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PARADISE LOST
BOOKS I and II
MILTON
Milton's
Paradise Lost
Books I. and II.

Edited
With Notes and an Introduction

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PREFACE

In this edition of the first two books of "Paradise Lost," I have tried to mark the literary aspects of the poem. Everything else has been of minor consideration. I have neglected a number of interesting things about Milton's life, because I believe that too much biography detracts from interest in the poem; I have neglected many interesting questions concerning Milton's language, because these seem often, not only to detract from interest in the poem, but almost to destroy it. I have tried to explain what was necessary, and no more, and to call attention to what might pass unnoticed, so that a student could read the poem with understanding and with appreciation of its special characteristics.

The poem is edited not only for cursory reading, but for special study. The notes at the bottom of the page are intended for use when the book is prescribed for reading. Where the book is prescribed for study, the student will find some additional notes on pp. 78–102. Even these additional notes, however, do not deal largely with explanation of allusion or linguistic comment: their purpose is to make the student more intimately familiar with the poem, and so more appreciative of its character.

There is so much information on "Paradise Lost" that is almost public property, that one cannot pretend to great originality in one's notes. I must particularly acknowledge, however, the value of Verity's edition, from which I have made a number of borrowings, always, I believe, with mention of the fact. The purpose of that edition differs somewhat from that of the present, but in its own direction it is unexcelled.
I have sought to give a good, modern, readable text, disregarding the peculiarities of the original spelling and punctuation, except in rare cases where they seemed to indicate something of importance. Not having access to the second edition (1674), the last revised by Milton, I have usually consulted the third edition (1678), which has the same text, except for slight inaccuracies; and also the modern texts of Masson and Verity.

Edward E. Hale, Jr.

Union College, June 11, 1896.
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INTRODUCTION

I. ON THE LIFE OF MILTON.

The life of a poet has too often an attraction which draws one insensibly away from the enjoyment of his poetry to a study of biography. Perhaps the temptation is robbed of its enchantment, and again, perhaps it is furnished with charms more deceitfully attractive, when we read a man's life in his own words. However this may be, there is a certain pleasure, if one must read something about a poet, in reading what he said about himself. Milton never wrote a formal autobiography, and yet from one or another of his writings we can put together enough to give us a good idea of the circumstances of his life, and at the same time some little idea of what sort of man was the writer.

In the active period of his life, shortly after the execution of Charles I., Milton wrote and published at the request of Parliament a "Defence of the People of England." The pamphlet was violently attacked by the adherents of the King, and, according to a habit now almost entirely passed away, in the answer to Milton's "Defence" was mingled much aspersion of a very personal nature. To this answer Milton replied, in a "Second Defence," not only with some unfortunate slanders of his own, but with a dignified, temperate statement of his life and work.

"I will now mention who and whence I am. I was born at London,¹ of an honest family; my father was distinguished by the undeviating integrity of his life; my mother by the esteem in which she was held, and the alms which she bestowed. My father destined me from a child to the

¹ Dec. 9, 1608.
pursuits of literature; and my appetite for knowledge was so voracious, that from twelve years of age, I hardly ever left my studies or went to bed before midnight. This primarily led to my loss of sight. My eyes were naturally weak, and I was subject to frequent headaches; which, however, could not chill the ardour of my curiosity, or retard the progress of my improvement. My father had me daily instructed in the grammar school, and by other masters at home. He then, after I had acquired a proficiency in various languages, and had made a considerable progress in philosophy, sent me to the University of Cambridge. Here I passed seven years in the usual course of instruction and study, with the approbation of the good, and without any stain upon my character, till I took the degree of Master of Arts. After this I did not, as this miscreant feigns, run away into Italy, but of my own accord retired to my father's house, whither I was accompanied by the regrets of most of the fellows of the college, who showed me no common marks of friendship and esteem.

"On my father's estate, where he had determined to pass the remainder of his days, I enjoyed an interval of uninterrupted leisure, which I entirely devoted to the perusal of the Greek and Latin classics; though I occasionally visited the metropolis, either for the sake of purchasing books, or of learning something new in mathematics or in music, in which I, at that time, found a source of pleasure and amusement. In this manner I spent five years, till my mother's death; I then became anxious to visit foreign parts, and particularly Italy." ("The Second Defence," Prose Works, Ed. Bohn, i. 254.)

A serious, earnest youth was Milton's, devoted to preparation for good work. We may add a passage or two from other writings, which will serve to show further his disposition, although they do not mention that this early period produced the poems "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Comus," and "Lycidas."

1The presumed author of the answer to the Defence of the People of England, Alexander More.
2At Horton, in Buckinghamshire.
"I must say, therefore, that 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, prosing or versing, but chiefly this latter, the style, by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live. . . . [He then speaks of the encomiums of certain, and goes on.] . . . I began thus far to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intense study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die. . . . Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, on the vapours of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her siren daughters,¹ but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim, with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases:² to this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs; till which in some measure be compassed, at mine own peril and cost, I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loth to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them." ("The Reason of Church Government," Works, ii. 479–481).

"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 sheweth.

¹Mnemosyne and the Muses.
²See Paradise Lost, i. 17; written long after this.
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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 endueath.
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 Taskmaster’s eye.”

(Sonnet iii.)

In such a manner passed the first part of Milton’s life, ending with the delightful journey to Italy, which was to him afterward the source of much happy recollection. From Italy he returned as events were drifting into the civil war, for, as he says, he “thought it base to be travelling for amusement abroad, while [his] fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home.”

Here begins the second period of Milton’s life. Giving up for the moment the thought of literature, he devoted himself to the cause in which he stoutly believed. His particular strength lying with the pen rather than with the sword, he wrote many pieces, at first defending the ideas of the Puritans on Church Government, and afterward defending their acts in governing England. During these years, too, he had private interests of his own, some of them, unfortunately, of a nature we cannot well be proud of. In May, 1643, he married Mary Powel, the daughter of a Royalist gentleman of Oxfordshire. She was but half his age, and the marriage was not a happy one. She remained with him but a month, and then returned to her father’s house. This was occasion for Milton’s publishing four pamphlets upon divorce, which ought to be mentioned as representing Milton at his worst, almost the contrary of what we would imagine him from “Paradise Lost.” Nor need we say more of his pamphlets on Church Government, or in defence of the Parliament.
A single passage will indicate their spirit. Often carried away by excess of zeal, we may be sure that at bottom Milton diverted his time and energy from poetry and study, because he saw in other work his duty, if not his desire.

"To descant on the misfortunes of a person fallen from so high a dignity, who hath also paid his final debt, both to nature and his faults, is neither in itself a thing commendable, nor the intention of this discourse. Neither was it fond ambition, nor the vanity to get a name, present or with posterity, by writing against a king. I never was so thirsty after fame, nor so destitute of other hopes and means, better and more certain to attain it; . . . nevertheless, for their sakes, who, through custom, simplicity, or want of better teaching, have no more seriously considered kings, than in the gaudy name of majesty, and admire them and their doings as if they breathed not the same breath with other mortal men, I shall make no scruple to take up (for it seems to be the challenge both of him and all his party), to take up this gauntlet, though a king's, in the behalf of liberty and the commonwealth." ("Eikonoklastes," Works, i. 307.)

But the study and work which he undertook for the public good, as he conceived it, was the cause of a most immense misfortune to him. For some time his sight had been failing; the work upon the "Second Defence" is said to have been the final cause of his blindness; in it he writes:

"Thus, therefore, when I was publickly solicited to write a reply to the defence of the royal cause, when I had to contend with the pressure of sickness, and with the apprehension of soon losing the sight of my remaining eye, and when my medical attendants clearly announced, that if I did engage in the work, it would be irreparably lost, their premonitions caused no hesitation, and inspired no delay. . . . I considered that many had purchased a less"
good by a greater evil, the meed of glory by the loss of life; 
but that I might procure great good by little suffering; 
that though I am blind, I might still discharge the most 
honorable duties, the performance of which, as it is 
something more durable than glory, ought to be an object 
of superior admiration and esteem; I resolved, therefore, 
to make the short interval of sight, which was left me to 
enjoy, as beneficial as possible to the public interest.”
(“Second Defence,” Works, i. 238.)

To which may be added a passage from “Paradise Lost;”

it is from the address to Light in the Third Book.

“Thée I revisit safe,
And feel thy sovran vital lamp; but thou
Revisit’st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,
That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
Those other two equalled with me in fate,
So were I equalled with them in renown,
Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old:
Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
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;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men.
Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,
Presented with a universal blank
INTRODUCTION

Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight."

(Book iii. 21-55.)

In spite of his loss of sight, however, he was revolving in his mind a great work. And with the close of his public activity and his return to poetry we may date the third and last period of Milton's life. Of the origin of "Paradise Lost" he has not himself spoken in detail, although, as we have seen, he had looked forward to some worthy work. There had early been in his mind the ambition to write a great poem; he would have undertaken it on his return from Italy, had it not been for public events. As it was, he revolved it in his mind: he thought first of a poem with King Arthur as hero, but in time his mind turned to the idea of the Fall of Man, a subject on which many had touched before, although none had conceived it fully or carried it to noble execution. His poem on King Arthur was to have been an epic; "Paradise Lost" he conceived first as a drama. So early as 1641 he had written, as it is thought, some lines which still stand in the poem. But the times were too pressing, and he put the work aside.

In the year 1659 Oliver Cromwell died, and his son succeeded him as Lord Protector. There was no stability to his government, however, and we can now readily see that the re-establishment of the royal power was a matter of a very short time. In the last year of the Commonwealth, Milton once more turned to pamphleteering, and put forth quickly one and another piece of suggestion and counsel. But it was of no avail. Charles II. came back, and Milton was for a time in danger even of his life. A few words in "Paradise Lost" seem to have been written with the
thought of this time when further resistance was impossible.

"Servant of God, well done! Well hast thou fought
The better fight, who singly hast maintained
Against revolted multitudes the cause
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms,
And for the testimony of truth hast borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence; for this was all thy care—
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
Judged thee perverse."

(Book vi. 29–37.)

The new power was not bloodthirsty, however, and Milton soon came out of hiding and lived peacefully and quietly for fourteen years more. He was at last able to devote himself to poetry and learning, and in these years put forth several works in prose, of which the memory remains only with students, and also his greatest poems,—in 1667, "Paradise Lost;" in 1671, "Paradise Regained," and "Samson Agonistes."

The end of his life was quiet and retired: his greatness as a poet was recognized by men of letters and by the reading public, and although he never had part, never could have had part with the gay crowd of Restoration writers, yet his days must have passed largely as he would have wished. He had lived a life which, in spite of some unfortunate elements, was distinctly a life of duty, of devotion to the task that came to his hand. The duty came to an end, the task ceased to be possible; he was able to devote himself to the work that was the desire of his heart. For a man like John Milton, it would seem incongruous to wish anything more.

He died November 8, 1674.

So much of Milton, more or less, can we learn from his own writings, and in this way we get an idea of him suffi-
ciently definite for the reader of his poetry. The student, however, will require something more; not only will he require more detail concerning the facts already indicated, but he will require something about Milton’s place in literary history, something of his relation to other men of letters, of the relation of his work to the rest of English literature. More detail concerning the facts already indicated is hardly consistent with the plan of this book,1 but we may well take a page or two to state very briefly Milton’s historical position.

As far as the history of literature is concerned, Milton occupies a curious position. Less than any other poet of the first rank does he stand in relation to the main currents of development of English Literature. Chaucer stood in the full course of the literature of his time. Shakespeare was surrounded by a great number of dramatists, whose work had so much the same character as his own that contemporaries made no great difference between them. Pope was the chief of a school, and his work has definite relations to the work of Dryden and of Goldsmith. Scott, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, however different from each other, stand together in the history of literature as significant of a movement. Milton, however, stands alone, so far, at least, as his greatest work is concerned. He had no predecessors, and although his influence has been great, he had no followers, as Chaucer, Pope, Wordsworth had followers. His early poems came at what we may call the very end of the Elizabethan period, but we cannot call Milton an Elizabethan, as we may call his contemporary, Herrick. His later poems came at the beginning of the Restoration period, but we can see nothing of the Restoration in Milton, as we can in his contemporary, Waller. Milton belongs to no group or school: he stands by himself.

Not that Milton’s work would have been what it is, had

1 Except so far as may be gained from the Chronological Table,
he written at any other time. So far as the metre is concerned, "Paradise Lost" would have been very different (if we can conceive of it at all), before Shakespeare or after Pope. So far as the general epic form is concerned, Milton would have written something very different had he been contemporary with Chaucer or with Browning. There is much about Milton's literary expression that belongs distinctly to his time and to no other. But so far as the vital qualities of his work are concerned, they are not explained by the development of English Literature.

The true setting for Milton and his work is not so much English Literature as English History. The history of the seventeenth century makes Milton's work much clearer to us than the literature of the seventeenth century. We need to know the history of the rise and fall of the Puritan party in England, we need to know what was the temper and character of the Puritan, before we see clearly how Milton's genius took its actual course and form. Something of such knowledge is the easy possession of every American. We all know something, and generally we have no very false idea, of that remarkable body of men who for their own day were the rulers of England, and for their own day and many a long day more were the rulers of that new England which they founded. They were men of strong character, having pre-eminent faults and great virtues. They were men of religion, men to whom the inner life was a matter of vast import. They were men of earnestness, intolerant of frivolity and license, as also of gayety and liberalism. They were, on the whole, high-minded men, magnanimous men, who looked after great things, and strove at least to get at their vital relations. Few of them paid great attention to literature; the Bible was to them not literature but law. But considering the small number of them who turned their attention to letters, they produced a large number of masterpieces,—namely two. "The Pilgrim's Progress" and "Paradise Lost" are both expressions of Puritan idealism,
INTRODUCTION

one in the simple, natural form of a prose allegory, the other in the refined, highly-developed conventionality of an epic. Both, doubtless, have excellences that were rare in the Puritan, and both have faults that were not uncommon with him. But neither of them would have been written as it was written, had it not been for the work done by the Puritan in England.

II. On "Paradise Lost."

1. The Relation of the Poem to Milton's Other Work.

We shall be able to take a broader view of our two books, and to gain a particular kind of pleasure from them, if we understand clearly, not only the place that they hold in "Paradise Lost," but the place that "Paradise Lost" itself holds among Milton's writings. We know, of course, that it was his greatest poem, but we shall do well also to know what it has to do with his other poems and with his prose writings, if there be any connection, and how far it grew out of the conditions of Milton's life and times. Such knowledge enables us to look at the poem in a particular way. It is not that we cannot enjoy it without knowing; doubtless many people have enjoyed "Paradise Lost" with very little definite knowledge about Milton. The theme, the construction of the poem, the characters, the descriptions, the figures, the language, the feeling,—all these things which go to cause the general impression are much the same with or without a knowledge of who Milton was or when he wrote. We could admire the greatness of Milton's conception of Satan, the boldness of his flight from Hell, even if we had no idea of the name of the author. Still, one gains a different kind of pleasure, an added pleasure, by looking at the poem as a part in a larger whole; we are glad to become better acquainted with the poet whom we admire; perhaps here and there we understand a passage better, or a few words, by knowing somewhat
more of the way Milton’s mind must have worked in con-
ceiving them.

The most considerable of Milton’s poems, besides “Par-
adise Lost,” are “Comus,” “Paradise Regained,” and
“Samson Agonistes.” In these four poems we shall find
that there is a curious unity of theme,¹ that Milton had
something of the same idea in mind in all of them, vary-
ing its presentation in one way or another according to cir-
cumstances or necessities. When we think that “Comus”
and “Paradise Regained” are separated by thirty years of
time, we may see how strong, how insistent was this idea.
It was, to tell the truth, a question which came close home
to every earnest Puritan, with a searching power that
dominated every other thought. This idea was the con-
tinual antagonism in this world between Good and Evil, or
we may call it more shortly the problem of Sin. The
questions of Sin and of Salvation, the relation of the Indi-
vidual, of each man, to God—these were matters over which
the Puritans in England and in this country suffered
agonies which were almost something new in the world.
Milton thought and felt with the great body to which he
belonged, and, after the fashion of poets, his thoughts and
feelings come to our view in his work.

In “Comus” we have the gallant allegory of a young
man. Milton was writing not for grave and serious men
and women, but for a cheerful and splendid festival. He
was himself more fond of the joyous and beautiful things
of this world than we are apt to remember. The Masque
was, in those days, an elaborate spectacular affair, in which
the nobles and gentles of two generations took their
delight, and Milton must have seen many at the University
or in London. The subject was sometimes a fantastic
legend, but more often it was allegorical in character, and
Milton’s temper, which was grave, even while gay, chose
this form for ideas which had often been in his mind. He
shows us Virtue tempted by Evil in the form of sensual

¹Pointed out by Dowden; see p. lxii.
pleasure,—Virtue represented by the chaste and beautiful Lady, Evil by the charming and dissolute young fellow whom Milton calls Comus, the son of the God of Wine and the Goddess of Love. For a time the Lady is in the power of the enchanter; she is in his power but never yields to him, never joins that herd of easy-going worldlings, who dance and sport about, unconscious of their beastliness. Then in time the Spirit of the place (for the masque was in compliment to a noble Earl) asserts her power, Vice is discomfited, the Lady is released from temptation, and the play ends. Couched in the form of a compliment as it is, we see here a light-handed dealing with the problem of Sin and the victory of Righteousness.

Not very long after "Comus" came the Civil War, putting an end to many masques and gayeties, and among other things putting an end to Milton's serious but light-hearted poetry. For almost twenty years he turned, as we have seen,¹ to public affairs and to prose.

The Puritan Commonwealth rose and fell, and Milton had his part in its rise and fall. And toward the end, when it began to be apparent that his work as a soldier in the church militant was coming to an end, Milton turned again to that other work to which he had long before solemnly devoted himself,² to the writing of a great poem. He had often before thought of the undertaking, had perhaps conceived some tale of chivalry; at one time, as we have seen, had thought to write of Arthur, the mythical king of legendary England. But now he turned to a different subject. He had seen the Good Cause battle only half successfully against great difficulties; now he reviewed the matter philosophically, or rather theologically, in his mind. Evil days were ahead. Why should there be Evil? How came it ever to exist? And what was the triumphant end to which the zealous lover of Good might with surety look forward? The answer as it stands in the doctrines of the Church assumed a poetic form long existent in his

¹See p. xii. ²See p. xi.
mind, and we have in "Paradise Lost" an exhibition of the origin of Evil, of its victory over man, and of its final defeat and destruction.

Somewhat later his mind turned to another poem. Thomas Ellwood, a young Quaker who had often read to Milton, and acted as secretary, tells us that Milton gave him the manuscript of "Paradise Lost" to read. He read it and returned it to Milton with the question, "What hast thou to say of Paradise Found?" Milton made no answer, "but sat some time in a muse; then brake off that discourse and fell upon another subject." Perhaps he saw that he had not made his idea plain. He had thought to account for the whole action, for the Defeat of Sin as well as for its Victory; but if Ellwood had seen in the poem no hint of Paradise Regained, doubtless there would also be many others equally blind. Whether especially for such, or not, Milton wrote his second great poem, not as a conclusion or completion to "Paradise Lost," but as a pendent, a smaller picture, as it were, to hang below a greater, reflecting or complementing its scheme of colour or its composition. But whereas in "Paradise Lost" he had taken for his subject a whole action, in "Paradise Regained" he took a single event, and yet an event so typical of the whole, that the whole was in a manner bound up in it. In the Temptation Christ and Satan meet, and the old victor over Adam finds in the Son of God his eternal Conqueror. Both poems deal with the same subject, the strife with Evil, but they present it to us in different ways.

At the same time as "Paradise Regained," Milton published another poem, "Samson Agonistes," Samson the Striver, or the Combatant. With something doubtless of a thought of himself, blind and beaten, and yet confident and in a manner triumphant, Milton conceives of Samson, the hero of the Chosen People, a hero typical in some ways of the Chosen People, powerful, misled, deluded, blinded, and yet finally victorious, although not with such a victory.

1 See Bk. i. 4, 5, and Bks. xi. and xii.
as in the days of prosperity they had conceived. The death of Samson was an episode in the great strife so constantly in the poet's mind.

In these four poems, then, in four different ways, does Milton bring before his readers the question which had such an insistent reality to him and to those of his time and of his way of thought. There is still one more point of interest in the matter.

Besides his poems, Milton wrote much prose. His prose writings are no longer read, except by students: they were of a temporary character, written chiefly for immediate effect, political pamphlets as one might say; they had not the eternal element about them, nor, we must add, was prose so much in the direct line of Milton's genius as poetry. Still they are the chief fruit of fifteen years and more of Milton's life, and it becomes interesting to see whether they have any relation to the great subject of his poetry. He has himself given us an account of his prose works and told us how they arranged themselves in his mind.

"When, therefore, I perceived that there were three species of liberty which are essential to the happiness of social life; religious, domestic, and civil; and as I had already written concerning the first, and the magistrates were strenuously active in obtaining the third, I determined to turn my attention to the second or domestic species. As this seemed to involve three material questions, the conditions of the conjugal tie, the education of the children, and the free publication of the thoughts, I made them objects of distinct consideration.\(^1\) . . . On the last species, of civil liberty, I said nothing; because I saw that sufficient attention was paid to it by the magistrates, nor did I write anything on the prerogative of the crown, till the king, voted an enemy by the parliament, and vanquished in the field, was summoned before the tribunal which condemned him to lose his head." . . . [and

\(^1\)Areopagitica, 1664, On Education, 1644, Divorce Pamphlets, 1643, 1644.
in a passage too long to quote here, he goes on to speak of the pamphlets which he thought of as devoted to civil liberty].

Liberty then was the subject of Milton's prose, and the strife between Sin and Righteousness the subject of his poetry. It seems at once a little strange that a man should treat one subject in a series of prose works, and a wholly different one in a series of poems. It would be hardly possible in the space at hand to show just how Milton thought of these matters. But when we try to conceive of Liberty not as license to do whatever we please, but as a freedom even from temptation to do what we cannot do rightly, we can see that Milton's ideal Liberty was that to which man can only come when, in the heat of the strife between Sin and Righteousness, the Evil has been thoroughly burned and purged away, so that He reigns whose right it is to reign, and whose service is perfect freedom.

2. Relation of the First Two Books to the Whole Action.

Thus, if we think of Milton's work as a whole, we may readily see the part that "Paradise Lost" plays therein. And that we may be able to look upon our two books, not merely as a fragment giving an account of the deliberations of the Fallen Angels and the Flight of Satan, but as part of a great whole, we must know a little more of the poem of which it makes the beginning.

The subject of "Paradise Lost" is the Temptation and Fall of Man. That event itself, however, was the end of a long series of events which form the action of the poem. First in order of time is the rebellion of Satan against God. Satan, one of the chief of the Angels, but weak through his pride and ambition, is eaten up through his rage and envy, when the Father proclaims the Lordship and Power
of the Son. He gathers together many disaffected ones and for two days wars against the powers of Heaven sent to subdue him. On the third day God gives commission to the Son to drive forth the rebellious ones, and Satan and his angels are cast out of Heaven, down to Hell, where, for a time, they lie chained and senseless on the fiery lake. Meanwhile, his glory being vindicated in Heaven, God turns to the Creation of this World, in part to make up the loss caused by the defeat of the rebellious angels. In six days the Universe is created, and Man is placed in the Garden of Eden.

All this precedes in time the opening of the poem, although it is recounted in later books.\(^1\) The poem begins with Satan and the fallen angels on the burning lake. He rouses them, gathers them together, and inspires them with renewed zeal against the Almighty, proposing to them as an insidious attack on his glory, the Temptation of Man. He himself assumes the task of spying out the possibilities, and, escaping from Hell, he flies through Chaos to the Earth. Eluding the vigilance of the angelic guards, he makes his way to Paradise, and there, in the form of the Serpent, he leads Eve to venture disobedience. His task accomplished more successfully than he could have hoped, he flies back to his palace of Pandemonium. Adam and Eve, having sinned, are judged and condemned. Yet not to take away all hope, Michael, who is sent to cast them

\(^1\) The poem begins upon the twenty-second day. The whole time covered by the action from the Proclamation of the Son to the Expulsion from Eden, would seem to be somewhat more than thirty-two days, as may be seen from the following passages: v. 618, 642, 700; vi. 699, 748; vi. 871; i. 50; iv. 1015; ix. 67; x. 846; xi. 173. No time is given for Satan’s flight to the Earth, although Milton has otherwise been very definite. It took nine days to fall the same distance, but if we may believe Moloch (ii. 80), that fall was really a stubborn and hardly-contested rout. Raphael made the journey in a single day (viii. 238–246). Whatever time be allotted to Satan for the flight must be added to thirty-two days to give the time of the action.
out of Eden, is bidden to show to Adam in a vision the final Redemption of Man and the triumph of righteousness. Such is the poem; it may practically be divided into six parts, as follows:

Books i., ii. The Council of Fallen Angels and Satan's Flight to the Earth.

iii., iv., v. 1–562. The Scene of the Temptation.
v. 563–907, vi. The Revolt of Satan and his Adherents.

vii., viii. The Creation of the Universe and of Man.

ix., x. The Temptation and Fall.

xi., xii. The Vision of Future Suffering and Redemption.

We see, then, the place which the subject of our study holds in the scheme of the whole. In some respects Books i. and ii. are the best books of the poem to read, if one does not read the whole. We are all, probably, familiar with the antecedent and subsequent events, so that we can read this episode with a full idea of its setting. We know that Satan and his angels had rebelled against the Highest. We know that he succeeded in tempting Man to his fall. Between the two comes this powerful effort of the Miltonic imagination. These two books Milton himself created; they are characteristically his own. And, although they have their place in the series of events nearer the end than the beginning, it was well thought of to put them first, and we can read them by themselves with thorough enjoyment.

