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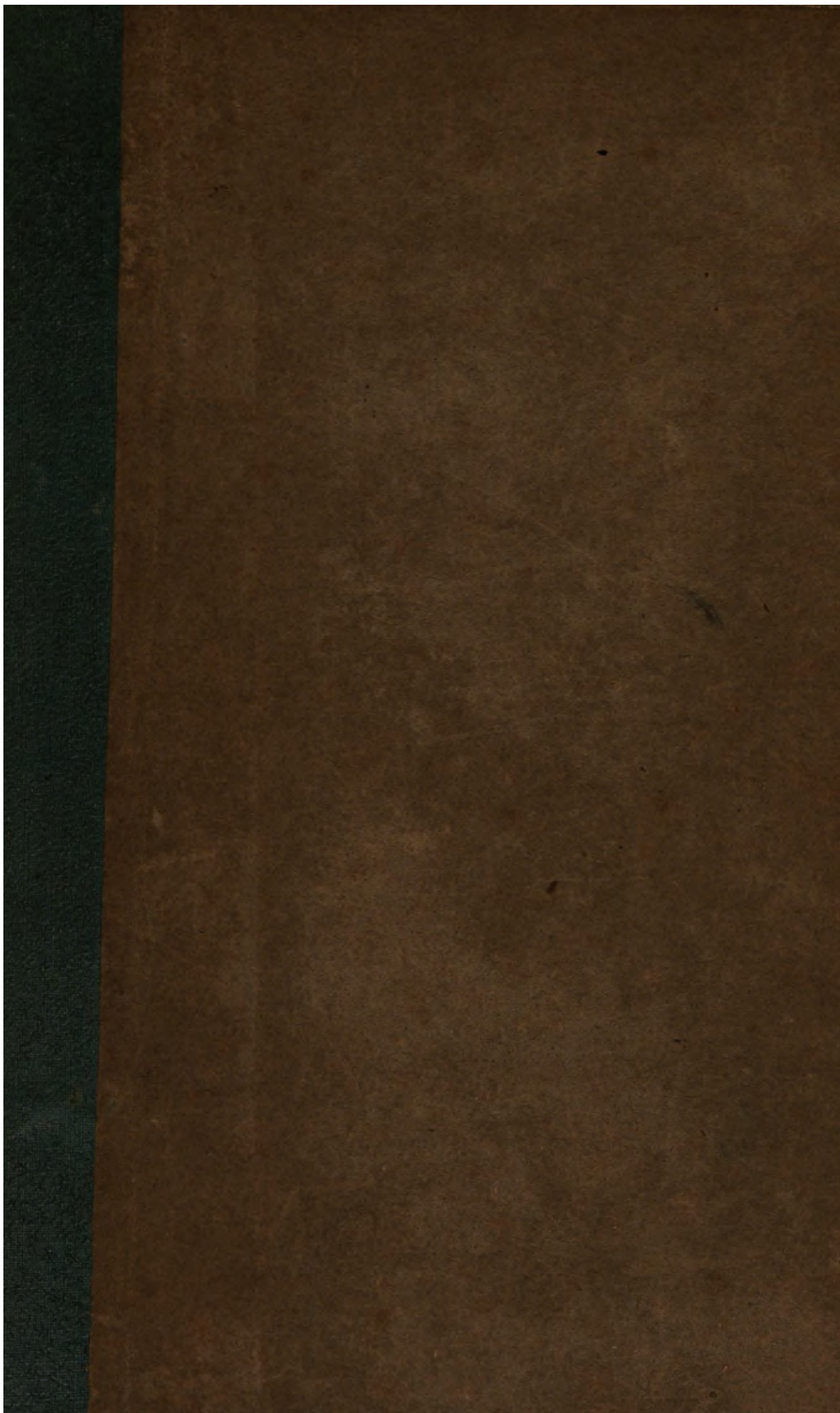
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PARADISE LOST
AND
REGAINED,
WITH THE LATIN AND OTHER POEMS,
OF
JOHN MILTON.
NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS
BY W. COWPER,
AND
LIFE BY WILLIAM HAYLEY.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Nec satis hoc visum est in utrumque et nec pia cessant officia in tumulo.
MANUS.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR HENRY WASHBOURNE,
SALISBURY SQUARE.



INTRODUCTORY LETTER

TO THE

REV. DR. JOHNSON,

THE KINSMAN OF COWPER.

—

ALLOW me, my dear Friend, to devote to you these little volumes, which, I persuade myself, you may often peruse with peculiar gratification, because they owe their existence to a wish zealously uttered by your beloved and revered relation. You may remember, that Cowper, in conversing with his friend of Sussex, expressed, with a tenderness and vivacity of spirit peculiar to himself, a kind hope, that an edition of Milton might, at some convenient season, appear, comprising that Friend's Life of their favorite Poet, united to whatever verse

and prose relating to Milton, his own precarious health had allowed, and might yet allow him opportunities of composing.

