The Pierian Spring at the foot of Olympus, the seat of the Homeric Pantheon.

19–22. So may some gentle muse, etc. The prayer here expressed by Milton that he himself would merit some memorial has been generously answered.

23–36. For we were nursed, etc. A beautiful setting of their life at Cambridge.

28. grey-fly. Cleg, or horse-fly.

34–36. Rough Satyrs, etc. Masson thinks there may be an allusion here to some of Milton’s undergraduate associates, and that old Damætus may refer to some Fellow or tutor.

40. gadding. Wandering, straggling.

46. taint-worm. The name taint was once given to a small red spider, deadly to cattle. (M.)

49. Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd’s ear. Cf. Mids. N. Dream, i. 1:

"More tuneable than lark to shepherd’s ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear."

50–55. Where were ye, etc. Cf. Virgil, Eclogue x.:

"What forests, what lawns were your abode, virgin nymphs of the fountains, when Gallus was wasting under an unworthy passion? What, indeed? for it was not any spot in the ridges of Parnassus or of Pindus that kept you there; no, nor Aonian Aganippe."

Virgil imitated the first idyl of Theocritus, but Masson agrees with Keightley that Milton excels Virgil in imitation.

52. The steep, etc. This is an allusion to some particular mountain in Wales.


55. Deva. The Dee. The old boundary between England and Wales. Cf. Faerie Queene, I. ix. 4:

"From whence the river Dee, as silver cleene,
His tombling billowes rolls with gentle rore."

Chester, the port from which King sailed, is on the Dee.

58–63. What could the Muse, etc. Orpheus, the son of Cal-
liope, because he continued to grieve for Eurydice (cf. note
*L’Allegro*, 145), was torn to pieces by the offended Thracian
women in their Bacchanalian orgies. The Muses buried frag-
ments of the body at the foot of Mount Olympus, but his head
was thrown into the river Hebrus, which carried it to the
island of Lesbos, where it was buried. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, vii.
32–39:

“But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus, and his revellers, the race
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drown’d
Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse
Defend her son.”

67–69. **Were it not better**, etc. To lead a life of ease and
pleasure. *Amaryllis* and *Næra* are names of shepherds’ sweet-
hearts in the old pastorals.

—70. **clear.** Aspiring.

75. **blind Fury.** Atropos.

77. **touched my trembling ears.** The idea here seems to be
that Milton was over-anxious for fame. Cf. Virgil, *Eclogue* vi.
“Cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthius aurem vellit, et
admonuit,” which Conington translates, “When I was ventur-
ing to sing of kings and battles, the Cynthian god touched my
ear and appealed to my memory.” Here touching the ear is
symbolic of quickening the memory.

79. **glistering foil.** Temporary reputation, which might like
the shining tinsel wrap a very cheap article.

81, 82. **But lives**, etc. Compare this alliance of Heaven with
true fame, with the idea in the last two lines of *Comus*.

85, 86. **O fountain Arethusa.** The nymph of the fountain of
Arethusa in Sicily was the Muse of pastoral poetry as revealed
in Theocritus: Mincius was a river of Italy near which Virgil,
the type of Latin pastoral poet, was born. Cf. Virgil, *Eclogue*
vi.

“Mincius fringing his green banks with a border of vocal reeds.”
87, 88. That strain, etc. The words of Apollo were more profound than the simple pastoral.

89, 90. the Herald of the sea, etc. In the judicial inquiry in regard to the death of Lycidas Triton came as representative of Neptune.


96. Hippotades. Ψελός, the god of the winds, was son of Hippotes.

99. Panope. One of the Nereids.

101. Built in the eclipse. Cf. Macbeth, iv. 1:

"Slips of yew
Slivered in the moon's eclipse"

are one of the ingredients of the witches' hell-broth.

103–107. Next, Camus, etc. The genius of the river Cam and of Cambridge University. Masson gives the note in Plumptre's Greek translation of Comus in explanation of the garb of Camus:

"The mantle is as if made of the plant 'river spruce' which floats copiously on the Cam: the bonnet of the river-sedge, distinguished by vague marks traced somehow over the middle of the leaves and serrated at the edge of the leaves, after the fashion of the At, At of the hyacinth." The hyacinth was the flower in whose petals the Greeks saw the At, At. Alas! Alas!

Inwrought. In the Ms. this is "scrawled o'er."

107. pledge. Hope, an allusion to the expectation of what King would have done had he lived. Cf. In Memoriam, lxxii.:

"The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath," etc.

108–131. Last came, etc. Cf. Matthew iv. 18–20. The reader should consult Ruskin's comment on this passage in "King's Treasures" (Sesame and Lilies). Masson says, "St. Peter, here called by name suggesting his original occupation as fisherman and with occult reference to the fact that Lycidas had perished at sea." The tradition of the Church as to the office of St. Peter is symbolized by the possession of the two
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keys, one for opening and the other for shutting. “Though not a lover of false bishops, Milton was a lover of true ones.” — Ruskin. “And were the punishment and misery of being a prelate-bishop terminated only in the person, and did not extend to the affliction of the whole diocese, if I would wish anything in the bitterness of soul to mine enemy, I would wish him the biggest and fattest bishopric.” — Apology for Smectymnuus.

112. mitred locks. Milton here allows St. Peter to speak with episcopal authority. “The Lake-Pilot is here in Milton’s thoughts the type and head of true episcopal power.” — Ruskin.

113. How well could I have spared, etc. This passage concluding in line 129 is in many respects the most significant in the poem. A more graphic picture of the incapacity of the hireling church can hardly be conceived. It reveals how surely though quietly the bow was being strung which only the sinews of Ulysses could draw, and which would send the arrow to the mark when the time came. We wonder how it could have escaped the condemnation of those against whom it was directed. Emerson says: “Questions that involve all social and personal rights were hasting to be decided by the sword, and were searched by eyes to which the love of freedom, civil and religious, lent new illumination.”

115. Creep, and intrude, and climb. Ruskin says: “Do not think Milton uses these three words to fill up his verse. He needs all the three; specially those three, and no more than those. — ‘Creep,’ and ‘intrude,’ and ‘climb,’ no other words would or could serve the turn, and no more could be added.” There are three classes here: First, the cunning; second, the insolently bold; and third, those who are ambitious to gain high dignities.

119. Blind mouths. “Those two monosyllables express the precisely accurate contraries of right character; in the two great offices of the Church — those of bishop and pastor. A Bishop means one who sees. A Pastor means one who feeds. The most unh bishoply character a man can have is therefore to be Blind. The most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want
to be fed — to be a Mouth." — Ruskin. Cf. Wordsworth, 
_Prelude_, i. 210, 211:

“ballad tunes
Food for the hungry ears of little ones.”

124. _scannel._ Screeching. Coined by Milton. (M.)
125. The hungry sheep look up, etc. Cf. Spenser, _Sheep-
heard’s Calendar_ (Maye):

_Piers._ “Those saytours little regarden their charge,
While they letting their sheepe runne at large,
Passen their time that should be sparely spent,
In lustihede and wanton meryment.
Thilke same bene shepeheardes for the Devil’s stedde,
That playen while their flockes be unfedde.”

Cf. Ben Jonson, _Pan’s Anniversary_:

_Shep._ “Now each return unto his charge,
And though today you’ve lived at large,
And well your flocks have fed their fill,
Yet do not trust your hireling still.
See yond’ they go, and timely do
The office you have put them to;
But if you often give this leave,
Your sheep and you they will deceive.”

Cowper must have had these lines in mind when he wrote:

“When nations are to perish in their sins,
’Tis in the church the leprosy begins;
The priest, whose office is, with zeal sincere,
To watch the fountain and preserve it clear,
Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,
While others poison what the flock must drink.”

_Expostulation._

126. _wind and rank mist._ Unsubstantial and unwholesome
doctrines. “This is to meet the vulgar answer that ‘if the
poor are not looked after in their bodies, they are in their souls; they have spiritual food.’” — Ruskin.

128. grim wolf. The Church of Rome was growing by the converts it made and there was little opposition.

130. that two-handed engine. This passage has puzzled the critics. Some think it refers to the axe to be laid at the root of the trees, or the sword which Michael the Archangel “brandished with huge two-handed sway” in the war in Heaven, while others think it alludes to the sword of the Apocalypse. It evidently has a Biblical origin. Masson thinks it may mean the Two Houses of Parliament, from the fact that not for eight years had Charles summoned a Parliament. When we consider what an “engine” the Parliament of 1640 was, we may not consider this interpretation far-fetched.

132. Return, Alpheus, etc. After the digression the pastoral note is resumed by calling upon the lover of Arethusa. Cf. line 85.

—136. use. Stay.

138. swart star. The malignant Dog-star Sirius.

sparely. Rarely.

142–151. Bring the rathe primrose, etc. Ruskin in Modern Painters, Vol. II. “Of Imagination Penetrative,” page 168, has a somewhat singular comment on the first seven lines of this beautiful passage. It seems to contradict the teaching of Vol. I. He says: “Compare Milton’s flowers in Lycidas with Perdita’s. In Milton it happens, I think generally, and in the case before us most certainly, that the imagination is mixed and broken with fancy, and so the strength of the imagery is part of iron and part of clay.” He then marks the lines as follows:

142. (Imagination.)
143. (Nugatory.) Unimaginative.
144. (Fancy.)
145. (Imagination.)
146. (Fancy, vulgar.)
147. (Imagination.)
148. (Mixed.)

"Then hear Perdita:

‘O, Proserpina,

For the flowers now, that frightened thou let’st fall
From Dis’s wagon. Daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty. Violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno’s eyes
Or Cytherea’s breath; pale primroses
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phoebus in his strength, a malady
Most incident in maids.’” — Winter’s Tale.

Observe how the imagination in these last lines goes into the
very inmost soul of the flower . . . and never stops on their
spots, or their bodily shape, while Milton sticks in the stains
upon them and puts us off with that unhappy freak of jet in
the very flower that without this bit of paper-staining would
have been the most precious to us of all.”

Cf. Spenser, Shepherd’s Calendar (April):

"Bring hither the pincke and purple cullambine,

With gelliflowres;
Bring coronations, and sops-in-wine,

Worn of paramoures:
Strowe me the ground with daffadowndillies,
And cowslips, and kingcups, and loved lillies;
The pretie pawnce,
And the chevisaunce,
Shall match with the fayre flower-delice.”

Cf. Keats, Endymion, book ii. 412-418:

"the ivy mesh,
Shading its Ethiop berries; and the woodbine,
Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine;
Convolvulus in streaked vases flush;
The creeper, mellowing for an autumn blush;
And virgins bower, trailing airily;
With others of the sisterhood.”
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Cf. Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, lxxxiii:

"Bring orchis, bring the fox-glove spire,
   The little speedwell's darling blue,
   Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
   Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire."

142. **rathe.** Early. Our word *rather* is the comparative of this adjective.

143. **crow-toe.** Crowfoot violet.

151. **laureate hearse.** Laurelled tomb.

153. **daily with false surmise.** Think that the body is entombed, though really it is washed about by the sea.

156–162. **beyond the stormy Hebrides, etc.** King was shipwrecked on the Irish coast. Milton sketches the wanderings of the body to the Scottish coast— to Land's End, Cornwall—the fabled abode of *Bellerus*, where the "guarded mount," St. Michael's, looks toward Cape Finistere and the castle (hold) of Bayona on the south.

163. **Look homeward.** Here Michael, who has been looking toward Naumancos and Bayona's hold, is asked to direct his gaze toward England.

164. **ye dolphins, etc.** An allusion to the rescuing of Arion, whom the sailors had thrown overboard.

165–181. **Weep no more, etc.** Compare these lines with 198–219 of *Epitaphium Damonis*, pp. 256, 257.

169. **repairs.** Raises again.

170. **new-spangled ore.** Renewed golden splendor.

173. **Through the dear might of Him, etc.** Note the appositeness to the whole subject of the poem in this reference to Christ's power over the waves. (M.)

176. **unexpressive.** Inexpressibly sweet. (M.)

181. **And wipe the tears, etc.** Cf. *Rev.* vii. 17, xxi. 4.

183. **thou art the Genius, etc.** Cf. *Epitaphium Damonis*, 207–211.

186. **uncouth.** Unknown, rather than rude, seems to be the idea here.
NOTES

188. stops of various quills. Alluding to the changing moods of the poem.
189. Doric. The Greek pastoral poets used the Doric dialect.

TEXTUAL

The following were the readings of the Cambridge Mss.: 
10. he knew, was "he well knew."
22. And bid, was "To bid."
26. opening, was "glimmering."
30. star that rose at evening bright, was "even-star bright."
31. westering, was "burnished."
47. wardrobe, was "buttons."
58–63. These lines were:

"What could the golden-haired Calliope
    For her enchanting son,
        When she beheld (the gods far-sighted be)
            His gory scalp roll down the Thracian lea?"

In the margin after "enchanting son" these lines were substituted for the two lines that follow:

"Whom universal Nature might lament,
    And Heaven and Hell deplore,
        When his divine head down the stream was sent,
            Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore."

69. Or with, was "Hid in."
85. honoured, was "smooth."
86. smooth-sliding, was "soft-sliding."
105. Inwrought, was "Scrawled o'er," with "Inwrought" in margin.
129. nothing, was "little."
138. sparely, was "stintly," though "sparely" had been first written.
139. Throw, was "Bring."
142–151. For these lines there were the following:

"Bring the rathe primrose that unwedded dies,
    Colouring the pale cheek of unenjoyed love
And that sad flower that strove
To write his own woes on the vermeil grain:
Next add Narcissus that still weeps in vain,
The woodbine, and the pansy freakt with jet,
The glowing violet,
The cowslip wan that hangs his pensive head,
And every bud that Sorrow’s livery wears;
Let daffadillies fill their cups with tears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
To strew,” etc.

“Sorrow’s livery” is changed into “sad escutcheon,” and that into the present reading.
153. frail, was “sad.”
154. shores, was “floods.”
160. Bellerus, was “Corineus.”
176. And hears, was “Listening.” (T.)

1642–1645

WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY

(Copy in the hand of an amanuensis, but title in Milton’s own hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

In spite of the fact that the breach between Royalist and Puritan was daily becoming wider, Milton having gained the approval of his father prepared to carry out a long-cherished plan of visiting Italy. His passport was furnished by Sir Henry Wotton, Provost of Eton, and early in May he crossed the Channel, “to fresh woods and pastures new.” “A more impressive Englishman never left our shores,” says Augustine Birrell. “Sir Philip Sidney perhaps approaches him nearest. Beautiful beyond praise, and just sufficiently conscious of it to be careful not to appear at a disadvantage—a gentleman, a scholar, a poet, a musician, and a Christian.” In Paris he was presented to the English Ambassador of Charles, and by him was introduced to “that most learned man,” Hugo Grotius, Ambassador from the Queen of Sweden. He remained in Paris but a short time, for his dreams of classic Italy lured him on.
In August we find him in Florence. Here he was received with the kindest hospitality by many of the young men in the famous literary circles, and was praised with a true Italian fervor. He met the famous Galileo — old, feeble, and blind — at his villa in Arcetri. This was the most impressive of all his experiences in Italy. From Florence he went to Rome, where he refreshed his memory of Horace, Livy, and Virgil by visiting places associated with their life and work. He heard Leonora Baroni, the first singer of the world at that time, and expressed his enthusiasm for her art in Latin epigrams. In five sonnets written in Italian we have another illustration of Milton’s worship at the shrine of Italian beauty. He was captivated by the “magnetic movements and love-darting dark brow” of some daughter of this land of art and beauty. What a lover he was is splendidly illustrated in the sonnet which Masson has translated:

"Young, gentlenatured, and a simple wooer,
Since in myself I stand in doubt to fly,
Lady, to thee my heart's poor gift would I
Offer devoutly; and by tokens sure
I know it faithful, fearless, constant, pure,
In its conceptions graceful, good, and high.
When the world roars and flames the startled sky;
In its own adamant it rests secure;
As free from chance and malice ever found,
And fears and hopes that vulgar minds confuse,
As it is loyal to each manly thing
And to the sounding lyre and to the muse,
Only in that part is it not so sound
Where Love hath set in it his cureless sting."