In fact, for one reason we can read them with more thorough enjoyment than any other considerable part of the poem, except perhaps the last two books. The account of the rebellion and fall of Satan has in it much that we can hardly think of except as an absurdity. The attempt to describe a war against the Almighty carried Milton into his account of angels discomfiting each other by volleys of cannon and burying each other under the hills of heaven. The presenting of a theological question like the origin of evil in the Biblical form led him to speculations
which, whatever be our religious opinions, we can hardly consider poetic. The account of the actual temptation, of the actual eating of the apple, can hardly seem to us nowadays other than an attempt to clothe in the garb of reality things which we endeavor to realize in thoroughly different fashion. When Milton’s poem deals with matters on which we have actual beliefs, there is a sort of jar, the moment we cease to think of it as an imaginary narrative. But the account of Satan in Hell is an imaginary narrative, and nothing more, and we accept it and enjoy it as such. The fiery lake, the fallen angels, Pandemonium, and the council of the great Seraphic lords, Satan’s battling flight through Chaos, all these have frankly no foundation but poetic imagination. In these two books we have the true Miltonic power, unhampered by the inevitable drawbacks which here and there interfere with our highest enjoyment of some of that which comes after, whether it be the logic of the Almighty, the warring of the angels, or the fascinations of the Serpent.

III. The Characters and the Scene of Action.

1. The Character of Satan.

The chief character, the chief figure in Books i. and ii. is Satan; and this brings up a matter of some little interest, namely, the place he holds in the poem as a whole. We shall understand him better in our two books if we know how Milton conceived his character throughout.

The critics of the last century, who were always a little more desirous than are we of measuring this or that according to a pretty definite standard, were at some pains to determine who was to be taken as the Hero of “Paradise Lost.” Their minds presumably moved in this way: an epic poem must have a hero; “Paradise Lost” is an epic poem; therefore “Paradise Lost” must have a hero. That an epic poem must have a hero was a view natural enough,
although not a dictum of Aristotle, who, although in the “Poetics” he always assumes a hero, says that a hero alone is not enough to give unity to a tragedy or epic poem. But the “Iliad,” the “Odyssey,” the “Æneid” had heroes, so that a hero seemed a necessity. Therefore there must be a hero to “Paradise Lost.”

As to precisely who the hero should be was a difficult question. The only two candidates for the honor were Adam and Satan. Now as Adam was presented, not triumphing over difficulties, but as betrayed and beaten, he certainly could not be the hero. There remained, then, Satan, who certainly carried out his plans with apparent success. And there were not wanting those who declared that Satan was to be regarded as the hero of “Paradise Lost.” So thought Dryden in Milton’s day, and so thought Lord Chesterfield, who was a very fine gentleman of letters of a later period. “I assert, with Mr. Dryden,” says he, “that the Devil is in truth the hero of Milton’s poem; his plan which he lays, pursues, and at last executes, being the subject of the poem.” And certainly whatever we may say of the poem as a whole, the chief figure of the two books we have in hand, the leading figure, the acting, achieving, accomplishing figure, is Satan. So far as these books only are concerned Satan is the hero, and the very successful hero. He appeals to our admiration, and, to a certain extent, he appeals to our sympathy.

If, however, we take the final impression of Satan, as we must have it in mind on reading the whole poem, we shall find the case different. However much he may appeal to our admiration, it cannot be on account of his success; and he soon loses any sympathy which he may have aroused, appealing instead almost to a sort of pity. He is presented in the poem as defeated and beaten in his effort to destroy mankind, and as becoming viler and viler, until he is finally an object for nothing more than a miserable disgust.

Of the first of these matters no more need be said. It has already been shown that Milton did not think of the
Fall of Man only; that he regarded the Redemption as implicit in the Fall; that, although as far as Satan and Adam were concerned, the latter is discomfited, yet when we consider the whole scheme of the poem, the purposes of God and the triumph of the Messiah are clearly seen and felt.

As to the second point, however, the development of the character of Satan, there is much that is interesting to have in mind in reading, which will bring out more strongly and effectively not a few passages which might otherwise pass with little notice.

When he first appears to us Satan is not "less than Archangel ruined." He has still the pride and ambition that caused his fall; he has added to them the rage, chagrin, and longing for vengeance which followed his fall. But these qualities cannot be said to render him utterly evil, utterly vile. Even his desire to strike the Creator through his creation shows, not malice, not hatred of those who had never injured him, but merely that extreme anger that cares nothing for its instrument, as a naughty boy in a fit of passion may long to break something belonging to his mother. Otherwise Satan is a figure that may be admired. Were it not for our feeling for the awful power against whom he rages, we should not think of calling him mean or base. He is a schemer, a politician, it is true; he will stoop to sophistry (ii. 27, cf. note), to finesse (ii. 468), to flattery (ii. 817), to gain his ends,—but except for this rather petty temper, he may rightly be called a heroic figure. And so much Milton indicates to us, not only by his presentation of the character, but by a subtle symbolism, which may be followed through the poem.

Milton tells us that as the Soul of Satan became viler and meaner, his form followed step by step, until from its heavenly beauty it fell to snaky ugliness. The angels had always power to change their form at will, but each had his own especial form to which he ever tended to return,
and with Satan this form, once equal to the splendor of Raphael,¹ gradually became more and more hideous as his spirit became more and more evil. We have first the fine lines in Book i.:

“He above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a tower. His form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured.” (589–594.)

Somewhat “changed in outward lustre” (i. 97) he was, but still he had the remnant of the angelic beauty which had been his in Heaven. So then he gathers his followers, starts on his journey, flies through Chaos, and finally reaches the Earth and the neighborhood of Paradise.

Here comes the moment of indecision when “Conscience wakes despair that slumbered,” the moment of possible return to the better, ended by that cry “Evil be thou my good,” the moment when he becomes pledged forever to Evil. And as his mind, which had wavered for a time, takes the determined plunge downward, so his form also, even through his borrowed form, takes on a hideous aspect, so marked that Uriel, whom he had before deceived, knows him for evil. Further proof comes when Satan is discovered in the garden by the Cherub Zephon. The angel asks which of the rebel spirits it may be, and Satan gives haughtily the well-known answer: “Not to know

¹ “Six wings he wore, to shade
His lineaments divine: the pair that clad
Each shoulder broad came mantling o’er his breast
With regal ornament; the middle pair
Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
And colours dipp’d in heaven; the third his feet
Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail
Sky-tinctured grain.”

(Bk. v, 277–285.)
me argues thyself unknown." But Zepphon answers scorn with scorn:

"Think not, revolted spirit, thy shape the same,
Or undiminished brightness to be known.
As when thou stood'st in Heaven upright and pure.
That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
Departed from thee; and thou resembllest now
Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul."

(Book. iv. 835–840.)

At this the Devil stood abashed,

"And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely—saw and pined
His loss; but chiefly to find here observed
His lustre visibly impaired." (847–850.)

With Ithuriel they leave the garden, and find Gabriel, who recognizes his fellows, and with them

"A third, of regal port,
But faded splendor wan, who by his gait
And fierce demeanour seems the Prince of Hell."

(869–871.)

Even further than this, however, must he fall; the better to carry out his scheme he takes the form of the serpent, not without some loathing: "That I," he cries,

"Who erst contended
With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
Into a beast, and mixed with bestial slime,
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the height of deity aspired!"

(Book. ix. 163–167.)

And this form which he himself assumes, though so distasteful to him, the form in which he completes his evil, this hideous form finally becomes his own in the metamor-
phosis of Book x. 504–584,¹ his own form which, although he is allowed to leave it by his power of change, must yet be worn certain numbered days each year.

With this change of form has gone the moral degradation. Ambition, pride, hate, malice, deceit, fear,—these are the steps in his career. He returns from earth, successful and humbled in the dust, and in what follows of the poem, Milton shows how all the outcome of his malice and deceit is the redemption of man, and, in the fulness of time, a new heaven and a new earth.

The interdependence of body and soul is a favorite idea of the Platonist, and had long lain in Milton's mind. Closely connected as it is with the eternal problem of Art, the connection between form and idea, he seems to have given it in a measure embodiment in the masque of "Comus." There we have the symbolic representatives of Goodness and Evil, we have the evil element in various natures coming to full possession in the "brutish form of wolf or bear, or ounce or tiger, hog or bearded goat," and, more especially have we the words of the elder brother, the Platonist, who explains to the younger brother the secrets of divine philosophy.

"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,

¹Too long to quote here, in which Satan and his angels are suddenly transformed into serpents.
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,
Lingerling and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it loved,
And linked itself by carnal sensuality
To a degenerate and degraded state.”
(“Comus,” 453–475.)

2. The Angelic Hierarchy.

Besides Satan, the chief characters of the First and Second Books are the fallen angels. In speaking of the angels, whether faithful or fallen, Milton uses several different names, and in order to avoid confusion we should understand something of the traditional ideas on the heavenly hierarchy, with which of course Milton was familiar. The most commonly accepted tradition goes back to the works which passed under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, who, as Dante says,

“Had learnt
Both this and much beside of these our orbs
From an eye-witness to heaven’s mysteries.”
(“Paradiso,” canto xxviii. ad fin.)

This “eye-witness” was St. Paul, who (2 Cor. xii. 4) was “caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable things.” And Dionysius himself was held to be the very man mentioned in Acts xvii. 34, who had heard Paul at Mars Hill, and so become converted. Such was the tradition: under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite there still exists a treatise “De Celesti Hierarchia.”¹ In this treatise the angels are said to be ranged in three orders of three ranks each, as follows:—Seraphim, Cherubim,

¹ Translated from Greek to Latin by John Scotus in Migne’s *Patrologia*, vol. 122, pp. 1038 ff.
Thrones; Dominations, Virtues, Powers; Princes, Archangels, Angels. These names are all of them found in the Bible in one place or another, but never all together, nor is any such arrangement stated in scripture. The names Seraph, Cherub, Angel, are of course frequent; Archangel is not uncommon; the other orders seem to be gathered from the writings of St. Paul, perhaps chiefly from Col. i. 16, ii. 15, Rom. viii. 38. Wherever found, however, the hierarchy was largely accepted by the mediæval mind, appears in Dante in the canto cited, and of course was familiar to Milton.

All these names Milton uses in the course of the poem, and, in fact, in the first two books. In i. 129, the followers of Satan are called "the embattled Seraphim;" i. 157, Beëlzebub is called a Cherub, and in i. 534, Azazel. In ii. 310, 311, Beëlzebub calls the angels assembled Thrones, Powers, Virtues; in i. 315 Satan addresses them as "Princes, Potentates;" in ii. 11, "Powers and Dominions." Satan is himself called an Archangel (i. 593), and the term Angel is common. But the more the matter is studied, the more will it be plain that Milton rarely used the names with any exact meaning. The recurrence of the line

"Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,"

(v. 601, 772, 840; x. 460),

has led some to the belief that he contemplated a fixed order. So one would think also from the lines,

"Where sceptred Angels held their residence,
And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright."

(i. 734-737.)

"The mighty regencies
Of Seraphim and Potentates and Thrones
In their triple degrees."

(v. 748-750.)
INTRODUCTION

Probably, however, it was only occasionally that Milton used these names with any particular thought as to their meaning. If he had done so, Beëlzebub, who was next to Satan in power, would hardly be called a Cherub (as above) while Satan's other followers were called Seraphim, and Satan himself an Archangel. Indeed, later in the poem, Raphael is called not only Seraph (v. 277), but Virtue (v. 371), Power (viii. 249), and Archangel (vii. 41). In one or two cases Milton seems to make a distinction, but it is only now and then, and never carried to any length.

On the other hand, Milton does seem to recognize the more popular distinction which thinks only of angels and archangels. The archangels were seven in number (iii. 648, 654), of whom, however, Milton only mentions four,—Michael, the Sword of God; Gabriel, the Man of God; Raphael, the Health of God, and Uriel, the Fire of God. Of these seven, Satan had been one, and one of the chief (v. 660); or it may have been that before his fall there had been eight.

This matter is worth considering a little for two reasons. The first is that Milton could not accept these traditions of the Church, as Dante had, for instance; he found nothing about the angelic hierarchy in the Bible, and he could not, therefore, believe implicitly in it. He knew, also, as Dante had not known, that the writings which went under the name of Dionysius were not really by the convert of Paul, and he did not recognize the authority of the Church of Rome, which gave them a certain sanction. As Scriptural terms, therefore, these names were precious to him, but he went no farther than he found warrant for in the Bible. The second reason why it is interesting to note Milton's use of these terms is for the evidence it bears as to the nature of Milton's genius. The reader of Macaulay's Essay will remember the comparison between Milton and Dante. We have here an evidence in the same direction. It was not according to the natural tenor of Mil-
ton’s mind to be particular or precise in his use of such terms. He used words, especially unfamiliar ones, in a large, grandiose way; they were to make an effect, not to convey information. A certain definiteness of conception was necessary: but it was also necessary to leave room for the stirring of the imagination. We shall see much the same thing in Milton’s conception of the cosmology of his poem, and, indeed, in one or two other places.

3. The Cosmology of the Poem.

To turn to a consideration of another matter which will make these two books easier to us. To have really a good idea of the course of events, we must know something of what in everyday language we might call "the lay of the land." The name common among students of Milton is the cosmology of the poem, that is, the distribution of the cosmos, as conceived by Milton, and as assumed in "Paradise Lost."

At the first,—not at the beginning of the poem, but at the beginning of the action,¹—all things were divided into Chaos and Heaven. Of Chaos we shall gain an idea toward the end of the second book, ll. 891–1009. It was a confused, indescribable anarchy of amorphous elements. Of Heaven we learn but little in our two books, but there is sufficient account of it later. We cannot form a definite idea of it, nor did Milton try to do so, but, in a general way, he gives us an adequate conception. For one thing, it was above. It is often called "the highest Heaven," and, on the other hand, Chaos is called the Deep, the Abyss. It is a firmament above the jarrings of Chaos; Milton conceives it in images of this earth; it has its hills and valleys, its pavements and mansions, its towers and battlements. Here abide from all eternity, God and his angels, and here it is, as we have seen, that Lucifer is in—

¹See p. xxv. above.
flamed with pride and ambition. He rebels, and, being conquered, he and all his following are cast forth from Heaven and fall to the place appointed for them.

The place appointed for them is Hell, apparently nonexistent before, but created in punishment of their sin. Of Hell we have ample description in the two books in this volume. Like Heaven, it is conceived in images of this earth (see especially ii. 570–628), with the difference that all is either burning hot or freezing cold. It is arched over by a fiery sky (if we may use the term) which separates it from Chaos, and in which, apparently, is the famous portal where sit Sin and Death, through which Satan flies forth in his search for the newly created Universe.

The Universe, or this earth and the starry systems which circle around it, is created immediately after the expulsion of Satan; we are given an account of the Creation in Book vii. It is a hollow sphere carved out of Chaos, against which it is protected by a solid shell, of which Milton makes a curious use in Book iii. 416–497. Satan comes to the outside from Chaos,—

"A globe far off
It seemed; now seems a boundless continent."

A hollow sphere suspended from Heaven by golden chains, such is the Universe from without; far within, at the centre, is our earth. At the highest point, nearest Heaven, is an opening whereby the angels may ascend and descend.

So much is all that we need to know on such matters to appreciate these two books, to understand the fall of the angels, and the flight of Satan. A word or two more, however, about the Universe may be added.

The Universe as presented in "Paradise Lost" is not the Universe we think of, a myriad of suns, each with its ring of planets, nor even our own solar system, where the sun in the centre compels the earth and all the rest to
move about him. It is the Universe as conceived by the Middle Ages, the Ptolemaic Universe of which the centre was our earth. The earth was the centre surrounded by ten spheres, which, as they moved around it, gave forth heavenly music. First and nearest the earth was the sphere of the Moon, then that of Mercury, then of Venus, then of the Sun; then in order Mars, Jupiter, Saturn; then the firmament of fixed stars, then the crystalline sphere, and, finally, the sphere called the Primum Mobile, which formed the outer shell and protected the earth from Chaos. Down through the highest opening flies Satan, past all the spheres to the sun, where he deceives Uriel, the heavenly guardian, into telling him where further to go, and finally reaches this earth, where he alights on the top of Mount Niphates. Such is the Miltonic cosmology,—to a certain point clear, distinct, substantial.

To a certain degree does Milton furnish us with a definite conception, for to a certain degree a definite conception was a necessity. The poem deals with spiritual themes, it is true,—with the origin of evil; with the failure, for the time, of man’s nature; with the estrangement of the soul from God, and its reconciliation. But being a poet, Milton deals with these themes as implicit in forms, in persons, and dealing with definite persons he must deal with definite places.

Yet there are not wanting hints which show us that the definiteness of this plan, so far as it goes, is merely the accident of the form. Hell, it is true, as we hear of it in the poem, is a fiery world,—yes, but the real Hell is in the mind. Escaped from the Hell that is merely a fiery place, Satan cannot escape from the Hell that he ever bears about with him.

“The Hell within him: for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step, no more than from himself can fly
By change of place.” (iv. 20–24.)
Adam and Eve on losing Paradise are still possessed of "a Paradise within them, happier far." And, as to Heaven, it is only to be conceived at all, says Raphael,

"By likening spiritual to corporeal forms
As may express them best." (v. 573, 574.)

IV. On the Style.

1. General Characteristics.

Dr. Johnson, in his "Lives of the Poets," considers Milton's poetry, and finally makes the terribly candid remark: "'Paradise Lost' is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction, retire harassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation; we desert our master, and seek for companions."

Now, such may certainly be the case with many who read "Paradise Lost," but if it is, they have missed the chief thing in the poem which is worth while. As a poem "Paradise Lost" was meant to give, and can give, not instruction but pleasure,—a high-minded, ennobling, refining pleasure, it is true, but a pleasure for all that. So a person who regards it as a bore is unfortunate, as Johnson was.

It is true that there are many minor reasons—especially nowadays—why "Paradise Lost" is not read with pleasure. First we do not, on the whole, like its subject-matter, regarded as fiction, and we cannot regard it as history. In addition to this drawback is another not less effective. We are, nowadays, accustomed to a form of literature which in Milton's day practically did not exist, and which has for us a much more imperious attraction, to say the least, than has the epic. We are so accustomed to novel-
reading that some of us can read nothing else. There is much also about the style which we do not care for. To one unfamiliar with the classics, the perpetual allusions to ancient mythology are trying. To one not habituated to the reading of poetry, the peculiarities of the epic style seem merely old-fashioned and tedious.\(^1\)

To most readers the classical turns of expression,\(^2\) the elliptical syntax,\(^3\) the occasional ruggedness of grammar present a bar. Of almost everybody the extremely close-packed character of the style demands constant attention, and, on the whole, the poem is not easy reading. These difficulties you must overcome, if you would really enjoy "Paradise Lost."

The greater number of these difficulties will be overcome by particular studies and general cultivation. But there must be something more yet: not only must we cease to have the feeling of repugnance naturally called up by such difficulties as there may be; we must, in place of it, have

\(^1\)As, for instance, the Invocations, i. 1–26, or vii. 1–39 (in Appendix, A); or such lines as i. 27, 376; or such locutions as "The dreaded name of Demogorgon" (ii. 964), or "what resounds . . . of Uther's son" (i. 579); or (to give it a little more than passing mention, for it is a point worth appreciating) the use of specific words in a general sense, or, more accurately, the use of specific words without regard to their specific meaning. Milton calls the lake of fire indifferently a lake (i. 280), a pool (i. 231), a flood (i. 289), a gulf (i. 52), a sea (i. 300); but the five words have no real difference in meaning. So he calls Satan Commander (i. 358), General (i. 337), Emperor (i. 378), Sultan (i. 348), Chief (i. 523), but by the different words he presents no difference in idea. So we have in i. 104 "the plains of Heaven;" or, in i. 86, "the realms;" or, in i. 249, "the fields;" or, in i. 321, "the vales." These expressions have neither power nor force. The reader of Milton's day probably regarded them as necessities of epic expression. Such expressions are not, however, excellent, although they may be of use in removing the diction from likeness with common speech. If the diction had no other striking qualities, this would be rather a defect; as it is, a certain dignity is added to the qualities otherwise possessed. To many readers, however, such expressions are merely colorless and stupid.

\(^2\)See notes to i. 573, 660. \(^3\)For instance, i. 191; ii. 377.
the feeling of pleasure and the enjoyment of appreciating the things which make the poem one of the finest in the language, and of these things the chief is undoubtedly the style.

Certain things about the style are very clear, such points as have just been mentioned, for instance. These, however, are of course not the vital, the characteristic things,—they are minor matters, not the matters we want to get at. We want the essential qualities.

As to the essential qualities of Milton's style, everybody knows that they are greatness, grandeur, sublimity. But, unfortunately, these words do not do us any good, for we do not realize them. "Milton is sublime" is a statement which, for most readers, has not very much more meaning than the statement "Milton is just elegant;" for the word sublime is not a word which for most people has much of any meaning. Like the words great and grand, it is too apt to be a mere vibration of the air which has no connection with thought. We get nowhere by such generalities: we must proceed in a different manner. We must attempt, by recognizing here and there in Milton's poetry things that seem essential, characteristic, to make real to ourselves the Miltonic quality which goes under these names which have so little meaning for us.

Some things are readily recognizable: for instance, some of the compressed sentences in the speeches:—

"Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven." (i. 263.)

"What though the field be lost?
All is not lost." (i. 106.)

"... to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering." (i. 158.)

"A mind not to be changed by place or time." (i. 253.)

"The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven." (i. 255.)

"Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen." (i. 330.)
These six quotations are picked out of a couple of hundred lines, but you can find others for yourself. They will strike you even at first; but after having them in mind awhile you will see that, although the particular temper which all six represent may not be especially admirable, they all show a feeling and an expression which are far above ordinary feeling and expression. Reading the rest of the speeches with these in your mind, you will begin to see what is one of the elements of Milton’s greatness. Whatever be the feeling or the thought, even though it be despicable (as the meanness of Mammon, ii. 247), it will always be found to have a singular character which makes it impressive, and the expression of it makes the impact greater. The more you try to isolate the feeling which these Miltonic speeches give you, by comparing them with some of Shakespeare’s great speeches, so full of the note of life, or some of Tennyson’s in the “Idyls of the King,” so full of romance, by so much the more will you begin to apprehend Milton’s quality.

To take something else, let us look at some of his descriptions. Look at the description of Satan:

"He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower." (i. 589–591.)

The whole passage will strike you as extremely forcible. Compare it with the description of Death (ii. 666–673), of Pandemonium (i. 722–730), of the Frozen Hell (ii. 587–595). In spite of a certain vagueness in each description, perhaps because of it, they all have a common force,—a force which can hardly fail to impress you, even though you cannot well describe your impressions. Consider the shorter descriptive pieces, such flashes as

"No light; but rather darkness visible" (i. 63);
or,
"the parching air
Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire." (ii. 594.)
Then compare them with some other descriptive lines or passages, and you will do better in seeing just what is Miltonic about them. For instance, take such lines as these from "The Passing of Arthur," in the "Idylls of the King":

"And on a sudden, lo! the level lake
   And the long glories of the winter moon;"

or,

". . . The many knotted water flags
   That whistled stiff and dry about the marge."

Those are fine lines, but they are of a very different character. Or take Shakespeare:

"This guest of summer
   The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
   By his loved mansionry, that the heaven’s breath
   Smells wooingly here." ("Macbeth," I., vi. 3–6.)

For longer passages compare with the description of the great gate in "Gareth and Lynette," or the city of Camelot and Arthur’s Hall in "The Holy Grail;" or of Ophelia’s brook in "Hamlet," or of Dover Cliff in "King Lear."

Such passages are truly Miltonic; the more we realize them, the more we realize Milton. Further, we may note something else without difficulty,—we have been speaking of the speeches and the descriptions, but this is something common to the speeches and the descriptions, and to the narrative parts as well,—I mean the quality of sustained movement which almost anybody will recognize in the poem, the unhasting, unresting flow of the language, the marshalling of clause after clause in never-ceasing march, or, if we choose to vary the figure, the sustained power of the flight which rises against the wind like some great eagle, or like his own Satan flying through Chaos. Really to get the idea, take such passages as i. 692–730, or ii.
871–928; take such a sentence as i. 192–220, or ii. 596–614; find out such passages for yourself, and you will know more than you could get from a dozen figures of speech and a dozen adjectives to boot.

If, now, we have rightly appreciated the preceding passages, we may gain something further from this judgment of Matthew Arnold, who is comparing Milton with Homer. "Milton," he says, "charges himself so full with thought, imagination, knowledge, that his style will hardly contain them. He is too full-stored to show us in much detail one conception, one piece of knowledge; he just shows it to us in a pregnant, allusive way, and then he presses on to another; and all this fulness, this pressure, this condensation, this self-restraint enters into his movement, and makes it what it is,—noble, but difficult and austere." Thought, imagination, knowledge,—a great wealth of these things, we find in Milton, and all expressed in a style which is noble, although austere and even difficult. To these three words, which are excellently chosen, I would add a fourth not so good,—but it may stand as a token for what we have already mentioned,—namely, powerful. When we allow Milton to be difficult, we admit merely that he is not to be enjoyed without previous effort. When we call his manner austere, we recognize that although we may gain pleasure from him, it is not a lovable, companionable pleasure. When we say that he is powerful, we mean that he imposes himself upon us, so that we feel the force of his ideas, and see things as he sees them. And when we say Milton is noble, we mean that his ideas are on a high plane, and that things as he sees them are fine things to see.

So much will be useful in giving a general appreciation of Milton's style; there are one or two minor matters which may be treated more at length as illustrating more important points, and there is also the question of his metre.

*On Translating Homer*, p. 206.
2. The Epic Similes.