He lived to execute only a small part of what he designed ; but even his fragments of composition have a sanctity in our estimation. I have now accomplished the desire of that benevolent spirit, whose slightest wish could not fail to have its due influence over all, who knew, and loved him as we did.

Instead of the Analysis, and the few scenes of Andreini's *Adamo*, which were formerly annexed to my *Conjectures on the Origin of Paradise Lost*, I have here inserted the whole drama in that faithful translation, which you will recollect, as having formed the pastime of the party at Eartham, when you kindly executed the office of a secretary, and committed the composition to paper, as it proceeded from the lips of the two social translators. The manuscript, which had been neglected for years, has been

recently examined and thought worthy of preservation ; since Italian copies of Andreini's *Adamo* are very seldom to be found, this version may gratify the public as an amusing curiosity ; and a sight of the whole drama may enable the reader to judge for himself concerning the influence, it is likely to have had, in attaching the mind of Milton to the subject, on which he has so happily founded his own poetical pre-eminence, and immortality.

Andreini has been contemptuously reviled by several writers utterly unacquainted with his compositions ; but Tiraboschi, one of the most candid, and judicious, critics of Italy, speaks of him with the following just mixture of censure, and of praise :

“ L' Adamo dell Andreini, benchè abbia alcuni Tratti di pessimo Gusto, ne ha altri ancora che si posson proporre come modello di eccellente Poesia.”

Tiraboschi, cited by Mr. Todd.

To prevent these volumes from even seeming to interfere with the comprehensive

edition of Milton, so richly furnished with illustrations by the learning, diligence, and zeal of the gentleman, just named, this publication will not contain any notes, except the fragment of Cowper's commentary on *Paradise Lost*, and a selection from those, that were printed with his Miltonic translations.

The Milton of Mr. Todd may be regarded as a standard library book; these smaller volumes may occasionally afford an agreeable travelling companion to such readers, as may feel gratified in seeing two poets, so congenial as Milton and Cowper, thus united.

You will find, with Andreini's *Adamo*, some account of a brief Italian Epic Poem on the Loss of Paradise, printed above thirty years before Milton visited Italy. I mean the *Adamo* of Soranzo, a poem even more rare than the drama of Andreini!

The dedication prefixed to my *Life of Milton* in 1796, is retained not only from regard to the departed amiable critic of Winchester, but because it contains literary sentiments, that had the approbation of our beloved Cowper. My ambition is to render this book, which will be endeared to us by bearing the name of *Cowper's Milton*, a proof of our affectionate attention to his wishes. May it prove a lasting and honorable record of that inexhaustible tenderness and zeal, with which you, his favorite kinsman, were used to serve him as a kind secretary in his season of mental activity, and as an inestimable attendant, and guardian, in his days of calamitous depression. You will be prosperous and happy indeed, if your prosperity and happiness are proportioned to the care and kindness, with which you watched over the most interesting of sufferers.

At all events, we shall ever sympathise, in a tender veneration for his memory; and I hope we may both exclaim, in

the words of the younger Pliny, and with
the honest fervency of indelible affection,

“Sunt qui defunctorum amicos agunt.”

Believe me ever, my dear friend,

Most faithfully yours,

W. HAYLEY.

Felpham, March 31, 1810.

DEDICATION

TO THE

REV. JOSEPH WARTON, D. D.

&c.

MY PLEASANT AND RESPECTED FRIEND,

IN prefixing your name to this volume, I feel and confess the double influence of an affectionate and of an ambitious desire to honor you and myself. Our lost and lamented friend Gibbon has told us, I think very truly, in dedicating a juvenile work to his father, that there are but two kinds of dedications, which can do honor either to the patron or the author—the first arising from literary esteem, the second from personal affection. If either of these two characteristics may be sufficient to give propriety to a dedication, I have little to apprehend for the present, which has certainly the advantage of uniting the two.

The kind and friendly manner in which you commended the first edition of this Life might alone have induced me to inscribe a more ample copy of it to that literary veteran, whose applause is so justly dear to me. I have additional inducements in recollecting your animated and enlightened regard for the glory of Milton. It is pleasing to address a sympathetic friend on a subject that interests the fancy and the heart. I remember, with peculiar gratification, the liberality and frankness, with which you lamented to me the extreme severity of the late Mr. Warton, in describing the controversial writings of Milton. I honor the rare integrity of your mind, my candid friend, which took the part of injured genius and probity against the prejudices of a brother, eminent as a scholar, and entitled also, in many points of view, to your love and admiration. I sympathize with you most cordially in regretting the severity to which I allude, so little to be expected from the general temper of the critic, and from that affectionate spirit, with which he had vindicated the poetry of Milton from the misre-

presentations of cold and callous austerity. But Mr. Warton had fallen into a mistake, which has betrayed other well-disposed minds into an unreasonable abhorrence of Milton's prose; I mean the mistake of regarding it as having a tendency to subvert our existing government. Can any man justly think it has such a tendency, who recollects that no government, similar to that which the Revolution established for England, existed when Milton wrote? His impassioned yet disinterested ardour for reformation was excited by those gross abuses of power, which that new settlement of the state very happily corrected.