He writes to his friend Diodati and confides in him the secret of the passionate love. On returning home he learned at Geneva that soon after he left England Diodati had died. This sadness, together with the feeling that it was unpatriotic for him to be in pleasure when his friends at home were struggling for freedom, hurried him to England. He revealed his sense of
loss at the death of his friend in a Latin elegy, *Epitaphium Damonis*.

Mr. Richard Garnett says: "Four times has a great English poet taken up his abode in 'the paradise of exiles,' and remained there until deeply imbued with the spirit of the land. The Italian residence of Byron and Shelley, of Landor and Browning, has infused into English literature a new element which has mingled with its inmost essence."

On returning to England in August, 1639, Milton did not take active part in the controversies of the time, but settled in studious life. After a short visit to Horton he took lodgings in St. Bride's, Fleet Street. He soon found these too small, and the next year he removed to Aldersgate Street, outside the city walls, near Islington, a quiet and restful quarter. Here he planned a poem which should be a monument to the English language—the first attempts at *Paradise Lost*. Here, too, he became tutor to his nephews and a few other boys. What his ideas of education were may be found in his *Tractate on Education*, written in 1644. In it occurs his famous definition: "I call therefore a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all offices, both private and public, of peace and war."

In 1641 he began a series of pamphlets on social and political questions, the first of which was *Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline in England*.

The Civil War had begun, and Milton decided that he could be of more assistance to the Parliamentarians with the pen than in other ways. The battle at Edgehill had been fought October 28, 1642, and the Cavaliers were advancing toward London. All was confusion and excitement in the city when news came that the enemy had been checked at Brentford. Milton had reason to think the Cavaliers would seek him out, and half in jest, half in earnest, he wrote this sonnet to the commander. The title given in the Cambridge Mss. is significant: "*On his dore when ye city expected an assault*." This was afterwards changed by Milton himself to the present title.

Masson finds "a mood of jest or semi-jest in the whole affair,"
but Lowell prefers to see in it evidence of Milton's quiet assumption of equality with Pindar and Euripides, whose memory, by the chance singing of the chorus of Euripides, secured immunity for other walls.

Mr. Richard Garnett says: "It should seem that if Milton detested the enemy's principles, he respected his pikes and guns. If this strain seems deficient in the fierceness befitting a besieged patriot, let it be remembered that Milton's doors were literally defenceless, being outside the rampart of the city."

Mr. Henry Van Dyke in comparing Milton and Tennyson says: "To Milton came the outward conflict; to Tennyson the inward grief. And as we follow them beyond the charmed circle of their early years, we must trace the parallel between them, if indeed we can find it at all, far below the surface; although even yet we shall see some external resemblances amid many and strong contrasts."

1. Colonel. A trisyllable. The word was formerly coronel, Captain coronel, chief captain. Cf. Spenser, State of Ireland, "their Coronell, named Don Sebastian."

3. In edition of 1645 this was: "If ever deed of honour did thee please." (M.)

5. charms. Magic verses.

10. Emathian conqueror. Alexander the Great, so called from Emathia, a part of Macedonia.

11. house of Pindarus. When Alexander sacked Thebes he spared the house of the poet Pindar.

12. repeated air. Lysander when he was about to destroy Athens was deterred by the chance singing of the chorus of Euripides.

1644–1645

To a Virtuous Young Lady

(In Milton's own hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

In the summer of 1643 Milton made a journey into the country, and after a month returned with a wife. The event was attended with appropriate entertainment in the home in Aldersgate Street. The bride was Mary Powell of Forest Hill, which was within the forest of Shotover, in which Milton's
NOTES

grandfather had been under-ranger. It seems that the Powells and the Miltons had been together in business transactions, the estate at Forest Hill being mortgaged to the scrivener.

It soon became evident that the marriage was an ill-considered one, for the Powells were Royalists. The bride, used to the gaieties of Cavalier society, soon tired of the sober life with the Roundhead schoolmaster in London. The two became mutually repugnant to each other, as was natural in such a union of frivolity with thoughtfulness. We are not called upon to fix the responsibility here, but we are not to forget that with all his love of a studious life Milton had no little susceptibility to the charm of feminine beauty. A month after the marriage the wife begged permission to visit her old home. She went to Forest Hill in July, and as she showed no disposition to return to Aldersgate Street, Milton at first wrote, but getting no reply, despatched a messenger, who returned, "having been dismissed with some sort of contempt." The result of this act on the part of the wife was to turn Milton's attention to the institution of marriage, and he published anonymously the pamphlet The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce. Emerson says: "It is to be regarded as a poem on one of the griefs of man's condition, unfit marriage. It should receive that charity which an angelic soul suffering more keenly than others from the unavoidable evils of human life is entitled to." In this he makes no mention of his personal case, but considers the principle as it were in the abstract. Pattison says: "His argument throughout glows with a white heat of concealed emotion." The stir occasioned by this pamphlet was widespread; the Church party was glad that such a scandal had arisen in the Presbyterian family, and Milton went out from his own fold. Here is the beginning of the party known as Independents. Milton now re-dited the pamphlet on Divorce, to which he signed his name, although it contained a daring address to Parliament.

With this trying period in Milton's career is the sonnet To a Lady connected, if we accept the statements of Phillips, Milton's nephew. The date of composition of this sonnet leads us naturally enough to the belief that Milton found consolation
in the society of some noble women. The subject of the poem is, according to Phillips, a Miss Davis, “a very handsome and witty gentlewoman.”


7. growing. The first reading of the MS. was “blooming.”

11. hope that reaps not shame. Cf. Romans v. 5.

12. when the Bridegroom, etc. Cf. Matthew xxv. 1.

13. Passes to bliss. Reading of first MS. was: “Opens the door of bliss that hour of night.”


1644–1645

TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY

(In Milton’s own hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

This sonnet belongs to the same period as the preceding and is equally rich in biographical and political interest. The lady here honored is another of those at whose home Milton was a welcome guest. She was the daughter of James Ley, first Earl of Marlborough. She married a Captain Hobson, who was a follower of the Parliamentarians. Phillips says: “Milton made it his chief diversion now and then of an evening to visit the Lady Margaret Ley, a woman of great wit and ingenuity, who had a particular honor for him, and took much delight in his company, as likewise Captain Hobson, her husband, a very accomplished gentleman.”

This was the last sonnet in the first edition of his poems published this year. It bore the motto, “Baccare frontem Cingite, ne vati noceat mala lingua futuro,” “Girl my brow with nard, lest an evil tongue hurt the poet yet to be.”

5. Till the sad breaking, etc. Parliament was dissolved March 10, 1629. The Earl died four years later.

6. dishonest victory. The Athenian orator Isocrates is said to have died from the shock of the defeat of the Athenians and Thebans at Charonea.

9. later born. Milton here refers to the early years of the
Earl's career, as he was twenty years old when the Earl died. (M.)

1645–1673

On the Detraction which followed upon my Writing Certain Treatises

(In Milton's own hand and copies in another hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

The list of pamphlets was now increased by the tract On Education, Areopagitica, and three more on Divorce: The Judgement of Martin Bucer, Tetrachordon and Colasterion. The last three were called forth by the attacks of his enemies. The first of these was a challenge to the Westminster Assembly which had assailed him as "Divorcier"; the second was a review of the four chief places in Scripture where the subject of marriage is treated, and the third was a stinging reply to his assailants who were determined to suppress all of his sect.

In the meantime the fortunes of the Royalists were waning, until at Naseby in June, 1645, defeat and ruin came at the hands of the new army of the Independents. By this defeat the Powells were made bankrupt, and in their distress they turned to Milton, whose star was in the ascendant. Some friends of both parties arranged by conspiracy a meeting of Milton and Mary Powell at a house where he often visited in St. Martins-le-Grand. When he entered she emerged from an adjoining room, threw herself at his feet and begged for reconciliation:

"With tears that ceas'd not flowing
And tresses all disorder'd, at his feet
Fell humble, and embracing them, besought
His peace.

Soon his heart relented
Tow'rds her, his life so late and sole delight
Now at his feet submissive in distress!
Creature so fair his reconcilement seeking,

At once disarmed, his anger all he lost."

Paradise Lost, x. 937.
He received not only her but the family of Powells as well, including the mother-in-law who probably encouraged the desertion. The house in Aldersgate Street had proved too small for his classes and he received the addition to his family in the house at Barbican. It was here that the sonnets On the Destruction were written. They continued the controversy raised by the pamphlets on Divorce. The fact that they were written after his wife had returned, and when he had lost some interest in the question, accounts for the fact that they are less violent than the retorts in prose.

Lowell says: "Gentle as Milton’s earlier portraits would seem to show him, he had in him by nature, or bred into him by fate, something of the haughty and defiant self-assertion of Dante and Michael Angelo."

Emerson says: "Truly he was the apostle of freedom: of freedom in the home, in the state, in the church; freedom of speech, freedom of the press, yet in his own mind discriminated from savage license, because that which he desired was the liberty of the wise containing itself in the limits of virtue."

Mr. John Fiske says: "It was the ideas of Locke and Milton, of Vane and Sidney, that, when transplanted into French soil, produced that violent but salutary Revolution which has given fresh life to the European world."

1. In the Ms. this is "I writ a book," etc.

4. Numbering. Attracting as readers. This line was in the Ms.: "Good wits, but now is seldom."


6. title page. "Have you seen Tet-Tetra-Tetra-what's its name?" (M.)

7. Mile-End Green. In Whitechapel, about a mile from the centre of Old London.

8. Gordon, etc. Milton intends to ridicule the barbarism of Scottish names in general. Masson says that more was intended; that he hit the Scottish Presbyterians well known in London. Colkitto is Sir Alexander M'Donnel, knighted by Montrose.
Galasp, was probably Gillespie, a member of the Westminster Assembly.

10. **rugged.** In the Ms. "rough hewn."

11. **Quintilian.** A Latin rhetorician.

12, 13. **Thy age, etc.** Thy age did not hate learning as does ours.

**John Cheek.** Teacher of Greek at Cambridge. He met with opposition from many of the unlearned.

**ON THE SAME**

Where the preceding sonnet is playful, this is severe in indignation.

4. **cuckoos.** In first draft this was "buzzards."

5. **those hinds, etc.** Lycian rustics who, when Latona with her children Apollo and Diana in her arms fled from Juno, refused to let her drink of the water in a certain lake, and puddled the water, were turned into frogs and doomed to live in the muddy water. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* vi. 337–381. *Faerie Queene,* II. xii. 13:

"Till that Latona travelling that way,
Flying from Junoes wrath and hard assay,
Of her fayre twins was there delivered,
Which afterward did rule the night and day."

7. **in fee.** Ownership.


10. **And still revolt, etc.** This originally was, "And hate the truth whereby he should be free." Cf. *John* viii. 32.

11, 12. **Licence they mean, etc.** Cf. *Eikonoclastes,* 1649: "None can love Freedom heartily but good men: the rest love not Freedom, but License."

13. **rove.** Shoot wide of. Cf. *Faerie Queene,* I., Introd. 2:

"Fair Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart
At thy good knight so cunningly didst rove."

14. **for.** Notwithstanding.
1646-1673

ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE

(Copy in the hand of an amanuensis in the Cambridge MSS.)

Milton’s father died in March of this year and was buried in St. Giles’, Cripplegate. As is the case with Burns, Carlyle, Wordsworth, and Tennyson, Milton owed as much to the father’s influence as to the mother’s. He has acknowledged his gratitude to him in prose and verse. In prose he praises “the ceaseless diligence and care of a father whom God recompense”; and in a Latin poem, Ad Patrem, written at Horton, there is a warmth of genuine piety and noble regard.

The Independents were now a powerful party and determined to espouse freedom of conscience against the system of Presbyterian Church Government which represented “No Toleration,” and the suppression of all sects not in uniformity. Against this intolerance Milton raised his voice in this poem. Masson says: “He intended it to be what may be called an Anti-Presbyterian and Pro-Toleration sonnet. But when he had reached the fourteenth line, Milton had not packed in it all he meant to say; and so added six lines more of jagged verse, converting the piece into a kind of sonnet with a scorpion’s tail to it. Although not published till 1673 it was probably in private circulation doing service for Independency and Liberty of Conscience from 1646 onwards.”

Greene says: “There was one thing dearer to England than free speech in Parliament, than security of property, or even personal liberty; and that one thing was, in the phrase of the day, the Gospel.”

1. thrown off, etc. Alluding to the throwing off of Episcopacy by the Long Parliament.

3. To seize, etc. To imitate the Episcopal Prelates in holding plurality of livings, such as parochial revenues and University Posts, etc.

5. Dare ye adjure, etc. The Presbyterians had demanded that Episcopacy be abolished, that the Presbytery be established,
and that violations of the latter should be punished by the state.

6. our consciences. Ms. has "the" for "our."


8. A. S. Adam Stewart, a Scottish defender of the Presbyterian against the Independents.

Rutherford (Samuel). The well-known Scottish divine.

12. shallow Edwards. Thomas Edwards, a London preacher who opposed the Independents. In the original, "shallow" was "haire-brain'd."


14. packings, etc. By which the Assembly was unduly constituted.

17. clip your phylacteries, etc. Parliament was the only hope of the Independents and those seeking freedom in matters of religion.

baulk. Stop at. That is, "cut away the badge of sanctity, yet not mutilate as you would do to us heretics if you could."

Milton first wrote for this line: "Crop ye as close as marginal P——'s eares." Alluding to Prynne, whose ears were cut off (for his Anti-Prelatic writings) by order of Laud, and who was wont to fill the margins of his books with quotations.

20. Presbyter is but old Priest, etc. Priest is a contraction of the Greek word Presbyteros, an Elder.

1646–1648–1673

To Mr. H. Lawes on his Airs

(Two copies in Milton's own hand and one in another's in the Cambridge MSS.)

We have already seen something of Mr. Lawes in our study of Arcades and Comus. What interests us here is that we have evidence of the continued friendship of Milton and Lawes, although one was an Independent and the other a Royalist. This sonnet, written in February, 1646, was first printed in a volume entitled Choice Psalms, put into Musick for three
voices: composed by Henry and William Lawes, Brothers and Servants to His Majestie, published in 1648. The poem was probably given to Lawes at the time it was written, as a pledge of friendship in return for the use of his name in connection with Arcades and Comus. As Lawes had set to music many songs which became very popular, Milton associated his name with the first publication of his poems, 1645, and the title-page bore the following: "The Songs were set in Musick by Mr. Henry Lawes, Gentleman of the King's Chappel and one of His Magesies private Musick." The allusion was of course to the songs in Arcades and Comus.

Lawes lived until after the Restoration. He was returned to his royal position and composed the Ode for the Coronation of Charles II. at the time when Milton was blind and in hiding. He died in 1682 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

3. Words with just note, etc. This line has two earlier forms: "Words with just notes which till then used to scan," and, "Words with just notes when most were wont to scan."

4. Midas' ears. Alluding to the ass's ears which Apollo gave Midas for his lack of sense in awarding the palm to Pan against Apollo in the contest of music. Cf. Ovid, Met. xi. 174. committing. Confounding. At first the word was "mis-joining."

5. exempts. Precludes your being of that class who mistake "short for long."

6–8. These lines originally were:

"And gives thee praise above the pipe of Pan:
In after age thou shalt be writ a man
That didst reform thy art, the chief among."

11. or story. This is explained by a marginal note to the sonnet as it was prefixed to Lawes' Choice Psalms: "The story of Ariadne set by him to musick." (M.)