One element of Milton's style may strike a modern reader as a little strained, or even pedantic, although in the poet's own day and for some time afterward it was much admired. I mean the similes, formal similes, one might almost call them, of which there are a number in our two books, as, for example, the comparison of the crowd of fallen angels with the swarming bees (Book i. 768–776). Milton is telling of the crowding horde of angels pushing into the great capitol which Mulciber has just devised for them. He compares them to bees:

"As bees,
In spring-time when the Sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
Fly to and fro, or, on the smoothèd plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubbed with balm, expatiate and confer
Their state affairs; so thick the aery crowd
Swarmed and were straitened."

Here the aptness of the figure strikes one at once; but one notices, too, that not only is there a resemblance between the two pictures, but that the picture of the bees is attractive in itself. It was evidently so to Milton, for it will be observed that he does not confine himself to the points of resemblance; he mentions not merely their flying to and fro, their conferring together; he suggests not only their swarming and crowding, but he goes on farther and fills out the picture. It is spring; the bees are buzzing about their straw hives standing in line upon a smooth plank; they flit about among the dewy flowers. These are not points of likeness; indeed, nothing could be much more unlike than a fresh, dewy spring morning and the terrible place Milton has been forcing upon our imagination; than the quaint straw bee-hives among the old-fashioned flowers and this great palace Pandemonium. But the poet, having
called up a picture, must make it as concrete as possible, and the points of likeness amid the differences give probably a greater pleasure than if the comparison exactly tallied in every point, as was one great aim of some of the writers just before Milton.

These rather detailed similes are not an invention of Milton’s: they were a part of the traditional epic manner, coming down to modern literature from Homer. They may be said to be a mark of the classic style as opposed to what is sometimes called the romantic. Read, if you like, Tennyson’s “Idylls of the King,” or one of them, and then Matthew Arnold’s “Sohrab and Rustum,” and you will see the difference. Matthew Arnold’s poem is very simple and plain, except for these marked similes; Tennyson’s has few figures of any such length, but the whole fabric of his poem is so interwoven with figure that the reader comes near being dazzled by the iridescence.

Addison, whose criticism on “Paradise Lost” is interesting, has a word to say on this subject, which I quote to show the feeling of a man of letters, himself a poet, who was much nearer Milton in point of time than we are.

“‘There are also several noble Similes and Allusions in the First Book of Paradise Lost. And here I must observe, that when Milton alludes either to Things or Persons, he never quits his Simile till it rises to some very great Idea, which is often foreign to the Occasion which gave Birth to it. The Resemblance does not, perhaps, last above a Line or two, but the Poet runs on with the Hint, till he has raised out of it some glorious Image or Sentiment, proper to inflame the Mind of the Reader, and to give it that sublime Kind of Entertainment, which is suitable to an Heroic Poem. Those, who are acquainted with Homer’s and Virgil’s way of Writing cannot but be pleased with this Kind of Structure in Milton’s Similitudes. I am the more particular on this Head, because ignorant Readers, who have formed their Taste upon the

1A few examples, ancient and modern, will be found in Appendix, B.  
2See Bibliography, p. lxi.
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quaint Similes, and little Turns of Wit, which are now so much in Vogue among Modern Poets, cannot relish these Beauties which are of a much higher nature, and are therefore apt to censure Milton's Comparisons, in which they do not see any surprising points of likeness."

(Criticism on Milton's Paradise Lost. "Spectator," No. 303.)

He then goes on to mention a certain M. Perrault, who had made fun of some of Homer's similes, calling them Comparaisons à longue queue, and gives also the answer to such talk of Boileau, a critic much esteemed in Addison's day, ending his paper thus:—

"In short, if we look into the Conduct of Homer, Virgil, and Milton, as the great Fable is the soul of each Poem, so to give their Works an agreeable Variety, their Episodes are so many short Fables, and their Similes so many short Episodes; to which you may add, if you please, that their Metaphors are so many short Similes. If the Reader considers the Comparisons in the First Book of Milton, of the Sun in an Eclipse, of the Sleeping Leviathan, of the Bees swarming about their Hive, of the Fairy Dance, in the view wherein I have placed them, he will easily discover the great Beauties that are in each of those Passages."


Another marked thing about Milton's way of writing in "Paradise Lost" is his use of geographical names, or, we might almost say, of proper names in general. The subject is one so easily misconceived that it is worth while to say a few words upon it. Take, for example, the lines,

"And all who since, baptised or infidel,
Josted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore,
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia." (i. 582-587.)

The action of the whole poem.
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Let us understand in the first place that although Milton, in all probability, used those eight names of places with a clear idea of what place was signified by each one, we shall not get the whole good out of the passage when we know so much ourselves. Aspramont is six miles north of Nice, Montalban was a castle in Languedoc, and so on. Doubtless it is better, other things being equal, to know where these places were, but that knowledge alone does not give us much enjoyment.

There are, however, the literary allusions; they add an interest. They certainly do add an interest when one has them at his fingers’ ends as Milton had. The half-legendary struggles between the Saracen knighthood and the Crusaders, the romantic adventures of the Paladins of Charlemagne, the final sacrifice of the Song of Roland,—these are all called up, vaguely but effectively, by those few lines. And when Aspramont reminds of the great Orlando, and Montalban is the castle of Rinaldo, the passage certainly has grown in meaning. Still, there is more yet to be said. Even the geographical and literary allusions do not make up the whole atmosphere of the lines.

There is little doubt that to Milton and to many of his readers the mere mention of strange, well-sounding names had a certain effect, wholly aside from the definite ideas brought to mind by them. They have generally a sonorous, magnificent sound, often from their very unfamiliarity,—a half-mysterious, romantic feeling. When they are geographical, the very fact that they are but half known gives a sort of exhilarating, wide-ranging sensation. Indeed, absolute exactness rather interferes with our enjoyment. It is better, just now, to think of Aspramont as a mediaeval castle somewhere in the sunny south of France near the exquisite blue of the Mediterranean than to conceive of it more exactly as six miles north of Nice. It is better that the name Trebisond should carry our thoughts out beyond the civilization of Europe, along the Black Sea, with ideas of Eastern magnificence, running astray
to the rose-gardens of Persia, perhaps, or the southern spurs of the Caucasus.

Look at these passages from more recent poets, and you will see that the names themselves really have a sort of power, beyond geographical information or literary allusion.

"As having been
With Arthur in the fight which all day long
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
And in the four loud battles by the shore
Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war
That thundered in and out the gloomy skirts
Of Celidon the forest; and again
By Castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head
Carved of one emerald centered in a sun
Of silver rays, that lightened as he breathed;
And at Caerleon had he helped his lord,
When the strong neighings of the wild White Horse
Set every gilded parapet shuddering.
And up in Aigned-Cathregionion too,
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
Where many a heathen fell; 'and on the mount
Of Badon, I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round
And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them.'"

(Tennyson: "Lancelot and Elaine.")

Of the nine places mentioned only Caerleon and Badon can be familiar to the ordinary reader; of the others it may almost be remarked that it does not matter where they were. They were strange wild places in that old legendary Britain, and that is enough.

In the following, from a great contemporary of Tennyson's, some of the names are not unfamiliar, but the effect is much the same.

"The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;
Large men, large steeds; who from Bokhara come
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.
Next the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;
Light men and on light steeds who only drink
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far, and a more doubtful service owned;
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards
And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,
Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere—
These all filed out from camp into the plain.”

(Matthew Arnold: “Sohrab and Rustum.”)

So let us not think that when we have learned what
such names signify we have thus got everything. We
must know something of them; in i. 381–505, we should
lose a great deal if we knew nothing of the places men-
tioned. But if they do not appeal to us in the other way
too, we should try to cultivate the appreciation of them.
We shall thereby enjoy Milton the more, and other poets,
too, for, as we have seen, the habit of Milton in this par-
ticular was not peculiar to himself.¹

V. ON THE METRE.

We are very apt to read with the eye only, but in poetry,
and especially in Milton’s poetry, we must think of the
ear as well; we must read aloud, or rather, when we read
to ourselves, we must read as if we read aloud. Toward
the end of his life Milton was blind, and so could never
see how his poem looked when written or printed. He had
to dictate it, to be written down by others, and when he

¹The passage best illustrating this matter is xi. 385–411.
read it, so to speak, he had to listen to others who read it to him. So he was like the poets of less civilized peoples, poets who recite their own productions, poets who know their own poetry only as it is given form by the voice. Thus we must read Milton’s poetry aloud, or at least appreciate the qualities which belong especially to reading aloud, of which the chief is the metre.

Concerning metre much that is pedantic has been written, so that some people regard any consideration of it as a useless and futile incumbrance to their enjoyment. But if one cannot read this poem aloud, one loses a great deal, and one cannot read it aloud well, without having some idea of the metre. We will try to look at it in as practical a way as possible.

There are in this case two considerations, which we must bear in mind in getting such an idea of our poem as will serve our purpose. First we want to know the way the poem ought to sound, the way it sounded when Milton dictated it, or when it was read to him; or, let us say, the general principles actually governing the flow of English blank verse in the minds of poets and readers alike. Some such study as this is important with every poem: if we would know how to read it; we must know something about rhythm and apply it to the particular poem.

But with “Paradise Lost,” as with other poems, we have another matter. Milton was a deep student of the classics and of Italian literature; he was familiar with their systems of metre, and with the attempts, more or less successful, to accommodate English verse to them, or to accommodate them to English verse. We must then know what was the metrical system which Milton had in mind in writing his poem. It is nearly certain that he had a somewhat definite metrical system in mind, with which the verses of “Paradise Lost” were in good accord. But in all probability the rhythmical flow of the poem was guided chiefly by the poet’s ear, and was indeed not always in keeping with the metrical system, or rather was
in keeping with it only by what we may call metrical fictions,¹ as will appear later.

We have, then, in the metre of “Paradise Lost” both a condition and a theory. Milton dictated his verses, probably, according to his ear, which, we are told, was very delicate; but he made his poem conform to a system of versification which was in great measure founded upon classical usage and which to some degree was not represented in the pronunciation.

So, first, as to the rhythmical character as apprehended by the ear. Rhythm means, with us, a more or less regular recurrence of stress or accent, generally in a sound. When we listen to the noise of the sea, and hear the continual roar broken at recurrent intervals by the fall of the breakers, we call it a rhythmical noise. As applied to poetry, the rhythm is formed by the recurrence of syllables more strongly accented than the others. For example, take the line,

“O Prince! O chief of many thronèd Powers!” (i. 128.)

In this line, the syllables Prince, chief, man, thron, Pow, are more strongly accented than the others, which makes a regular recurrence of accented and unaccented syllables. If we indicate the accented syllables by a and the unaccented syllables by x, we can write out the recurrences thus,

\[ x a x a x a x a x a x. \]

Now, it is known that when we get such a sequence of accented and unaccented syllables in mind, and hear a sequence of words in which the regular accents approximate to that order, we take up the rhythm in our imagination and impose it upon every line that comes along, imagining the right stress at the proper place, even if it be

¹The contractions and elisions (see lower, pp. lv.–lvi.) in which the vowels omitted in the scansion are, in reading, actually pronounced.
not actually there. So in the line following the one just quoted:

"That led the embattled Seraphim to war" (i. 129),

the last syllable of Seraphim is not really accented to the same degree as the first, but, having the rhythm in mind, we impose it, as it were, upon the line. We even accept lines like

"Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf" (i. 329),

or,

"The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld." (i. 309.)

Although the words to and of in the first line, and the syllable -ers and who in the second, are not in good reading especially accented, we have the rhythm in mind, and a slight additional emphasis is sufficient to make the line harmonious; or even if not accented by the voice in reading they are accented by the mind.

So also if there be a slight variation of the rhythm, provided it be such as makes no serious difference in the time between stress and stress, either we do not notice it, or, if we do notice it, our attention is especially directed to the word in question so as to give it emphasis. In the line

"Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues" (i. 15),

we hurry over the A so quickly, and over -ian, that the two vowels in each case seem no longer than one, and the rhythm goes on as usual. The extra syllable may come at the end of a line, as in i. 138, quoted above.

In the line

"Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky" (i. 45),

the word hurled must evidently be accented, which makes
the rhythm run $a x a x a x a$ instead of $x a x a x a$. But here the break in the rhythm is so slight that it merely concentrates our attention for an instant upon hurled, where it may well rest, for it is an important word.

Thus we have a long recurrence of unaccented and accented syllables. Out of convention we print ten syllables to a line, but it would be blank verse even were it not so printed, just as it would be blank verse even without the capital letter with which modern habit begins each line. The poem is not divided into sets of ten syllables as we read it; the pauses come almost anywhere.

Such is the main structure of English Blank Verse; it is language so arranged that every other syllable is accented, so that a rhythmical effect is produced. Variations in the rhythm occur often, serving sometimes to emphasize a word, sometimes merely to hasten our utterance, which may in itself have a harmonious effect, and these variations serve also to break what would be otherwise rather a monotonous recurrence. The variations, however, are never such as to break the flow of the rhythm, which is both pleasing in itself and effective of a sort of glow of interest on the part of the reader.

But the classical verse, having been carefully studied by grammarians and others, had proved to have a system, just as English blank verse may have, and Milton was too good a scholar not to be aware of the first point and to aim at the second. So along with the simple rhythmical effect of blank verse of which we have been speaking, we have the following systematic arrangement which we may call the metre.

A. The basis of the metre is a verse of five feet, called iambic, in imitation of classical usage, each consisting of two syllables; the first unaccented, the second accented.¹

In this scheme certain exceptions are allowed, and, indeed, occur frequently, thus breaking what might otherwise seem a monotony.

¹The classical iambic foot was a short syllable followed by a long.
B. Exceptions.

1. Addition.—An additional syllable may occur at the end of the verse.

"Of sovran power, with awful ceromen | y." (i. 753.)

"Wide gaping, and with utter loss of be | ing." (ii. 440.)

Here belong also some verses ending with \( r \) or \( n \), which, as in fire, sometimes develops an extra syllable. In other words, the unstressed vowel before \( r \) or \( n \) is disregarded as in 3 b.

"In clusters; they among fresh dews and flow | ers." (i. 771.)

"As far removed from God and light of Heav | en." (i. 73.)

2. Elision.—A vowel is said to be elided when it is disregarded in scansion, although generally pronounced in reading. Unaccented vowels may be elided:

a. Before another vowel.

"His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed." (ii. 46.)

"Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain." (ii. 207.)

"By herald’s voice explained; the hollow Abyss." (ii. 518.)

b. When followed by \( r \), \( l \), \( n \), and another unaccented vowel.

"The sentence of their conqueror. This is now." (ii. 208.)

"A multitude, like which the populous North." (i. 351.)

"In equal ruin; into what pit, thou seest." (i. 91.)
3. Contraction.—A vowel is said to be contracted when it is assumed by the scansion to be a consonant. As in elision, these vowels are to be pronounced as such in reading. Unaccented vowels only may be contracted.

a. Before another unaccented vowel i and u become consonantal, i.e., more like y and w.

“Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope.” (ii. 142.)

“Drew audience and attention still as night.” (ii. 308.)

“Though full of pain, this intellectual being.” (ii. 147.)

“Then most conspicuous, when great things of small.” (ii. 258.)

b. Before r, l, or n, followed by an unstressed vowel. Practically the vowel r, l, n, are regarded as consonants.

“A pillar of state: deep on his front engraven.” (ii. 302.)

“Abominable, inutterable, and worse.” (ii. 626.)

“Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host.” (i. 136.)

4. Inversion.—The accent may be inverted in any foot; i.e., the first syllable may be accented and the second unaccented. This in version is quite common in the first and third feet, and very rare in the last.

“Róse out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill.” (i. 10.)

“Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy.” (i. 123.)

“For one restraint, lórd of the world besides.” (i. 32.)

“Into the Euboic sea. Others more mild.” (ii. 546.)

This inversion must not be disguised in reading, for it is often useful, as in the examples above, to give emphasis.
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5. *Substitution.*—In place of two iambic feet we may have a combination of a pyrrhic and a spondee; *i.e.*, two unaccented syllables followed by two accented. This combination may also occur in any part of the line, but is most common at the beginning.

"Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first, what cause."

(i. 28.)

"That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed."

(i. 8.)

"Could merit more than that small infantry."

(i. 575.)

"Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire."

(ii. 69.)

This accentuation must not be disregarded in reading, for, as with Inversion, one gains emphasis by it.

Such, omitting some details, is the metrical system of English blank verse as understood by Milton. It does not differ much from the usage of other poets. But all this system is merely a way of stating definitely the analysis of the cases in which, according to Milton’s ear, extra syllables or inversion might occur without interrupting the flow of the rhythm. The real test is always the spoken verse: if this be euphonious, some place in the scheme of metre will be found for it; or, if not, a new exception will be made. A person totally ignorant of the cases in which Milton allowed variations from the normal verse can learn to read the poem perfectly well by trusting to his ear (if it be fairly good), and this is the main thing to be attained. If you cannot read the poem aloud, you have not yet got to the bottom of it.

We may appropriately print here Milton’s own remarks upon the verse. They were printed in the original editions at the beginning of the poem.

¹According to Mr. Bridges (p. 16) Shakespeare was rather looser in his use of extra syllables and of contractions.
INTRODUCTION

THE VERSE.

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

It will be useful to note among the editions of "Paradise Lost" the earliest and some of the latest. The following list includes the editions published in the seventeenth century, and some of the more convenient modern editions.

Editions of "Paradise Lost."

1. Paradise Lost. A Poem written in Ten Books by John Milton. Licensed and Entered according to Order. London, printed, and are to be sold by Peter Parker under Creed Church near Aldgate; and by Robert Boulter at the Turk's Head in Bishopsgate-street; and Matthias Walker under St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-street. 1667.
   [Quarto: pp. 342. Issued with different title pages in 1667, 1668, 1669.]

   [Small octavo: pp. 333. The Ten Books were changed to Twelve by dividing what had originally been Books vii. and x. Books vii. and viii., then, of the present editions, were originally one book. The first few lines of Book viii. were added on the division. In like manner what are now Books xi. and xii: the first lines of Book xii. being added at this time.]

[The third edition, with title page almost exactly like that of the second, except for the date.]

4. PARADISE LOST. London. 1688.
   [Fourth edition, folio, some copies having "Paradise Regained" added.]

5. PARADISE LOST. London. 1692.
   [Fifth edition, folio. "Paradise Regained" added.]

   [All of Milton's Poems, in folio. "Paradise Lost" was also bound by itself. To this edition was added the first Commentary on the poem, by Patrick Hume.]

   Of recent editions may be noted:

7. THE POETICAL WORKS OF JOHN MILTON. Edited by David Masson. 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1874. (Macmillan.)
   [An excellent library edition.]

7a. The same in 3 vols., Globe 8vo, a good smaller edition.


   [In six small volumes, each containing two books: Books ix. and x. have not yet been issued.]

LIVES.

   [This is a great piece of work; too much for the ordinary student to read through, but valuable for reference.]


ESSAYS.

ADDISON. Eighteen numbers of the Spectator, as follows: 267, 273, 279, 285, 291, 297, 303, 309, 315, 321, 327, 333, 339, 345, 351, 357, 363, 369; i.e., every Saturday from Jan. 5th, 1712, to May 3d. Also, collected and edited by Edward Arber. London, 1868. New edition, 1895. Extremely appreciative in the old-fashioned way, serving to call attention to a good deal that is true about the poem.

JOHNSON. In his "Lives of the Poets," originally written for an edition of the British poets, but now to be found in his Collected Works. The essay gives a somewhat prejudiced account of Milton's life; the poet was what Johnson called "an acrimonious and surly republican." When it came to his poetry, Johnson could not help admiring it greatly and esteeming it great; his rough common sense, however, prevented his going into any conventional ecstasies.

MACAULAY. "Milton." The first essay contributed by Macaulay to the Edinburgh Review, appearing in the number for August, 1825. Ostensibly a notice of the newly discovered "Treatise on Christian Doctrine," it is really a description and an estimate of Milton's life and work. It is not the best example of Macaulay's style or of his opinions, but may well be read as a corrective to Johnson.


MATTHEW ARNOLD. "A French Critic on Milton." Quar-

The student will also find valuable:
SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

I. Where the Poem is prescribed for Reading.

It is best to begin by reading the books rapidly through in the class-room, without stopping for anything but explanation of obvious difficulties. In such a rapid reading the student will get a general idea of what the poem is about. This reading aloud will also be necessary to give familiarity with the metre and with the proper names. It will not be necessary that the rules of the metrical scheme (pp. liii.–lvii.) be learned by heart, but the examples should be looked up, so that the student may be familiar with the common forms of the verse. Any line that causes difficulty should be explained so that it may be read smoothly. The object, as far as this part of the study is concerned, is not to learn about the metre, but to be able to read the poem without stumbling. The proper names, too, should be fairly well understood. Never let a mispronunciation pass. The notes at the bottom of the page will give enough idea of the places and persons spoken of.

The next point is that the Action of the books be thoroughly understood. The part of the Introduction (pp. xx.–xxiii.) referring to the subject should be read, and the analyses on pp. 79, 91, may be consulted. The Characters, too, Satan, Beëlzebub, Moloch, Mammon, should be discussed; the Introduction, pp. xxiii.–xxxvi., will give some suggestions. But it is important that the pupil should try to be definite in his ideas, and particularly that he should be able to refer to whatever passages are needed to support his opinions.

If time permit, some passages should be committed to.
memory, and essays may be written. The passages should, in general, be left to the choice of the student: ask only that he take what seems an especially fine passage and get him to say why it is fine. As to essays, they should be short, so that they may be read and criticised in class. As to subjects, the Examination Questions, 6–8, will show the kind of subject that will be useful, the student being sent to other books so far as they are at hand. Some students may like to write essays commenting in detail on the idea of particular passages, and if the comment be definite the idea is not a bad one.

Not until a good deal of the poem has been read is it worth while to study the Introduction. Then the parts on Milton’s Life, and the relation of “Paradise Lost” to his other work may be studied or read in class with any comment or enlargement the teacher may wish to add. The sections on Style and Metre should be constantly referred to as cases come up in the daily reading.

II. Where the Poem is prescribed for Study.

The first thing to be done here, also, is to read the two books through rapidly. Afterward, however, the text must be mastered in a more thorough and complete manner than when the book is for reading only. It is an important thing to know the poem. Allusions and proper names must be more carefully studied. Milton was a learned poet, and it requires work to know what he was writing about. There is so much else to learn about the text that matters purely linguistic may be largely neglected. It is true that a really good understanding of the text cannot be gained without a fair knowledge of Milton’s English. But a knowledge of the English of Milton’s day is not a very easy thing to come at. So it will be well to be satisfied with a good knowledge of the meaning of the text, a study of obscure sentences, of parts where the syntax is so unfamiliar as to conceal the sense, and an idea of
some of the particularities of Milton’s English, as, for instance, his classicisms, e.g., i. 573, ii. 40.

Then the Metre must be thoroughly studied. The part of the Introduction treating the question should be taken up, a little every day, in connection with the daily reading. Every line especially remarked in the examples or in the notes should be read aloud until its rhythmical structure is clearly understood. Passages should be given out to the student in which all deviations from the normal line should be marked and explained. The student must know the matter theoretically and practically, he must be able to explain the metre of any line, and he must be able to give as much of Milton’s system of blank verse as is given in the Introduction.

As in the less detailed study, the Action of the books must be thoroughly understood, as well as their structure. Analyses as on pp. 79, 91, should be made and explained; it is well to put them on the blackboard.

The student should now be somewhat familiar with the poem, and subsequent study may make use of the material gained as a help to right appreciation. A few words on p. 101 will give some idea of the relation that the knowledge gained may have to a really fine feeling for the poem. In no way is the connection better shown than in the comparison of different passages, that any particular line or lines may be seen in true relation and proportion. A simile may seem strange till we find, by looking at others of the same kind, what Milton was trying to effect by it (xlv.–xlvii.); a description will be seen more truly if compared with something else (note on ii. 906–910). And even if the direct result be small, the increased familiarity with the poem will be a step toward the increased enjoyment of it. At this time now, as in the more cursory study, the Introduction may be studied, the sections on the Style in particular (pp. xxx.–xl.), with frequent reference to the poem, more especially with a view of discovering and discussing new examples.
EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

It is a very difficult thing to make out good Examination papers on the subject of a poem. This fact has led many persons having to do with education, to hold one of two views: to believe either that poems should not be studied as such, or that no examinations should be given on them. Those who hold the second opinion are at present somewhat in the position of one disapproving of gravitation. Examinations are a fact which we must reckon with. Examination questions on "Paradise Lost" will generally be found to come under one of the following heads: ¹

1. On Proper Names.

   a. What and where was "Sion hill," i. 10; "Siloa's brook," i. 11; "the Aonian mount," i. 15?
   b. Who were Moloch, Belial, Dagon, Chemos, i. 381–505; Mammon, i. 678–684?
   c. Where were Nebo, i. 407; Lebanon, i. 447; Gaza, i. 466; Damascus, i. 468; Basan, i. 398?
   e. Where and what were Olympus, i. 516; Delphi, i. 517; Dodona, i. 518; Lemnos, i. 746?

2. On Allusions.

   a. Explain

      "A leper once he lost and gained a king." (i. 471.)

¹ 1-5 would hardly be expected of those who had merely read the poem in a general way. The number of questions given in any examination would be dependent on various circumstances, partly on the time allowed.
EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

"Doubled that sin in Bethel, and in Dan." (i. 485.)

b. Explain "Gehenna . . . type of hell," i. 405; "the Asphaltic pool," i. 411; "the hill of scandal," i. 416; "sojourners in Goshen," i. 309; "Amram's son," i. 339.

c. Who was Uther's son, i. 580? the Soldan, i. 764? What is the allusion in "Panim chivalry," i. 765; "fell by Fontarabbia," i. 587?

d. What was the "pygmæan race," i. 780 (cf i. 575)? "The Arimaspian," ii. 945?

e. What allusion to his own time may be supposed in

"Then wander forth the sons of Belial" (i. 501)?