Your learned and good-natured brother, my dear friend, was not the only man of learning and good-nature, who indulged a prejudice, that to us appears very extravagant, to give it the gentlest appellation. A literary Paladine (if I may borrow from romance a title of distinction to honor a very powerful historian) even Gibbon himself, whom we both admired and loved for his literary and for his social accomplishments, surpassed, I think, on this topic, the severity of Mr. Warton,

passionately admired, and to whom he bore, I think, in many points, a very striking resemblance. Perhaps they both possessed too large a portion of fancy and enthusiasm to make good practical statesmen; the visionaries of public virtue have seldom succeeded in the management of dominion, and in politics it has long been a prevailing creed to believe, that government is like gold, and must not be fashioned for extensive use without the alloy of corruption. But I mean not to burthen you, my lively friend, with political reflections, or with a long dissertation on the great mass of Milton's prose; you whose studies are so various and extensive, are sufficiently familiar with those singular compositions; and I am not a little gratified in the assurance that you think as I do, both of their blemishes and their beauties, and approve the use that I have made of them in my endeavours to elucidate the life and character of their author. Much as we respected the classical erudition and the taste of your lamented brother, I am confident that we can neither of us subscribe to the censure he has passed on the Latin style of Milton, who, to my apprehension, is

often most admirably eloquent in that language, and particularly so in the passage I have cited from his character of Bradshaw ; a character in which I have known very acrimonious enemies to the name of the man commended, very candidly acknowledge the eloquence of the eulogist. Some rigorous idolaters of the unhappy race of Stuart may yet censure me even for this dispassionate revival of such a character ; but you, my liberal friend to the freedom of literary discussion, you will suggest to me, that the minds of our countrymen in general aspire to Roman magnanimity, in rendering justice to great qualities in men, who were occasionally the objects of public detestation, and you join with me in admiring that example of such magnanimity, to which I particularly allude. Nothing is more honourable to ancient Rome, than her generosity in allowing the statue of Hannibal to be raised and admired within the walls of the very city, which it was the ambition of his life to distress and destroy.

In emulation of that spirit, which delights to honor the excellencies of an illustrious antagonist, I have endeavoured to preserve in my own mind,

and to express on every proper occasion, my unshaken regard for the rare faculties and virtues of a late biographer, whom it has been my lot to encounter continually as a very bitter, and sometimes I think, an insidious enemy to the great poet, whose memory I have fervently wished to rescue from indignity and detraction. The asperity of Johnson towards Milton has often struck the fond admirers of the poet in various points of view ; in one moment it excites laughter, in another indignation ; now it reminds us of the weapon of Goliath as described by Cowley ;

“ A sword so great, that it was only fit
To cut off his great head that came with it ;

now it prompts us to exclaim, in the words of an angry Roman ;

“ Nec bellua tetrior ulla est
Quam servi rabies in libera colla furentis.”

I have felt, I confess, these different emotions of resentment in perusing the various sarcasms of the austere critic against the object of my poetical idolatry, but I have tried, and I hope with some

success, to correct the animosity they must naturally excite, by turning to the more temperate works of that very copious and admirable writer, particularly to his exquisite paper in the Rambler (No. 54) on the deaths and asperity of literary men. It is hardly possible, I think, to read the paper I have mentioned without losing, for some time at least, all sensations of displeasure towards the eloquent, the tender moralist, and reflecting, with a sort of friendly satisfaction, that as long as the language of England exists, the name of Johnson will remain and deserve to remain

Magnum et memorabile nomen.

As long as eloquence and morality are objects of public regard, we must revere that great mental physician, who has given to us all, infirm mortals as the best of us are, such admirable prescriptions for the regimen of mind, and we should rather speak in sorrow than in anger, when we are forced to recollect, that, like other physicians, however able and perfect in theory, he failed to correct the infirmity of his own morbid spirit, You, my dear War-

ton, whom an opposite temperament has made a critic of a more airy and cheerful complexion, you are one of the best witnesses that I could possibly produce, if I had any occasion to prove that my ideas of Johnson's malevolent prejudices against Milton are not the offsprings of a fancy equally prejudiced itself against the great author, whose prejudices I have presumed to oppose; you, my dear friend, have heard the harsh critic advance in conversation an opinion against Milton, even more severe than the detractive sarcasms with which his life of the great poet abounds; you have heard him declaim against the admiration excited by the poetry of Milton, and affirm it to be nothing more than the cant (to use his own favorite phrase) of affected sensibility.