12, 13. These lines in first form were:

"Fame, by the Tuscan's leave, shall set thee higher
Than old Casell, whom Dante wooed to sing."
Cf. Dante, *Purgatorio*, ii. Dante meets his old friend Casella, the musician, and asks him to sing.

"If new law taketh not from thee
Memory or custom of love-turned song,
That whilom all my cares had power to 'swage;
Please thee therewith a little to console
My spirit, that encumber'd with its fame,
Traveling so far, of pain is overcome," etc.

14. milder. That is, than those of *Purgatory.*

1646–1673

**On the Religious Memory of Mrs. Catherine Thomson**

(Two copies in Milton's own hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

Notwithstanding the bitterness of controversy Milton found opportunity to indulge in the most delightful personal friendships, of one of which this sonnet is a memorial. Pattison says: "Now, out of all the clamour and the bitterness of sects, he can retire and be alone with his heavenly aspirations which have lost none of their ardour by having laid aside all their sectarianism."

3. earthy. Some editions have the corrupted form "earthly."

load. Originally "clod."

4. Of death, etc. The original rendering was:

"Of flesh and sin, which man from heaven doth sever."


6–10. Stayed not behind, etc. Originally these lines were:

"Straight followed thee the path that saints have trod;
Still as they journeyed from this dark abode
Up to the realms of peace and joy for ever,
Faith showed the way, and she, who saw them best
Thy handmaids," etc.
1648–1693–1713

ON THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX

(In Milton's own hand in the Cambridge MSS.)

About Michaelmas, 1647, Milton gave up taking pupils and moved to a smaller house in High Holborn, opening into Lincoln's Inn Fields. Cromwell and Fairfax had marched through London, and the flight of Charles I. from Hampton Court to the Isle of Wight soon followed. Milton was studiously employed in literary work, planning a Latin Dictionary, a Complete History of England and a Digest of Christian Doctrine: so much did his love of letters precede his Republicanism. He also translated nine Psalms, lxxx.–lxxxviii.

The English and Scottish Royalists rose in behalf of Charles, now a prisoner at the Isle of Wight. This uprising was the Second Civil War. Cromwell met and defeated the northern Royalists (Scots) at Preston, and Fairfax laid siege to Colchester, a town which had been seized by the Royalists. It surrendered after three months and the fame of Fairfax seemed complete. It was in celebration of this great victory that Milton wrote this sonnet.

It should be remembered that Fairfax would not approve of the execution of Charles, which took place January 30, 1649, and the following year he resigned his office and retired to private life. Although Milton defended the execution, yet he did not forget to pay Fairfax his tribute as late as 1654, for in his Defensio Secunda he alluded to him as "a man in whom nature and the divine favour have joined with the greatest fortitude a modesty and a purity of life equally great." Besides being a great general, Fairfax was a man of taste and learning. It was by his care that the great Bodleian library was saved at the surrender of Oxford, 1646. His retirement from office was largely due to his desire to live in the quiet of delightful studies, and he became a competitor of Milton in the paraphrase of the Psalms.

The sonnet was first printed (and badly printed) in Phillips'
Life of Milton. It is not in the edition of 1673 because of its "pre-Restoration" ideas. It was first printed in Milton's works in 1713.

2. Filling. Phillips has "and fills."
4. that. Phillips has "which."
5. virtue. Phillips has "valour."
6. though. Phillips has "while."

7. the false North. Parliament considered the work of the Scotch army in the North as a breach of the Solemn League and Covenant.

8. imp. To piece out, mend. Cf. Richard II. ii. 1: "Imp out our drooping country's broken wing."

their. Phillips has "her."

10. endless war. Phillips has "acts of war."

11. truth and right. Phillips has "injured truth."

12. cleared from, etc. Phillips has "be rescued from the brand."

14. share. Phillips has "shares."

How Phillips' copy came to differ so much from the original Ms. is not known. It went unchallenged until 1752, when Newton went back to the Ms.

1652–1694–1713

To the Lord General Cromwell

(In the hand of an amanuensis in the Cambridge MSS.)

After the execution of the King in January, 1649, the power was centred in the Council of State. This Council needed for Secretary one who could translate the State papers, and it is not surprising that they turned to Milton, who had lately defended their action in the pamphlet, Tenure of Kings and Magistrates. Here a new world opened to him. He would be a companion of the great men whom he admired — of Fairfax, Cromwell, and Vane. On March 15, 1649, he was inducted into office. As High Holborn was inconveniently distant from his desk, he moved to Petty France in Westminster, opening into St. James Park, where he lived until the Restoration.
Besides translating despatches he was the censor of the official organ, the *Mercurius Politicus*, and he was expected to reply to any attacks made upon the government. He returned the fire of Gauden’s *Eikon Basilikē*, in *Eikonoklastes*, and of Salmasius’ *Defensio Regia*, in *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*. In this close application he injured his eyesight.

The latest acts of Cromwell’s career before he was made Protector were his conduct of the campaign in Ireland and Scotland, and his victory at Worcester, when the cause of Charles II. was ruined in Scotland. He was in London when this sonnet was written. Religious sects were clamoring for the enactment of their narrow conceptions of Church Government; a new Established Church was desired, and Milton in this sonnet called upon Cromwell to resist the movement.

The question naturally arises, What was Cromwell’s opinion of Milton? Mr. Augustine Birrell says: “There is nothing to prove that Cromwell and Milton, the body and soul of English Republicanism, were ever in the same room together, or exchanged words with one another.” Naturally there could be but little in common between the two men, except the question of the Commonwealth, and even here there was not entire harmony of feeling. Milton must have felt there was some cause for fear that Cromwell would not be tolerant, or he would not have written this sonnet. That his fears were well grounded is proved by subsequent events and the estrangement of Vane. This sonnet and that to Vane are singularly beautiful illustrations of the catholicity of Milton the poet, as some of his prose pamphlets are equally revelations of Milton the partisan.

“We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spoke, the faith and morals hold
That Milton held.”

**Wordsworth.**

Of the various estimates of the character of Cromwell, those representing the farthest extremes are by Clarendon and Carlyle. Clarendon believed that posterity would look upon Cromwell as a “brave bad man”; while Carlyle thought it would consider him in the character of “a prophetic man; a man with
his whole soul seeing and struggling to see." The golden mean between these opinions has not yet been reached.

This sonnet was first printed by Phillips in 1694, in his Life of Milton, and varies much from the copy in Ms. by the hand of an amanuensis.

1. 2. cloud not of war only, etc. "Nubem belli." Cf. Æneid, x. 809. — Newton.
   detractions. Phillips has "distractions."

5. crowned Fortune. An allusion to King Charles and his family, and the battle of Worcester. (K.)
   This line was omitted from Phillips' copy.

6. Hast reared, etc. Phillips has —
   "And fought God's battles, and his work pursued."

7. Darwen. A river in Lancashire, near which the battle of Preston was fought.

8. Dunbar field. Where Cromwell fought the famous battle of Dunbar, beating the Scots, and joined Scotland to the English Commonwealth. (M.)

   "And twenty battles more: yet much remains."

The change was made by Phillips, but from what is not known.

12. secular chains. Milton feared these chains of the Presbyterianists as much as he did the ecclesiastical chains of the Royalists.

14. hireling wolves. Nothing better illustrates Milton's independence than does this charge and the similar one in Lycidas against the Episcopalians.

1652-1694-1713

To Sir Henry Vane the Younger

(Copy from Milton's dictation in the Cambridge MSS.)

The dramatic career of Sir Henry Vane falls into four acts: First, the period of youth; second, his service in New Eng-
land; third, his association with Cromwell in the Civil War; and fourth, his revolt against the usurpation of Cromwell.

No English statesman had a clearer insight into what constitutes civil and religious liberty, a more unselfish purpose to defend the right as God had given him power to see it, a greater Christian fortitude to bear the pain of tyrannical and cruel death.

At the time Milton wrote this sonnet Vane was a distinguished member of the Council of State. The breach between Cromwell and Vane, caused by Vane’s refusal to approve of the execution of the King, and his noble stand for toleration of all sects, even the Catholics, was growing wider and wider.

Vane had said in Parliament: “Why should the labours of any be suppressed, if sober, though never so different? We now profess to seek God, we desire to see light.” Roger Williams, who had spent some weeks with Vane at his country house in Lincolnshire consulting him upon the Puritan persecution of the Friends in New England, called this a “heavenly speech.”

The army was devoted to Cromwell; by its aid Parliament was to be dissolved, and in the election of a new Parliament none who fought on the losing side, whether Royalist or Presbyterian, should have any part. Vane stood for the rule of Parliament, that it should dissolve itself, or that Cromwell should act as the servant of Parliament. Conferences were held, but Cromwell grew more and more determined in his disposition to rule by the sword. On the 20th of April, 1653, when Vane was speaking in the House upon the bill for dissolution, Cromwell entered with a body of soldiers. When the question was about to be put he rose and poured out a torrent of invective, “speaking,” says Ludlow, “with so much passion and discomposure, as if he had been distracted.” Vane and others attempted to reply, but were met with a prompt command from Cromwell: “Come, come, I’ll put an end to your prating. You are no Parliament. I’ll put an end to your sitting. Begone!” As Vane left the House he passed Cromwell and said, “This is not honest! Yea, it is against morality and common honesty!”
To this Cromwell shouted, "Sir Harry Vane! Sir Harry Vane! The Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane!"

Vane retired to his estate at Raby Castle and lived with his family and those studies so dear to him, waiting for the next call to defend the Cause. He wrote a treatise entitled *A Healing Question*, "in which he proposed," says John Forster, "for the first time in the records of history that expedient of organizing a government in certain fundamentals not to be dispensed with, which was thought visionary and impracticable until the world learned to venerate the name of Washington." Cromwell ordered his arrest, and imprisoned him at the Isle of Wight for about four months. After the death of Cromwell in 1658 he was returned to Parliament. At the Restoration he was arrested, and on June 14, 1662, was beheaded for the very act which he never approved—the execution of Charles I. His last words were: "I bless the Lord who has accounted me worthy to suffer for his name." Milton did not dare print this and the preceding sonnet in his edition of 1673.

Whittier, in his poem *The King's Missive*, alluded to the treatment of the Friends at the hands of New England Puritans. Rev. George E. Ellis criticised the ballad in that (as he thought) it was not historically accurate. In Whittier's reply to this criticism he says: "With the single exception of the Friends, every sect in Christendom believed in the right of the magistrate to punish heresy. There were indeed individuals, and among the noblest of the age, who sympathized with the persecuted Friends, and exerted themselves for their relief—such men as Sydney and Vane, Milton and Marvel. . . . But these were solitary exceptions." — *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier*, Vol. II., Appendix.

Mr. John Fiske says: "It is pleasant to remember that one of the greatest Puritan statesmen of that heroic age, the man who dared even to withstand Cromwell at the height of his power when his measures became too violent,—that this admirable man was once the chief magistrate of an American Commonwealth. Thorough republican and enthusiastic lover of liberty, he was spiritually akin to Jefferson and to Samuel Adams."
John Forster says: "During the progress of Vane’s brilliant administration of the government, Milton addressed to him his famous sonnet; and at the same time, as if with the view of composing these fatal differences between them, which threatened the state with calamity, by showing how the glories of each might be celebrated by the same impartial pen, the divine poet forwarded another, not less famous sonnet, to Cromwell."

Cf. The Statesmen of the Commonwealth, John Forster; Chief Actors in the Puritan Revolution, Peter Bayne.

The sonnet was first printed by Phillips, but with few variations from the Ms.

1. counsel. Phillips has "counsellors."

3, 4. when gowns, etc. Alluding to the fact that it was the wisdom of statesmen, not skill of generals, that saved Rome from Pyrrhus and Hannibal.

"It is the authors more than the diplomats, who make nations love one another." — Tennyson (Memoir).

6. hollow states. The States of Holland, the relations of which to the Commonwealth were not explicit. (M.)

7–14. Then to advise, etc. Phillips has for these lines:

"Then to advise how war may best be upheld,
Mann’ed by her own main nerves, iron and gold,
In all her equipage: besides, to know,
Both spiritual and civil, what each means,
What serves each, thou hast learn’d, what few have done.
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe;
Therefore on thy right hand Religion leans,
And reckons thee in chief her eldest son."

The Cambridge copy as dictated by Milton has several corrections. For "Then to advise" in line 7 there had been first dictated "And to advise"; for "Move by" in line 8, "Move on"; instead of the present lines 10–11, the following:

"What power the Church and what the Civil means
Thou teachest best, which few have ever done."
Altered later to:

"Both spiritual power and civil, what each means
Thou hast learned well, a praise which few have won."

And for "firm hand," line 13, "right hand." (M.)

1655–1673

On the Late Massacre in Piedmont

At the close of the year 1652, and soon after Cromwell had decided to dissolve Parliament, a book was published anonymously at Hague entitled Regii Sanguinis Clamor, "Cry of the King's blood to Heaven against the English Parricides."

It was dedicated to Charles II., and in the dedication Milton is alluded to as that "monster, ugly, hideous, huge, bereft of sight." The author of this scurrilous volume was supposed to be one Morus, but later it was revealed that he was only an agent and that the author was Peter Du Moulin, an ex-rector in Yorkshire.

Milton at this time was totally blind.

"So thick a drop serene hath quench'd these orbs,
Or dim suffusion veil'd." 

He was in ill health and mourning for the loss of his wife and little boy, — dolor unutterable. He did not reply to Clamor until 1654, when he published Defensio Secunda. It was a pitiless attack on his old enemy Salmassius, Morus, and Ulac the printer of Clamor.

Mr. Stopford Brooke says: "Again and again, like an unsated shark, Milton returns to the charge to draw fresh blood from his dead and living foes; it is the most merciless thing in our literature."

It was after this controversy had subsided that Milton composed this noble sonnet and the four which follow it. All are revelations of a lofty spirit; they have the charm of majestic music and solemn beauty.

Mr. Richard Garnett says: "This sonnet is the most memo-
rable example in our language of the fire and passion which may inspire a poetical form which some have deemed only fit to celebrate a 'mistress' eyebrow.'"

In January, 1655, the Turin Government decided to make the Protestant inhabitants of certain Piedmontese valleys conform to the Catholic religion. They were ordered to quit the country in three days under pain of death unless they chose to change their religion. They remonstrated, but to no purpose. On the 17th of April the brutal soldiery was let loose upon the unarmed and defenceless people. They revelled in lust, murder and plunder. When the news reached England a cry of horror went up; a day of humiliation was appointed; collections were called for, £40,000 was raised, and an envoy sent to remonstrate with the Duke of Savoy. Cromwell was in earnest, and the result was a treaty by which the survivors were to be protected and accorded the right to worship as they desired.

Mr. John Fiske says: "Everywhere else the Roman idea seemed to have conquered or to be conquering; while they (the Puritans) seemed to be left as the forlorn hope of the human race. But from the very day when Oliver Cromwell reached forth his mighty arm to stop the persecutions in Savoy, the victorious English idea began to change the face of things. . . . It has come to rule, it has come to stay."

Masson says: "This sonnet is Milton's private and more tremendous expression in verse of the feeling he expressed publicly, in Cromwell's name in his Latin State Letters. Every line labors with wrath."

Macaulay says: "The noble poem on the massacres of Piedmont is strictly a collect in verse."

"It recalls," says Mr. C. D. Deshler, "the style of the Lesser Prophets, which it rivals in the magnificence of its imprecations. Like them it burns with holy wrath and unforgiving zeal. It pulsates vehemently with the old Hebrew spirit of retributive vindictiveness."

In many of Wordsworth's sonnets dedicated to Liberty we have strains as solemn and magnificent, of which the following is a type:
ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

Archbishop Trench says: “Wordsworth’s sonnets to Liberty are filled with trumpet-notes, for in his hands also, as in Milton’s before him,
‘the thing became a trumpet.’”