"O shame to men! Devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds; men only disagree," etc.
(ii. 496, 497.)

3. On Passages connected with other parts of the poem.

a. Explain

"As far removed from God and light of Heaven
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole."
(i. 73, 74.)

b. Explain

"O Chief of many thronèd Powers
That led the embattled Seraphim to war."
(i. 128, 129.)

c. Satan says to Beëlzebub,

"Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."
(i. 263.)

What language does he use to his followers?

d. Comment on

"His form had yet not lost
All her original brightness." (i. 591.)
EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

e. Explain

"that tore Hell's concave." (i. 542.)
"this huge convex of fire." (ii. 434.)

4. On Constructions.

Comment on or explain

"Never since created man." (i. 573.)
"Peace is despaired." (i. 660.)
"Of Javan's issue held gods." (i. 508.)
"What doubt we to incense his utmost ire?" (ii. 94.)
"since our present lot appears
For happy though ill, for ill not worst." (ii. 234.)

5. On Metre.

Point out anything noteworthy in the rhythm of the following lines:

i. 195; i. 159; i. 28; i. 82; i. 329; i. 38; ii. 207; ii. 626; ii. 4.


The questions under 3 deal also with this subject in a somewhat different way.

a. What sort of names does Milton give the fallen angels and for what reason?

b. In what two-fold fashion do Sin and Death appear in the poem?

c. What is the meaning of the names Satan and Lucifer? What appropriateness have they to their bearer?

d. What place have Chaos, Night, Orcus, Ades, Demogorgon in the poem?

e. State briefly the action of the poem. What place in it is held by Books i. and ii.
7. On Milton’s Poetic Manner.
   a. Give some examples of characteristic Miltonic phrases.
   b. Give some examples of conventional epic diction.
   c. What are epic similes?
   d. How does Milton use geographical names?
   e. Quote and comment upon some particular description as i. 589 foll.

   a. What different periods are to be noted in Milton’s life and what distinguishes them?
   b. Why did Milton write his prose pamphlets?
   c. What is the main idea running through his great poems?
   d. What was Milton’s relation to the Commonwealth?
   e. What is the relation of Milton’s prose to his poetry?

Such questions as these may fairly be asked to test a student’s knowledge of a poem. Some of them will offer an opportunity for him to show his appreciation of it; but an examination is not a good means of testing poetic appreciation, nor was it devised for that purpose.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MILTON’S CHIEF WORKS.</th>
<th>CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.</th>
<th>CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHY.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1608. [Milton born.]</td>
<td>1608. Shakspere, Coriolanus (?) ; Beaumont and Fletcher (?), Philaster.</td>
<td>1608. Fuller, Clarendon born; Sackville died.</td>
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<td>1610. Shakspere, Tempest; G. Fletcher, Christ’s Victory, etc.; Chapman, Iliad (I–XII.); J. Fletcher, Faithful Shepherdess.</td>
<td>1611. King James Version of Bible completed.</td>
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<td>1622. Drayton, Polyolbion (complete); Wither, Mistress of Philaret.</td>
<td>1622. Drayton, Polyolbion (complete); Wither, Mistress of Philaret.</td>
<td>1615. Baxter, Denham born.</td>
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<td>1631. Drayton, Donne died; Dryden born.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1633. Arcades (written ?).</td>
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<td>1633. G. Herbert died.</td>
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</table>
### MILTON'S CHIEF WORKS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Work Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1655.</td>
<td>Pro se defensio contra A. Morum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1659.</td>
<td>Two ecclesiastical pamphlets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1660.</td>
<td>Ready and easy way to establish a free Commonwealth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1667.</td>
<td>Paradise Lost.</td>
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<td>1669.</td>
<td>Accidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1670.</td>
<td>History of Britain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1671.</td>
<td>Paradise Regained; Samson Agonistes (published together).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1672.</td>
<td>Artis Logicae, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1673.</td>
<td>Of true Religion, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1674.</td>
<td>Epistolарum familiarum liber.</td>
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1 Chief posthumous works: 1697 and 1698. Prose Works.

### CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Work Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1655.</td>
<td>Fuller, Church History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1659.</td>
<td>Cleveland, Poems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1660.</td>
<td>Pepys' Diary begun; Dryden, Astraea Redux.</td>
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<td>1669.</td>
<td>Dryden, Tyrannic Love.</td>
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### CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHY.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1658.</td>
<td>Cromwell, Love-lace, Cleveland died.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1660.</td>
<td>Charles II. restored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1661.</td>
<td>Fuller died; Defoe born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1664.</td>
<td>Prior born.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1666.</td>
<td>Shirley died.</td>
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<td>1668.</td>
<td>Davenant, Denham died.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1669.</td>
<td>Prynne died.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1670.</td>
<td>Congreve born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1672.</td>
<td>Addison, Steele born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1674.</td>
<td>Herrick, Clarendon died.</td>
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PARADISE LOST

A POEM IN TWELVE BOOKS

THE AUTHOR

JOHN MILTON

[THE FIRST AND SECOND BOOKS ONLY ARE HERE REPRINTED]
PARADISE LOST

BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

This First Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject, Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed; then touches the prime cause of his fall, the Serpent or rather Satan in the Serpent, who revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of angels, was by the command of God driven out of Heaven with all his crew into the great Deep. Which action passed over, the poem hastens into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his angels now fallen into Hell, described there, not in the centre, (for Heaven and Earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed,) but in a place of utter darkness fitliest called Chaos. Here Satan with his angels, lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him; they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded; they rise, their number, array of battle, their chief leaders named according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope of yet regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new World and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or report in Heaven; for that angels were, long before this visible creation, was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of the prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he

The Argument. As in i. 24 the word means, not a process of reasoning, but the subject-matter of what follows.

Into the midst of things. The phrase, which has become almost proverbial, is a translation of the in medias res of Horace: Ars Poetica, 148.
refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt.
Pandemonium the palace of Satan rises suddenly built out of the
Deep. The infernal powers there sit in council.

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste.
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of Oreb or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the Heavens and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill

1–26. The Invocation. It was the custom of the classic authors,
who were, in Milton's day, everywhere taken as models, to begin an
epic poem with an address to the Muse of poetry. In Appendix A
will be found some examples. Milton for this poem would invoke
no heathen divinity: he addresses the Heavenly Muse who inspired
the sacred writings. In Bk. vii. i. i. he calls her Urania, "the
Heavenly One."

1. Fruit. The word seems to be used literally, with a thought also
of the figurative meaning; i. e., the whole outcome or result.


4. Greater than any other man; i. e., the Messiah. Although he
afterwards took Paradise Regained as the subject of another poem
(see Introd., p. xxii.), Milton meant in Paradise Lost to write of the
Fall and of the Redemption as well. In Book xi. Adam is given by
Michael a prophetic view of the fulfilment of the promise of salvation
made to Eve.

5. Seat, place, abode.

6. Secret, remote from man, mysterious and unknown.

7. Of Oreb or of Sinai. The meaning is "on the secret top of
that great mountain, whether it be called Oreb or Sinai." Sinai is
the general name for the great mass of mountains in Southern
Arabia. Horeb is apparently the name of one of the mountains.

8. That shepherd, Moses who "kept the flock of Jethro." Exod.
iii., 1. The chosen seed, the children of Israel.

10. Out of Chaos. Gen. i. Sion, one of the hills upon which Je-
rusalem was built.
Delight thee more, and Siloa’s brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know’st; thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like, sat’st brooding on the vast Abyss,
And mad’st it pregnant: what in me is dark,
Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
That to the highth of this great argument
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first—for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,

11. Siloa. “Siloam’s shady rill” is said in Nehem. iii. 15, to be “by the king’s garden.”
12. The oracle of God. The Temple.
13. Adventurous, because he was to undertake “things unattempted yet.”
14. No middle flight. His poem was to be on the highest possible theme.
15. Aonian mount. Helicon, the mountain of the classic Muses, in Boetia or Aonia. By his subject Milton rises far above the classic poets.
17. Thou, O Spirit. Leaving the thought of analogy with the classic muses, Milton turns to the thought of the Holy Spirit.
24. Highth. This is Milton’s customary spelling.
26. A noble aim. But critics have thought that the desire to justify the ways of God led Milton to introduce arguments and discussions into his poem which are not wholly poetical. We have no such passages in Books i. and ii., but there is some theology toward the beginning of Book iii.
27. Milton puts the question of which the answer is his poem.
Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first, what cause
Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,
Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
The infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel angels, by whose aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
If he opposed; and, with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition; there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night

32. *For one restraint.* Because of one restraint, following *to fall off* and *transgress.*
32. *Besides,* in all other respects.
34. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field." *Gen.* iii. 1.
36. *What time,* at that time when. In the following lines Milton gives in a few words, what he subsequently relates in two books, v. 577-907, vi.
39. *His peers,* those who were rightfully his equals.
50. *Nine times.* "Nine days they fell,” vi. 871, and nine days more they lay confounded. Milton here takes up the action where he means to leave it later,

"Hell at last
Yawning, received them whole, and on them closed." vi. 874, 875.
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain,
Torments him. Round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdurate pride, and steadfast hate.
At once, as far as angels ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild:
A dungeon horrible on all sides round
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
No light; but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious, here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set

51. *Horrid crew.* This is a case where we must rid our minds of the present meanings of words and try to get at them more as they were in Milton’s mind. For *horrid*, cf. i. 83, 392; ii. 63, 676.
53. *Doom*, judgment; sentence.
59. *Angels ken.* As far as the knowledge of angels extends.
63. *Darkness visible.* One of Milton’s imaginative phrases which have become famous.
64. *Discover*, uncover, render visible.
68. *Urges*, presses on. The word was used intransitively in Milton’s day.
70. *Had prepared.* Before Lucifer’s transgression we may suppose that Hell had not existed. In Raphael’s story (v. 577) it seems as though the universe consisted of Heaven and Chaos only.
72. *Utter*, probably used by Milton in the meaning *absolute* and *outer*, of which last *utter* is a doublet.
As far removed from God and light of Heaven,
As from the center thrice to the utmost pole.
Oh, how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns, and, weltersing by his side,
One next himself in power and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine and named
Beelzebub. To whom the Arch-Enemy,—
And thence in Heaven called Satan,—with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:
"If thou beest he,—but O, how fallen! how changed
From him, who, in the happy realms of light,
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads though bright!—if he, whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin; into what pit, thou seest,
From what highth fallen! so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent or change,

74. As from the center, etc. Usually taken to mean that the distance from Heaven to Hell was half as far again as across the universe. If this were in Milton's mind he must have had another idea when he wrote, ii. 1052.
78. Weltering, rolling about.
81. Beelzebub. Called in Matt. xii. 24 "the prince of the devils."
The first part of the name is the same as Baal, cf. i. 422.
82. Satan. "So call him now; his former name
Is heard no more in heaven." v. 659.
In Hebrew the name means adversary or opposer; in which character Satan appears throughout the poem.
84. How changed. Satan was also changed. See i. 97 and Introd., pp. xxxix.—xxxiii.
94. Dire, dreadful.
Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind;
And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power,
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
Doubted his empire,—that were low indeed,
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since, by Fate, the strength of gods
And this Empyreal substance cannot fail,
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,

102. *That durst dislike his reign.* Satan had rebelled against what he chose to consider the tyranny of God. He speaks here as though his companions had also rebelled of their own accord; but in Book v. Milton points out that he himself had aroused their discontent.

104. *In dubious battle.* These battles are described in Book vi. The battles of immortal beings have not the interest given by the chance of death, nor can strife against Omnipotence ever be doubtful. In spite of this, however, the rebellious angels had gained a temporary advantage by their invention of cannon and gunpowder. vi. 470–634.

109. The line is a little obscure. It seems to mean, what else is there in not being overcome, except will, revenge, hate, courage?

111. *Sue, beg.*

114. *Doubted his empire,* doubted whether it were still his.
We may, with more successful hope, resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand foe,
Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven."

So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair;
And him thus answered soon his bold compeer:

"O Prince! O chief of many thronèd Powers!
That led the embattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual King,
And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate;
Too well I see and rue the dire event,
That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as gods and heavenly essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigor soon returns,
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.
But what if he our Conqueror (whom I now

121. To wage, etc. In ii. 1–506 Satan and the chiefs of the fallen angels consult how best to accomplish their end.

125. Apostle. An apostate is one who abandons his religious allegiance.

127. Compeer here means merely companion.

128. Thronèd powers. Thrones and Powers were titles in the Heavenly Hierarchy. See Introd., p. xxxiii.

129. Seraphim. The word is here used loosely to mean angels. The Seraphim were really the angels of the highest rank.

130. Conduct, guidance.

133. Whether upheld. An un-English construction which we owe to Milton's familiarity with Greek.

138. This is a difficulty which Milton finds it hard to surmount. Cf. note on 104 supra.
Of force believe almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire, 146
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service, as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be, 150
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?
What can it then avail, though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being,
To undergo eternal punishment?"
155
Whereeto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend replied:
"Fallen Cherub! to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering; but of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will,
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil;
Which oft-times may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuitt 160
165

152. Deep. Chaos, as in Gen. i. 2, "darkness was upon the face
of the deep." Cf. i. 177, and indeed many other lines in our books.
Chaos, as will be seen when we get to ii. 79, lay between Heaven and
Hell.
156. Arch-Fiend. The chief enemy: I make no doubt that Milton
had in mind the older meaning of "fiend," which was the opposite
of "friend."
157. Cherub. Like Seraphim just above and elsewhere, the term
is used generally.
165. Still, always.
Back to the gates of Heaven; the sulphurous hail,
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
The fiery surge, that from the precipice
Of Heaven received us falling; and the thunder,
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.
Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn
Or satiate fury yield it from our foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Cast's pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves,
There rest, if any rest can harbour there,
And, reassembling our afflicted powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire calamity,
What re-enforcement we may gain from hope,
If not, what resolution from despair."

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides,
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,

171–3. As hard rain beats down the surf on the beach.
178. *Slip*. "Let slip" would be more common nowadays. The meaning is, Let us take the chance, however we have come by it.
186. *Powers*, forces, *i.e.*, the other fallen angels.
187. *Offend*, more serious in meaning than at present.
191. An ellipsis: what resolution we may gain from despair.
197. *As whom*. As those whom.
198. The Titans of Greek mythology, the older deities, who heaped Mt. Pelion upon Mt. Ossa in their attempt to scale Heaven and
Briereos or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream;
Him, haply, slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays:
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay,
Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence
Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others, and, enraged, might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
cast down Zeus, or Jove, as Milton calls him, using his Latin name.
Briereos and Typhon were not Titans, but giants or earth-born
monsters: the first had a hundred arms, the second a hundred
heads.

200. Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, Asia Minor.
201. Leviathan. The reference is to Job xli. It is now sup-
poused that the animal there described was the crocodile. But Milton
had obviously no such idea. He conceived of the Leviathan as being
some great sea monster.
203-208. These lines are like the similes of Homer, each of which
presents a picture complete in itself. See Introd., p. xlv. and Appen-
dix B.
204. Night-foundered, sunk in night.
208. Invests, clothes, and so covers.
210. Chained. It is not clear what Milton had in mind here (cf.
48 above), unless he conceived of Satan as being that moment loosed,
according to the next lines.
214. Reiterated, repeated.
215. Damnation, in its earlier sense of condemnation.
217. But, only.
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn
On man by him seduced, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured. 220
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames,
Driven backwards, slope their pointing spires, and, rolled
In billows, leave in the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,
That felt unusual weight, till on dry land
He lights; if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
And such appeared in hue, as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fuelled entrails thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singèd bottom all involved
With stench and smoke: such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate,
Both glorying to have 'scaped the Stygian flood,
As gods, and by their own recovered strength,
Not by the sufferance of supernal power.

218. See Book xii., in which the Redemption of man is shown to Adam.
220. See x. 504–584.
226. Incumbent, lying upon; cf. recumbent.
232. Pelorus, Ætna, mountains in Sicily; the former a promontory, the latter as appears in the lines following, a volcano.
235. Sublimed. The word has a definite chemical meaning, or rather the noun sublimate has. Here sublimed means no more than "brought to its essential strength."
238. Next mate. Nearest companion; nearest actually, and nearest in rank.
239. Stygian. The Styx was in classical mythology one of the rivers of Hades, cf. ii. 577 and note. Milton takes the adjective as appropriate to Hell.
"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat
That we must change for Heaven? this mournful gloom,
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he,
Who now is Sovran, can dispose, and bid
What shall be right; farthest from him is best,
Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy forever dwells! hail, horrors! hail,
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessor; one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
The associates and co-partners of our loss,

242. Is this. With emphasis on this. We have no demonstrative (Lat. iste) which indicates contempt.
243. Archangel. According to popular conception there were seven archangels, or chiefs among the angels. See Intro., p. xxiii.
246. Sovran, Milton's customary spelling: he derives the word from his favourite Italian, sovrano.
248. Satan imagines himself quite equal to God in everything but power; cf. 1. 258.
252. He is no longer speaking to Beelzebub, but to himself, following his own thoughts.
263. A famous line with which one must compare: "It is better to be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."
Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool,  
And call them not to share with us their part  
In this unhappy mansion, or once more,  
With rallied arms, to try what may be yet  
Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?"

So Satan spake, and him Beelzebub  
Thus answered:—"Leader of those armies bright,  
Which but the Omnipotent none could have foiled!  
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge  
Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft  
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge  
Of battle when it raged, in all assaults  
Their surest signal, they will soon resume  
New courage and revive, though now they lie  
Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,  
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed:  
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious highth."

He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend  
Was moving toward the shore, his ponderous shield,  
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,  
Behind him cast. The broad circumference  
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb  
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
At evening, from the top of Fesole,

266. Oblivious pool. It was not, of course, the pool which forgot, 
but those lying upon it. Milton is thinking of Lethe, the river of 
forgetfulness in Hades, as afterward ii. 583–586.

268. Mansion, abiding place, as in John xiv. 2: "In my Father's 
house are many mansions."

274. Pledge, that which has assured them of hope.

281. Astounded, stunned. Amazed, stupefied as by a blow.

282. Pernicious, harmful.

283. Superior. Satan was and had always been the chief.

288. Optic glass, the telescope.

The Tuscan artist, Galileo, the astronomer, whom Milton had 
seen on his Italian journey.

289. Fesole, a village on a hill near Florence.
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands, 290
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
His spear, to equal which the tallest pine,
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great amminal, were but a wand,
He walked with, to support uneasy steps 295
Over the burning marle, not like those steps
On Heaven’s azure; and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire:
Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamèd sea he stood, and called 300
His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced,
Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades,
High over-arched embower; or scattered sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed 305
Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o’erthrew
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses 310

290. Valdarno, the valley of the Arno, in which Florence is situa-
ted.
294. Amminal. An obsolete form of “admiral”; an obsolete use
also, meaning the ship and not the commander.
301.Entranced, a little different in meaning from our present
use; in a stupor.
302-4. These lines are well known. Vallombrosa, “the shady
vale,” is not far from Florence. Etruria was the ancient name for
a great part of northern Italy.
305. Orion. The constellation was held to bring stormy weather.
307. Busiris, the Pharaoh of the Bible. Memphian, for Egyptian,
Memphis having been a great city of Egypt.
308. Perfidious, because he had given the Israelities leave to go.
Exod. xii. 31; cf. xiv. 5.
309. Sojourners of Goshen. The children of Israel had sojourned
in the land of Goshen four hundred and thirty years according to
Gen. xlvii. 27 and Exod. xii. 40.
And broken chariot wheels: so thick bestrewn,
Abject and lost lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.
He called so loud, that all the hollow deep
Of Hell resounded: "Princes, Potentates,
Warriors, the flower of heaven, once yours, now lost,
If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal spirits! Or have ye chosen this place
After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here as in the vales of Heaven?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conqueror—who now beholds
Cerub and Seraph rolling in the flood,
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern
The advantage, and, descending, tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?
Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!"

They heard and were abashed, and up they sprung
Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch,
On duty sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed,
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,
Waved round the coast, up called a pitchy cloud

312. Abject, hurled down.
317. Lost, if such astonishment . . . can seize Eternal spirits;
   i. e., all chance of regaining heaven is gone if you are as you seem.
337. To. We say obedience to anything, to the law of God, for instance,
as in xii. 397, but obey usually takes an object without a preposition.
340. The plague of locusts is described in Ex. x.
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung.
Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile:
So numberless were those bad angels seen
Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell,
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires:
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear
Of their great Sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain:
A multitude, like which the populous North
Poured never from her frozen loins, to pass
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.
Forthwith from every squadron and each band,
The heads and leaders thither haste, where stood
Their great Commander; godlike shapes, and forms
Excelling human, princely dignities,
And powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones;
Though of their names in heavenly records now
Be no memorial, blotted out and rased
By their rebellion from the Books of Life.
Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
Got them new names; till, wandering o'er the earth,

345. Cope. The word originally meant hood, mantle, and so covering, as of Heaven, whence transferred to Hell.
348. Sultan. Strictly speaking, an Oriental monarch, but Milton uses the word in a general sense. In l. 378 we have Emperor.
351–355. Refers to the invasions of the Roman Empire by the Teutonic tribes beyond the Rhine and the Danube, which rivers formed the Roman boundary.
355. The Vandals passed through Spain into Africa.
359. Excelling, surpassing.
360. Powers . . . thrones. See note on l. 128.
364–373. It was a legend that the fallen angels had, in process of time, become deities of the heathen nations. Milton in ll. 380–521 makes excellent use of it.
Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,
By falsities and lies, the greatest part
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and the invisible
Glory of Him that made them to transform
Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
And devils to adore for deities;
Then were they known to men by various names
And various idols through the heathen world.

Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last,
Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch,
At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth,
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.

The chief were those, who, from the pit of Hell
Roaming to seek their prey on earth, durst fix
Their seats long after next the seat of God,
Their altars by his altar, gods adored
Among the nations round, and durst abide
Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned

376. Say, Muse. Cf. "Musa mihi causas memora," Æn. i. 6, and other such passages, also P. L., i. 27, and vii. 40, in Appendix A.

380. Promiscuous, mixed, and so common; ordinary.

381. The most constant temptation before the children of Israel was to imitate the idolatry of the neighbouring nations. Over and over again did they offend, taking sometimes the gods of one tribe, sometimes of another: the Old Testament from Exodus to Malachi is the record of constant stumbling. Milton follows a sort of traditional idea that the gods of the heathen were none other than the fallen angels, who had been cast out of heaven, and, as will appear in Book ii., he was able to work the idea into the structure of his poem. To illustrate the passages following, the student should read in Appendix C, p. 108, the extracts from Kings and Chronicles, and from Isaiah and Jeremiah. But no one can really enjoy Paradise Lost without constant reference to the Bible, and one should really read much more. See also the extract from The Hymn to the Nativity, p. 89.
Between the Cherubim: yea, often placed
Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,
Abominations; and with cursed things
His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,
And with their darkness durst confront his light.

First Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears,
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard, that passed through fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite

Worshipped in Rabba and her watery plain,
In Argob, and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
His temple right against the temple of God

387. Between the Cherubim. See Ex. xxv. 17-22, and 1 Kings vi. 23-30.

388. Manasseh "built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord." 2 Kings xxi. 5.

392-405. The Ammonites were a people kindred to the Moabites (l. 406), both tribes being children of Lot. They dwelt to the east of the land of Gilead: Rabba was in the southern part of their territory; Argob, mentioned in 1 Kings iv. 13, as a part of Bashan, was farther north; the Arnon rises in the mountains of Gilead and flows into the Dead Sea.—utmost seems to mean near its source. It had been particularly forbidden that the Israelites should make their children "pass through the fire to Molech." Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2-5. But there seems to have been a constant fascination about the worship, Ezek. xvi. 21. In later times, Solomon built "a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon." 1 Kings xi. 7, with ll. 404, 405; cf. Jeremiah vii. 30, 31. The name Gehenna means "the valley of Hinnom," which the Jews after the captivity regarded with detestation, using it for the casting out of all kinds of filth. This rubbish was constantly destroyed by great fires, so that the valley became the type of Hell, and the words Tophet and Gehenna have the meanings attached to them to-day.
On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove,
The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence
And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.

Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab’s sons,
From Aroër to Nebo and the wild
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonaim, Seon’s realm, beyond
The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,
And Eleælè to the Asphaltic pool.
Peor his other name, when he enticed
Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged

Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove
Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate,
Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
With these came they, who, from the bordering flood
Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names

406-418. Moab lay to the east of the Dead Sea, which throws up asphalt on its shores, and so is called in l. 411 “the asphalitic pool.” Aroër was a city on the southern border; Mt. Nebo and the mountains of Abarim were to the north. Further north still, were Sibma and Eleælè and Heshbon, the city of Sihon (Seon) King of the Amorites, Numb. xxxi. 26, who had conquered a former king of Moab. Horonaim is mentioned by Isaiah and Jeremiah. The mention of Peor in Numb. xxv. is not very clear (cf. Ps. cxi. 28 and Hos. ix. 10) but Milton evidently conceives of Baal-peor, as he is there called as another name for Chemos. The Israelites passed through Shittim, as they came from Egypt. The hill of scandal is the hill mentioned in 1 Kings xi. 7, quoted in the note above. For “Josiah’s zeal and reformation,” see 2 Kings xxiii.

In connection with these lines the student should read in Appendix D, from the Judgment of Moab, Jeremiah xlviii., and the Burden of Moab, Isaiah xv. and xvi.