I have presumed to say, that Johnson sometimes appears as an insidious enemy to the poet. Is there not some degree of insidious hostility in his introducing into his dictionary, under the article *Sonnet*, the very sonnet of Milton, which an enemy would certainly chuse, who wished to represent Milton as a writer of

verses entitled to scorn and derision? You will immediately recollect that I allude to the sonnet which begins thus :

“ A book was writ of late call'd Tetrachordon.”

The sonnet is, in truth, contemptible enough, if we suppose that Milton intended it as a serious composition ; but I apprehend it was an idle lusus poeticus, and either meant as a ludicrous parody on some other sonnet, which has sunk into oblivion, or merely written as a trifling pastime, to shew that it is possible to compose a sonnet with words most unfriendly to rhyme. However this may be, it was barbarous surely towards Milton, (and, I might add, towards the poetry of England) to exhibit this unhappy little production, in so conspicuous a manner, as a specimen of English sonnets. Yet I perceive it is possible to give a milder interpretation of Johnson's design in his display of this unfortunate sonnet ; and as I most sincerely wish not to charge him with more malevolence towards Milton than he really exerted, I will observe on this occasion, that as he had little, or rather no relish

for sonnets, which the stern logician seems to have despised as perplexing trifles, (difficiles nugæ) he might only mean to deter young poetical students from a kind of verse that he disliked, by leading them to remark, how the greatest of our poets had failed in this petty composition. You, who perfectly know how much more inclined I am to praise than to censure, will give me full credit for my sincerity in saying, that I wish to acquit Johnson of malevolence in every article where my reason will allow me to do so. I have been under the painful necessity of displaying continually, in the following work, the various examples of his severity to Milton. Nothing is more apt to excite our spleen than a stroke of injustice against an author whom we love and revere; but I should be sorry to find myself infected by the acrimony which I was obliged to display, and I should be equally sorry to run into an opposite failing, and to indulge a spirit of obloquy, like Mrs. Candour, in the School for Scandal, with all the grimaces of affected good nature. I have, spoken, therefore my own feelings, without bitterness and without timidity. I cannot

say that I speak of Johnson, "sine ira et studio," as Tacitus said of other great men, (very differently great!) for, in truth, I feel towards the same object those two opposite sources of prejudice and partiality: as a critical biographer of the poets he often excites my transient indignation; but as an eloquent teacher of morality he fills me with more lasting reverence and affection.

His lives of the poets will probably give birth, in this or the next century, to a work of literary retaliation. Whenever a poet arises with as large a portion of spleen towards the critical writers of past ages, as Johnson indulged towards the poets in his poetical biography, the literature of England will be enriched with "the Lives of the Critics," a work from which you, my dear Warton, will have little to apprehend; you, whose essay teaches, as the critical biographer very truly and liberally observed, "how the brow of criticism may be smoothed, and how she may be enabled, with all her severity, to attract and delight."

Yet to shew how apt a writer of verses is to

accuse a profest critic of severity, we may both recollect, that when I had occasion to speak of your entertaining and instructive Essay on Pope, I scrupled not to consider the main scope of it a little too severe ; and in truth, my dear friend, I think so still ; because it is the aim of that charming Essay to prove, that Pope possessed not those very high poetical talents, for which the world though sufficiently inclined to discover and magnify his defects, had allowed him credit. You consider him as the poet of reason, and intimate that “ he stooped to truth and moralized his song,” from a want of native powers to support a long flight in the higher province of fancy. To me, I confess, his Rape of the Lock appears a sufficient proof that he possessed, in a superior degree, the faculty in which you would reduce him to a secondary rank ; he chose, indeed, in many of his productions, to be the poet of reason rather than of fancy ; but I apprehend his choice was influenced by an idea (I believe a mistaken idea) that moral satire is the species of poetry by which

a poet of modern times may render the greatest service to mankind. But if in one article you have not been so kind as I could wish, to the poet of morality, I rejoice in recollecting, that you are on the point of making him considerable amends, and of fulfilling a prediction of mine, by removing from the pages of Pope a great portion of the lumber with which they were amply loaded by Warburton. You will soon, I trust, prove to the literary world, as you perfectly proved to me some years ago, that the poet has suffered not a little from the absurdities of his arrogant annotator. It is hardly possible for a man of letters, who affectionately venerates the name of Milton, and recollects some expressions of Warburton concerning his poetry and his moral character, to speak of that supercilious prelate without catching some portion of his own scornful spirit: you will immediately perceive that I allude to his having bestowed upon Milton the opprobrious title of a time-server. Do*