5. in thy book, etc. Cf. Psalms lvi.
7. that rolled, etc. Warton alludes to an account of the massacre by Sir W. Moreland, where there is a print showing this cruelty. (M.)
10. martyred blood, etc. An adaptation of Tertullian’s—
“Sanguis martyrum semen est Ecclesiae.”

12. triple Tyrant. The Pope with his triple crown. Milton in his Latin poem In Quintum Novembris called the crown “Tri-coronifer.”

1655–1673

ON his Blindness

That Milton became totally blind in 1652 is evident from the fact that the sonnets of that year to Cromwell and Vane are not
in his own hand. The reason that the sonnet on his blindness was not written earlier may be due to the fact that he had been devoting all his powers to the replies to *Clamor*. He had now completed the last of these — the *Pro se Defensio*. He had been made a subject of scorn and coarse jest in the *Clamor*, and his enemies at home taunted him with suffering the just judgment of God for his conduct in the affairs of Church and State. We must believe that these things at times caused him to be depressed. Masson says: "Again and again in Milton's later writings in prose and verse there are passages of the most touching sorrow over his darkened and desolate condition." When we consider how intense was Milton's nature: how bitter was his disposition when attacked; how proud he was, and with what impatience he bore some of the domestic infelicities for which he alone was responsible, we are amazed at the lofty serenity and the holy resignation which this poem reveals."

Mr. Stopford Brooke says: "Having done with personal wars, he looked forward always to the time when he might let himself loose, and, leaving the disputes and passions of earth, soar into the poetic air in which alone he breathed with ease and pleasure and triumph. He loved the solemn beauty of lofty thought more than any man in England has ever loved it."

Lowell says: "There is hardly a more stately figure in literary history than Milton's, no life in some of its aspects more tragical, except Dante's. In both these great poets, more than in any others, the character of the man makes part of the singular impressiveness of what they wrote, and of its vitality in after times."

In the *Tractate on Education* Milton had said that the reading of the masters would reveal to pupils "what religious, what glorious and magnificent use might be made of Poetry, both in divine and human things." When he wrote this he little thought that his own "glorious and magnificent" poetry would be the highest revelation of the divine and the human; that it would inspire the same calm and steady heroism in others when facing the pitiless storm. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, iii. 41-44:
NOTES

"Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine."

It was this magnificent spectacle which perhaps more than any other fortified Wordsworth against malignant truth or lie, and enabled him to be strong in himself and powerful to give strength. In the following, which Wordsworth wished prefixed to every edition of his works, we have the keynote of his spirit.

"If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
Then to the measure of that heaven-born light,
Shine, Poet, in thy place, and be content.
The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,
And they that from the zenith dart their beams,
(Visible though they be to half the earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of their brightness),
Are yet of no diviner origin,
No purer essence, than the one that burns,
Like an untended watch-fire on the ridge
Of some dark mountain; or than those which seem
Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,
Among the branches of the leafless trees.
Then to the measure of the light vouchsafed,
Shine, Poet, in thy place, and be content."

2. Ere half my days. Milton's eyesight began to fail several years before he became totally blind in 1652.

"That first great gift, the vital soul."

WORDSWORD, Prelude, 1.

8. fondly. Foolishly.
12. thousands, etc. Cf. Spenser, Hymn of Heavenly Love.

"There they in their trinal triplicities
About him wait and on his will depend," etc.
1655–1673

To Mr. Lawrence

We must not forget that Milton was not on intimate terms with the scholars of his time. He had no political friendships; and as he was not connected with any place of worship he had no spiritual adviser. By reason of his physical infirmity and by the character of his mind and heart he was solitary. "No grander figure," says Mr. Stopford Brooke, "stands forth in the whole of English literature, scarcely any grander in English history, than the figure of this blind, resolute, eloquent man." He possessed those independent solaces

"To mitigate the injurious sway of place
Or circumstance how far-soever changed,
Or to be changed in after years."

As the tumult and bitterness of personal strife dies away there come instead those revelations of tender sympathy and loving regard which are full of the deepest interest. "His house in Petty France was sought by distinguished foreigners and Londoners of rank," says Masson, "but most assiduous of all were former pupils and other enthusiastic young men, who accounted it a privilege to read to him, or act as his amanuenses, and to hear him talk."

Phillips says that among the particular friends who visited him thus was "Young Lawrence, to whom there is a sonnet among the rest of his printed poems." He was a son of Henry Lawrence of St. Ives, Westmoreland, President of Cromwell's Council.

The glimpse into the life of Milton at this time is altogether delightful. What treasures were placed within the reach of these young men!

"Of knowledge graced
By Fancy, what a rich repast!"

Mr. Richard Garnett says: "This sonnet gives a pleasing picture of the British Homer in his Horatian hour."

6. Favonius. Zephyrus, the west wind.
NOTES

10. Of Attic taste. Cf. Horace, Book IV. Ode xii., To Virgil:

"Virgil, haste,
Comrade of noble youths, and taste
Choice wines of Cales: my reward
One little shell of Syrian nard."

13, 14. and spare to interpose, etc. Refrain from interposing them oft. (M.) Cf. Horace, Epode ii., Beatus ille:

"What man would change the sober joys
For cares that fret or love that cloys."

1655-1673-1713

TO CYRIACK SKINNER

(Last ten lines in the hand of an amanuensis in the Cambridge MSS.)

The subject of this and the following sonnet was the son of a Lincolnshire squire. He was "an ingenious young gentleman and pupil of Jo: Milton," says Wood. Masson gives other evidences of Milton's intimacy with him, and reveals the fact that a relative of Cyriack's became Milton's amanuensis in the last years of his life, and that he was intrusted with certain State papers and the De Doctrina Christiana for publication. As the latter could not be published in England, "being mischievous to the Church or the State," it was sent to Amsterdam. Skinner, who was a member of Trinity College, Cambridge, was ordered not to allow it published on pain of expulsion. It was finally returned to the Secretary of State and deposited in the State Papers Office, where it remained until 1823. It was published in 1825. The Treatise in the original Ms. is partly in Skinner's hand and partly in others corrected by him, and is still in the State Papers Office.

Ten lines of this sonnet are in the Cambridge Mss. and are upon a leaf torn from some other volume; the paper is the same quality and size as that used for the Treatise. (M.)

Emerson, in his Essay, John Milton, written in 1838, says: "The discovery of the last work of John Milton in 1823 drew a
sudden attention to his name. For a short time the literary journals were filled with disquisitions on his genius; new editions of his works and new compilations of his life were published."

It should not be forgotten that Macaulay's famous essay on Milton in the *Edinburgh Review*, 1825, was occasioned by the discovery of this Treatise. As to the reason for making it the occasion of the essay he says:

"The dextrous Capuchins never choose to preach on the life and miracles of a saint, till they have awakened the devotional feelings of their auditors by exhibiting some relic of him, a thread of his garment, a lock of his hair, or a drop of his blood. On the same principle we intend to take advantage of the late interesting discovery, and, while this memorial of a great and good man is in the hands of all, to say something of his moral and intellectual qualities."


7. Euclid, etc. Skinner was interested in mathematics and physical science.

8. what the Swede intend, etc. An allusion to the wars of Charles XII. of Sweden against Russia, Poland and Denmark, and the wars of Louis XIV. in the Netherlands.

12–14. disapproves that care, etc. Cf. Horace, Book II. Ode xviii.:

*Non ebur neque aureum.*

"Simple and true I share with all
The treasures of a kindly mind;
And in my cottage, poor and small,
The great a welcome find."

1655–1694–1713

**TO THE SAME**

(Copy in the hand of an amanuensis in the Cambridge MSS.)

This was first printed by Phillips in his Life of Milton, 1694.

"In the Cambridge Ms. this sonnet is on the same leaf as the copy of the last, but in a different hand," says Masson.
NOTES

Professor Edward Dowden says: "Milton's inner life, of which his poetry is an expression, as his prose is an expression of his outer, public life, was an unceasing tending from evil to good, from base or common to noble, a perpetual aspiration to moral greatness." If we are familiar with the course of Milton's life since 1632, when he wrote his first sonnet, we cannot fail to realize what a struggle it was. In the sonnet on his blindness we have his willingness to serve by waiting; here is his determination to serve by working.

Lowell says: "Milton never was fairly in his element till he got off the soundings of prose and felt the long swell of his verse under him like a steed that knows his rider. . . . In those poems and passages that stamp him great, the verses do not dance interweaving to soft Lydian airs, but march rather with resounding tread and clang of martial music."

This sonnet was not printed in edition of 1673 because of its political ideas.

1. this three years' day. Cf. note to On his Blindness.
2. light. Phillips gives "sight."
3. sight. Phillips gives "day."
4. Of. Phillips gives "or."
5. Heaven's hand. Milton first had "God's hand."
6. bear up and. Milton first had "attend to."
7. Right onward. Milton first had "Uphillward."
9. rings. Milton has "talks," corrected by Phillips to "rings."

1658–1673

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

(In the hand of an amanuensis in the Cambridge MSS.)

In November, 1658, Milton married Catherine Woodcock, daughter of Captain Woodcock of Hackney, and the house in Petty France was lighted up with the presence of a genial and sympathetic woman.

His labors as Secretary were now somewhat relieved by the appointment of Andrew Marvel as assistant. It seems that
Milton's fame as champion of liberty had spread abroad, for Aubrey says that he was urged to come to France and Italy, where he was offered "great preferments." Many foreigners visited England "to see the house and chamber where he was born." It was a time of quiet and he was meditating his flight "above the Aeolian Mount" in Paradise Lost. He writes to a friend: "I am glad to know that you are assured of my tranquil spirit in this great affliction of the loss of sight, and also of the pleasure I have in being civil and attentive in the reception of visitors from abroad. Why, in truth, should I not gently bear the loss of sight when I may hope that it is not so much lost as retracted inwards for the sharpening rather than the blunting of my mental edge." But the blessing of sympathetic and tender attentions from a partner in his joys and sorrows was not long to be his, for early in 1658 his wife died in childbirth, and the infant daughter lived but a month. Left with his three young daughters, the eldest only twelve, in his despondency he would wander from room to room and recall the pleasant hours spent with her in whose person shone that 'love, sweetness and goodness' which for one year had made him strangely happy. We may fancy him stopping at the doors where his heart was used to beat so quickly, and

"Waiting for a hand,
A hand that can be clasp'd no more, —
Behold him, for he cannot sleep."

In his dreams he sees her whom in his waking hours he was not permitted to gaze upon.

In the In Memoriam Tennyson reveals a similar experience during his day dreams:

"So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
His living soul was flash'd on mine."

She was buried in St. Margaret's, Westminster.
In 1887 Mr. George W. Childs of Philadelphia, whose bene-
faotions were so noble, "every one a testimony of peace and goodwill," offered to defray the expense of a Milton memorial window in St. Margaret's Church, and Archdeacon F. W. Farrar, who was asked to take the matter in charge, wrote the following to Mr. Childs: "Mr. Lowell wrote me a quatrain for the Raleigh window. I can think of no one so suitable as Mr. J. G. Whittier to write four lines for the Milton window. Mr. Whittier would feel the fullest sympathy for the great Puritan poet, whose spirit was so completely that of the Pilgrim Fathers." Mr. Childs forwarded the letter to Mr. Whittier, who accepted the invitation and composed the following:

"The new world honors him whose lofty plea
For England's freedom made her own more sure,
Whose song, immortal as its theme, shall be
Their common freehold while both worlds endure."

Dr. Farrar on receiving these lines wrote to Mr. Whittier as follows: "Let me thank you for the four lines on Milton. They are all that I can desire, and they will add to the interest which all Englishmen and Americans will feel in the beautiful Milton window. I think that if Milton had now been living, you are the poet whom he would have chosen to speak of him, as being the poet with whose whole tone of mind he would have been most in sympathy."

In his memorable address at the unveiling of this window Mr. Matthew Arnold, alluding to the 'Anglo-Saxon Contagion' and its effect upon the ideal of a high and rare excellence, said: "I treat the gift of Mr. Childs as a gift in honour of Milton, although the window given is in memory of his second wife. . . . This fair and gentle daughter of the rigid sectarist of Hackney, this lovable companion with whom Milton had rest and happiness one year, is a part of Milton indeed, and in calling up her memory we call up his. . . . If to our English race an inadequate sense for perfection of work is a real danger, if the discipline of respect for a high and flawless excellence is peculiarly needed by us, Milton is of all our gifted men the best lesson, the most salutary influence. In the sure
and flawless perfection of his rhythm and diction he is as admirable as Virgil or Dante, and in this respect he is unique amongst us. No one else in English literature and art possesses a like distinction. . . . From style really high and pure Milton never departs. That Milton, of all our English race, is by his diction and rhythm the one artist of the highest rank in the great style whom we have; this I take as requiring no discussion, this I take as certain. . . . All the Anglo-Saxon contagion, all the flood of Anglo-Saxon commonness, beats vainly against the great style but cannot shake it, and has to accept its triumph. But it triumphs in Milton, in our own race, tongue, faith, and morals. The English race overspreads the world, and at the same time the ideal of an excellence the most high and the most rare abides a possession with it forever."

Mr. Henry Van Dyke says: "Of woman, woman as God meant her to be, woman as she is in true purity and unspoiled beauty of her nature, Milton never thought otherwise than nobly and reverently. Surely there is no more beautiful and heartfelt praise of perfect womanhood in all literature than this sonnet."

Cf. Wordsworth's tribute to his wife in She was a Phantom of Delight:

"The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned;
To warn, to comfort and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light."

Cf. Tennyson, Princess:

"My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so thro' those dark gates across the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee: come,
Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one:
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me."
NOTES

Dedication to Enoch Arden:

"Dear, near and true — no truer Time himself
Can prove you, tho' he make you evermore
Dearer and nearer."

Cromwell died in August, 1658, and during Richard's Protectorate Milton remained in office. He wrote the State papers and composed three pamphlets. The first was A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes: showing that it is not lawful for any Power on Earth to compel in Matters of Religion. In this he criticised Cromwell for supporting a State Church. The second, Considerations touching the Likeliest Means to remove Hirelings out of the Church, was also an attack upon Cromwell's unjust interference in "free election of ministers." These were both in the spirit of Vane and the Republicans. In May, 1659, Richard abdicated, and on Monk being made Dictator, in March, 1660, the third pamphlet appeared. It was A Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth. Monk and the Parliament disregarded this splendid plea for a Republic. In May the Restoration came and the hunt for Regicides began. Milton fled from his home and took hiding at a friend's in Bartholomew Close, until the 20th of August, when the Act of Indemnity was passed. He was nevertheless taken into custody by the Sergeant-at-Arms, and his Defensio and Eikonoklastes burned by the hangman. He was released from custody by the intercession of friends, Andrew Marvel, or Sir William Davenant, the new Poet-laureate.

"On evil days now fallen, and evil tongues,
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,"

his cause lost, his enemies in triumph, his name a byword, his fortune impaired, at fifty-two he is thrown back upon himself, and he asks —

"by which means,
Now blind, disheartened, shame, dishonoured, quelled,
To what can I be useful? Wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed?"
He begins to work upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought; he is attired with sudden brightness like a man inspired. *Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, Samson Agonistes* reveal to us

"Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme."

Lowell says: "It is idle to talk of the loneliness of one the habitual companions of whose mind were the Past and Future. I always seem to see him leaning in his blindness a hand on the shoulder of each, sure that one will guard the song which the other had inspired."

"What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat—
It fail'd and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou always visions of our light
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night."

2. like *Alcestis*, etc. An allusion to the *Alcestis* of Euripides, where Hercules rescues the heroine from the lower world and restores her to her husband.

"Euripides the human with his droppings of warm tears
And his touching of things human 'till they seem to reach the spheres."