420. Old Euphrates. The Euphrates was the fourth of the rivers running out of Paradise, Gen. ii. 14.

The brook that parts, etc. The Besor, called in Joshua xv. 4 “the river of Egypt.”
Of Baālim and Ashtaroth, those male, 
These feminine: for spirits, when they please, 
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure,
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aery purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfil.
For those the race of Israel oft forsook
Their living Strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods; for which their heads as low
Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came Astoreth, whom the Phœnicians called
Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns;
To whose bright image nightly by the moon
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on the offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious king, whose heart though large,

422. Baālim. Im is a Hebrew plural ending as in Seraphim. Baāl was the name of the Phœnicians, found in different forms as Baāl, Baāl Peor, Baāl Zebub, etc. In like manner Ashtaroth is the Hebrew plural of Ashtoreth, the Phœnicians Astarte, the goddess of the moon.

437–446. Astoreth, Hebrew for Astarte, a goddess having something in common with the Greek Artemis, but more with Aphrodite. Tyre and Sidon were the great coast towns of the Phœnicians. “The offensive mountain” is the “hill of scandal” of 1. 416, on which Solomon built idolatrous temples to the various gods of his many wives, whence is he called uxorious. In 1 Kings xi. 4, 5, the verses preceding those quoted above, we read that “it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart away after other gods. . . . For Solomon went after Astoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians.”
Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul. Thammuz came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate,
In amorous ditties all a summer's day;
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded. The love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark
Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopt off
In his own temple on the grunsel edge,
Where he fell flat, and shamed his worshippers:
Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man,
And downward fish; yet had his temple high
Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast

446-457. Thammuz, fabled to have been slain by a boar on Mt.
Lebanon, is the Greek Adonis. In this passage, however, Adonis is
the river flowing from the mountain into the Mediterranean. The
waters reddened by the turbid spring rains have been thought to
have suggested the "annual wound." The yearly mourning for
Adonis was a rite accompanied by various loose ceremonies which
found its way among the children of Israel. See Ezek. viii. 14.
457-466. Dagon, the fish-shaped god of the Philistines, a people
who gave their name to Palestine, although they inhabited only the
south-west corner of it. Akron, Ashdod (Azotus in Acts viii. 40, is
through the Greek), Gath, Ascalon, Gaza, were their five towns. They
were constantly at war with the Israelites, cf. Judges xiii. 1. Some
time after Samson, the Philistines captured the ark of the Lord and
put it in the house of Dagon. "And when they arose early on the
morrow morning, behold Dagon was fallen upon his face to the
ground before the ark of the Lord: and the head of Dagon, and
both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only
the stump of Dagon was left to him." 1 Sam. v. 4.
460. Grunsel, threshold, ground-sill.
Of Palestine, in Gath, and Ascalon,
And Accaron, and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abana, and Pharpar, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was bold:
A leper once he lost and gained a king,
Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared
A crew, who, under names of old renown,
Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train,
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek
Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms
Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape
The infection, when their borrowed gold composed
The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king

467-476. Rimmon, a god of the Syrians. It was into the House of
Rimmon that the King of Syria went to worship, leaning on the
hand of Naaman, captain of his host, whose story may be read in
2 Kings v. Naaman was the leper who, on being bid by Elisha to
bathe in Jordan, was enraged, thinking that Abana and Pharpar,
"rivers of Damascus," were better than all the waters of Israel.
Lucid means clear in a physical sense. As to Ahaz his idolatries
may be read in 2 Kings xvi., or 2 Chron. xxviii.

476-480. Osiris and Isis were the chief deities, male and female,
of Egypt. Orus, more commonly Horus, was the sun-god.

481. Brutish forms. They were often presented as typified in
animals.

483. Borrowed gold. The calf set up by Aaron for the children
of Israel was made of the ornaments stolen from the Egyptians.

484. The calf in Oreb. Exod. xxxii.

The rebel king. Jereboam, who, fearing that the revolted Israelites
would return to Rehoboam and the God of their fathers, set up two
golden calves, one in Bethel and the other in Dan. 1 Kings xii.
26-29.
Doubled that sin in Bethel, and in Dan, Likening his Maker to the graz'd ox, Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed From Egypt marching, equalled with one stroke Both her first-born and all her bleating gods. Belial came last, than whom a spirit more lewd Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love Vice for itself. To him no temple stood, Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he In temples and at altars, when the priest Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled With lust and violence the house of God? In courts and palaces he also reigns, And in luxurious cities, where the noise Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers, And injury and outrage; and when night Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine. Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night

487. "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast: and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord." Exod. xii. 12.

488. Equalled, i.e., made them equal. I suppose this to be the meaning here, although Milton generally uses the word as in i. 248.

490. Belial was not a heathen deity, i. 492. The Hebrew word means worthlessness. Later it became a sort of type of evil as in 2 Cor. vi. 15.

495. Eli's sons. Eli was a priest of the Lord whom we remember chiefly by the story of Samuel. His sons "were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord." 1 Sam. ii. 12.

500-502. Milton had perhaps in mind the wild young men of fashion who harried the streets of London after their revels. They went by different names: the Tityre-Tu's appear as early as 1641; the Mohocks as late as Queen Anne's day.

502. Flown, flushed.

503. Sodom, the most notorious of the five cities of the plain. Gen. xviii.-xix.
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
Exposed a matron to avoid worse rape.
These were the prime in order and in might:
The rest were long to tell, though far renowned,
The Ionian gods—of Javan’s issue held
Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth,
Their boasted parents—Titan, Heaven’s first-born,
With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
By younger Saturn; he from mightier Jove,
His own and Rhea’s son, like measure found;
So Jove usurping reigned. These first in Crete
And Ida known; thence on the snowy top
Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,
Their highest Heaven; or on the Delphian cliff,
Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
Of Doric land; or who, with Saturn old,
Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields,

505. Prime, first, chief.
506. The Greek people were divided into three families, the Ionian,
the Dorian (i. 519) and the Æolian. Of these the first being best
known, to the Asiatics at least, stand for all. The Ionians were
fabled to descend from Ion, whose name has been identified with
Javan, the son of Japhet. Gen. x. 2.

507. Of Javan’s issue, by Javan’s issue considered to be gods.
509. Heaven and Earth, the parents of Saturn and Rhea, who
dispossessed them of their power. They and the other Titans were
in turn dispossessed by Jupiter or Jove and the later family of gods.
510. Titan. See the note to l. 198.
515. Ida and Olympus, mountains, the former in Crete, the other in
Thessaly, famous both in Greek mythology, especially the latter,
which was the home of the gods.
517. Delphi, the oracle of Apollo, on the southern slope of Mount
Parnassus.
518. Dodona, the oracle of Zeus or Jove; it was in Epirus.
520. Adria, the Adriatic Sea.

Hesperian fields; Italy, where according to the traditions of Latin
literature, Saturn, being cast out by Jupiter, had established his king-
dom and an age of gold.
And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost isles.
All these and more came flocking; but with looks
Downcast and damp, yet such wherein appeared
Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their chief
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears:
Then straight commands, that at the warlike sound
Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
His mighty standard. That proud honour claimed
Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
The imperial ensign, which, full high advanced,
Shone like a meteor, streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden lustre rich emblazoned,
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:
At which the universal host up-sent
A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
With orient colours waving: with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array

521. O'er the Celtic, probably alludes to France, as utmost isles to the British Isles.
523. Damp. Damped, we should say.
526, 527. Cast like doubtful hue; i.e., at first their downcast appearance discouraged Satan.
534. A Cherub tall. The Cherubim were of second rank in the angelic host. See Introd., p. xxxiv.
542. Concave, the vault of hell.
546. Orient, Eastern, i.e., the colors of sunrise.
Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders; such as raised
To highth of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle, and, instead of rage,
Deliberate valour breathed, firm and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and 'suage
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force with fixèd thought,
Moved on in silence to soft pipes, that charmed
Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil: and now,
Advanced in view, they stand, a horrid front
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
Of warriors old with ordered spear and shield,
Awaiting what command their mighty chief
Had to impose. He through the armèd files
Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
The whole battalion views, their order due,
Their visages and stature as of gods;
Their number last he sums. And now his heart
Distends with pride, and hardening in his strength
Glories: for never, since created man,
Met such embodied force as named with these
Could merit more than that small infantry

550. Dorian mood. The Spartans were the chief Dorian people,
famous for their prowess in war and for their severe discipline of
life. Their music was like their national character.
555. 'Suage, assuage.
560. Traverse, across.
565–576. For never after the creation of man, was collected
together a force which, compared to these, would seem more than
pygmies.
575. The battles of the Pygmies and the Cranes was the subject
of one of the poems attributed to Homer.
Warred on by cranes; though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra with the heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son,
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptised or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond;
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore,
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell

577. Phlegra, in Macedon. For the giant brood see note on i. 198.
578. Thebes and Ilium. The war of the Seven against Thebes and
the Trojan war (Ilium was another name for Troy) are famous in
Greek literature. Not only did the heroes do battle, but the gods
themselves took sides and aided their favourites.
580. Uther's son, King Arthur. Read The Coming of Arthur, in
Tennyson's Idylls of the King.
581. Armoric. The old inhabitants of Brittany (Armorica) were a
Celtic people akin to the ancient British.
582. Baptised or infidel. Christian or Saracen, as in the Crusades
and the legends developing from them.
583–587. As to Milton's use of geographical names see Introd.,
p. xlvii.
583. Aspramont was in southern France, the scene of certain ex-
ploits of the Paladin Orlando.
Montalban was the castle of Rinaldo in Languedoc.
584. Damasco, or Marocco. Milton probably had in mind the
Crusades and the Spanish wars with the Moors. Trebisond was an
Eastern empire south of the Black Sea, a great favourite of the old
romancers.
585–587. Charles the Great of France, although a historical per-
sonage, was almost as great in romance as King Arthur. The
legends relate that Agramant, King of Africa, preparing to invade
Christendom, gathered a great army at Biserta, whence he marched
into Spain. At Roncesvalles he came up with the retreating rear
guard of Charlemagne's army under Orlando or Roland and de-
stroyed it, Charlemagne himself being a considerable distance in
advance. So the story is usually told, the latter part, at least, hav-
ing some historic basis. Why Milton varies from this version is not
known. Fontarabbia was at some distance from Roncesvalles.
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess yet observed
Their dread commander. He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower; his form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new risen
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs: darkened so, yet shone
Above them all the Archangel; but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
For ever now to have their lot in pain;
Millions of spirits for his fault amerced
Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
For his revolt: yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory withered; as when Heaven's fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
With singèd top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round

501. His form had yet not lost. It did later; namely, his own particular form, from which he could change to others. See i. 428 and Introd., p. xxv.-xxxiii.
601. Intrenched, dug into.
603. Considerate, thoughtful.
609. Amerced, primarily fined; here punished by the loss.
With all his peers; attention held them mute.
Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words, interwove with sighs, found out their way:
"O myriads of immortal spirits! O Powers
Matchless, but with the Almighty! and that strife
Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change
Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,
Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge, past or present, could have feared
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to reascend,
Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
For me, be witness all the host of Heaven,
If counsels different, or dangers shunned
By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
Monarch in Heaven, till then as one secure
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent or custom, and his regal state
Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed,
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own,
So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war provoked. Our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not; that he no less

629. Feared how; feared that was more common even in Milton's day.
636. Different, differing; hence vacillating.
645. Better part, still used, although obsolescent, for "better course of conduct."
646. Close, closed; secret.
647. What force, etc.; object of to work.
At length from us may find, who overcomes
By force hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new worlds; whereof so rife
There went a fame in Heaven, that ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation, whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the sons of Heaven.
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption—thither or elsewhere;
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial spirits in bondage, nor the Abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired;
For who can think submission? War then, war
Open or understood, must be resolved.”

He spake; and, to confirm his words, out-flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce, with graspèd arms,
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.

There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top

650. Rife, of common report.
651. A fame, a rumor.
652. The Universe had actually been created since Satan had been
cast out of heaven. The time now, it must be remembered, is eigh-
ten days after the angels had been expelled from heaven. See vi.
871; i. 50. The six days of creation are said by Raphael in Book
vii. to have followed immediately the expulsion of the rebels. And
in Book iv., which, in time, follows directly the four succeeding books
(see Introd., p. xxv.), Adam and Eve speak as though they had been
in the Garden some time. The account of Creation is, however,
delayed by Milton to Book vii.
653. Generation, race; offspring, as in “generation of vipers.”
656. Eruption, bursting forth.
660. Peace is despaired. One of Milton’s un-English construc-
tions, as in the next lines.
670. Grisy, horrible.
Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf, undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,
A numerous brigad hastened: as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on,
Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
From Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks and
thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific. By him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire
That riches grow in Hell: that soil may best
Deserve the precious bane. And here let those

675. Brigad. The word has, and had in the seventeenth century,
a technical meaning. In common speech, however, it meant only a
large body.

677. Forerun. Forerunner is common; the verb means merely
to go before.

678. Mammon has not been already mentioned in the list of chiefs,
but comes to notice later in ii. 229–283, where he follows Belial in
speaking to the assembled powers of Hell. Like Belial, Mammon
was not the name of a heathen god: it was a Chaldaic word for
riches. But the Saviour's words in Matt. vi. 24 have given it a uni-
versal personification, which Milton develops in the lines here suc-
ceeding.

688. Better hid, a rather severe ellipsis which cannot be readily
expanded into a grammatical construction.

690. Admire, wonder.
Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame
And strength and art are easily outdone
By spirits reprobate, and in an hour,
What in an age they, with incessant toil
And hands innumerable, scarce perform.
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wondrous art founded the massy ore,
Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion dross;
A third as soon had formed within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook;
As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
Anon, out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
Built like a temple, where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
With golden architrave; nor did there want
Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven;
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon

694. Babel. Either the famous tower, or the later Babylon. Memphian: see note on l. 307.

711. The building by music has been a favourite idea with poets from the time of Amphion to Tennyson's King Arthur.

714. Doric, the name of one of the divisions of the Greek people (see note on l. 508): hence one of the styles of Greek architecture.

715. The architrave is the part of a pillared structure resting immediately upon the columns.

716. The frieze comes immediately above the architrave, and is often ornamented with figures or otherwise. Lastly, under the roof, comes the projecting cornice.

Bossy, embossed, in high relief.
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus or Serapis, their gods, or seat
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
Stood fixed her stately highth; and straight the doors,
Opening their brazen folds, discover wide
Within her ample spaces, o'er the smooth
And level pavement: from the archèd roof,
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky. The hasty multitude
Admiring entered, and the work some praise,
And some the architect. His hand was known
In heaven by many a towered structure high,
Where sceptred Angels held their residence,
And sat as princes, whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the orders bright.
Nor was his name unheard, or unadored,
In ancient Greece, and in Ausonian land
Men called him Mulciber: and how he fell
From Heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements; from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and with the setting sun

718. Alcairo, now called Cairo. Al is merely an article as in Alkoran; in some words it has retained its place, as in algebra, alkali, alchemy.

720. Belus or Bel, the latter the Aramaic form for Baal. Serapis, the Egyptian god of the world of the dead.

722. Pile, a poetic expression for any great structure.

732. His hand, etc. This one of the fallen angels became in aftertime the Greek deity Hephaistos, identified by the Romans with their own Vulcan or Mulciber, the Forger. His fall from heaven (Iliad i. 591), as a result of which he was always lame, is a part of Greek mythology.
Dropt from the zenith like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Ægean isle. Thus they relate,
Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he 'scape
By all his engines, but was headlong sent
With his industrious crew to build in Hell.

Meanwhile the wingèd heralds, by command
Of sovran power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council forthwith to be held
At Pandemonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
From every band and squarèd regiment,
By place or choice the worthiest; they anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
Attended. All access was thronged, the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
(Though like a covered field, where champions bold
Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair
Defied the best of Panim chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance),
Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees, 
In spring-time when the sun with Taurus rides, 
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive 770
In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers 
Fly to and fro, or, on the smoothèd plank, 
The suburb of their straw-built citadel, 
New rubbed with balm, expatiate and confer 
Their state affairs: so thick the aery crowd 775
Swarmed, and were straitened; till, the signal given, 
Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed 
In bigness to surpass earth's giant sons, 
Now less than smallest dwarfs in narrow room 
Throng numberless, like that pygmean race 780
Beyond the Indian mount, or faery elves, 
Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side 
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees, 
Or dreams he sees, while over head the moon 
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth 785
Wheels her pale course; they, on their mirth and dance 
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear; 
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds. 
Thus incorporeal spirits to smallest forms 
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large, 790
Though without number still, amidst the hall 
Of that infernal court. But far within, 
And in their own dimensions like themselves, 
The great Seraphic lords, and Cherubim,

769. Taurus, the Bull among the signs of the Zodiac. The sun 
comes into Taurus about the middle of April. 
774. Expatiate, spread out. 
780. Pygmean race. Ancient fables placed the Pygmies in Asia, 
but modern exploration finds them in Africa. 
793. Like themselves. Spirits had the power of changing their 
appearance (see i. 428) but yet they had, each his own particular 
form. The point has more than a curious interest. (See Introd., 
p. xxix.) 
794. In this line Seraph and Cherub may perhaps mean the chief 
of the angelic hierarchy.
In close recess and secret conclave sat,
A thousand demigods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then
And summons read, the great consúlt began.

795. *Frequent* agrees with *conclave*; the meaning is Latin, i.e., crowded.
PARADISE LOST

BOOK II.

THE ARGUMENT.

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

High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East, with richest hand,
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,

2. Ormus. An island in the Persian gulf, a famous diamond mart. India was just coming into notice from the trading and settlements of the East India Company.

4. This line may be taken quite literally. The books of travel of Milton's day have descriptions of this accompaniment of eastern coronations.
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence; and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven, and, by success untaught,
His proud imaginations thus displayed:

"Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven!
For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigor, though oppressed and fallen,
I give not Heaven for lost. From this descent
Celestial Virtues rising will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate.
Me, though just right, and the fixed laws of Heaven,
Did first create your leader, next, free choice,
With what besides, in council or in fight,
Hath been achieved of merit, yet this loss,
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
Established in a safe unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is then no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction; for none sure will claim in Hell
Precedence, none whose portion is so small
Of present pain, that with ambitious mind

9. Success, the outcome: not necessarily, as to-day, fortunate.
11. Powers and Dominions. For these angelic titles see Introd., p. —
14. Give . . . for lost, not give up as lost, but consider as lost.
15. Virtues is another title. Celestial Virtues then means powers of heaven.
27. In this line, and l. 32, Satan is not candid; i. 263 expresses his real mind.
Will covet more. With this advantage then
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in Heaven, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us; and, by what best way,
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate; who can advise, may speak."

He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptered king,
Stood up, the strongest and the fiercest spirit
That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair.
His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all: with that care lost
Went all his fear; of God, or Hell, or worse
He recked not, and these words thereafter spake:

"My sentence is for open war: of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not; them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need, not now.
For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest,
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend, sit lingering here,
Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling-place

35-40. The art with which Satan covers over the logical conclusions of his own remarks is worthy of a political speaker of the present day. He has already shown that in the war they would now undertake they must lose this advantage they now possess, in other words that the better they succeed the less sure are they to prosper.

43 and following. These speeches are extremely characteristic. If possible the student should study the more extended notes, pp. 94-97. That of Moloch is quite in keeping with what has been already said of him, i. 392-405. Compare 46-48 with i. 402.

46. With the Eternal. The Hebrew word Jehovah means "the eternal one." The Greek translators, however, used the word οὐρανός, which means Lord, in which they were followed by the English translators. The French Bible has l'Eternel.

51, 52. Moloch is, as he says, merely a fierce warrior without skill in schemes or speech.
Accept this dark, opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of his tyranny who reigns
By our delay? No! let us rather choose,
Armed with Hell flames and fury, all at once
O'er Heaven's high towers to force resistless way,
Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer; when, to meet the noise
Of his almighty engine, he shall hear
Infernal thunder, and for lightning see
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
Among his angels, and his throne itself
Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire,
His own invented torments. But perhaps
The way seems difficult and steep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe.
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat; descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear
Insulting, and pursued us through the Deep,
With what compulsion, and laborious flight

We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy then;
The event is feared! Should we again provoke
Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find
To our destruction, if there be in Hell

65. Engine; the word was used in a very general way for any mechanical device.
67. Black fire, a bold conception, something like darkness visible, i. 64.
69. Tartarean. Tartarus was the classic name for the abode of the dead.
75. Proper motion, that which belongs to us, our own rightful motion.
82. Event, outcome. We still say “in any event.”
83. Our stronger; our betters, our inferiors are more familiar examples of this use of a comparative adjective.
Fear to be worse destroyed. What can be worse
Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemned
In this abhorred deep to utter woe;
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us, without hope of end,
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge
Inexorably, and the torturing hour,
Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus,
We should be quite abolished, and expire.
What fear we then? what doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which, to the hitherto enraged
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential—happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being!—
Or if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
On this side nothing; and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
Though inaccessible, his fatal throne;
Which, if not victory, is yet revenge.”

He ended frowning, and his look denounced
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
To less than gods. On the other side up rose
Belial, in act more graceful and humane;
A fairer person lost not heaven; he seemed
For dignity composed and high exploit.
But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash

89. **Must exercise us, afflict us.**
94. **What doubt we to incense.** The syntax is irregular. Milton may have had the preceding clause in mind.
97. **Essential,** of the character of essence, spiritual.
107. **Desperate,** hopeless.
109. **Humane;** not in the sense common to-day, but with the meaning, polished and scholarly.
Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low,
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful. Yet, he pleased the ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began:
"I should be much for open war, O Peers!
As not behind in hate, if what was urged
Main reason to persuade immediate war
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
Ominous conjecture on the whole success;
When he who most excels in fact of arms,
In what he counsels and in what excels
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution, as the scope
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what revenge? The towers of Heaven are filled
With armèd watch, that render all access
Impregnable; oft on the bordering Deep
Encamp their legions, or, with obscure wing,
Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,
Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
With blackest insurrection, to confound
Heaven's purest light, yet our great enemy,
All incorruptible, would on his throne
Sit unpolluted, and the ethereal mould,
Incapable of stain, would soon expel
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire
Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
Is flat despair: we must exasperate
The almighty victor to spend all his rage,

119. Belial is throughout the polished rhetorician; his first effort is to turn to himself the minds already affected by the words of Moloch.

131. Impregnable. In reality it is the towers that are impregnable, not the access.

135, 136. Belial is not so much in earnest on this theme as Moloch; these lines fall short of the vigor of ll. 60–70.
And that must end us; that must be our cure,
To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows,
Let this be good, whether our angry foe
Can give it, or will ever? How he can,
Is doubtful; that he never will, is sure.
Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
Belike through impotence or unaware,
To give his enemies their wish, and end
Them in his anger, whom his anger saves
To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we then?'
Say they who counsel war; 'we are decreed,
Reserved, and destined to eternal woe:
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more?
What can we suffer worse?' Is this then worst,
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
What! when we fled amain, pursued, and strook
With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
The Deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed
A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
Chained on the burning lake? That sure was worse.
What if the breath that kindled those grim fires,
Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,
And plunge us in the flames? or, from above,
Should intermitted vengeance arm again
His red right hand to plague us? What if all
Her stores were opened, and this firmament
Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
Impendent horrors, threatening hideous fall

146-151. An idea which has doubtless tormented many who might otherwise have argued themselves to self-destruction.
155. Belial is here keener than Moloch, ll. 96-101.
One day upon our heads? while we, perhaps,
Designing or exhorting glorious war,
Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled,
Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,
There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespted, unpitied, unreplied,
Ages of hopeless end! This would be worse.
War therefore, open or concealed, alike
My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile
With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye
Views all things at one view? He from Heaven’s highth
All these our motions vain sees and derides;
Not more almighty to resist our might
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
Shall we then live thus vile, the race of Heaven
Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here
Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,
By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
The victor’s will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal, nor the law unjust
That so ordains. This was at first resolved,
If we were wise, against so great a foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
I laugh, when those who at the spear are bold
And venturous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear
What yet they know must follow,—to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
The sentence of their conqueror. This is now

186. Belial is of that lower order of mind which thinks it best to
get along on what is obviously practical. They get on excellently in
this world, but rarely achieve great things.

188. What can force or guile with him? Something of a Latin-
ism, quid possit. What can force do? we should say.

208. There was a certain noble endurance in the preceding lines:
now Belial shows rather a cringing lowness of mind.
Our doom, which if we can sustain and bear,
Our supreme foe in time may much remit
His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,
Not mind us not offending, satisfied
With what is punished; whence these raging fires
Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapour; or, inured, not feel;
Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed
In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat, and void of pain;
This horror will grow mild, this darkness light;
Besides what hope the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
Worth waiting; since our present lot appears
For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
If we procure not to ourselves more woe."

Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,
Counselled ignoble ease, and peaceful sloth,
Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake:

"Either to disenthrone the King of Heaven
We war, if war be best, or to regain
Our own right lost. Him to unthrone we then
May hope, when everlasting fate shall yield
To fickle chance, and Chaos judge the strife:
The former vain to hope argues as vain

224. For happy though but ill. When we regard our lot as happy it seems but ill, but when we regard it as ill, it seems not worst.

228. Mammon, although his advice runs along with that of Belial, offers a somewhat different argument, and shows a different temper, and, in fact, goes a step farther. Belial had been unable to arise to the fierce unrest of Moloch; in reality he hated the bother of making an effort. But Mammon is already more or less satisfied with Hell; he sees things (i. 678–688; ii. 270–273) that he really likes much better than he ever did the more spiritual delights of Heaven, of which he speaks with hardly veiled contempt (241–243).