* With what peculiar propriety Warburton applied this name to Milton, the reader will best judge, who re-

you recollect, my dear learned critic, extensive as your studies have been ; do you recollect, in the wide range of ancient and modern defamation, a more unpardonable abuse of language ? Milton, a poet of the most powerful, and, perhaps, the most independent mind that was ever given to a mere mortal, insulted with the appellation of a time-server ; and by whom ? by Warburton, whose writings, and whose fortune—but I will not copy the contemptuous prelate in his favorite exercise of re-

collects the humourous Butler's very admirable character of a time-server, which contains the following passage: " He is very zealous to shew himself, upon all occasions a true member of the church for the time being, and has not the least scruple in his conscience against the doctrine and discipline of it, as it stands at present, or shall do hereafter, unsight unseen ; for he is resolved to be always for the truth, which he believes is never so plainly demonstrated as in that character that says '*it is great and prevails*'; and in that sense only fit to be adhered to by a prudent man, who will never be kinder to truth than she is to him ; for suffering is a very *evil effect*, and not likely to proceed from a *good cause*." Butler's Remains, vol. ii. p. 220.

viling the literary characters, whose opinions were different from his own ; his habit of indulging a contemptuous and dogmatical spirit has already drawn upon his name and writings the natural punishment of such verbal intemperance ; and the mitred follower of his fame and fortune, who has lately endeavoured to prop his reputation by a tenderly partial but a very imperfect life of his precipitate and quarrelsome patron, has rather lessened, perhaps, his own credit, than increased that of his master, by that affected coldness of contempt with which he describes, or rather disfigures, the illustrious chastiser of Warburtonian insolence, the more accomplished critic, of whom you eminent scholars of Winton are very justly proud ; I mean the eloquent and graceful Lowth.

But as I am not fond of literary strife, however dignified and distinguished the antagonists may be, I will hasten to extricate myself from this little group of contentious critics ; for it must be matter of regret to every sincere votary of peace and benevolence to observe, that the field of litera-

ture is too frequently a field of cruelty, which almost realizes the hyperbolic expression of Lucan, and exhibits

“Plusquam civilia bella ;”

where men, whose kindred studies should humanize their temper, and unite them in the ties of fraternal regard, are too apt to exert all their faculties in ferociously mangling each other ; where we sometimes behold the friendship of years dissolved in a moment, and converted into furious hostility, which, though it does not endanger, yet never fails to embitter life ; and perhaps the source of such contention,

“teterrima belli

“Causa——”

instead of being a fair and faithless Helen, is nothing more than a particle of grammar in a dead language. O that the spleen-correcting powers of mild

and friendly ridicule could annihilate such hostilities!—Cannot you, my dear Warton, who have the weight and authority of a pacific Nestor in this tumultuous field, cannot you suggest effectual lenitives for the genus irritabile scriptorum. The celebrated Saxon painter Mengs, has, I think, given us all an admirable hint of this kind in writing to an ingenious but petulant Frenchman, who had provoked him by speaking contemptuously of his learned and enthusiastic friend Winkelman. Se io possedessi il talento di scriver bene (says the modest painter) vorrei esporre ragioni, e fatti, e insegnar cose utili senza perdermi a contraddir veruno poiche mi sembra, che si possan fare buoni libri senza dire, che il tale, o il tal sogetto s' inganna; e finalmente se ella mi puo dimostrare, che la maldicenza sia cosa honesta, allora io converro che importa molto poco il modo, con cui si attacca la riputazione del prossimo: e aggiungo che il sarcasmo e l' insulto sono la peggior maniera di mormorare, e di biasimare donde risulta sempre il maggior danno a chi lo usa.—Opere di Mengs, tomo primo, p. 243.

These admonitions are excellent, and want only the good example of the monitor to make them complete ; but Mengs, unfortunately, in his professional writings, has spoken of Reynolds in a manner that grossly violates his own doctrine ; so difficult is it, my good Doctor, to find a pacific preacher and his practice in perfect harmony with each other.

To feeling and fervent spirits there can hardly be any provocation more apt to excite asperity of language, than an insult offered to an object of their esteem and veneration. In writing upon Milton, and those who, to my apprehension, have insulted his name with contumelious severity, I may have been hurried beyond the bias of my temper, which is, I trust, neither irascible nor censorious ; but I will imitate some well meaning catholic writers, and making you, my dear Warton, my inquisitor as well as my patron, I will here very honestly say to you—“ Si quid dixerim contra spiritum caritatis evangelicæ indictum volo.”