10. Her face was veiled. Milton had never looked upon her face. Masson thinks there is here a possible allusion to Alkestis when restored to Admetus.

"There is no telling how the hero twitched
The veil off."

*Browning, Balaustion's Adventure.*
ELEGIA PRIMA

AD CAROLUM DIODATUM

TANDEM, chare, tuae mihi pervenere tabellae,
Pertulit et voces nuncia charta tuas;
Pertulit occiduâ Devæ Cestrensis ab orâ
Vergivium prono quâ petit amne salum.
Multûm, crede, juvat terras aluisse remotas
Pectus amans nostri, tamque fidele caput,
Quòdque mihi lepidum tellus longinquâ sodalem
Debet, at unde brevi reddere jussa velit.
Me tenet urbs refluâ quam Thamesis alluit undâ,
Meque nec invitum patria dulcis habet. 10
Jam nec arundiferum mihi cura revisere Cæsum,
Nec dudum vetiti me laris angit amor.
Nuda nec arva placent, umbrasque negantia molles;
Quàm male Phæbicolis convenit ille locus!
Nec duri libet usque minas perferre Magistri,
Cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo.
Si sit hoc exilium, patrios adiisse penates,
Et vacuum curis otia grata sequir,
Non ego vel profugi nomen sortemve recuso,
Lætus et exilii conditione fruor. 20
O utinam vates nunquam graviora tulisset
Ille Tomitano flebilis exul agro;

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Non tunc Ionio quicquam cessisset Homero,  
   Neve foret victo laus tibi prima, Maro.  
Tempora nam licet hic placidis dare libera Musis,  
   Et totum rapiunt me, mea vita, libri.  
Excipit hinc fessum sinuosi pompa theatris,  
   Et vocat ad plausus garrula scena suos.  
Seu catus auditur senior, seu prodigus haeres,  
   Seu procus, aut positâ casside miles adest,  
Sive decennali fœcundus lité patronus  
   Detonat inculta barbara verba foro;  
Sæpe vafer gnato succurrit servus amanti,  
   Et nasum rigidi fallit ubique patris;  
Sæpe novos illic virgo mirata calores  
   Quid sit amor nescit, dum quoque nescit amat:  
Sive cruentatum furiosa Tragedia sceptrum  
   Quassat, et effusis crinibus ora rotat;  
Et dolet, et specto, juvat et spectasse dolendo;  
   Interdum et lacrymis dulcis amaror inest:  
Seu puér infelix indelibata reliquit  
   Gaudia, et abrupto flendus amore cadit;  
Seu ferus e tenebris iterat Styga criminis ultor,  
   Conscia funereo pectora torre movens;  
Seu mœret Pelopœia domus, seu nobilis Ili,  
   Aut luit incestos aula Creontis avos.  
Sed neque sub tecto semper nec in urbe latemus,  
   Irrita nec nobis tempora veris eunt.  
Nos quoque lucus habet vicinâ consitus ulmo,  
   Atque suburbani nobilis umbra loci  
Sæpius hic, blandas spirantia sidera flammæ,  
   Virgineos videas præteriisse choros.  
Ah quoties dignæ stupuí miracula formæ  
   Quæ possit senium vel reparare Jovis!
Ah quoties vidi superantia lumina gemmas,
Atque faces quotquot volvit uterque polus;
Collaque bis vivi Pelopis quae brachia vincant,
Quæque fluit puro nectarie tincta via,
Et decus eximium frontis, tremulosque capillos,
Aurea quæ fallax retia tendit Amor;
Pellaceseque genas, ad quas hyacinthina sordet
Purpura, et ipse tui floris, Adoni, rubor!
Cedite laudatae toties Heroides olim,
Et quæcunque vagum cepit amica Jovem;
Cedite Achæmeniæ turritæ fronte puellæ,
Et quot Susa colunt, Memnoniamque Ninon;
Vos etiam Danaæ fasces submittite Nymphæ,
Et vos Iliacæ, Romuleæque nurus;
Nec Pompeianas Tarpæia Musa columnas
Jactet, et Ausoniiis plena theatra stolis.
Gloria virginibus debetur prima Britannis;
Extera sat tibi sit foemina posse sequi.
Tuque urbs Dardaniis, Londinum, structa colonis,
Turrigerum latè conspicienda caput,
Tu nimium felix intra tua mœnia claudis
Quicquid formosi pendulus orbis habet.
Non tibi tot cælo scintillant astra sereno,
Endymioneæ turba ministra deæ,
Quot tibi conspicuae formâque auroque puellæ
Per medias radiant turba videnda vias.
Creditur huc geminis venisse invecta columbis
Alma pharetrigero milite cincta Venus,
Huic Cnidon, et riguas Simoëntis flumine valles,
Huic Paphon, et roseam posthabitura Cypron.
Ast ego, dum pueri sinit indulgentia cæci,
Mœnia quàm subitò linquere fausta paro;
ELEGIA SEXTA

Et vitare procul malefidæ infamia Circes
   Atria, divini Molyos usus ope.
Stat quoque juncosas Cami remeare paludes,
   Atque iterum raucæ murmure adire Scholæ.
Interea fidi parvum cape munus amici,
   Paucaque in alternos verba coacta modos.

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ELEGIA SEXTA

AD CAROLUM DIODATUM, RURI COMMORANTE;

Qui, cum Idibus Decemb. scripsisset, et sua carmina excusari postulasset
   si solito minus essent bona, quod inter laulitias quibus erat ab amicis
   exceptus haud satis felicem operam Musis dare se posse affirmabat,
   hoc habuit responsum.

Mitto tibi sanam non pleno ventre salutem,
   Quâ tu distento fortè carere potes.
At tua quid nostram prolectat Musa camœnam,
   Nec sinit optatas posse sequi tenebras?
Carmine scire velis quàm te redamenque colamque;
   Crede mihi vix hoc carmine scire queas.
Nam neque noster amor modulis encluditur arctis,
   Nec venit ad claudos integer ipse pedes.
Quàm bene solennes epulas, hilaremque Decembrim,
   Festaque cælifugam quæ coluere Deum,
Deliciasque refers, hiberni gaudia ruris,
   Haustaque per lepidos Gallica musta focos!
Quid quereris refugam vino dapibusque poesin?
   Carmen amat Bacchum, carmina Bacchus amat.
Nec puduit Phœbum virides gestâsse corymbos,
   Atque hederam lauro præposuisse suæ.
Sæpiús Aoniis clamavit collibus Euæ
   Mista Thyoneo turba novena choro.
Naso Corallæis mala carmina misit ab agris;
   Non illic epulæ, non sata vitis erat.
   20
Quid nisi vina, rosasque, racemiferumque Lyæum,
   Cantavit brevibus Tēia Musa modis?
Pindaricosque inflat numeros Teumesius Euan,
   Et redolet summptum pagina quæque merum;
Dum gravis everso currus crepat axe supinus,
   Et volat Eleo pulvere fuscus eques.
   30
Quadrimoque madens Lyricen Romanus Iaccho
   Dulcè canit Glyceran, flavicomamque Chloen.
Jam quoque lauta tibi generoso mensa paratu
   Mentis alit vires, ingeniumque fovet.
Massica fœcundam despumant pocula venam,
   Fundis et ex ipso condita metra cado.
Addimus his artes, fusumque per intima Phœbum
   Corda; faveunt uni Bacchus, Apollo, Ceres.
Scilicet haud mirum tam dulcia carmina per te,
   Numine composito, tres peperisse Deos.
Nunc quoque Thressa tibi cælato barbitos auro
   Insonat arguâ molliter icta manu;
Auditurque chelys suspensa tapetia circum,
   Virgineos tremulâ quæ regat arte pedes.
   40
Illâ tuas saltem teneant spectacula Musas,
   Et revocent quantum crapula pellit iners.
Crede mihi, dum psallit ebur, comitataque plectrum
   Implet odoratos festa chorea tholos,
Percipies tacitum per pectora serpere Phœbum,
   Quale repentinus permeat ossa calor;
Perque puellares oculos digitumque sonantem
Irruet in totos lapsa Thalia sinus.
Namque Elegia levis multorum cura deorum est,
Et vocat ad numeros quemlibet illa suos;
Liber adest elegis, Eratoque, Ceresque, Venusque,
Et cum purpurea matre tenellus Amor.
Talibus inde licent convivia larga poetis,
Sæpiüs et veteri commaduisse mero.
At qui bella refert, et adulto sub Jove cælum,
Héroasque pios, semideosque duces,
Et nunc sancta canit superum consulta deorum,
Nunc latrata fero regna profunda cane,
Ille quidem parcè, Samii pro more magistri,
Vivat, et innocuos præbeat herba cibos;
Stet prope fagineo pellucida lympha catillo,
Sobriaque e puro pocula fonte bibat.
Additur huic scelerisque vacans et casta juventus,
Et rigidi mores, et sine labe manus;
Qualis veste nitens sacrâ, et lustralibus undis,
Surgis ad infensos augur iture Deos.
Hoc ritu vixisse ferunt post rapa sagacem
Lumina Tiresian, Ogygiumque Linon,
Et lare devoto profugum Calchanta, senemque
Orpheon edomitis sola per antra feris;
Sic dapis exiguus, sic rivi potor Homerus
Dulichium vexit per freta longa virum,
Et per monstrificam Perseiæ Phæbados aulam,
Et vada fœmineis insidiosa sonis,
Perque tuas, rex ime, domos, ubi sanguine nigro
Dicitur umbrarum detinuisse greges:
Diis etenim sacer est vates, divûmque sacerdos,
Spirat et occultum pectus et ora Jovem.
ELEGI A SE XTA

At tu si quid agam scitabere (si modò saltem
Esse putas tanti noscere siquid agam).

Paciferum canimus cælesti semine regem,
Faustaque sacratis sæcula pacta libris;
Vagitumque Dei, et stabulan tem paupere tecto
Qui suprema suo cum patre regna colit;
Stelliparumque polum, modulantesque æthere turmas,
Et subitò elisos ad sua fana Deos.
Dona quidem dedimus Christi natalibus illa;
Illa sub auroram lux mihi prima tulit.
Te quoque pressa manent patriis meditata cicitis;
Tu mihi, cui recitem, judicis instar eris.

DIODATI (e te’l dirò con maraviglia),
Quel ritroso io, ch’ amor spreggi ar solea
E de’ suoi lacci spesso mi ridea,
Già caddi, ov’ uom dabben talor s’ impiglia.
Nè treccie d’ oro nè guancia vergiglia
M’ abbaglian sì, ma sotto nova idea
Pellegrina bellezza che ’l cuor bea,
Portamenti alti onesti, e nelle ciglia
Quel sereno fulgor d’ amabil nero,
Parole adorne di lingua più d’una,
E ’l cantar che di mezzo l’ emispero
Traviar ben può la faticosa Luna;
E degli occhi suoi avventa sì gran fuoco
Che l’ incerar gli orecchi mi fia poco.
EPITAPHIUM DAMONIS

ARGUMENTUM

Thyrsis et Damon, eadem vicinie pastores, eadem studia sequuti, a puellitii
amici erant, ut qui plurimum. Thyrsis, animi causâ profectus, peregrè
de obitu Damonis munclum acceptit. Domum postea reversus, et rem ita
esse comperto, se suamque solitudinem hoc carmine deplorat. Damonis
autem sub personâ hic intelligitur Carolus Deodatus, ex urbe Heturiae
Lucâ paterno genere oriundus, cæteris Angius; ingeni, doctrinâ, clarissi-
misque cæteris virtutibus, dum viveret, juvenis egregius.

Himerides Nymphæ (nam vos et Daphnin et Hylan,
Et plorata diu meministis fata Bionis),
Dicite Sicelicum Thamesina per oppida carmen:
Quas miser effudit voces, quæ murmura Thyrsis,
Et quibus assiduis exercuit antra querelis,
Fluminaque, fontesque vagos, nemorumque recessus,
Dum sibi præreptum queritur Damon, neque altam
Luctibus exemit noctem, loca sola pererrans.
Et jam bis viridi surgebat culmus aristâ,
Et totidem flavas numerabant horrea messes,
Ex quo summa dies tulerat Damon sub umbras,
Nec dum aderat Thyrsis; pastorem scilicet illum
Dulcis amor Musæ Thuscâ retinebat in urbe.
Ast ubi mens expleta domum pecorisque relictâ
Cura vocat, simul assuetâ seditque sub ulmo,
Tum verò amissum, tum denique, sentit amicum,
Cœpit et immensum sic exonerare dolorem:—

"Ita domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Hei mihi! quæ terris, quæ dicam numina cælo,
Postquam te immitti rapuerunt funere, Damon?
Siccine nos linguis? tua sic sine nomine virtus
Ibit, et obscuris numero sociabitur umbris?"
EPITAPHIUM DAMONIS

At non ille animas virgâ qui dividit aureâ
Ista velit, dignumque tui te ducat in agmen,
Ignovumque procul pecus arceat omne silentüm.

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Quicquid erit, certè, nisi me lupus antè videbit,
Indeplorato non comminuere sepulchro,
Constabitque tuus tibi honos, longùmque vigebit
Inter pastores. Illi tibi vota secundo
Solvere post Daphnin, post Daphnin dicere laudes,
Gaudebunt, dum rura Pales, dum Faunus amabit;
Si quid id est, priscanque fidem coluisse, piumque,
Palladiasque artes, sociumque habuisse canorum.

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vocat, agni.
Hæc tibi certa manent, tibi erunt hæc præmia, Damon.
At mihi quid tandem fiet modò? quis mihi fidus
Hærebit lateri comes, ut tu sæpe solebas,
Frigoribus duris, et per loca fœta pruinis,
Aut rapido sub sole, siti morientibus herbis,
Sive opus in magnos fuit eminûs ire leones,
Aut avido terrere lupos præsepibus altis?
Quis fando sopire diem cantuque solebit?

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Pectora cui credam? quis me lenire docebit
Mordaces curas, quis longam fallere noctem
Dulcibus alloquiis, grato cum sibilat igni
Molle pirum, et nucibus strepitat focus, at malus Auster
Miscet cuncta foris, et desuper intonat ulmo?

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Aut æstate, dies medio dum vertitur axe,
Cum Pan æsculeâ somnum capitis abditus umbrâ,
Et repetunt sub aquis sibi nota sedilia Nymphæ,
Pastoresque latent, stertit sub sepe colonus,
Quis mihi blanditasque tuas, quis tum mihi risus,
Cecropiosque sales referet, cultosque lepores?

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
At jam solus agros, jam pascua solus oberro,
Sicubi ramosi densantur vallibus umbrae;
Hic serum expecto; supra caput imber et Eurus
Triste sonant, fractaeque agitata crepuscula silvae.

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Heu! quam culta mihi prius arva procacibus herbis
Involvuntur, et ipsa situ seges alta fatiscit!
Innuba neglecto marcescit et uva racemo,
Nec myrteta juvant; ovium quoque tædet, at ille
Mœrent, inque suum convertunt ora magistrum.

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Tityrus ad corylos vocat, Alphesibœus ad ornos,
Ad salices Ægon, ad flumina pulcher Amyntas:
‘Hic gelidi fontes, hic illita gramina musco,
Hic Zephyri, hic placidas interstrepit arbutus undas.’
Ista canunt surdo; frutices ego nactus abibam.

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Mopsus ad hæc, nam me redeuntem fortè notarât
(Æt callebat avium linguas et sidera Mopsus),
‘Thyrsi, quid hoc?’ dixit; ‘quæ te coquit improbabilis?
Aut te perdit amor, aut te malè fascinat astrum;
Saturni grave sæpe fuit pastoribus astrum,
Intimaque obliquo fitæ præcordia plumo.’