234. The vanity of the former hope is evidence of the vanity of the latter.
The latter; for what place can be for us
Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's Lord's supreme
We overpower? Suppose he should relent,
And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forced Halleluiais; while he lordly sits
Our envied sovran, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings? This must be our task
In Heaven, this our delight. How wearisome
Eternity so spent, in worship paid
To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue
By force impossible, by leave obtained
Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state
Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek
Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
Free and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
We can create; and in what place soe'er
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
Through labour and endurance. This deep world
Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
And with the majesty of darkness round

245. *Ambrosial.* Ambrosia was the food of the gods of the classics.
The line is another reminiscence of Milton's traditions.
250. Here he gives his view of Belial's idea of possible forgiveness
(209–220).
263, 264. A weak argument, not even specious.
Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar
Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell?
As he our darkness, cannot we his light
Imitate when we please? This desert soil
Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;
Nor want we skill or art, from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can Heaven show more?
Our torments also may, in length of time,
Become our elements, these piercing fires
As soft as now severe, our temper changed
Into their temper; which must needs remove
The sensible of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels and the settled state
Of order, how in safety best we may
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise.”
He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled
The assembly, as when hollow rocks retain
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Seafaring men o’er-watched, whose bark by chance,
Or pinnace, anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest: such applause was heard
As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,
Advising peace; for such another field
They dreaded worse than Hell; so much the fear
Of thunder and the sword of Michaël
Wrought still within them; and no less desire
To found this nether empire, which might rise,
By policy and long process of time,
In emulation opposite to Heaven.

278. Sensible, sense or sensibility; the adjective used for the noun.
284. Michaël means “the sword of God.” The word must here be pronounced as a trisyllable.
296. Nether, lower.
Which when Beëlzebub perceived, than whom,  
Satan except, none higher sat, with grave  
Aspèct he rose, and in his rising seemed  
A pillar of state: deep on his front engraven  
Deliberation sat, and public care;  
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,  
Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood,  
With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear  
The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look  
Drew audience and attention still as night  
Or summer’s noontide air, while thus he spake:

"Thrones and Imperial Powers, offspring of Heaven,  
Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now  
Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called  
Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote  
Inclines, here to continue, and build up here  
A growing empire; doubtless, while we dream,  
And know not that the King of Heaven hath doomed  
This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat  
Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt  
From Heaven’s high jurisdiction, in new league  
Banded against his throne, but to remain  
In strictest bondage, though thus far removed  
Under the inevitable curb, reserved  
His captive multitude. For he, be sure,

300–305. A very fine picture.

306. Atlas was a giant of Greek mythology, fabled to bear up the world.

308. Audience, hearing.

312. Style. The formal designation of a monarch is his "style.”

314–329. Beëlzebub has as little difficulty in showing the folly of Belial and Mammon as they had in exposing the temerity of Moloch. The first part of his speech shows the emptiness of both plans: impossible to recover Heaven, impossible to make a Heaven out of Hell. So we come to the suggestion in l. 345. His only thought is for revenge; here he shows, perhaps, a higher mind than the others. They had striven to better their position: he takes no thought of such matters, his only desire is the mental triumph of vengeance.
In highth or depth, still first and last will reign
Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
By our revolt, but over Hell extend
His empire, and with iron sceptre rule
Us here, as with his golden those in Heaven.
What sit we then projecting peace and war?
War hath determined us, and foiled with loss
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Vouchsafed or sought; for what peace will be given
To us enslaved, but custody severe,
And stripes, and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
But to our power hostility and hate,
Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the conqueror least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we most in suffering feel?
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need,
With dangerous expedition to invade
Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,
Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprise? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven
Err not), another world, the happy seat
Of some new race called Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favoured more
Of him who rules above; so was his will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath,
That shook Heaven's whole circumference, confirmed.
Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what mould
Or substance, how endued, and what their power,
And where their weakness, how attempted best,
By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,

349. The idea is Satan's, see i. 651 and ii. 379, 380.
And Heaven’s high arbitrator sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie exposed,
The utmost border of his kingdom, left
To their defence who hold it. Here perhaps
Some advantageous act may be achieved
By sudden onset: either with Hell-fire
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive, as we were driven,
The puny inhabitants; or, if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. This would surpass
Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
In our confusion, and our joy upraise
In his disturbance; when his darling sons,
Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail original, and faded bliss,
Faded so soon. Advise, if this be worth
Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires.” Thus Beelzebub
Pleased his devilish counsel, first devised
By Satan, and in part proposed; for whence,
But from the author of all ill, could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root, and earth with Hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleased highly those infernal States, and joy
Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent
They vote; whereat his speech he thus renewes:

375. Original, he who was their origin.
377. Or to sit: a considerable ellipsis, “or if it be better to.”
380. See i. 651.
385. Milton here speaks, theologically, in his own person. Not only does the damnation of many tend to the greater glory of God, but the Fall of man gives opportunity for the Redemption.
"Well have ye judged, well ended long debate, Synod of gods! and, like to what ye are, Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate, Nearer our ancient seat; perhaps in view Of those bright confines, whence, with neighbouring arms And opportune excursion, we may chance Re-enter Heaven; or else in some mild zone Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven's fair light, Secure, and at the brightening orient beam Purge off this gloom; the soft delicious air, To heal the scar of these corrosive fires, Shall breathe her balm. But first, whom shall we send In search of this new world? whom shall we find Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet The dark, unbottomed, infinite Abyss, And through the palpable obscure find out His uncouth way, or spread his aery flight, Upborne with indefatigable wings, Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive The happy isle? What strength, what art, can then Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe Through the strict senteries and stations thick Of angels watching round? Here he had need All circumspicition, and we now no less Choice in our suffrage; for, on whom we send, The weight of all, and our last hope, relies."

This said, he sat; and expectation held

391. Synod, assembly.
405. Abyss, one of the several names for Chaos.
406. Palpable obscure, darkness that may be felt.
407. Uncouth, in the earlier meaning of unknown.
409. The vast abrupt, not so happy as some of Milton's bold strokes.
414. And we now need no less.
415. Suffrage, vote.
His look suspense, awaiting who appeared
To second or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt: but all sat mute,
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts, and each
In other’s countenance read his own dismay,
Astonished; none, among the choice and prime
Of those Heaven-warring champions, could be found
So hardy as to proffer or accept
Alone the dreadful voyage; till at last
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
Above his fellows, with monarchical pride,
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:
   "O progeny of Heaven, empyreal Thrones!"
   With reason hath deep silence and demur
   Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the way
   And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light;
   Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
   Outrageous to devour, immures us round
   Ninefold, and gates of burning adamant,
   Barred over us, prohibit all egress.
   These passed, if any pass, the void profound
   Of unessential Night receives him next,
   Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being
   Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.
   If thence he 'scape into whatever world
   Or unknown region, what remains him less
   Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?
   But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperial sovranty, adorned
With splendour, armed with power, if aught proposed
And judged of public moment, in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honour, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more, as he above the rest
High honoured sits? Go, therefore, mighty Powers,
Terror of Heaven, though fallen! I intend at home,
While here shall be our home, what best may ease
The present misery, and render Hell
More tolerable; if there be cure or charm
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion. Intermit no watch
Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all. This enterprise
None shall partake with me." Thus saying, rose
The Monarch, and prevented all reply;
Prudent, lest, from his resolution raised,
Others among the chief might offer now
(Certain to be refused) what erst they feared;
And, so refused, might in opinion stand
His rivals, winning cheap the high repute,
Which he, through hazard huge, must earn. But they
Dreaded not more the adventure than his voice
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose.
Their rising all at once was as the sound

457. Intend, much the same as attend to.
464. Coasts, used now of the sea line, but in Milton's day more generally in the meaning country. There is nothing in the origin of the word to make the expression "sea-coast" tautological.
470. Erst, at first.
472, 473. Note the distinction between winning and earning.
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone; and as a god
Extoll him equal to the Highest in Heaven:
Nor failed they to express how much they praised
That for the general safety he despised
His own: for neither do the spirits damned
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
Or close ambition varnished o’er with zeal.

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief:
As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the north wind sleeps, o’erspread
Heaven’s cheerful face, the lowering element
Scowls o’er the darken’d landscape snow or shower;
If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

O shame to men! Devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds; men only disagree
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace, and, God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night for his destruction wait.

The Stygian council thus dissolved; and forth
In order came the grand infernal Peers:

496–505. This reflection of Milton’s may have been called forth by
the impossibility of the Puritan leaders coming to any good under-
standing after the death of Cromwell. He may have felt that had
they shown a firm united front, the Restoration would
have come.

507. See i. 618.
Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seemed
Alone the antagonist of Heaven, nor less
Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp supreme,
And god-like imitated state; him round
A globe of fiery Seraphim enclosed,
With bright imblazonry, and horrent arms.
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpets' regal sound the great result.
Towards the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,
By herald's voice explained; the hollow Abyss
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim.

Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised
By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd powers
Disband, and wandering each his several way
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest find
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours, till his great chief return.
Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing, or in swift race contend,
As at the Olympian games, or Pythian fields;

508. **Paramount.** Lord Paramount was a legal term meaning
supreme lord. The adjective—it was originally an adverbial phrase
—is here used as a noun.

509. **Alone the antagonist of Heaven;** seemed in himself alone to
be a sufficient antagonist for God.

511. **Imitated state;** imitated from the state of Heaven.


517. **Alchymy.** A mixed metal imitating gold, much used for
making trumpets. The word is not in common use after the seven-
teenth century.

518. **By herald's voice explained.** After the trumpets the heralds
proclaimed the results of the conclave.

530. **Olympian games,** the greatest of the national games, which
were so much of a help to Greek unity.

**Pythian fields.** The Pythian games were also national, but of less
fame.
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form:
As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
To battle in the clouds; before each van
Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears,
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
From either end of Heaven the welkin burns.
Others, with vast Typhœan rage, more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar.
As when Alcides, from Æchalia crowned
With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
And Lichas from the top of Æta threw
Into the Euboeic sea. Others more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
By doom of battle; and complain that fate
Free virtue should enthral to force or chance.
Their song was partial; but the harmony
(What could it less, when spirits immortal sing?)
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment

532. Fronted brigads. Brigads is a specific word (see i. 675) used with a general meaning; fronted, presumably, means drawn up in line.
538. Weikin, the heavens, the region of clouds.
539. Typhœan. Typhœus was one of the Titans. See i. 198.
542. Alcides. Hercules, the grandson of Alcaeus, died of a poisoned robe sent him on his marriage in Æchalia, by a former wife, who was ignorant of the mischief she was doing. In his agony he seized Lichas, who had brought the robe, and hurled him into the Eubœan sea. The common version represents him as ascending Mount Æta afterwards, and there mounting his funeral pyre.
551. It may not be superfluous to point out that free virtue is the object of enthral.
552. Partial, inclined too much to their own side.
554. Suspended, caused a stop, a silence.
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
(For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense),
Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate—
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute—
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame—
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!
Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
Pain for a while, or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope, or arm the obdurèd breast
With stubborn patience, as with triple steel.
Another part, in squadrons and gross bands,
On bold adventure to discover wide
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
Might yield them easier habitation, bend
Four ways their flying march, along the banks
Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams:
Abhorrello Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegeton,
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,

555-565. Milton would seem to have little respect for such discussions, if we could judge from this passage. Yet he inserted in his poem discussions on the same and kindred topics, e.g., iii. 92-343, which have generally been regarded as blemishes.

568. Obdured, hardened; obdurate.

575. Four infernal rivers. These four rivers, with their characteristics, come from classical mythology. Cf., e.g., Ovid, Metam. xiv., or Virgil, AEn. vi.

580. Rueful, the word was stronger than to-day.

Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth; whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
Beyond this flood a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,
A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,
Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air
Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire.
Thither, by harpy-footed Furies hailed,
At certain revolutions, all the damned
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,

584. Labyrinth. Lethe is compared with Phlegethon, the last mentioned of the four infernal rivers. That was a torrent, but Lethe wound slowly here and there, through country so level that the stream split up into numberless branches continually intertwisting with each other.

587. The idea that Hell contained the extreme of cold as well as of heat, was not uncommon in the Middle Ages, whence it comes to its finest presentation in Dante. Inferno, canto xxxii.

589. Dire hail; "dirae grandinis." Horace, Od. I. ii. 1.

592. Serbonian bog. Lake Serbonis, in northeast Egypt, mentioned by Herodotus, but now dried up.

593. Damiata; Damietta, on one of the mouths of the Nile.

Mount Casius; on the Egyptian coast. Diodorus Siculus (xx. 74, 2, 3) mentions the dangers to armies trying to land or anchor there.

595. Frore, frozen.

596. Harpy-footed Furies. The Furies of the Greek mythology were fearful beings in the shape of women, who executed on mankind the punishments due their crimes. Orestes, for instance, was pursued by Furies for having killed his mother. The Harpies were filthy creatures, with bodies of women, but wings and legs of birds. As a rule the two were not confounded.

597. At certain revolutions. At times which came around at certain fixed periods.
From beds of raging fire, to starve in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
Immovable, infixed, and frozen round,
Periods of time; thence hurried back to fire.
They ferry over this Lethean sound
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
All in one moment, and so near the brink.
But fate withstands, and, to oppose the attempt,
Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
In confused march forlorn, the adventurous bands,
With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast,
Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
They passed, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery alp,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death,
A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good;
Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds

600. *Starve.* The word originally meant merely *to die*, as the German *sterben* at present. In some English dialects it means "to die of cold"; to *clam* is the word for to die of hunger.

610. Milton stops an instant for the moral: the damned cannot forget.

611. *Medusa* was one of the Gorgons, whose look turned to stone those on whom it fell.

614. *Tantalus* was punished in Hades, by standing up to his neck in water, which, as he stooped to drink, receded, and under fruit-trees which, when he reached for fruit, drew back.

620. *Alp* is not often used in the singular with the meaning of *mountain.*
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned, or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.

Meanwhile, the adversary of God and man,
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,
Puts on swift wings, and towards the gates of Hell
Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
He scoursthe right-hand coast, sometimes the left;
Now shaves with level wing the deep; then soars
Up to the fiery concave, towering high.
As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they, on the trading flood,
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seemed
Far off the flying fiend. At last appear
Hell bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable shape.
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair;

625. Perverse, perverted.
628. For Gorgons see l. 611 above. The Hydra was a fearful water-
snake slain by Hercules. The Chimera was a formless monster
attacked and killed by Bellerophon.
636. This is a famous passage. See Introd., pp. xlv.—xlvii.
638. Bengala, an old form for Bengal. This was in the early days
of the East India Company.
639. Ternate and Tidore are two of the Moluccas or Spice Islands.
641. The wide Ethiopian, now called the Indian Ocean.
The Cape of Good Hope, discovered long before, was at just about
this time (1651) settled by the Dutch.
647. Impaled, paled (or fenced) about.
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,  
Voluminous and vast; a serpent armed  
With mortal sting. About her middle round  
A cry of hell-hounds never-ceasing barked,  
With wide Cerberean mouths, full loud, and rung  
A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep,  
If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,  
And kennel there; yet there still barked and howled  
Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these  
Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts  
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;  
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called  
In secret, riding through the air she comes,  
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance  
With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon  
Eclipses at their charms. The other shape—  
If shape it might be called that, shape had none  
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;  
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,  
For each seemed either—black it stood as Night,  
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,  
And shook a dreadful dart; what seemed his head  
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.  
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat  
The monster moving onward came as fast  
With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode.

655. Cerberae. Cerberus was the three-headed dog which guarded the classical Hades. The appearance of Sin is borrowed from the form of Scylla.

660. Scylla, a maiden of Sicily who, through the rage of Circe, was changed while bathing, as here related, into a hideous being girt about with dogs, and subsequently into a great rock. Scylla and Charybdis stood over against each other in the passage between Italy and Sicily—cf. ll. 1019, 1020 and also the Odyssey, Book xii., and the Æneid, Book iii.

661. Calabria is the toe of the Italian boot. Trinacria is three-cornered Sicily.

666-673. A famous description.
The undaunted fiend what this might be admired;—
Admired, not feared; God and his Son except,
Created thing nought valued he, nor shunned;
And, with disdainful look, thus first began:

"Whence, and what art thou, execrable Shape!
That darest, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated front athwart my way
To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass—
That be assured—without leave asked of thee:
Retire, or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
Hell-born, not to contend with spirits of Heaven."

To whom the goblin, full of wrath, replied:

"Art thou that traitor Angel, art thou he
Who first broke peace in heaven, and faith, till then
Unbroken; and in proud, rebellious arms
Drew after him the third part of Heaven's sons,
Conjured against the Highest; for which both thou
And they, outcast from God, are here condemned
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?

And reckonest thou thyself with spirits of Heaven,
Hell-doomed! and breathest defiance here and scorn,
Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive! and to thy speed add wings,
Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart
Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before."

So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,
So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold

677. Admired, wondered, as in i. 690 and, generally, in Paradise Lost.
688. Goblin. We associate with the word the idea of smallness and quaintness, but evidently no such meaning was in Milton’s mind.
689. Death is at first a loyal servant and very stern with the traitor angel. He afterwards changes his note decidedly.
693. Conjured, conspired; literally, swore together.
More dreadful and deform. On the other side,
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Levelled his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend; and such a frown
Each cast at the other, as when two black clouds,
With Heaven’s artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian, then stand front to front,
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid air:
So frowned the mighty combatants, that Hell
Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds
Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
Had not the snaky sorceress, that sat
Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key,
Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.

“O father! what intends thy hand,” she cried,
“Against thy only son? What fury, O son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
Against thy father’s head? and knowest for whom?
For Him who sits above, and laughs the while
At thee, ordained his drudge, to execute
Whate’er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids;
His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both!”

She spake, and at her words the hellish pest

707. *Incensed*, in its literal meaning of *ablaze, on fire.*
709. *Ophiuchus*, a constellation in the northern heaven.
716. *Caspian*; a case of Milton’s use of geographical names. See
Introd., p. xlvii.
721. *Like*, likely.
735. *Pest*. Like a plague, a destroyer, something that snatches
people from life.
Forbore; then these to her Satan returned:

"So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand
Prevented spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends, till first I know of thee,
What thing thou art, thus double-formed; and why,
In this infernal vale first met, thou callest
Me father, and that phantasm callest my son.
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
Sight more detestable than him and thee."

To whom thus the portress of Hell-gate replied:

"Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem
Now in thy eye so foul? once deemed so fair
In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight
Of all the Seraphim with thee combined
In bold conspiracy against Heaven's King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth till on the left side opening wide,
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,
Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized
All the host of Heaven; back they recoiled, afraid
At first, and called me Sin, and for a sign
Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,
I pleased, and with attractive graces won
The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing
Becamest enamoured, and such joy thou tookest

746–813. The description, more or less allegorical, of Sin and Death is based upon the verse of the epistle of James i. 15, "Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." When Milton puts Satan for lust, he thinks of him as representing unbridled Desire unchecked by a love of Right. So he regarded the perfect Liberty as the opposite of Sin, i.e., freedom to carry out the law of Righteousness.
With me in secret, that my womb conceived
A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,
And fields were fought in Heaven; wherein remained
(For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe
Clear victory, to our part loss and rout
Through all the empyréan. Down they fell
Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down
Into this deep; and in the general fall
I also; at which time this powerful key
Into my hand was given, with charge to keep
These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
Without my opening. Pensive here I sat
Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb,
Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.
At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
Tore through my entrails, that with fear and pain
Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
Transformed; but he my inbred enemy
Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart
Made to destroy: I fled, and cried out "Death!"
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed
From all her caves, and back resounded "Death!"
I fled; but he pursued (though more, it seems,
Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter far,
Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,
And in embraces forcible and foul
Ingathering with me, of that rape begot
These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
Surround me, as thou sawest, hourly conceived
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me; for when they list, into the womb
That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw
My bowels, their repast; then bursting forth

777. Pensive, thoughtful.
Afresh with conscious terrors vex me round,
That rest or intermission none I find.
Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,
And me his parent would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involved, and knows that I
Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
Whenever that shall be; so Fate pronounced.
But thou, O Father, I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint,
Save he who reigns above, none can resist."

She finished; and the subtle Fiend his lore
Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered smooth:
“Dear daughter! Since thou claimest me for thy sire,
And my fair son here shewest me, the dear pledge
Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and joys
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
Befallen us, unforeseen, unthought of; know,
I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of pain
Both him and thee, and all the heavenly host
Of spirits, that, in our just pretences armed,
Fell with us from on high. From them I go
This uncouth errand sole; and, one for all,
Myself expose with lonely steps to tread
The unfounded deep, and through the void immense
To search with wandering quest a place foretold

803. In opposition, over against.
808. Bane, destruction, death.
813. Dint, blow.
825. Just pretences. Pretence had not then, as now, the necessity of emptiness, falseness. It meant merely a claim, or a dere.
829. Unfounded, without foundation.
Should be, and, by concurring signs, ere now
Created, vast and round, a place of bliss
In the purlieus of Heaven, and therein placed
A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room; though more removed,
Lest Heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,
Might hap to move new broils. Be this or aught
Than this more secret now designed, I haste
To know; and, this once known, shall soon return,
And bring ye to the place where thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom air, embalmed
With odours: there ye shall be fed and filled
Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey."

He ceased, for both seemed highly pleased; and Death
Grinned horrible a ghastly smile to hear
His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw
Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced
His mother bad, and thus bespeak her sire:

The key of this infernal pit by due,
And by command of Heaven’s all-powerful King,
I keep; by him forbidden to unlock
These adamantine gates; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o’ermatched by living wight.

But what owe I to his commands above
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office here confined,
Inhabitant of Heaven, and heavenly-born;
Here, in perpetual agony and pain,

833. Purlieus. The places round about a royal domain were called purlieus. Here, however, the word means only near by.
840. How his prophecy is carried out may be seen in ii. 1024–1030 and x. 229–324.
850. By due, as due to me, as my right.
858. Tartarus, the classic name for Hell.
With terrors and with clamours compassed round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
My being gavest me; whom should I obey
But thee? whom follow? thou wilt bring me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.”

Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
And, toward the gate rolling her bestial train,
Forthwith the huge portcullis high up-drew,
Which, but herself, not all the Stygian powers
Could once have moved; then in the key-hole turns
The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron, or solid rock, with ease
Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She opened, but to shut
Exceded her power; the gates wide open stood,
That with extended wings a bannered host,
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through
With horse and chariots ranked in loose array;
So wide they stood, and, like a furnace-mouth,
Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.

Before their eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary Deep, a dark

875. *Stygian powers.* *Stygian* used as *Tartarean.*

880. *Erebus.* The name is from Greek mythology, in which it stands for the mysterious darkness under the Earth, born of Chaos.

891. We now come to the Deep so often mentioned already. Milton borrowed the word from the Bible, where it is the synonym of Chaos, *Gen.* i. 2. In *Paradise Lost* the place is called “the Deep;” Chaos is a personage, ii. 895.
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension; where length, breadth, and highth,
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring.
Their embryo atoms; they around the flag
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands
Of Barca, or Cyrene's torrid soil,
Levied to side with warring winds, and poise
Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere
He rules a moment: Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray
By which he reigns; next him high arbiter
Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss,
The womb of Nature and perhaps her grave,
Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds—
Into this wild abyss the wary Fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,
Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed
With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
Great things with small), than when Bellona storms,
With all her battering engines, bent to rase

895. *Ancestors of Nature*, for the world had been formed from
Chaos. *Cf.* ii. 911, "the womb of Nature."
904. *Barca, Cyrene*, cities of northern Africa.
Some capital city; or less than if this frame
Of Heaven were falling, and these elements
In mutiny had from her axle torn
The steadfast earth. At last his sail-broad vans
He spreads for flight, and, in the surging smoke
Upright, spurns the ground; thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides
Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets
A vast vacuity. All unawares,
Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb down he drops
Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour
Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,
The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
As many miles aloft. That fury stayed,
Quenched in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,
Nor good dry land, nigh foundered on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half-flying; behoves him now both oar and sail.
As when a gryphon, through the wilderness
With winged course, e’er hill or moory dale
Pursues the Arimaspian, who by stealth
Had from his wakeful custody purloined
The guarded gold; so eagerly the fiend
O’er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.

927. Vans, i.e., fans, here used for wings. The sails of the windmill are still sometimes called vans.
939. Syrtis, a gulf; in fact, there were two places of this name in northern Africa, famous for quicksands.
942. Behoves him, he needs.
943. The gryphon was a mythical creature whom the Arimaspi wronged as in the text. The legend is Greek (Herod. iii. 116), but does not exactly belong to Greek mythology. The Arimaspi were vaguely held to live in the north of Europe; i.e., beyond the parts known to the ancients.
At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds and voices all confused,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies,
Undaunted, to meet there whatever power
Or spirit of the nethermost abyss
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne
Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful Deep. With him enthroned
Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon; Rumour next and Chance,
And Tumult and Confusion all embroiled,
And Discord with a thousand various mouths.

To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: "Ye Powers,
And Spirits of this nethermost abyss,
Chaos and ancient Night! I come no spy,
With purpose to explore or to disturb
The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint
Wandering this darksome desert, as my way
Lies through your spacious empire up to light,
Alone, and without guide, half lost, I seek
What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds

954. *Plies*; to *ply* means "to pursue steadily" as in "he plies his trade," or "to labor at," as "he plies the oar." Here the meaning would seem a combination of the two.

956. *Nethermost*, lowest.

964. *Orcus and Ades* (more commonly *Hades*) are names for the God of the Underworld in the classic mythology, the former Latin, the latter Greek. Both names were used for the place as well as its ruler.

965. *Demogorgon*, a vague and terrible being represented by poets and others, fated to be the conqueror of Jove. The ancients avoided even the mention of his name.
Confine with Heaven; or if some other place,
From your dominion won, the ethereal King
Possesses lately, thither to arrive
I travel this profound. Direct my course.
Directed, no mean recompense it brings
To your behoof, if I that region lost,
All usurpation thence expelled, reduce
To her original darkness and your sway,
(Which is my present journey), and once more
Erect the standard there of ancient Night,
Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge!"

Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,
With faltering speech and visage incomposed,
Answered: "I know thee, stranger, who thou art;
That mighty leading angel, who of late
Made head against Heaven's King, though overthrown.
I saw, and heard; for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frightened Deep,
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded; and Heaven-gates
Poured out by millions her victorious bands
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve
That little which is left so to defend,
Encroached on still through your intestine broils,
Weakening the sceptre of old Night. First Hell,
Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
Now lately Heaven and Earth, another world,
Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden chain

977. Confine, are bounded by. The verb in this sense is obsolete; we still have the noun in the plural. Cf. march, marches.

988. Anarch. The word, coined or borrowed by Milton, is used like Monarch, tetrarch. A ruler over a State whose constitution is such that rule is impossible, is not an easy conception to realize. But the word brings up a strong sentiment.

1002. Hell and the Universe had been successively separated out of the Kingdom of Chaos. See Introd., p. xxvi.-xxxix.
To that side Heaven from whence your legions fell.
If that way be your walk, you have not far;
So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed!
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."

He ceased; and Satan stayed not to reply,
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity, and force renewed,
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,
Into the wild expanse; and, through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environed, wins his way: harder beset,
And more endangered, than when Argo passed
Through Bosporus, betwixt the justling rocks;
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
Charybdis, and by the other whirlpool steered.
So he with difficulty and labour hard
Moved on: with difficulty and labour he;
But, he once past, soon after, when man fell,
Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain
Following his track,—such was the will of Heaven,—
Paved after him a broad and beaten way
Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling gulf
Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,
From Hell continued, reaching the utmost orb
Of this frail world; by which the spirits perverse
With easy intercourse, pass to and fro

1017. Argo, the ship wherein Jason and the heroes sailed in quest of the Golden Fleece. The story was one of the famous and favourite tales of antiquity. Sailing from Larissa in Greece to Colchis at the eastern end of the Black Sea, they passed through the Bosphorus.

1019. The passage of Ulysses between Scylla and Charybdis (Odyssey, xii.) was imitated by Virgil in his account of the voyage of Æneas (Æneid, iii.). The other whirlpool was beneath the rock Scylla.

1024. Compare ii. 840, but especially x. 229-234, where is related in detail how the bridge or "causey" was built.

To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good angels guard by special grace.

But now at last the sacred influence
Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven
Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins
Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire,
As from her utmost works, a broken foe,
With tumult less, and with less hostile din;
That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light;
And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;
Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorned
Of living sapphire, once his native seat;
And fast, by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent world, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accursed, and in a cursèd hour, he hies.

1034. The sacred influence of light. The words are singularly apt
after so much fiery gloom and dark turbulence.
1049. Opal towers. Perhaps a far-away recollection of the de-
scription of the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxii. 10-21.
1052. This pendent world. Not the Earth, but the whole uni-
verse as described in the Introd., p. xxxvii. In bigness as a star
. . . close by the moon; i.e., it looked very small in the im-
mensity of Chaos.
ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR MORE
DETAILED STUDY

In studying a poem, or anything else for that matter, we want
to appreciate it as a whole, and also to understand each separate
part. Of these two necessities the first would probably be reck-
oned of the greater importance. But it happens with most poems
that we cannot gain the first point without having passed the
second: that is, the best appreciation of the poem as a whole
comes from the understanding of each separate part; so the
second point is of the first importance. Really, the two things
are so dependent on each other, that it is not wise to say that one
is more important than the other. We could not well get along
without either.

For the best appreciation of Paradise Lost, one must have much
minute understanding of minor things. Not that this minute
understanding is the best appreciation; but it is a necessary
factor in it.

These notes are for the purpose of directing such particular
and minute study as will result in a better appreciation of the
whole. They concern a number of small points; each one of
them, by itself, may seem insignificant and uninteresting; all
together they will form a background of half-conscious recollec-
tion, that will be both interesting and significant.

BOOK I.

It is a thing of importance to know the subject-matter thor-
oughly. In reading a piece of narrative poetry that is not short
and simple, it is useful to make a careful analysis, or to compare
such an analysis with the poem. Without some such work, one
is likely to slip from part to part, without a good idea of the
relation of one thing to another, or sometimes without an appre-
ciation of the real character of what one is at the moment read-
ing. The danger of such work is that one may get the idea that
it is in itself a thing of importance. We must always remember that its only value is as a help to a good understanding and appreciation of the poem itself.

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK.

I. Introductory lines.
   1. Invocation. 1–16, 17–26, proposing the whole subject, the Fall and Redemption of Man.
   2. The prime cause of his fall touched, 27–49.

II. The Narrative. With 50 "the poem hastens into the midst of things."

1. Satan arouses himself after his fall.
   Satan on the burning lake, 50–83.
   Satan to Beëlzebub, 84–124.
   Answer of Beëlzebub, 128–155.
   Satan moves ashore, 192–241.
   Speech of Satan, 242–270.
   Answer of Beëlzebub, 271–282.

2. He musters his powers.
   Satan calls the Fallen Angels, 283–330.
   They also rise from the lake, 331–375.
   Enumeration of their chiefs, 375–521.
   a. The Gods who tempted Israel.
      Moloch, 392–405.
      Chemos, 406–418.
      Diverse male and female, 419–437.
      Astoreth, 437–446.
      Thammuz, 446–457.
      Dagon, 457–466.
      Rimmon, 467–476.
      Belial, 490–505.
      The muster of the Fallen Angels, 522–567.

3. He summons his followers to consult.
   Satan reviews his host, 567–621.
   He addresses them, 622–662.
   The building of Pandemonium, 663–751.
   The coming to the council, 752–798.
The Argument.

The prime cause, the first cause.
Not in the centre; i.e., of the earth, according to the common notion embodied in such phrases as "He descended into Hell." The Hell of Paradise Lost was elsewhere. See the Introduction, p. xxxvii.

Not yet made. Elsewhere it would appear that it had been made though not accursed. Milton means by heaven and earth the universe. Now from the account of the Creation in Book vii. it would seem (see ll. 130-173) that the purpose of the Creation is announced as the Son returns from casting Lucifer out of Heaven. He proceeds at once to do the Father's will, and the Six Days of Creation follow. But the poem begins on the eighteenth day after Satan had been cast out, for he fell nine days, and lay nine days on the fiery lake. So when Satan (i. 651) and Beelzebub (ii. 348) speak of the World, they speak of what had for some time been in existence.

Of their miserable fall. The words on and of, in the sense of concerning, were used well-nigh interchangeably.
To be created. As above, really created already.

The Text.

1. Fruit. Only in one passage of Paradise Lost (x. 483) does Milton speak of the fruit as an apple, and then in the contemptuous account given by Satan on his return to Pandemonium. In Paradise Regained (ii. 349), however, he speaks of it himself, as "that crude apple that diverted Eve." Many other writers from Cædmon down speak of the apple, and of course the popular tradition is very old. In older English, however, the word "apple" was often used with the general meaning "fruit."

3. Death into the world. Namely, by the introduction of sin. "Therefore, as through one man, sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (Rom. v. 12, and see also James i. 15). The idea is presented in the poem in two-fold wise; first in allegory, and then, as we may say, actually. The allegorical or symbolical representation we have in ii. 648-883. Sin, born of Satan, representing unbridled desire, conceives and brings forth Death, and these two creatures follow Satan to the earth, making
as they go a perpetual pathway from Hell to the Universe (ii. 1024). But also we have Death threatened by the Almighty as a punishment of disobedience (v. 542-546), and afterward we have the Sin of Adam and Eve in disobeying the command of God, and the anticipation of Death (x. 814.) That Milton was aware of the inconsistency, if such it be, is obvious from x. 585:

"Meanwhile in Paradise the Hellish pair
Too soon arrived—Sin, there in power before
Once actual, now in body, and to dwell
Habitus habitant; behind her Death,
Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horse."

One greater man. "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous" (Rom. v. 19, and see also 1 Cor. xv. 22).

6. Note the accent on the first syllable instead of on the second as usual. The more unusual the inversion of accent, the more marked or emphatic the word on which the accent falls. This particular inversion is common; still it serves for slight emphasis on the word Sing. So in l. 10 Rose; in l. 21 Dove-like; in l. 87 Myriads; in l. 197, Prone, and in many other places.

Secret. Bentley, who made a good many emendations to Paradise Lost to correct supposed misprints, changed this word to sacred. The change may seem at first to be to the point, and yet the difference, though slight, does much to give an idea of the real Miltonic quality. The expression "sacred top" is on the whole conventional; if it suggest anything, it is merely the idea "holy." "Secret," however, may not at once give any meaning at all; but on a moment's thought we begin to see that it implies all the remoteness, mysteriousness, and awfulness, perhaps even sacredness too, of the great mountain where Moses went apart from the people to talk with God. And when once established in meaning, the word becomes one of those truly poetical words, which by themselves do much to create an emotional atmosphere.

9. Heavens. In our ordinary sense; not the abode of God and the angels, which is usually called, not the Heavens, but Heaven or the Heaven of Heavens. (With perhaps one or two exceptions, e.g., vi. 567.)
10–12. Sion's hill and Siloa's brook were probably mentioned by Milton with a recollection of Mount Helicon, the abode of the classical Muses, and the spring Aganippe. Compare the lines in the beginning of Book iii.

"Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Sweet with the love of sacred song; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,
That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit." (iii. 26–32.)

12. Thence. The word must be emphasized, for otherwise the parenthetic "or if Sion hill," etc., will not seem to have any connection with what has gone before.

14. No middle flight . . . above the Aonian mount. That is to say, his theme, at least, was to be far higher than those of the great Greek poets. With the same idea in ll. 515–517, he speaks of the gods of Greece, who

"On the snowy top
Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,
Their highest Heaven."

The Heaven which Milton conceived was far higher.

16. In prose or rhyme. It is possible that Milton meant to indicate here that Paradise Lost was itself in form neither prose nor rhyme, for blank verse is neither one nor the other. Look on p. lviii. for Milton's opinion of rhyme, and you will see why it was that he thought blank verse to be the form best suited to so high a theme as his.

17. And chiefly thou, O Spirit. Turn to the Invocation of Paradise Regained, as quoted in Appendix, A 5, and the quotation on p. xi. The earnest, devoted way in which Milton regarded his vocation as poet, almost as a divine calling, is manifest in many parts of his work.

21. Brooding is said to be a more exact rendering of the Hebrew in Gen. i. 2, than the word moved in the King James version of the Bible.

28. Raise. The inversion of accent makes the word emphatic. Inversion in the third or fourth foot is not so common as in the
first, and so gives more emphasis. It is more common, however, than in the second or fifth foot.

26. Pope in the Essay on Man assumes the same high purpose, using in fact the same verse with a slight variation:

"Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,
But justify the ways of God to Man." (Essay on Man, i. 16.)

28. The scansion of this line is worth noting. The first two accents, instead of coming on the second and fourth syllables, come on the third and fourth, giving rather a peculiar effect. So l. 55:

"Both of lost happiness and lasting pain."

This grouping of accented syllables gives a considerable addition of emphasis, which in this case and in l. 55 gives a good effect.

29. Grand parents, our ancestors; with something of the idea of the compound word.

38. Aspiring. The extra syllable on the end of the line is to be read rapidly, as if it came in the middle.

40. Look at Isaiah xiv. 13.

48. Chains. The word is probably used loosely for "imprisonment," "confinement," and so probably in l. 210. Absolute chains were among the possibilities of additional punishment; see ii. 183.

50. With Satan on the burning lake the poem begins, and it is worth while to consider why it should begin just here. In the Introduction will be found an account of the events of the poem in chronological order, from which it will be seen that in point of time the events of Book v., from l. 577 to the end, and of Books vi., vii., viii., all precede the opening of the poem. Why did Milton choose just this moment for beginning? Or in other words, the action of the poem stretches over more than thirty-two days: why does Milton begin on the twenty-second day?

In part the reason is that which led Homer to begin in the ninth year of the siege. But this particular point of time is suitable for several reasons. In the first place, it fixes the interest of the reader, though not his sympathy, on Satan, who is the chief actor in the poem, although not the hero. Then it enables Milton to narrate very easily the twofold line of events following the
casting out of Satan,—the Creation, in Books vii., viii., and the plot of Satan and his flight to the earth, in Books i., ii. The account of the strife in Heaven is rather the weakest part of the poem. Milton may have felt the subject to be the most difficult to deal with, and so thought it best not to begin with it. And, lastly, the defeat of Satan is now placed, in the narration of Raphael, where it serves as a warning to Adam.

55. Pain means actual physical pain. When Satan in the battle in Heaven is cut down by Michael, Milton says

"Then Satan first knew pain." (vi. 327.)

And in this book, 125, 147, 336, he insists upon the capacity of the fallen angels for suffering.

61. Cf. 64, 74. These three lines are cases where there are really only four accented syllables. In reading we cannot really emphasize the last syllable of horrible, for instance, or certainly not in any marked way. But the mind, accustomed to the rhythm, hears the unaccented syllable as though it were accented.

63. Darkness visible. It is best not to tamper with this phrase by way of explanation. One must feel its power or let it go. I cannot think Mr. Verity is right in saying "the gloom which half conceals and half reveals objects."

70. Had prepared. As to the time of the creation of Hell, see the note to the argument of Book i.

79. Next himself in power. In Raphael's account of Satan's rebellion, it is Beelzebub to whom Lucifer first confides his plan, it is he who, at his order, collects a third part of the angels and carries them off into rebellion. In Matt. x. 24, Beelzebub is called "The prince of the devils."

82. Thence, therefore.

Satan. The Hebrew word for opposer or adversary has, in the Book of Job, where most of us recollect it, a meaning somewhat different from what would be in keeping here. In Job, Satan is that one of "the sons of God" who opposes the pretensions of man to self-righteousness, and although he displays rather too keen a zeal in opposing Job, he is by no means a fallen angel, or one who is doing other than the behests of God. In Paradise Lost, however, Satan is the adversary in a very different sense, as appears from the use of the term in one or two places, e. g., ii. 629. Question has arisen as to Satan's former name.
For us the question is merely one of curious speculation, except in so far as it determines whether Milton conceived of Lucifer as that former name. The word means "Light-bearer," and would be eminently appropriate to one of the chief of Angels. Probably, however, Milton did not so regard it; in vii. 131, Raphael tells Adam that he is now to be called Lucifer, and the other passages where the name is used refer to Satan after his rebellion. It may be added that Satan was one of the seven Archangels (v. 660), and would in all probability have been thought of under a name similar to theirs. We hear of Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, meaning respectively the Sword, the Man, the Health, the Light of God; one would expect that Satan's name would have been of like nature, that he too would have represented one of the attributes of the Most High. So it seems best to give up Satan's heavenly name; let it be with the name of Achilles while he was among the maidens. Milton tells us that the names of the rebellious angels were "raised from the Books of Life" (ii. 363).

84. Addison, who was a great admirer of Paradise Lost, makes especial allusion to this speech in his criticisms in the Spectator. "The thoughts in the first Speech and Description of Satan, who is one of the principal actors in this Poem, are wonderfully proper to give us a full idea of him. His Pride, Envy and Revenge, Obstinance, Despair and Impenitence, are all of them very artfully interwoven. In short, his first speech is a complication of all those Passions which discover themselves separately in several other of his speeches in the Poem." Spec., No. 303. It hardly seems, however, that Satan here displays all the qualities he afterward possesses. Compare Introd., p. xxxii.

97. Changed in outward lustré. The angels could assume any form at will; yet each had a form peculiarly his own. The individual aspect of Satan had sadly changed since his fall although it had not yet "lost all her original brightness" (l. 591). See Introd., p. xxix.

102. The line has an extra syllable at the end.

110. That glory. Apparently the glory of forcing Satan to submit or yield.

116. By fate. Satan would seem to recognize fate as the only omnipotent power.

124. Another four-stressed line.

128. Thronèd powers. Throne and Power were angelic titles,
although here used loosely, as Seraphim in the next line. See Introd., p. xxxiii.

139. **Remains.** Singular, for *mind and spirit* together constitute a singular subject.

159. The gathering of accent on the third and fourth syllables gives the words *aught good* additional force.

167. **If I fail not.** As in his first rebellion, Satan has a plan in mind, to which he must bring his followers to agree. So in this case also, Beelzebub serves as his instrument of persuasion.

170. This line is noted by Mr. Bridges (*Milton's Prosody*, p. 19) as having but three real accents: *cf.* ll. 306, 329.

176. **His** = *its*, as often in Shakespeare and contemporary writers. *His* is the older possessive both for *he* and *it*. *Its* is modern; it was, indeed, just coming into use at this time. See l. 254.

182. **Livid.** The word originally meant black and blue, ghastly, or something like it, and was applied to the color of the face. It was then applied to anything giving such a light that the face seemed livid.

197. **Fables.** Milton usually speaks of the mythology of the classics as fabulous.

210. Compare the note on l. 48.

215. **Heap on himself damnation.** We miss one of the most important things about *Paradise Lost*, if we do not see that it has for a subject not only the Fall of Man, but the Fall of Satan, and not merely his first fall from heaven, but his constant degradation lower and lower, until the absolute wreck of his physical beauty was a true index to the utter evil of his character.

225. **The dusky air.** Compare l. 63, the “‘darkness visible,’” which “served only to discover sights of woe.”

228. **That burned with solid...fire.** Cf. “to burn always with this hard gem-like flame.” Walter Pater: *The Renaissance*, 250.

242. **Clim.** This word, like *seat* (l. 243) or *fields* (l. 249) or *vaile* (l. 321), is used loosely for place. Such a use of absolutely general terms instead of specific, concrete expressions is not in itself poetic. Milton’s poetry has, however, other poetic elements, so that this really prosaic usage serves a good purpose in tempering what might otherwise be a heaping together of too effective material. In other words, the attempt always to find specific expressions, full of meaning and suggestion, would have
interfered with the grand, magnificent, and therefore somewhat vague and indefinite tone of *Paradise Lost*.

253. The reversal of accent in the second foot gives especial emphasis to not.

254. *Its*. One of the few cases in Milton's poetry where the pronoun occurs. Dr. Bradshaw, in his concordance, notes three cases. The form was only just coming into use, displacing *his* (l. 176) and *her* (l. 592).

255. Satan has here reached a point in thought which the world has not yet passed. He sees that in spite of the actuality and the pain of the real fire and torment in which he is, the true Hell is inward. In a later book we come to a fuller expression of the idea (cf. p. xxxviii.):

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"Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven."  (iv. 73–78.)
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263. We get here Satan's real ambition. Afterward, in his speech to his followers, he finds it convenient to dissemble.

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"Who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
Your bulwark?"  (ii. 26.)
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288. *Optic glass*. Mr. Verity remarks that the expression is not uncommon for the telescope, and quotes Giles Fletcher, *Christ's Victory on Earth*, 60, "all her optique glasses shattered," and Henry More, *Song of the Soul*, "The opticke glass has shown to sight the dissolution of the starrie clouds." Milton thought naturally of Galileo (with whose name the telescope was commonly associated), for he had visited him in Florence on his Italian journey. Hence came the reminiscence of Fiesole and Valdarno, and the figure a little below of the autumnal leaves of Vallombrosa.

291. *Spotty globe*. The effect is very marked in a photograph of the moon, although Milton's idea, of course, did not come by this means.
293. Norway was then as now a great place for firs and pines, and exported many masts.

302. The brooks of Vallombrosa. The name Vallombrosa (the shady vale) is given not only to the valley, but to the hill rising from it, which is said to have many streams. The leaves fall from the chestnut and beech trees in such profusion as often to choke up the brooks in their course.

309. The sojourners of Goshen who beheld. See p. liii.

317. Astonishment, with the sense rather of being astounded or stunned than of being astonished, in our sense of the word.

326. Discern the advantage. Satan always keeps up the fiction that he and his horde are in some degree real antagonists of the Almighty.

335. Nor did they not. A somewhat stately way of putting the matter; a recollection of the Latin.

338. The figure, drawn from the last plague of Egypt, is appropriate to the tone of the poem. It may have come to Milton's mind from the allusion to the passage of the Red Sea immediately before.

341. Warping. To warp a ship is to get her forward by means of warps or hawsers. Milton may have had the process in mind, or he may merely have meant to indicate a twisting and turning line of flight.

345. Cope of Hell. The conception of Hell would seem to have been much like that of the earth some time since, a flat plain and over it

"This inverted bowl we call the sky,"

as Omar Khayyam says. Only in the case of Hell, the earth and the sky which separated it from the Abyss were both fire. Hence the upper and nether fires.

351. Mr. Verity calls attention to the appropriate character of the similes: floating on the fiery lake the fallen angels are compared to leaves in the brook and seaweed in the sea (ll. 302–306); rising in the air they are like the swarms of locusts (ll. 338–343); once on solid ground they are like the innumerable hordes of barbarians (ll. 351–355).

361. Though of their names. It would then seem as though their names in Heaven were lost and Satan's among them. See note on l. 82.
363. *Books of Life.* The common term now is Book of Life, and it may be that this plural is a mistake of the copyist.

371. The tendency to conceive of gods in animal form was strong among the Egyptians (see l. 481), whence the idea of the Golden Calf. And so also among the deities of the peoples surrounding the Israelites,—Dagon had a fish’s tail, Moloch a calf’s head, 329 ff. The *Hymn on the Nativity*, written by Milton long before, presents to us these same deities, now preparing to begin their reign on earth, put to flight and scattered at the birth of Christ:

**XXII.**

"Peur and Bašlim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice battered god of Palestine;
And moonèd Ashtaroth,
Heaven’s queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers holy shine;
The Lybic Hammon shrinks his horn;
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thamuz 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.

**XXIV.**

"Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unsuruered grass with lowings loud;
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest;
Naught but profoundest Hell can be his shroud;
In vain with timbreled anthems dark
The sable-stolèd sorcerers bear his worshipped 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 damnèd crew."

395. *That passed through fire.* The expression seems to have been a euphemism for burning to death. The popular tradition was to the effect that the brazen figure of Moloch, heated blazing hot by fires within, received its victims in its outstretched arms.

398. *Basan.* Bashan in the authorized version. So Chemos for Chemosh (l. 406), Hesebon for Heshbon (l. 408), Sittim for Shittim (l. 413). It would seem that Milton was something of an Ephraimite. *Judges* xii. 6.

423. See note on l. 97, and Introd., p. xxix.

498. A four-stressed line, like i. 74.

507. *Far renowned,* widely famed.

513. *Like measure found,* i. e., were treated in the same manner.

528. *Recollecting,* not remembering, but actually re-collecting, getting back again.

538. *Imblazed.* Emblazon is the technical term for painting a coat of arms.

542. As though it tore through the sky of Hell (note on l. 345), and reached the Deep beyond, the realm of Chaos and old Night (ii. 970).

550. Keightly calls attention to Thucydides' account of the Spartans' advance at the battle of Mantinea "to the strains of many flute players." The recorder, as will be remembered from *Hamlet,* iii. 2, 360, was a sort of flute. The *Dorian mood* was grave and serious, as compared with the more sprightly Phrygian, and the more soft and melting Lydian (*L'Allegro,* 136). The little excursus on the effect of music is characteristic. Milton had a delicate ear and loved music, which, especially in his later days, was one of his chief diversions.

569. *Battalions.* The word now means a definite body of men, although the particular constitution of the battalion is different
in different armies. But here, and often in poetry, the word means only "order of battle."

573. Since created man, i.e., since the creation of man. A Latinism, like post urbem conditam. Cf. 798, "After summons read."

576 ff. Milton here runs over the chief fields of legendary and heroic deeds; first the Greeks at Thebes and at Troy, then the Round Table of King Arthur, and last the Legends of Charlemagne. It has been one of the regrets of certain critics that Milton gave up his idea of writing an epic of Chivalry. And we have in such passages as the preceding, just the touch of chivalric interest which Milton could infuse into his sacred epic.

589. This is a very fine description, whether we think mostly of the conception or of the wording. For the meaning of the change of Satan's appearance since his rebellion, and the way the idea is developed by Milton, see Introd., p. xxix–xxxiii.

604. Cruel his eye. Milton is at his best here; the reserved power of his verse sweeps us along as the fierce ambition of Satan carried him over such trivial things as sympathy (passion is not here anger) and remorse,—which yet had their effect on him (l. 620).

612. Their glory withered. They as well as Satan had lost their original brightness.

618. All his peers, those of highest rank.

624. Event, outcome, the words being exact equivalents in composition and meaning.

630. The idea is complimentary to their vanity, but, as is apt to be the case with Satan's oratory, there is no foundation for it. Although here and there, as in l. 633 below, Satan speaks as though he had gathered around himself by far the greater number of angels, yet it would seem (e.g., from ii. 692) that his adherents were only a third part of all the angels, and so by no means a match for the angels who had remained faithful.

635. Host of Heaven, he means probably those to whom he is speaking.

645. Our better part, etc. In the preceding lines Satan excuses himself for not having known that God was omnipotent. Now, he says, we know his might. But it does not seem to occur to him that God is also omniscient, so that Satan's "close design" is known to him from the beginning. So in the first part of Book iii., "God, sitting upon his throne, sees Satan flying toward this
world" and predicts the fall of man, which instead of tending to his injury, as Satan hopes, merely serves to increase his glory.

665. Illumined Hell; for in spite of the flames Hell was dark.

674. Sulphur. Keightley's note is that "It was the common opinion of chemists that metals were composed of sulphur and quicksilver."

710. Compare Merlin's account of the building of King Arthur's palace at Camelot, in Gareth and Lynette (The Idylls of the King).

732. It is imagined by some that Milton means Mammon by "the architect," subsequently called Mulciber. But it is not necessary to suppose so: he says that Mammon discovered the gold, not that he built the palace. Nothing is said of Mammon which makes the identification necessary, and it is, on the other hand, improbable, for Milton is not given to confusing Hebrew and Greek characters.