Let me now hasten to apologize to you, as I

think I ought, for such deficiencies as your nice discernment cannot fail to observe in the work I address to you. You remember that Plutarch, the amiable prince of ancient biographers, has justly mentioned the advantage arising to a writer from residing in a city amply furnished with books ;-- it is my lot, you know, to live in a little sequestered village, and I chuse to do so for the reason which attached the good-natured Plutarch to his native Cheronæa, that it may not become less. Had it suited me to devote much time and labour to extensive researches in the public and private libraries in London, it is possible that I might have discovered some latent anecdotes relating to Milton ; yet after the patient inquiries of the intelligent and indefatigable Dr. Birch, and after the signal discovery of your successful brother, little novelty could be expected to reward the toil of such investigation ; and perhaps a writer too eager to make new discoveries on this beaten ground, might be hurried by such eagerness into the censurable temerity of Peck the antiquarian, who, in his memoirs of the great poet, has affixed the

name of Milton to a portrait and a poem that do not belong to him.

Though my work has been executed in a retired village of England, my enquiries have extended far beyond the limits of our own country, by the aid of some intelligent and obliging friends, who had the kindness to search for me the great libraries of Paris and Rome, in the hope of discovering some neglected composition, or latent anecdote, that might be useful to a biographer of Milton. The success of these researches has not been equal to the kindness and the zeal of the intelligent enquirers; but an unexpected favor from a literary friend, who is known to me only by his writings, has enabled me to throw, perhaps, a new ray of light on that inviting subject of conjecture, the real origin of Milton's greatest performance.

In the dissertation, which I have annexed to this life of the poet, you will find some account of an Italian drama on the inhabitants of Paradise, which, though it rises not to the poetical spirit of Andreini, may have had some influence I appre-

hend, on the fancy of Milton. You will also find that I have followed your example, in recommending your old acquaintance Andreini to the notice of the public. He happened to engage my attention, when the health of my revered friend, Mr. Cowper, allowed him to be my guest ; and after our more serious morning studies, it afforded us a pleasant relaxation and amusement to throw some parts of the Adamo into English, in a rapid yet metrical translation. In this joint work, or rather pastime, it would be needless, if it were possible, to distinguish the lines of the united translators, as the the version had no higher aim than to gratify the curiosity of the English reader, without aspiring to praise. A very different character is due to that version of Milton's Latin Poetry, which my excellent friend has finished with such care and felicity, that even from the separate specimens of it, with which this life is embellished, you, my dear Warton, and every delicate of judge of poetry, will, I am confident, esteem it an absolute model of poetical translation. For the honour of Milton and for that of his most worthy interpreter, I hope


that the whole of this admirable performance may be soon imparted to the public, as I trust that returning health will happily restore its incomparable author to his suspended studies; an event that may affect the moral interest and the mental delight of all the world—for rarely, very rarely indeed, has heaven bestowed on any individual such an ample, such a variegated portion of true poetical genius, and never did it add greater purity of heart to that divine yet perilous talent, to guide and sanctify its exertion. Those who are best acquainted with the writings and the virtues of my inestimable friend, must be most fervent in their hopes, that in the course and the close of his poetical career he may resemble his great and favorite predecessors, Homer and Milton; their spirits were cheered and illuminated in the decline of life by a fresh portion of poetical power; and if in their latter productions they rose not to the full force and splendor of their meridian glory, they yet enchanted mankind with the sweetness and serenity of their descending light.

Literature, which Cicero has so eloquently described as the friend of every period and condition of human existence, is peculiarly the friend of age; a truth of which, you, my dear Warton, are a very lively illustration—you, who at a season of life when unlettered mortals generally murmur against the world, are ministering to its instruction and its pleasure by continuing to write with temper, vivacity, and grace.