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Mirantur nymphæ, et ‘Quid te, Thyrsi, futurum est?
Quid tibi vis?’ aiunt: ‘non hæc solet esse juventæ
Nubila frons, oculique truces, vultusque severi:
Illa choros, lususque leves, et semper amorem
Jure petit; bis ille miser qui serus amavit.’
EPITAPHIIUM DAMONIS

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Venit Hyas, Dryopeque, et filia Baucidis Ægle,
Docta modos, citharæque scient, sed perdita fastu;
Venit Idumanii Chloris vincina fluenti:
Nil me blanditiæ, nil me solantium verba,
Nil me si quid adest movet, aut spes ulla futuri.

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Hei mihi! quam similes ludunt per prata juvenci,
Omnes unanimi secum sibi lege sodales!
Nec magis hunc alio quisquam secernit amicum
De grege; sic-densi veniunt ad pabula theos,
Inque vicem hirsuti paribus junguntur onagri:
Lex eadem pelagi; deserto in littore Proteus
Agmina phocarum numerat: vilisque volucrum
Passer habet semper quicum sit, et omnia circum
Farra libens volit et, serò sua tecta revisens;
Quem si sors letho objectit, seu milvus adunco
Fata tulit rostro, seu stravit arundine fossor,
Protinus ille alium socio petit inde volatu.
Nos durum genus, et diris exercitata fatis
Gens, homines, aliena animis, et pectore discors;
Vix sibi quiseque parem de millibus invenit unum;
Aut, si sors dederit tandem non aspera votis,
Illum inopina dies, quâ non speraveris horâ,
Surripit, aeternum linquens in sæcula damnum.

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Heu! quis me ignotas traxit vagus error in oras
Ire per aèreas rupes, Alpenque nivosam?
Ecquid erat tanti Romam vidisse sepultam
(Quamvis illa foret, qualem dum viseret olim
Tityrus ipse suas et oves et rura reliquit),
Ut te tam dulci possem caruisse sodale,
Possem tot maria alta, tot interponere montes,
Tot silvas, tot saxa tibi, fluviisque sonantes?
Ah! certè extremum licuisset tangere dextram,
Et bene compositos placidè morientis ocellos,
Et dixisse 'Vale! nostri memor ibis ad astra.'

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Quamquam etiam vestri nunquam meminisse pigebit,
Pastores Thusci, Musis operata juventus,
Hic Charis, atque Lepos; et Thuscus tu quoque Damone,
Antiquà genus unde petis Lucumonis ab urbe.
O ego quantus eram, gelidi cum stratus ad Ami
Murmura, populeumque nemus, quà mollior herba,
Carpere nunc violas, nunc summas carpere myrtos,
Et potui Lyceiæ certantem audire Menalcam!
Ipse etiam tentare ausus sum; nec puto multùm
Displicui; nam sunt et apud me munera vestra,
Fiscellae, calathique, et cerea vincla cicuta:
Quin et nostra suas docuerunt nomina fagos
Et Datis et Francinus; erant et vocibus ambo
Et studiis noti, Lydorum sanguinis ambo.

"Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Hæc mihi tum læto dictabat roscida luna,
Dum solus teneros claudebam cratibus hædos.
Ah! quoties dixi, cum te cinis ater habebat,
'Nunc canit, aut lepori nunc tendit retia Damon;
Vimina nunc texit varios sibi quod sit in usus';
Et quæ tum facili sperabant mente futura
Arripui voto levis, et præsentia finxi.
'Heus bone! numquid agis? nisi te quid fortè retardat,
Imus, et argutæ paulòm recubamus in umbrâ,
Aut ad aquas Colni, aut ubi jugera Cassibelauni?
Tu mihi percurres medicos, tua gramina, succos,
Helleborumque, humilesque, crocos, foliumque hyacin-thi,
Quasque habet ista palus herbas, artesque medentûm.’
Ah! pereant herbæ, pereant artesque medentûm,
Gramina, postquam ipsi nil profecere magistro!
Ipse etiam — nam nescio quid mihi grande sonabat
Fistula — ab undecimâ jam lux est altera nocte —
Et tum fortè novis admôram labra cicutis:
Dissiluere tamen, ruptâ compage, nec ultra
Ferre graves potuere sonos: dubito quoque ne sim
Turgidulus; tamen et referam; vos cedite, sylvæ. 160

“Hte domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Ipse ego Dardanias Rutupina per æquora puppes
Dicam, et Pandrasidos regnum vetus Inogeniæ,
Brennumque Arviragumque duces, priscumque Beli-
num,
Et tandem Armoricos Britonum sub lege colonos;
Tum gravidam Arturo fatali fraude Ioğernen;
Mendaces vultus, assumptaque Gorlöis arma,
Merlini dolus. O, mihi tum si vita supersit,
Tu procul annosâ pendebis, fistula, pinu
Multûm oblitâ mihi, aut patriis mutata Camœnis 170
Brittonicum strides! Quid enim? omnia non licet uni,
Non sperâsse uni licet omnia; mi satis ampla
Merces, et mihi grande decus (sim ignotus in ævum
Tum licet, externo penitûsque inglorius orbi),
Si me flava comas legat Usa, et potor Alauni,
Vorticibusque frequens Abra, et nemus omne Treantæ,
Et Thamesis meus ante omnes, et fusca metallis
Tamara, et extremis me discant Orcades undis.

“Ite domum impasti; domino jam non vacat, agni.
Hæc tibi servabam lentâ sub cortice lauri,
Hæc, et plura simul; tum quæ mihi pocula Mansus,
Mansus, Chalcidicæ non ultima gloria ripæ,
Bina dedit, mirum artis opus, mirandus et ipse,
Et circum gemino cælaverat argumento.
In medio Rubri Maris unda, et odoriferum ver,
Littora longa Arabum, et sudantes balsama sylvæ;
Has inter Phœnix, divina avis, unica terris,
Cæruleùm fulgens diversicoloribus alis,
Auroram vitreis surgentem respicit undis;
Parte alîa polus omnipatens, et magnus Olympus: 190
Quis putet? hic quoque Amor, pictæque in nube
pharetræ,
Armas corusca, faces, et spicula tineta pyropo;
Nec tenues animas, pectusque ignobile vulgi,
Hinc ferit; at, circum flammantia lumina torquens,
Semper in erectum spargit sua tela per orbes
Impiger, et pronos nunquam collimat ad ictus:
Hinc mentes ardere sacræ, formæque deorum.
"Tu quoque in his — nec me fallit spes lubrica,
Damon —
Tu quoque in his certè es; nam quò tua dulcis abiret
Sanctaque simplicitas? nam quò tua candida virtus? 200
Nec te Lethæo fas quæsivisse sub Orco;
Nec tibi convenient lacrymæ, nec flebimus ultra.
Ite procul, lacrymæ; purum colit ëthera Damon,
Æthera purus habet, pluvium pede repullit arcum;
Heroumque animas inter, divosque perfènnes,
Æthereos haurit latices et gaudia potat
Ore sacro. Quin tu, cæli post jura recepta,
Dexter ades, placidusque fave, quicunque vocaris;
Seu tu noster eris Damon, sive æquior audis
Diodòtus, quo te divino nomine cuncti 210
Cælicolæ nôrint, sylvisque vocabere Damon.
Quòd tibi purpureus pudor, et sine labe juvventus
Grata fuit, quòd nulla tori libata voluptas,
En! etiam tibi virginei servantur honores!
Ipse, caput nitidum cinctus rutilante coronâ,
Laetaque frondentis gestans umbracula palmæ,
Æternûm perages inmortales hymenæos,
Cantus ubi, choreisque furit lyra mista beatis,
Festa Sionæo bacchantur et Orgia thyrso."
TRANSLATION

ELEGY I

To CHARLES DEODATI

At length, my friend, the far-sent letters come,
Charged with thy kindness, to their destined home;
They come, at length, from Deva’s western side,
Where prone she seeks the salt Vergivian tide.
Trust me, my joy is great that thou shouldst be,
Though born of foreign race, yet born for me,
And that my sprightly friend, now free to roam,
Must seek again so soon his wonted home.
I well content, where Thames with influent tide
My native city laves, meantime reside,
Nor zeal nor duty now my steps impel
To reedy Cam, and my forbidden cell.
Nor aught of pleasure in those fields have I,
That, to the musing bard, all shade deny.
'Tis time that I a pedant’s threats disdain,
And fly from wrongs my soul will ne’er sustain.
If peaceful days, in lettered leisure spent
Beneath my father’s roof, be banishment,
Then call me banished, I will ne’er refuse
A name expressive of the lot I chuse.
I would that, exiled to the Pontic shore,
Rome’s hapless bard had suffered nothing more;
He then had equalled even Homer’s lays,
And Virgil! thou hadst won but second praise.
For here I woo the Muse, with no control;
And here my books — my life — absorb me whole.
Here too I visit, or to smile, or weep,
The winding theatre’s majestic sweep;
The grave or gay colloquial scene recruits
My spirits, spent in learning’s long pursuits,
Whether some senior shrewd, or spendthrift heir,
Suitor, or soldier now unarmed, be there;
Or some coifed brooder o’er a ten years’ cause
Thunder the Norman gibberish of the laws.
The lacquey there oft dupes the wary sire,
And artful speeds the enamoured son’s desire.
There, virgins oft, unconscious what they prove,
What love is know not, yet, unknowing, love.
Or if impassioned Tragedy wield high
The bloody sceptre, give her locks to fly
Wild as the winds, and roll her haggard eye,
I gaze, and grieve, still cherishing my grief,
At times even bitter tears yield sweet relief:
As when, from bliss untasted torn away,
Some youth dies, hapless, on his bridal day;—
Or when the ghost, sent back from shades below,
Fills the assassin’s heart with vengeful woe,
When Troy, or Argos, the dire scene affords,
Or Creon’s hall laments its guilty lords.
Nor always city-pent, or pent at home,
I dwell; but when spring calls me forth to roam,
Expatriate in our proud suburban shades
Of branching elm, that never sun pervades.
Here many a virgin troop I may descry,
Like stars of mildest influence, gliding by.
Oh forms divine! Oh looks that might inspire
Even Jove himself, grown old, with young de-
sire!
Oft have I gazed on gem-surpassing eyes,
Outsparkling every star that gilds the skies,
Necks whiter than the ivory arm bestowed
By Jove on Pelops, or the Milky Road!
Bright locks, Love's golden snare! these falling low,
Those playing wanton o'er the graceful brow!
Cheeks too, more winning sweet than after shower
Adonis turned to Flora's favourite flower!
Yield, heroines, yield, and ye who shared the embrace
Of Jupiter in ancient times, give place!
Give place, ye turbaned fair of Persia's coast!
And ye, not less renowned, Assyria's boast!
Submit, ye nymphs of Greece! ye, once the bloom
Of Ilion! and all ye of haughty Rome,
Who swept, of old, her theatres with trains
Redundant, and still live in classic strains!
To British damsels beauty's palm is due;
Aliens! to follow them is fame for you.
O city, founded by Dardanian hands,
Whose towering front the circling realms commands,
Too blest abode! no loveliness we see
In all the earth, but it abounds in thee.
The virgin multitude that daily meets
Radiant with gold and beauty, in thy streets,
Outnumbers all her train of starry fires,
With which Diana gilds thy lofty spires.
Fame says, that wafted hither by her doves,
With all her host of quiver-bearing loves,
Venus, preferring Paphian scenes no more,
Has fixed her empire on thy nobler shore.
But lest the sightless boy enforce my stay,
I leave these happy walls, while yet I may.
Immortal Moly shall secure my heart
From all the sorcery of Circean art,
And I will e’en repass Cam’s reedy pools
To face once more the warfare of the schools.
Meantime accept this trifle! rhymes though few,
Yet such as prove thy Friend’s remembrance true!

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ELEGY VI

TO CHARLES DEODATI

Who, while he spent his Christmas in the country, sent the Author
a poetical Epistle, in which he requested that his verses, if not so
good as usual, might be excused on account of the many feasts to
which his friends had invited him, and which would not allow
him leisure to finish them as he wished.

With no rich viands overcharged, I send
Health, which perchance you want, my pampered
friend;
But wherefore should thy muse tempt mine away
From what she loves, from darkness into day?
Art thou desirous to be told how well
I love thee, and in verse? verse cannot tell,
For verse has bounds, and must in measure move
But neither bounds nor measure knows my love.
How pleasant, in thy lines described, appear
December’s harmless sports, and rural cheer!
French spirits kindling with cærulean fires,
And all such gambols as the time inspires!

Think not that wine against good verse offends;
The Muse and Bacchus have been always friends,
Nor Phœbus blushes sometimes to be found
With ivy, rather than with laurel, crowned.
The Nine themselves ofttimes have joined the song
And revels of the Bacchanalian throng;
Not even Ovid could in Scythian air
Sing sweetly — why? no vine would flourish there, 20
What in brief numbers sung Anacreon’s muse?
Wine, and the rose, that sparkling wine bedews.
Pindar with Bacchus glows — his every line
Breathes the rich fragrance of inspiring wine,
While, with loud crash o’erturned, the chariot lies
And brown with dust the fiery courser flies.
The Roman lyrist steeped in wine his lays,
So sweet in Glyceria’s and Chloe’s praise.
Now too the plenteous feast and mantling bowl
Nourish the vigour of thy sprightly soul;
The flowing goblet makes thy numbers flow,
And casks not wine alone, but verse bestow.
Thus Phoebus favours, and the arts attend,
Whom Bacchus, and whom Ceres, both befriend:
What wonder, then, thy verses are so sweet,
In which these triple powers so kindly meet?
The lute now also sounds, with gold inwrought,
And touched with flying fingers, nicely taught;
In tapestried halls, high-roofed, the sprightly lyre
Directs the dancers of the virgin choir.
If dull repletion fright the muse away,
Sights, gay as these, may more invite her stay:
And, trust me, while the ivory keys resound,
Fair damsel’s sport, and perfumes steam around,
Apollo’s influence, like ethereal flame,
Shall animate, at once, thy glowing frame,
And all the Muse shall rush into thy breast,
By love and music’s blended powers possest.
For numerous powers light Elegy befriend,
Hear her sweet voice, and at her call attend;
Her Bacchus, Ceres, Venus, all approve,
And, with his blushing mother, gentle Love.
Hence to such bards we grant the copious use
Of banquets, and the vine’s delicious juice.
But they, who demi-gods and heroes praise,
And feats performed in Jove’s more youthful days,
Who now the counsels of high heaven explore,
Now shades, that echo the Cerberean roar,
Simply let these, like him of Samos, live;
Let herbs to them a bloodless banquet give;
In beechen goblets let their beverage shine,
Cool from the crystal spring, their sober wine!
Their youth should pass in innocence, secure
From stain licentious, and in manners pure,
Pure as the priest, when robed in white he stands,
The fresh lustration ready in his hands.
Thus Linus lived, and thus, as poets write,
Tiresias, wiser for his loss of sight;
Thus exiled Chalcas, thus the bard of Thrace,
Melodious tamer of the savage race;
Thus, trained by temperance, Homer led, of yore,
His chief of Ithaca from shore to shore,
Through magic Circe’s monster-peopled reign,
And shoals insidious with the Siren train;
And through the realms where grisly spectres dwell,
Whose tribes he fettered in a gory spell:
For these are sacred bards, and, from above,
Drink large infusions from the mind of Jove.
Wouldst thou, (perhaps ’tis hardly worth thine ear)
Wouldst thou be told my occupation here?
The promised King of peace employs my pen,
The eternal covenant made for guilty men,
The new-born Deity with infant cries
Filling the sordid hovel, where he lies;
The hymning Angels, and the herald star,
That led the Wise, who sought him from afar,
And idols on their own unhallowed shore
Dashed, at his birth, to be revered no more!
This theme on reeds of Albion I rehearse:
The dawn of that blest day inspired the verse;
Verse that, reserved in secret, shall attend
Thy candid voice, my critic, and my friend!