737. Each in his hierarchy the orders bright. For the nine orders of angels "in their triple degrees" (v. 750), and for some discussion of how far Milton used the specific terms particularly, see Introd., p. xxxiii.

750. Engines means here no more than mechanical contrivances. It must be remembered that in Milton's day neither the steam-engine nor the locomotive was in existence. Milton sometimes uses the word engine rather loosely for sword.

759. By place or choice the worthiest. Milton may have had in mind the House of Lords and the House of Commons, the members of the latter elected, of the former born to their dignity.

766. Either combat à l'outrance (to the death) or a friendly course with lances. These were the two recognized forms of knightly contest.

BOOK II.

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK.

I. The Consultation.

   The Speech of Satan, 11–42.

2. The Plans of Others.
   Belial, 106–118 : he dissuades from open war and advises that they remain as they are, 119–227.
Mammon, 228: he thinks it best to make what they can of Hell, 229–233.
The audience approve, 284–298.

3. The Plan of Satan.
Beelzebub rises, 299–308; he puts aside the plans advanced, and suggests the Earth, 309–386.
The plan pleases, 386–388.
Beelzebub renews his speech indicating the dangers, 389–416.
No other volunteering, Satan assumes the enterprise, 417–466.
The council rises and the chiefs come forth, 467–520.

II. Episode. Satan preparing for his journey, the others occupy themselves in many ways, 521–628.

III. The Flight of Satan.
1. In Hell.
   He reaches the gates of Hell, 629–643, and finds Sin and Death, 644–676.
   Satan and Death, 677–722.
   Sin interferes and reconciles them, 722–814.
   Satan acquaints them with his errand and obtains the opening of the gates, 815–889.

2. In Chaos.
The Deep is seen and described, 890–927.
Satan launches forth, 928–959.
He meets Chaos but goes on his way, 959–1024.
Sin and Death have followed him, 1024–1033.
Satan comes toward the end of the Deep and sees the Universe, 1034–1055.

Notes.

3. Or where. The wealth of Ormus or of Ind or of those places where, etc.

11. Deities of Heaven. He still calls them of Heaven and explains why in the next two sentences.

12. For offers explanation of the word Heaven.

17. No second fate. Fate, here, would mean evil outcome.

18. This is the real beginning of his speech. We are not told enough of the circumstances to say how much of this, as of so much more of Satan, is meant by Milton only as an empty boast. Satan while in Heaven was one of the greatest of the angels,
acknowledged by Raphael to have been perhaps the chief. It may well have been that he ruled over many of the lesser angels. 

26. Envy. It might have drawn envy from such as himself. But from Raphael we get a very different idea.

28. The Thunderer, the Almighty;

"So much the stronger proved
He with his thunder." (i. 92, 93.)

40. By what best way. We should use best as an adverb to qualify claim, l. 38. The form is a classicism.

40, 41. Much the same idea as had been already expressed to Beelzebub.

47. Equal in strength. Moloch appears in much the same character in the battle in Heaven (vi. 357), where, however, he suffers a great check. Later, in Palestine, he had a chance to realize his ambition in a petty fashion, so far as the Israelites were concerned. See note on i. 392–405.

51 ff. These speeches are a marked characteristic of the Second Book, not that they are strikingly different from those in the other books, but because they are such a predominant feature; the speeches make up almost half the book. The four speeches of Moloch, Belial, Mammon, Beelzebub, are especially worth studying, with a view both to their intent and purport and to their expression. It will be found that although they all have a family likeness as representing Milton's idea of oratory, and the way his sentences flowed for oratorial effect, yet they are characteristically different. It is a good plan to analyze the speeches of importance with some care; and then to turn one's attention to getting the particular quality. It will be seen that Moloch is brusque even to recklessness, Belial careful and persuasive, while Mammon stands between the two in his way of handling the subject, although his opinion is much the same as Belial's. Beelzebub is the popular rhetorician, really agreeing with neither, but offering a plan which each will accept as though it were his own. He seems a regular demagogue, not least in that he is the henchman of a greater personage, his whole idea being Satan's.

51–105. Moloch begins abruptly, expresses his own view and his contempt for any other, and then bursts into a bit of rhodomontade (ll. 60–70), which doubtless had its effect upon the hot-heads of the assembly. To these, then, he addresses him-
self next (ll. 70–80) with an argument pleasing enough and ending *ad hominem*, but without real force. Assuming, however, that he has carried his audience so far (l. 81), he proceeds to do away with an objection which he sees, perhaps, in the faces of the less impetuous. Not being much of a logician, he presents rather a vague dilemma (either l. 96 or ll. 99–101). The first point he manages in vigorous style; then coming to the second and finding his position weak, he drops it quickly and ends by a bit of self-congratulation (ll. 101–105) which would be pretty sure of its effect, although contrary in a measure to what he had already said (ll. 85–91). At the very last he perhaps feels that his position is weak, but in trying to better himself, he really knocks away the whole foundation of his speech.

59. *Who reigns by our delay, i. e.,* while we delay to dethrone him.

65. *Engine.* The word meant in i. 750, merely some contrivance, and possibly does here. On the other hand Moloch may speak of God's chariot of wrath in which the Son rode to the final discomfiture of the rebels, rolling

"With the sound
Of torrent flood or of a numerous host," (vi. 829, 830)

and sending forth ten thousand thunders.

66. *Infernal.* The word is to be emphasized. They have their own thunder as well as the Almighty.

73. *Such,* as think the way difficult.

79. Although we speak of the *fall* of the angels ("nine days they fell") it would seem here that they were driven down rather than merely allowed to fall.

108–225. Belial is the orator, more so perhaps even than Beelzebub. He rises suavely and begins at once by taking advantage of the clumsy logic of Moloch, whose argument, he points out, seems to confute itself,—the speaker seems to be wholly without the confidence he counts upon (l. 126). But granting his position, we must see that no revenge is possible (ll. 129–142) nor is annihilation (a sad alternative, l. 146) at all probable (ll. 151–159). Nor is it well to assume that nothing worse is possible; there can be much worse punishment (ll. 166–186). This idea of war is quite impossible. We must abide by our lot. It will not be so bad; it is the fortune of war (ll. 200–208), it may become
more tolerable (ll. 208–214), we shall become used to it (ll. 215–220), and there is always hope (ll. 220–225). The whole speech is very sensible, but no heroes are made of the stuff of Belial.

113. Make the worse appear the better. The charge made against Socrates, but really lying more justly against the Sophists.

124. In fact of arms, in deed of arms. "Fact = feat in sense as in etymology" (Verity).

177. Impendent. A form imitating the Latin participle.

212. Satisfied, etc., i.e., with what punishment is already inflicted.

228–289. Mammon arises, meaning to avail himself of the speech of Belial without appearing to do so. He begins, therefore, with a sort of analysis of the case in his own way. As he can see that his hearers have been already prejudiced against war by Belial, he mentions it only as an impossibility (ll. 231–237). He then, however, introduces an idea which Belial had not offered. He declares that even if they could be restored to favor he for his part would not care much for it. Far better (ll. 252 ff.) to look about to our own good. We can make something out of this: the darkness is nothing (ll. 262–270), the place even has its riches (ll. 270–273), we may become used to it (ll. 274–278). Let us make the best of it: it will be found good. It is not a very profound speech; it is the plain, straightforward utterance of one who knew the weakness of his audience through his own weakness.

233. See l. 907 later.

245. Ambrosia was, strictly speaking, the food of the gods. Here it means little more than heavenly. Bentley suggested that we read from instead of and, which deprives the idea of half its beauty.

256. This is Mammon's edition of "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."

294. The sword of Michael, the chief of the faithful angels, had played a great part in the strife.

310–378. Beelzebub sees that his hearers are still cowed by the beating they have undergone. The few like Moloch cannot infuse courage into the rest; the greater number have as little spirit as Mammon. This temper falls in well with his directions from Satan, who had no notion of open war, but proposed craft. He first examines the scheme of Belial and Mammon, and shows that it is impossible (ll. 315–328). In fact there is no question of
ADDITIONAL NOTES

Peace or War; there is only war (l. 330). The only question is, What kind of war? He now comes to the main part of his speech. Some less fearful kind of war must be found. For instance (ll. 345 ff.), the seduction of mankind. Here, he says, we may do something (ll. 362–370). This would be a fine revenge (ll. 370–378).

352. By an oath that shook, etc. So Zeus in the Iliad, i. 530.
354. The rhythmical effect of this line is curious. It has real accents apparently on the first, eighth, and tenth feet.
367. Puny, partly with an idea of contempt, meaning weak; partly perhaps a form of the French puîné, younger. There are several examples of similar use elsewhere in Milton.
377. A considerable ellipsis: the idea, of course, is to contrast the two ideas.
393. Satan contemplates making this new world a home for them all.
406. Palpable obscure. "Darkness which may be felt," as in the plague of Egypt, Exod. x. 21.
430. Empyrean. Heaven was often called the Empyrean, e.g., later l. 771.
462. Mansion, as in i. 268, means abiding place.
467. Prevented, means almost literally "to get ahead of," from which the present every-day meaning is developed.
491. Landskip. Milton always uses the word in this form, and it may be found in more modern English.
508. This is an inspiring description, as good in its way as the fine description in the first Book (ll. 589 ff.).
514. Bid cry. The verb as a transitive is not so familiar now as in Milton's day when every town had its crier. Here it means to announce. It will be remembered that only the chiefs were present in the Council; the others were waiting outside.
529–628. These lines divide the book into two parts, and the episode, standing between them, obviates the effect of an immediate passing from the Council to the Flight of Satan. It also gives opportunity for a description of Hell.
531. Or shun the goal with rapid wheels. The chariot race was driven around a goal and back to the starting point. The making the turn was, of course, a most exciting moment; it was necessary to turn as quickly as possible, but to touch the goal meant an accident.
555. The line is worth noting, for it seems an expression of
personal opinion on Milton's part. By song he presumably refers to music, a favorite diversion with him.

577. Abhorred Styx, etc. These names had in Greek a meaning which Milton gives in each case. They were the rivers of hate, grief, lamentation, and burning, and their names were expressive of their character. In like manner Lethe means "oblivion." Of these five rivers, the Styx was the principal one, so much so that the adjective Stygian is used by Milton of the whole of Hell, e.g., in l. 506 just above. Lethean also is used as an adjective, but with a different meaning.

590. Ruin seems of ancient pile. Pile we have had in i. 722, with the meaning building.

596–616. Milton looks ahead in time and takes a leaf out of Dante's book. "The damned" of l. 597 are presumably not the fallen angels but unfortunates long afterward sent to eternal punishment for sins on this earth.

613. Wight. The word was in Milton's day obsolescent.

621. The line entirely made up of monosyllables suggests Pope's

"
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line."

(Essay on Criticism, 347.)

But Milton, doubtless, had in mind the effect that the line would produce, and held it to be appropriate to the subject. Cf. ll. 948–950.

628. Does this line add or detract from the feeling aroused by the last?

631. The gates of Hell. It would seem from 644 that the gates were at one end of Hell, as it were. Otherwise we should imagine them somewhere above.

638. Close sailing. The meaning is not wholly clear. To sail close to the wind is to sail with the wind as nearly dead ahead as possible. This would hardly be the case with ships sailing from India to the Cape. On the other hand the word is sometimes taken to refer to the fleet with the meaning that all the ships were grouped together.

641. Mr. Verity points out that although Milton means what is now called the Indian Ocean, the name Ethiopian was in Milton's day applied to the South Atlantic.

649. On either side a formidable shape. Compare these two
descriptions; that of Sin full of definite and horrible conceptions, that of Death purposely vague and impossible of realization. The figure of Sin is conventional; various other authors had drawn such a figure; indeed the earliest conception comes from the classics. We may find descriptions in Ovid, *Metam.* xiv. and Virgil, *Aen.* iii. The figure of Death, however, is original.

662. *The night hag.*

"The hag is astride
This night for to ride,
The devil and she together."

(Herrick's *Hesperides.*)

664. *Infant's blood,* an ancient superstition concerning witch revels.

665. *Lapland witches.* The Laplanders had from very early times the reputation of being skilled in magic. The reputation came partly perhaps from their uncouth personal appearance and partly from the fact that they long remained pagan. Mention of the matter is found in all the early books describing the country.

666 ff. *The other shape.* As is pointed out by various commentators on this passage, Death had often before this been personified and described. But this description has no connection with any previous description or personification. Milton has in mind to produce a figure of terror; instead of giving a number of terrible elements, he shrouds the whole figure in mystery. "What seemed his head," "substance that shadow seemed," "if shape it, could be called that shape had none." Compared with such images, the very definite l. 671 seems weak.

678. *God and his son except.* Strictly speaking the expression is incorrect. God and his son are not among created things and therefore cannot be excepted from them. The error is not very uncommon; compare

"Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve."

(iv. 323, 324.)

686. *Taste thy folly; i.e.,* taste the results of thy folly, although the ellipsis is a considerable one.

692. *The third part of Heaven's sons.* So Raphael places the
number of revolted angels at one third of all. (v. 710.) Satan was inclined to make the number higher. (ix. 141, 142, and i. 633.)

699. Thy King. The accent is on thy: what was to enrage Satan was the idea of anybody being his king.

706. Deform, shapeless. Lat. deformis.

713. No second stroke; i. e., one stroke was to finish it.

715. Come rattling on, a most effective expression.

721. For never but once more, etc. Christ was the greatest foe that either was ever to meet: by him both in turn were to be vanquished, Satan in the Temptation, Death in the Resurrection.

730. And knowest for whom. This is not a question, although it may at first seem to be.

742. In this infernal vale first met. Why, when we have never met before, do you hail me as father?

746. As to this allegorical narration see the note on i. 3. Like most allegories (even The Pilgrim's Progress) it has points where it is inconsistent, but if one do not take pains to push it to the farthest, it will be found to have its definite meaning.

846. One of Milton's effective expressions.

855. Wight. The modern editions generally read might; We follow the third edition. Compare l. 613 and all force in l. 853.

876. Portcullis. Strictly speaking, a heavy grating let down in front of the door of a mediaeval castle. Everyone will remember how the portcullis came down behind Marmion as he was riding out of Tantallon Castle. The fact that the gate goes up and down might have some influence on our opinion in l. 631.

887. Ranked in loose array. Not only could an army go through, but that in no very close order.

891 ff. A remarkable description, if we may call it so, of what is not only indescribable but well-nigh inconceivable.

895. Ancestors of Nature. Cf. 911. By Nature is meant the Universe (p. xxxvii.) which had been created out of the Deep as Chaos complains (1004).

898. Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry. The four elements more commonly thought of as Fire, Air, Water, Earth. We have them in still another form in l. 912.

906–910. It is difficult to indicate rightly the singular effectiveness of these few lines. They present in small compass the whole impression; or, if not quite that, they depend upon the same
means, namely, the almost contradictory character of each assertion. Whoever wins rules, but only for a moment; the decision of Chaos only makes more confusion; the only arbiter or court of last resort is Chance, which is the same as having no arbiter at all. As in the description of Death, this half-paradoxical character, which prevents any real realization of the scene, heightens the effect.

911. The Universe had been created out of the Deep and might relapse into it again.

948. In these three lines we have a still further use of a line of monosyllables (cf. l. 621).

961. Wasteful. Not in the ordinary sense of the word, but meaning “full of wastes” or something of the sort. The Deep is called a desert just below, l. 973.

981. Satan is always ready to make it to one’s advantage to aid him. If Chaos will direct him to the Universe (lately won from his territory by the ethereal King), he will restore that province to its original allegiance, i.e., turn it back into Chaos.

988. Chaos speaks as a feeble old man.


1024–1033. I am apt to feel that this passage rather mars the fine effect of the end of the book. Sin and Death do nothing; in Book x. we return with Satan and find them still building.

1084. These last lines coming after the turmoil and confusion of the Deep are certainly very fine. The ideas of light, ease, leisure, rest are such a relief from the impossible conceptions we have just passed through. The images and accessory ideas add to the impression: “a glimmering dawn,” a vessel running into port, a star beside the moon, these are the figures; the wide extent of Heaven, with the half-pathetic touch, “once his native seat,” these are the thoughts. Readers of Dante will think of the impression made on beginning the Purgatorio after finishing the Inferno.

And now, having got a good deal of minute information about these two books of Milton’s great poem, how are we any better off? We have certainly much more information than is necessary to read the poem intelligently and with pleasure, and certainly in itself, for its own sake, all this detailed and particular information is of no especial value.
We might even ask, Would not one really appreciate the poem better without more knowledge than is required for a good understanding of what would otherwise be meaningless? Compare Keats, who delighted in Milton, and yet probably did not know many things that may be found in the annotated editions, and Bentley, who probably knew all there was to know as far as knowledge is concerned, and yet could change "the secret top of Oreb" (i. 7) into "the sacred top." Is not appreciation better than knowledge?

We must admit that appreciation without knowledge is better than knowledge without appreciation. But appreciation without knowledge is not so fine, other things being equal, as appreciation which has made the most of knowledge. It is true that knowledge (of this sort) is an easy thing, and appreciation, for most people, is not. So knowledge of a great poem is apt to be commoner than appreciation of it, and held in less esteem. But although knowledge of a great poem is not worth very much considered in itself, yet the right knowledge may be so used as to produce something which is worth a great deal. For if it be not allowed to choke out one's appreciation, to overpower everything else, it may so saturate, so color, so invigorate one's ideas, that one's appreciation becomes a far stronger and finer thing, giving a fuller pleasure in the poem, and a greater admiration for the poet.
APPENDIX

A. The Invocation of an Epic Poem.

The extracts following will give an idea of the epic convention of an Invocation. 1 and 2 are from translations of Homer and Virgil, respectively, made not a very long time after Milton. 3 is the beginning of Spenser's Faerie Queene, written some time before. To compare these extracts with those that follow,—4, the beginning of the Seventh Book of Paradise Lost, and 5, the invocation of Paradise Regained, is a good lesson in English Literature.


Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring
Of woes unnumbered, heavenly goddess, sing!
That wrath which hurled to Pluto's gloomy reign
The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain;
Whose limbs unburied on the naked shore,
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore;
Since great Achilles and Atrides strove.
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove.
Declare, O Muse! in what ill-fated hour
Sprung the fierce strife, from what offended power?
Latona's son a dire contagion spread,
And heaped the camp with mountains of the dead;
The king of men his reverend priest defied,
And for the king's offence the people died.

2. The Aeneid in Dryden's Translation, Book I. 1–18.

Arms and the man I sing, who, forced by Fate
And haughty Juno's unrelenting hate,
Expelled and exiled, left the Trojan shore.
Long labours, both by sea and land he bore,
And in the doubtful war, before he won
The Latian realm, and built the destined town;
His banished gods restored to rites divine,
And settled sure succession in his line,
From whence the race of Alban fathers come,
And the long glories of majestic Rome.

O Muse! the causes and the crimes relate;
What goddess was provoked and whence her hate;
For what offence the queen of heaven began
To persecute so brave, so just a man;
Involved his anxious life in endless cares,
Exposed to wants, and hurried into wars!
Can heavenly minds such high resentment show,
Or exercise their spite in human woe?


Lo! I, the man whose Muse whilome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly shepherd's weeds,
Am now enforced, a far unfitter task,
For trumpets stern to change mine eaten reeds,
And sing of knights' and ladies' gentle deeds;
Whose praises having slept in silence long,
Me all too mean, the sacred Muse areeds
To blazon broad amongst her learned throng:
Fierce wars and faithful loves shall moralize my song.

Help then, O holy virgin! chief of nine,
Thy weaker novice to perform thy will;
Lay forth out of thine everlasting scrine
The antique rolls, which there lie hidden still,
Of Faerie Knights, and fairest Tanaquill,
Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
That I must rue his undeserved wrong:
O help thou my weak wit, and sharpen my dull tongue!

And thou, most dreaded imp of highest Jove,
Fair Venus' son, that with thy cruel dart
At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,
That glorious fire it kindled in his heart,
Lay now thy deadly heben bow apart,
APPENDIX

And with thy mother mild come to mine aid;
Come, both; and with you bring triumphant Mart,
In loves and gentle jollities arrayed,
After his murderous spoils and bloody rage allayed.

And with them eke, O Goddess heavenly bright!
Mirror of grace and majesty divine,
Great Lady of this greatest Isle, whose light
Like Phæbus' lamp throughout the world doth shine,
Shed thy fair beams into my feeble eyne,
And raise my thoughts, too humble and too vile,
To think of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted style:
The wish to hear vouchsafe, O dearest dread awhile!


Descend from Heaven, Urania, by that name
If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegasean wing!
The meaning, not the name, I call; for thou
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st; but heavenly-born,
Before the hills appeared or fountain flowed,
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased
With thy celestial song. Up led by thee,
Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,
As earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
Thy tempering. With like safety guided down,
Return me to my native element;
Lest, from this flying steed unreined (as once
Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)
Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,
Erroneous there to wander and forlorn.
Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
Within the visible Diurnal Sphere.
Standing on Earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues, 
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round, 
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou 
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn 
Purples the East. Still govern thou my song, 
Urania, and fit audience find, though few. 
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 drowned 
Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend 
Her son. So fail not thou who thee implores; 
For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream. 
Say, Goddess, what ensued when Raphael, 
The affable Archangel, had forewarned 
Adam, by dire example, to beware 
Apostasy.


I, who erewhile the Happy Garden sung 
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing 
Recovered Paradise to all mankind, 
By one man's firm obedience fully tried 
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foiled 
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed, 
And Eden raised in the waste wilderness. 
Thou Spirit, who led'st this glorious Eremite 
Into the desert, his victorious field 
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence 
By proof undoubted Son of God, inspire, 
As thou art wont, my prompted song, else mute, 
And bear through lighted or depth of Nature's bounds, 
With prosperous wings full summed, to tell of deeds 
Above heroic, though in secret done, 
And unrecorded left through many an age: 
Worthy to have not remained so long unsung.

B. Epic Similes.

The following similes are, 1 from the Iliad, in the translation of Lang, Leaf, and Myer, and 2 from Matthew Arnold's
Sohrab and Rustum, an epic fragment which may well be compared both with Homer and Milton.

1. Neither lingered Paris long in his lofty house, but clothed on him his brave armour, bedight with bronze, and hasted through the city, trusting to his nimble feet. Even as when a stalled horse, full-fed at the manger, breaketh his tether and speedeth at the gallop across the plain, being wont to bathe him in the fair-flowing stream, exultingly; and holdeth his head on high, and his mane floateth about his shoulders, and he trusteth in his glory, and nimbly his limbs bear him to the haunts and pasturage of mares; even so Priam's son Paris, glittering in his armour like the shining sun strod down from high Pergamos laughingly, and his swift feet bare him.

Iliad vi., 504–514. [Lang, Leaf, and Myers' Translation, p. 126.]

And as when a brimming river cometh down upon the plain, in winter flood from the hills, swollen by the rain of Zeus, and many dry oaks and many pines it sucketh in, and much soil it casteth into the sea, even so renowned Aias charged them, pursuing through the plain, slaying horses and men. xi. 490–495. [p. 218.]

Thus saying fair-haired Menelaos departed glancing everywhither, as an eagle which men say hath keenest sight of all birds under heaven, and though he be far aloft the fleet-footed hare eludeth him not by crouching beneath a leafy bush, but the eagle swoopeth thereon and swiftly seizeth her and taketh her life. xvii. 672–677. [p. 363.]

2. But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighbouring mountain of milk snow;
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parched throats with sugared mulberries—
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows—
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.

As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blackened fingers makes her fire—
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers the whitened window-panes—
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum eyed
The unknown adventurous Youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs.

C. The Idolatries of the Israelites. i. 392–505.

These matters must be illustrated by Bible reading, the more the better. It is not, of course, by looking at a few passages that one can come to regard these things as Milton did. But even a few passages will do something to give the right view. First we give the prophecy in the song of Moses; then an extract from later history showing how the prophecy was carried out; and last an account of one of the various efforts made for reform and regeneration.

1. The Song of Moses.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation. And the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle. And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, and this people will rise up and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them.

Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I sware unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and waxed fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed. Deut. xxxi. 14–21.
From the Song of Moses:

But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. And when the Lord saw it he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. Deut. xxxii. 15–19.

2. The Idolatries of Solomon. Compare especially with i. 442–446.

But King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.

Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians; and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. 1 Kings xi. 1–8.

3. The zeal and reformation of Josiah, alluded to in i. 417–419, are spoken of both in Kings and Chronicles.

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he
reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.

And so did he in the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about. And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles xxxiv. 1–7.

With this compare the account in 2 Kings xxiii. 1–14. Especially vv. 10, 13 and 14, which are as follows:

And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. . . .

And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom, the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. And he brake in pieces the images and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.

D. The Geography of Palestine. i. 392–418.

1. From Numbers xxi. 21–30.

And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, “Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink of the waters of the well: but we will go along by the king’s highway until we be past thy borders.”
APPENDIX

And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel; and Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon was strong. And Israel took all the cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof. For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon.

2. From Isaiah xv. 1–5 and xvi. 6–9.

The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste and brought to silence.

He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.

In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the top of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.

And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh; their voice shall be heard, even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.

My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, a heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.

We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so.

Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn; surely they are stricken.

For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come even to Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea.
Therefore will I bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh: for the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen.


Against Moab thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Wo unto Nebo! for it is spoiled: Kiriathaim is confounded and taken: Misgab is confounded and dismayed.

There shall be no more praise of Moab: in Heshbon they have devised evil against it; come and let us cut it off from being a nation. Also thou shalt be cut down, O madmen, the sword shall pursue thee.

A voice of crying shall be from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction.

Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard.

For in the going up of Luhith continual weeping shall go up; for in the going down of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.

Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness.

For because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity with his priests and his princes together.

And the spoiler shall come upon every city and no city shall escape: the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken.

Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein.

Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.
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