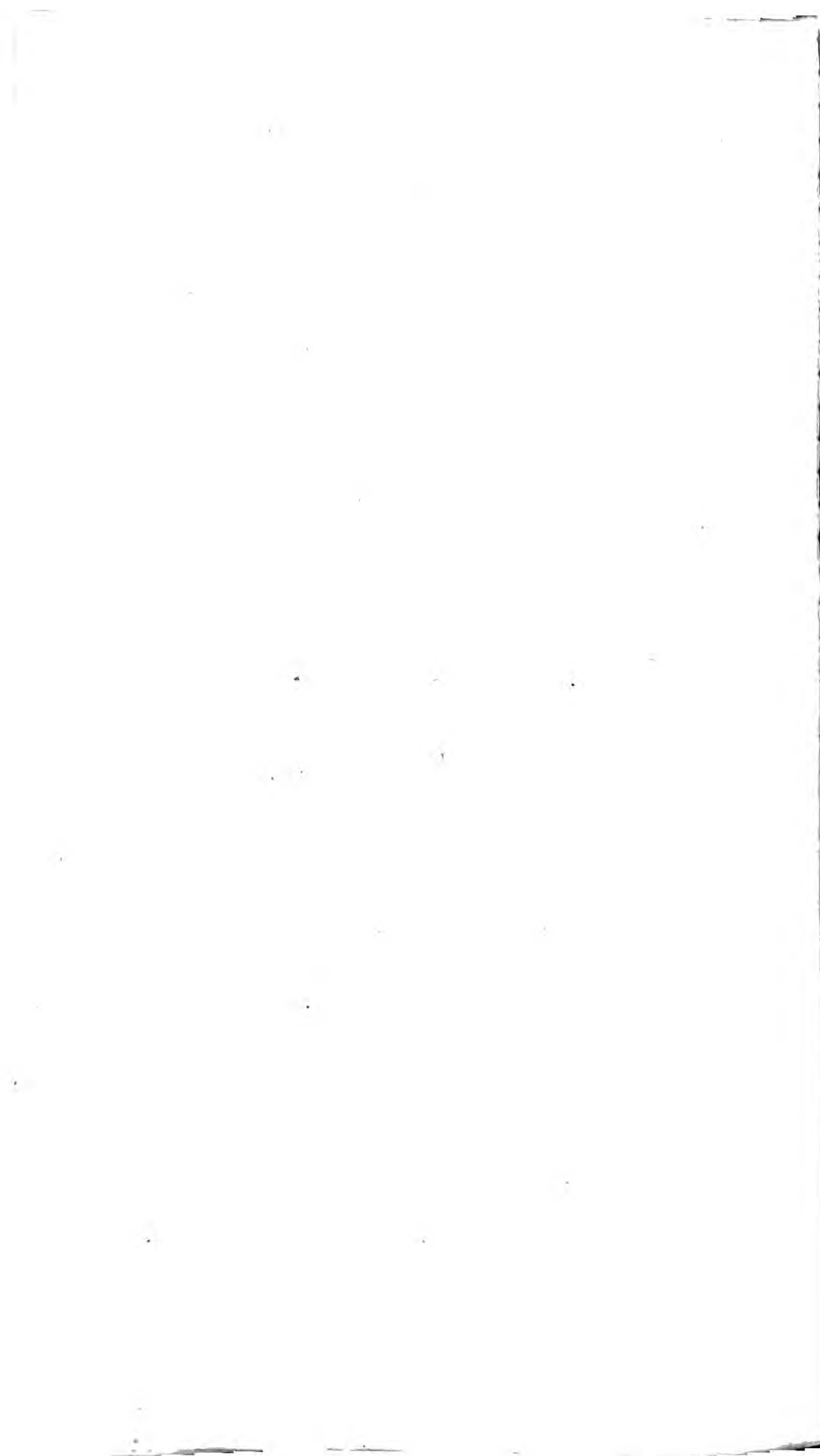
That you may long retain and display this happy assemblage of endowments, so rare in a critical veteran, is the cordial wish of many, and particularly the wish of your very sincere and affectionate friend,

W. H.

EARTHAM, OCT. 29, 1795.



THE
LIFE OF MILTON.



THE
LIFE OF MILTON.

PART I.

L' ETA PRECORSE, E LA SPERANZA; E PRESTI
PAREANO I FIOR, QUANDO N' USCIRO I FRUTTI.

Tasso.

THE character of Milton has been scrutinized with all the minuteness of investigation, which opposite passions could suggest. The virulent antagonist and the enraptured idolater have pursued his steps with equal pertinacity; nor have we wanted men of learning and virtue, who, devoid of prejudice and enthusiasm, both in politics and in

poetry, have endeavoured to weigh his merits exactly, in the balance of truth and reason.

What new light then can be thrown upon a life, whose incidents have been so eagerly collected, and so frequently retailed? What novelty of remark can be expected in a review of poems, whose beauties and blemishes have been elaborately examined in critical dissertations, that almost rival in excellence the poetry they discuss? Assuredly but little; yet there remains, perhaps, one method of giving a degree of interest and illustration to the life of Milton, which it has not hitherto received; a method which his accomplished friend of Italy, the Marquis of Villa, in some measure adopted in his interesting life of Tasso; and which two engaging biographers of later date the Abbé de Sade and Mr. Mason, have carried to greater perfection in their respective memoirs of Petrarch and of Gray. By weaving into their narrative selections of verse and prose from the various writings of the

authors they wished to commemorate, each of these affectionate memorialists may be said to have taught the poet he loved “to become his own biographer;” an experiment that may, perhaps, be tried on Milton, with the happiest effect! as in his works, and particularly in those, that are at present the least known, he has spoken frequently of himself: Not from vanity, a failing too cold and low for his ardent and elevated mind; but, in advanced life, from motives of justice and honor, to defend himself against the poisoned arrows of slander; and, in his younger days, from that tenderness and simplicity of heart, which lead a youthful poet to make his own affections and amusements the chief subjects of his song.