SONNET

TO CHARLES DEODATI

Charles — and I say it wondering — thou must know
That I, who once assumed a scornful air,
And scoffed at Love, am fallen in his snare;
(Full many an upright man has fallen so.)
Yet think me not thus dazzled by the flow
Of golden locks, or damask cheek; more rare
The heartfelt beauties of my foreign fair,
A mien majestic, with dark brows that show
The tranquil lustre of a lofty mind;
Words exquisite, of idioms more than one,
And song, whose fascinating power might bind,
And from her sphere draw down, the labouring moon;
With such fire-darting eyes, that should I fill
My ears with wax, she would enchant me still.
ON THE DEATH OF DAMON

ON THE DEATH OF DAMON

AN ARGUMENT

Thrys and Damon, shepherds and neighbours, had always pur-
sued the same studies, and had, from their earliest days, been united
in the closest friendship. Thrys, while travelling for improve-
ment, received intelligence of the death of Damon, and, after a time,
returning and finding it true, deplores himself, and his solitary
condition, in this poem.

By Damon is to be understood Charles Deodati, connected with
the Italian city of Lucca by his father's side, in other respects an
Englishman; a youth of uncommon genius, erudition, and virtue.

Ye nymphs of Himera (for ye have shed
Erewhile for Daphnis, and for Hylas dead,
And over Bion's long-lamented bier,
The fruitless meed of many a sacred tear),
Now through the villas laved by Thames rehearse
The woes of Thrys in Sicilian verse,
What sighs he heaved, and how with groans profound
He made the woods and hollow rocks resound,
Young Damon dead; nor even ceased to pour
His lonely sorrows at the midnight hour.

The green wheat twice had nodded in the ear
And golden harvest twice enriched the year,
Since Damon's lips had gasped for vital air
The last, last time, nor Thrys yet was there;
For he, enamoured of the Muse, remained
In Tuscan Fiorenza long detained,
But, stored at length with all he wished to learn,
For his flock's sake now hasted to return;
And when the shepherd had resumed his seat
At the elm's root, within his own retreat,
Then 'twas his lot, then, all his loss to know,
And, from his burthened heart, he vented thus his woe:
  "Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
  "To other cares than those of feeding you.
  "Alas! what deities shall I suppose
  "In heaven, or earth, concerned for human woes,
  "Since, O my Damon! their severe decree
  "So soon condemns me to regret of thee!
  "Departest thou thus, thy virtues unrepaid
  "With fame and honour, like a vulgar shade? 30
  "Let him forbid it whose bright rod controls
  "And separates sordid from illustrious souls,
  "Drive far the rabble, and to thee assign
  "A happier lot, with spirits worthy thine!
  "Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
  "To other cares than those of feeding you.
  "Whate'er befall, unless by cruel chance
  "The wolf first give me a forbidding glance,
  "Thou shalt not moulder undeptored, but long
  "Thy praise shall dwell on every shepherd’s tongue; 40
  "To Daphnis first they shall delight to pay,
  "And, after him, to thee, the votive lay,
  "While Pales shall the flocks and pastures love,
  "Or Faunus to frequent the field or grove,
  "At least, if ancient piety and truth,
  "With all the learned labours of thy youth,
  "May serve thee aught, or to have left behind
  "A sorrowing friend, and of the tuneful kind.
  "Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
  "To other cares than those of feeding you. 50
"Yes, Damon! such thy sure reward shall be;
"But ah, what doom awaits unhappy me?
"Who now my pains and perils shall divide
"As thou wast wont, for ever at my side,
"Both when the rugged frost annoyed our feet,
"And when the herbage all was parched with heat;
"Whether the grim wolf's ravage to prevent,
"Or the huge lion's, armed with darts we went?
"Whose converse, now, shall calm my stormy day,
"With charming song who now beguile my way?
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
"In whom shall I confide? whose counsel find
"A balmy medicine for my troubled mind?
"Or whose discourse with innocent delight
"Shall fill me now, and cheat the wintry night,
"While hisses on my hearth the pulpy pear,
"And blackening chestnuts start and crackle there,
"While storms abroad the dreary meadows whelm,
"And the wind thunders through the neighbouring elm?
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
"Or who, when summer suns their summit reach,
"And Pan sleeps hidden by the sheltering beech,
"When shepherds disappear, nymphs seek the sedge,
"And the stretched rustic snores beneath the hedge,
"Who then shall render me thy pleasant vein
"Of Attic wit, thy jests, thy smiles, again?
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
"To other cares than those of feeding you.
"Where glens and vales are thickest overgrown
"With tangled boughs, I wander now alone,
"Till night descends, while blustering wind and shower
"Beat on my temples through the shattered bower.
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
"To other cares than those of feeding you.
"Alas! what rampant weeds now shame my fields,
"And what a mildewed crop the furrow yields!
"My rambling vines, unwedded to the trees,
"Bear shrivelled grapes; my myrtles fail to please; 90
"Nor please me more my flocks; they, slighted, turn
"Their unavailing looks on me, and mourn.
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
"To other cares than those of feeding you.
"Ægon invites me to the hazel grove,
"Amyntas, on the river's bank to rove,
"And young Alphesibœus to a seat
"Where branching elms exclude the mid-day heat.
"'Here fountains spring,—here mossy hillocks rise;
"'Here Zephyr whispers, and the stream replies.' 100
"Thus each persuades, but, deaf to every call,
"I gain the thickets, and escape them all.
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
"To other cares than those of feeding you.
"Then Mopsus said, (the same who reads so well
"The voice of birds, and what the stars foretell,
"For he by chance had noticed my return,)
"'What means thy sullen mood, this deep concern?
"'Ah, Thyris! thou art either crazed with love,
"Or some sinister influence from above; 110
"'Dull Saturn's influence oft the shepherds rue;
"'His leaden shaft oblique has pierced thee through.'
"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are,
"My thoughts are all now due to other care.
"The nymphs, amazed, my melancholy see,
"And 'Thyris!' cry, 'what will become of thee?'
"'What wouldst thou, Thyris? such should not appear
"The brow of youth, stern, gloomy, and severe;
"'Brisk youth should laugh and love,—ah, shun the fate
"'Of those twice wretched mopes who love too late!'
"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are; 121
"My thoughts are all now due to other care.
"Ægle with Hyas came, to soothe my pain,
"And Baucis' daughter, Dryope the vain,
"Fair Dryope, for voice and finger neat
"Known far and near, and for her self-conceit;
"Chloris too came, whose cottage on the lands
"That skirt the Idumanian current stands;
"But all in vain they came, and but to see
"Kind words, and comfortable, lost on me. 130
"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are;
"My thoughts are all now due to other care.
"Ah, blest indifference of the playful herd,
"None by his fellow chosen or preferred!
"No bonds of amity the flocks enthral,
"But each associates and is pleased with all;
"So graze the dappled deer in numerous droves,
"And all his kind alike the zebra loves;
"The same law governs where the billows roar,
"And Proteus’ shoals o’erspread the desert shore; 140
"The sparrow, meanest of the feathered race,
"His fit companion finds in every place,
"With whom he picks the grain that suits him best,
"Flirts here and there, and late returns to rest,
"And whom, if chance the falcon make his prey,
"Or hedger with his well-aimed arrow slay,
"For no such loss the gay survivor grieves,
"New love he seeks, and new delight receives.
"We only, an obdurate kind, rejoice,
"Scorning all others, in a single choice. 150
"We scarce in thousands meet one kindred mind;
"And if the long-sought good at last we find,
"When least we fear it, Death our treasure steals,
"And gives our heart a wound that nothing heals.
"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are;
"My thoughts are all now due to other care.
"Ah, what delusion lured me from my flocks,
"To traverse Alpine snows and rugged rocks!
"What need so great had I to visit Rome,
"Now sunk in ruins, and herself a tomb? 160
"Or, had she flourished still as when of old
"For her sake Tityrus forsook his fold,
"What need so great had I to incur a pause
"Of thy sweet intercourse for such a cause,
"For such a cause to place the roaring sea,
"Rocks, mountains, woods, between my friend and me?"
"Else, had I grasped thy feeble hand, composed
"Thy decent limbs, thy drooping eyelids closed,
"And, at the last, had said — 'Farewell, — ascend, —
"'Nor even in the skies forget thy friend!' "
170
"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
"My thoughts are all now due to other care.
"Although well pleased, ye tuneful Tuscan swains!
"My mind the memory of your worth retains,
"Yet not your worth can teach me less to mourn
"My Damon lost; — he too was Tuscan born,
"Born in your Lucca, city of renown!
"And wit possessed, and genius, like your own.
"Oh, how elate was I, when stretched beside
"The murmuring course of Arno's breezy tide, 180
"Beneath the poplar grove I passed my hours,
"Now cropping myrtles, and now vernal flowers,
"And hearing, as I lay at ease along,
"Your swains contending for the prize of song!
"I also dared attempt (and, as it seems,
"Not much displeased attempting) various themes,
"For even I can presents boast from you,
"The shepherd's pipe, and osier basket too;
"And Dati, and Francini, both have made
"My name familiar to the beechen shade, 190
"And they are learned, and each in every place
"Renowned for song, and both of Lydian race.
"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
"My thoughts are all now due to other care.
"While bright the dewy grass with moonbeams shone,
"And I stood hurdling in my kids alone,
"How often have I said (but thou hadst found
"Ere then thy dark cold lodgment under ground),
"Now Damon sings, or springes sets for hares,
"Or wickerwork for various use prepares!
"How oft, indulging fancy, have I planned
"New scenes of pleasure that I hoped at hand,
"Called thee abroad as I was wont, and cried,
"'What, hoa! my friend, — come lay thy task aside,
"'Haste, let us forth together, and beguile
"'The heat beneath yon whispering shades awhile,
"'Or on the margin stray of Colne's clear flood,
"'Or where Cassibelan's grey turrets stood!
"'There thou shalt cull me simples, and shalt teach
"'Thy friend the name and healing powers of each, 210
"'From the tall bluebell to the dwarfish weed,
"'What the dry land and what the marshes breed,
"'For all their kinds alike to thee are known,
"'And the whole art of Galen is thy own.'
"Ah, perish Galen's art, and withered be
"The useless herbs that gave not health to thee!
"Twelve evenings since, as in poetical dream
"I meditating sat some statelier theme,
"The reeds no sooner touched my lip, though new
"And unessay'd before, than wide they flew, 220
"Bursting their waxen bands, nor could sustain
"The deep-toned music of the solemn strain;
"And I am vain perhaps, but I will tell
"How proud a theme I chose, — ye groves, farewell!
"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
"My thoughts are all now due to other care.
"Of Brutus, Dardan chief, my song shall be,
"How with his barks he ploughed the British sea,
"First from Rutupia's towering headland seen,
"And of his consort's reign, fair Imogen; 230
Of Brennus and Belinus, brothers bold,
And of Arviragus, and how of old
Our hardy sires the Armorican controlled,
And of the wife of Gorlois, who, surprised
By Uther, in her husband's form disguised
(Such was the force of Merlin's art), became
Pregnant with Arthur of heroic fame.
These themes I now revolve, — and oh, if Fate
Proportion to these themes my lengthened date,
Adieu my shepherd's reed! yon pine-tree bough
Shall be thy future home; there dangle thou
Forgotten and disused, unless ere long
Thou change thy Latian for a British song;
A British? — even so, — the powers of man
Are bounded; little is the most he can:
And it shall well suffice me, and shall be
Fame, and proud recompense enough for me,
If Usa, golden-haired, my verse may learn.
If Alain bending o'er his crystal urn,
Swift-whirling Abra, Trent's o'ershadowed stream,
Thames, lovelier far than all in my esteem,
Tamar's ore-tinctured flood, and, after these,
The wave-worn shores of utmost Orcades.
Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
All this I kept in leaves of laurel-rind
Enfolded safe, and for thy view designed
This, and a gift from Manso's hand beside
(Manso, not least his native city's pride),
Two cups that radiant as their giver shone,
Adorned by sculpture with a double zone.
The spring was graven there; here slowly wind
"The Red-sea shores, with groves of spices lined;
"Her plumes of various hues amid the boughs
"The sacred, solitary Phœnix shows,
"And, watchful of the dawn, reverts her head
"To see Aurora leave her watery bed. —
"In other part, the expansive vault above,
"And there too, even there, the god of love;
"With quiver armed he mounts, his torch displays 270
"A vivid light, his gem-tipt arrows blaze,
"Around his bright and fiery eyes he rolls,
"Nor aims at vulgar minds or little souls,
"Nor deigns one look below, but aiming high
"Sends every arrow to the lofty sky;
"Hence forms divine, and minds immortal, learn
"The power of Cupid, and enamoured burn.
"Thou, also, Damon (neither need I fear
"That hope delusive), thou art also there;
"For whither should simplicity like thine 280
"Retire? where else such spotless virtue shine?
"Thou dwellest not (thought profane) in shades below,
"Nor tears suit thee; — cease then my tears to flow!
"Away with grief, on Damon ill bestowed!
"Who, pure himself, has found a pure abode,
"Has passed the showery arch, henceforth resides
"With saints and heroes, and from flowing tides
"Quaffs copious immortality and joy,
"With hallowed lips! — Oh! blest without alloy,
"And now enriched with all that faith can claim, 290
"Look down, entreated by whatever name,
"If Damon please thee most (that rural sound
"Shall oft with echoes fill the groves around)
"Or if Deodatus, by which alone
"In those ethereal mansions thou art known.
"Thy blush was maiden, and thy youth the taste
"Of wedded bliss knew never, pure and chaste:
"The honours, therefore, by divine decree
"The lot of virgin worth, are given to thee;
"Thy brows encircled with a radiant band,
"And the green palm-branch waving in thy hand,
"Thou in immortal nuptials shalt rejoice,
"And join with seraphs thy according voice,
"Where rapture reigns, and the ecstatic lyre
"Guides the blest orgies of the blazing quire."
NOTES

1626-1645

ELEGY I

We have already alluded to Milton's friendship for Diodati, which began at St. Paul's School (p. 115), and in this poem we have that friendship revealed in the true Miltonic fashion. It is interesting to know that the family of Diodati like that of Milton was persecuted for religious opinions. Diodati's uncle was exiled from Italy and settled in Geneva, where he became Professor of Hebrew, while his father came to England, married an English woman, and practised medicine in London. There the son Charles was born. The friendship of Diodati and Milton formed at St. Paul's was continued while one was at Oxford and the other at Cambridge. In their vacations in London they were invariably together.

Their correspondence was in Latin and Greek, Diodati preferring the latter, while Milton used the former. Two of Diodati's Greek epistles are now in the British Museum. The first, probably written in the vacation of 1625, bears this greeting, "Θεόδοτος Μιλτώνι ευφραίνεσθαι (Diodati to Milton, to cheer up)." It contains the following evidence of the closest endearment: "So much do I long for your society that I am now dreaming of, and all but prophesying, fine weather, and calm, and everything golden, for to-morrow that we may regale each other with the discourses of philosophers and learned men, ... air, and sun, and river, and trees, and birds, and men, will make holiday with us, and laugh with us, and, be it said without offence, dance with us ... only you be ready either to start when I come for you, or, without being called to come to me longing for you." In December of this year Diodati took his degree of B.A. and went into the country, as it is from
Cheshire that the second of these Greek letters was sent, in the summer of 1626. It is headed, "Θεόδωρος Μιλτωνί χάρειν (Diodati to Milton greeting)." I have no fault to find with my present mode of life, except this one, that I lack some kindred spirit to converse with, and long for such an one; for what else is wanting when the days are long, the scenery blooming with flowers and waving and teeming with leaves, on every branch a nightingale or goldfinch or other bird delightful with its songs and warblings, most varied walks, a table neither scant nor overloaded, and sleep undisturbed." Masson thinks that Milton's first elegy is written in reply to the above from Diodati. It was written during Milton's enforced absence from Cambridge in the summer of 1626, and is full of the most interesting biographical color. It reveals that the truest type of the Puritan was not devoid of the sense of humor. It is generally believed that the Puritans lacked this sense, but there are abundant evidences to the contrary.

3. Deva's western side. The Dee was the old boundary between England and Wales. Diodati was in Cheshire near Chester.


7, 8. now free to roam, etc. Milton seems delighted that Diodati can be in the country.

12. my forbidden cell. His rooms in St. John's College, Cambridge, from which he is temporarily exiled.

"Among the band of my comperees was one
Whom chance had stationed in the very room
Honored by Milton's name."

WORDSWORTH, Prelude, iii. 293–295.

22. hapless bard. Ovid, who was banished from Rome by Augustus. "A soul ill at ease amid its surroundings." — R. Y. TYRRELL.

27–49. Here too I visit, etc. Not much of formal Puritanism here. Shakespeare was his teacher.

45. Some youth, etc. Romeo.

47. assassin's heart. Hamlet.

51-53. but when spring calls. Diodati wrote from the country: "But thou, wondrous youth, why dost thou persist in tying thyself night and day to books, and studies. Live, laugh, enjoy youth and the present; and give over wearing yourself out with reading about the libations, and leisures, and indolences of the Sages of old."

54-89. Here many a virgin troop, etc. In some of the parks. Masson says, "Kensington Gardens would be about the present equivalent." Does any one doubt that Milton was susceptible to feminine charms? Cf. note, p. 210.

76. Dardanian hands. An allusion to the old legend which said that London was founded by the Trojans, and called New Troy.

90, 91. Immortal Moly, etc. By this plant Ulysses is made proof against the charms of Circe.

"The root is black,
The blossom white as milk. Among the gods
Its name is Moly." — Odyssey, x.

1629-1645

Elegy VI

The heading to this poem reveals the occasion of its inception. It is in reply to one of December 13th, 1629, written by Diodati when he was in the country enjoying the festivities preceding Christmas, and was sent about Christmas in the same year. Diodati was continuing the study of medicine, and Milton was still in the University. Masson thinks that when Diodati was incorporated ad eundem at Cambridge in July, 1629, the two friends must have met.

10-12. December's harmless sports, etc. Cf. Washington

19, 20. Not even Ovid, etc. Ovid, during his banishment, wrote his *Tristia*, and other poems which were considered by critics not equal to those written in Italy.

21. Anacreon's muse. Anacreon was a native of Teos on the coast of Asia Minor. His poetry was characterized by its bacchanalian turn. Professor R. C. Jebb calls him the poet of courtly festivity.

23–26. Pindar with Bacchus glows, etc. Pindar was the poet of the Olympian Festival, where the present and past religious and heroic splendor of the Hellenic spirit were united. Matthew Arnold described him as "the poet on whom above all other poets, the power of style seems to have exercised an inspiring and intoxicating effect."

27, 28. The Roman lyrist, etc.

"Bacchus! to thee belong
The glories twain of Peace and War,
The fight, the jest, the dance, the song:
Hail! genial King! Hail! youthful conqueror!"

*Horace*, Book ii. Ode xix.

"Drink, comrades, drink; give loose to mirth!
With joyous footstep beat the earth,
And spread before the War-God's shrine
The Salian feast, the sacrificial wine."

Book i. Ode xxxvii.

29–54. Now too the plenteous feast, etc. Milton gives here a splendid characteristic of what he calls "light elegy," the popular flute music suitable for social gatherings or the jovial friendly epistle.

39–48. In tapestried halls, etc. Diodati was enjoying holiday festivities with friends in the country, and this description of the associations of the time in the English country-mansion is exceedingly beautiful.
"As in the winters left behind,
    Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic pictures' breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman blind."

*In Memoriam, LXXVIII.*

"And who but listened, — till was paid
Respect to every true friend's claim:
The greeting given, the music played,
In honour of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call,
And 'Merry Christmas' wished to all."

*Wordsworth, The River Duddon.*

55-78. But they, etc. "These twenty-four lines," says Masson, "are about Milton's noblest in Latin, and deserve to be learnt by heart with reference to himself, or to be written under his portrait."


67. Linus. Theban philosopher and singer. He instructed Hercules in music.


69. Calchas. The prophet who went with the Greeks to Troy. Cf. *Iliad,* i.

bard of Thrace. Orpheus, poet, musician and philosopher.

71-78. Homer led, etc. Cf. *Odyssey,* x.

79-88. Wouldst thou be told, etc. An allusion to the *Hymn on the Nativity.*

91, 92. Verse that, etc. This is a revelation that Diodati was looked upon by Milton much as was Hallam by Tennyson.

"Heart-affluence in discursive talk
    From household fountains never dry:
The critic clearness of an eye,
    That saw thro' all the Muses' walk."

*In Memoriam, cix.*

Milton set out upon his Italian journey (cf. p. 209) full of joy and hope, not a little of which was due to his association with Diodati. In his Epistolae Familiares, written not long before he left England, we find him greeting his friend who was now settled in the practice of his profession, probably near Chester. He says: "I would not that true friendship turned on balance of letters and salutations, all which may be false; but that it should depend upon the deep roots of the mind and sustain itself there... for the fostering of which friendship there is not need so much of writing as of a loving recollection of virtues on the one side and on the other. Nor, even now should you not have written, would there be a lack of means for supplying that good office. Your probity writes with me in your stead and indites true letters on my inmost heart; your blamelessness of morals writes to me, and your love of the good; your genius also, by no means a common one, writes to me, and commends you to me more and more... Know that it is impossible for me not to love men like you." This, then, was the feeling he carried with him everywhere during his visit with the countrymen of his friend. While at Florence he makes a journey to Lucca to visit the town where the Diodati family originated, and at Geneva visited the celebrated theologian, Giovanni Diodati, the uncle of Charles.

In the five sonnets and the canzone written in Italian there is concealed an experience similar to that in the sonnets of Shakespeare, and the critics are perplexed as to how to interpret them. They seem to reveal Milton's love for a beautiful and accomplished Italian lady. It is generally believed that they were written during his visit to Italy and that they record his affection for one whom he then met,—possibly, but unlikely, the celebrated singer, Leonora Baroni, whom he heard at Rome and to whom he addressed complimentary Latin verses. The lady is described in the first sonnet as one
"whose harmonious name the Rhine
Through all his grassy vale, delights to hear."

In the fourth he says:

"Lady! it cannot be but that thine eyes
Must be my sun, such radiance they display."

The master-mistress of Shakespeare's passion, and the subject of Wordsworth's poems on Lucy are not more surely concealed than is this spirit

"That manifests a sweetness all divine."

It was natural that Milton should wish to confide this secret to his friend Diodati, and the incident is rendered pathetic from the fact that the sonnets never reached him. Cf. *Epitaphium Damonis*, note.

1639-1645

The Death of Damon

Early in 1639 Milton turned his steps homeward. He was anticipating the pleasure of meeting his friend in the familiar scenes so dear to both, and the opportunity of sharing the delights of his tour, when he learned that his hopes were vain,—that Diodati had been dead for nearly a year. No particulars were made known to him until he reached home. He was at first stunned by the blow, but on gaining possession of himself he could say as did Tennyson at the death of Hallam:

"I sing to him that rests below,
And since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow."

The fact that this poem was written in Latin has caused it to be almost unknown to the general reader, and hence *Lycidas* has become associated with the other great elegies of English poets. But *Lycidas* lacks the strong personal note which is the characteristic of the Latin poem. King had been only an
associate of Milton in the life of the University, while Diodati was the embodiment of

"First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart."

"In Diodati," says Mr. Richard Garnett, "Milton found perhaps the only friend whom, in the most sacred sense of that term, he had ever possessed."

Mr. Mark Pattison says: "Milton's Latin verses are distinguished from most Neo-Latin verse by being a vehicle of real emotion. His technical skill is said to have been surpassed by others; but that in which he stands alone is, that in these exercises of imitative art he is able to remain himself and to give utterance to genuine passion. Artificial Arcadianism is as much the framework of the elegy on Diodati as it is of Lycidas. . . . But this factitious bucolism is pervaded by a pathos which, like volcanic heat, has fused into a new compound the dilapidated débris of the Theocritan world."

"The poem is," says Masson, "beyond all question, the finest, the deepest in feeling of all that Milton has left us in Latin, and one of the most interesting of all his poems, whether in Latin or English. . . . Whoever will read it will perceive in it a passionateness of personal grief, an evidence of bursts of tears and sobbings interrupting the act of writing, to which there is nothing equivalent in the English Lycidas."

1. nymphs of Himera. Himera is a Sicilian river mentioned in the Idylls of Theocritus.


Hylas. The youth abducted by the nymphs in the thirteenth idyll of Theocritus.

3. Bion. The pastoral poet whose death Moschus laments in his third idyll.

6. Thyrsis. This name is common in pastoral poetry, from Theocritus to Arnold. Milton assumes the part of the bereaved shepherd.

Arnold, in Thyrsis, gives us a picture of one who sought com-
fort in the scenes associated with a friendship similar to that of Milton and Diodati.

"Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill!
Who, if not it, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,
And what sedged brooks are Thames' tributaries."

9. **Damon.** Another common name for shepherd in pastoral poetry.
11–14. **The green wheat,** etc. This makes it certain that Diodati died soon after Milton left England in April, 1638. Milton returned in the fall of 1639.
16. **Tuscan Fiorenza.** Milton was in Florence when his friend died.

23, 24. **Go, seek your home,** etc. The repetition of these lines at regular intervals in the poem is after the fashion of Theocritus and the pastoralists.

41, 42. **To Daphnis first,** etc. Here is an illustration of the egotism of a great soul, "a glorious nature," as Rev. Frederick Robertson called it. Milton does not hesitate to take a place second only to Theocritus.

43. **Pales.** The god of the sheepfold.
44. **Faunus.** The god of the pastures and flocks.

65–70. **Or whose discourse,** etc.

"Best seemed the thing he was, and join'd
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind."

*In Memoriam*, cxi.
NOTES

"There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields! Yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
'Neath the soft canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky."
MATTHEW ARNOLD, Thyrsis.

91, 92. they, slighted, turn, etc. Cf. Lycidas, 125.
111. Saturn’s influence. The star Saturn was considered as causing melancholy among shepherds. Cf. Il Penseroso, 43.
127–129. Chloris too came, etc. Masson thinks that as the "Ithumanian current" is the river Chelmer in Essex, some friend of Milton’s is here meant.
133–154. Ah, blest indifference, etc. This contrast of natural and moral affection is one of the most interesting features of the poem. The one is temporary, the other permanent.

"Dear friend, far off, my lost desire;
So far, so near in woe and weal;
O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher."
In Memoriam, cxxix.

157–170. Ah, what delusion, etc. An allusion to Virgil’s first Eclogue, where Tityrus (Virgil) tells Melibœus of his visit to Rome, "carrying her head as high among all other cities as cypresses do among your bending hedgerow trees." Milton implies that even if Rome were as in Virgil’s time, he paid dearly for such a sight if it took him away from his dying friend.
173–192. Although well pleased, etc. Here we have an allusion to the friendships Milton formed in Italy. Carlo Dati and Antonio Francini were among the distinguished Florentines who did him honor, the one in an ode and the other in an
address. Milton himself entertained them with his discussions in the Academies; his ease and grace, his learning and accomplishments, delighted them.

195–216. While bright the dewy grass, etc. Milton anticipates his return from Italy and the pleasure he would have in the society of Diodati the follower of Galen. Sometimes Milton would go to St. Albans, in Herts (where the British king Cassibelaunus opposed Caesar), and where his friend lived, or Diodati would visit him at Horton on the Colne. This reminds us of the society of Tennyson and Hallam.

"We talk'd; the stream beneath us ran;
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss.
Or cool'd within the glooming wave;
   And last returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave.

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
   We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours."

_In Memoriam, xcv._

217–224. Twelve evenings since, etc. Here we have an allusion to the fact that Milton was meditating a great English poem, but that the subject was too complex for him. As there is no Diodati in whom to confide dare he confide in us? He says, 'Yes, I will let you into the secret,' and for this purpose he bids farewell to the 'groves,' or the pastoral, and reveals his high theme.

Milton's father was disappointed that his son did not care to enter the service of the church. In his Latin poem _Ad Patrem_, written at Horton, Milton alludes to this feeling as an apparent slighting of the Muse.

"'Nor thou persist, I pray thee, still to slight
The sacred Nine, and to imagine vain
And useless powers, by whom inspired, thyself
Art skilful to associate verse with airs
Harmonious, and to give the human voice
A thousand modulations, heir by right
Indisputable of Arion's fame.
Now say, what wonder is it if a son
Of thine delight in verse, if, so conjoined
In close affinity, we sympathise
In social arts, and kindred studies sweet?
Such distribution of himself to us
Was Phoebus' choice; thou hast thy gift, and I
Mine also, and between us we receive,
Father and son, the whole inspiring god.
No! howsoe'er the semblance thou assume
Of hate, thou hatest not the gentle Muse,
My father! for thou never bad'st me tread
The beaten path, and broad, that leads right on
To Opulence, nor didst condemn thy son
To the insipid clamours of the bar,
To laws voluminous, and ill observed;
But, wishing to enrich me more, to fill
My mind with treasure, led'st me far away
From city din to deep retreats, to banks
And streams Aonian, and, with free consent
Didst place me happy at Apollo's side."

227–237. Of Brutus, etc. In his Latin poem to Manso, an Italian marquis who showed Milton much attention at Naples, he had sketched something of his plan of an Epic based on the legendary history of Britain.

"Oh might so true a friend to me belong,
So skilled to grace the votaries of song,
Should I recall hereafter into rhyme
The kings and heroes of my native clime,
Arthur the chief," etc. — Manso.

229. Rutupia. Richborough in Kent, whose headlands make a safe harbor. (M.)
230. **Imogen.** The wife of Brutus.

231. **Brennus and Belinus.** Two famous Celts who ruled in Britain centuries after Brutus.

232. **Arviragus.** Son of the British king Cunobelin (Shakespeare's Cymbeline). He fought against the Roman invaders about 45 A.D. (M.)

233. **Armorican.** An allusion to the settlement of Armorica in France by those who about 450 A.D. left Britain to escape the tyranny of Hengist and Horsa, the Saxons. (M.)


240–243. **Adieu my shepherd's reed, etc.** Although Milton changed the pastoral form and the Latin verse for British, he never carried out the idea of an Arthurian Epic. In his *History of England* we have many of the old legends of Britain.

248–253. **If Usa, etc.** The enumeration of these rivers reminds us of that in *At a Vacation Exercise*.


Alain. The Alyn flowing into the Dee. (M.)

Abra. The Humber. (M.)

Tamar. The river dividing Devon from Cornwall. (M.)

Orkades. The Orkneys.

256–277. **All this I kept, etc.** A pathetic allusion to the fact that he anticipated showing this outline of the poem to Diodati, and also the beautiful gifts from the aged Manso. To those who think these gifts were only two lines of Latin verse idealized, Masson says: “We know of no present of Manso to Milton except the Latin distich of compliment—

> ‘Ut mens, forma, decor, facies, mos, si pietas sic,  
> Non Anglus, verum hercıl Angelus ipse, fores, ’

and surely not even Milton’s imagination could have converted that into two cups.”
278–305. **Thou, also, Damon,** etc. This beautiful conclusion of the poem surpasses that of *Lycidas*. It throbs with passionate love and hope.

```
"The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were to the tempest given;
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are."
```

*Shelley, Adonais.*

```
"Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice:
I prosper, circled by thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die."
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"O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure."
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*In Memoriam, cxxx., cxxxi.*
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