The great aim of the subsequent account is to render full and perfect justice to the general character of Milton. His manners and cast of mind, in various periods of life, may appear in a new and agreeable light, from the following collection and arrangement of the many little sketches,

which his own hand has occasionally given us, of his passions and pursuits. Several of these, indeed, have been fondly assembled by Toland or Richardson; men, who, different as they were in their general sentiments and principles, yet sympathized completely in their zeal for the renown of Milton; delighting to dwell on his character with "that shadow of friendship, that complacency and ardour of attachment, which (as Pope has observed in speaking of Homer,) we naturally feel for the great "geniuses of former time."—But those who have endeavoured to illustrate the personal history of the great English Author, by exhibiting passages from some of his neglected works, have almost confined themselves to selections from his prose.

There is an ampler field for the study of his early temper and turn of mind in his Latin and Italian Poetry: here the heart and spirit of Milton are displayed with all the frankness of youth. I select what has a peculiar tendency to shew, in the

clearest light, his native disposition, because his character as a man, appears to have been greatly mistaken. I am under no fear that the frequency or length of such citations may be exposed to censure, having the pleasure and advantage of presenting them to the English reader in the elegant and spirited version of a poet and a friend—with pride and delight I add the name of Cowper. Since I am indebted to Milton for a friendship, which I regard as honorable in the highest degree, may I be indulged in the hope of leaving a lasting memorial of it in these pages.

A book, devoted to the honor of Milton, may admit, I trust, without impropriety, the praises due to an author, who is become his poetical interpreter; an office which the spirit of the divine bard may be gratified in his having assumed; for, assuredly, my friend bears no common resemblance to his most illustrious predecessor, not only in the energy and hallowed use of poetical talents, but in that beneficent fervour and purity of heart, which entitle the

great poet to as large a portion of affectionate esteem, as he has long possessed of admiration.

John Milton was born in London, on the 9th of December, 1608, at the house of his father, in Bread-street, and baptized on the 20th of the same month. His christian name descended to him from his grandfather. The family, once opulent proprietors of Milton, in Oxfordshire, lost that estate in the civil wars of York and Lancaster, and was indebted, perhaps, to adversity for much higher distinction than opulence can bestow. John, the grandfather of the poet, became deputy ranger in the forest of Shotover, not far from Oxford: and intending to educate his son as a gentleman, he placed him at Christ-Church, in that university; but being himself a rigid Papist, he disinherited the young and devout scholar, for an attachment to the doctrines of the Reformation, and reduced him to the necessity of quitting the path of literature for a less honorable but more lucrative profession.

The discarded student applied himself

to the employment of a scrivener, which has varied with the variations of life and manners. A scrivener, in remoter ages, is supposed to have been a mere transcriber ; but at the period we speak of, his occupation united the two profitable branches of drawing contracts and of lending money. The emoluments of this profession enabled the father of Milton to bestow most abundantly on his son, those advantages of education, which had been cruelly withdrawn from himself. The poet was happy in both his parents ; and to the merits of both he has borne affectionate and honorable testimony. The maiden name of his mother has been disputed ; but it seems reasonable to credit the account of Philips, her grandson, the earliest biographer of Milton, who had the advantage of living with him as a relation and a disciple.

Her name, according to this author, who speaks highly of her virtue, was Caston and her family derived from Wales. Milton in mentioning his own origin, with a decent pride, in reply to one of his revilers, asserts,

that his mother was a woman of exemplary character, and peculiarly distinguished by her extensive charity.* The parental kindness and the talents of his father he has celebrated in a Latin poem, which cannot be too warmly admired, as a monument of filial tenderness, and poetical enthusiasm. It is probable, that the severe manner in which that indulgent father had been driven from the pursuits of learning induced him to exert uncommon liberality and ardour in the education of his son. Though immersed himself in a lucrative occupation, he seems to have retained great elegance of mind, and to have amused himself with literature and music; to the latter he applied so successfully, that, according to Dr. Burney, the accomplished historian of that captivating art, “he became a voluminous composer, equal in science, if not in genius, to the best musicians of his age.” Nor did his talents pass without celebrity or reward. Philips relates

* Londini sum natus, genere honesto, patre viro integerrimo, matre probatissimâ, et eleemosynis per viciniam potissimum notâ

Defensio secunda.

that for one of his devotional compositions in forty parts, he was honored with a gold chain and medal by a Polish prince, to whom he presented it. This mark of distinction was conferred on men, who rose to great excellence in different arts and sciences : perhaps the ambition of young Milton was first awakened by these gifts of honor bestowed upon his father.*

* The father of Milton has been lately mentioned as an author.—He was thought to have published, in the year of the poet's birth, a little book, with the quaint title of "A Sixe Fold Politician."—Mr. Warton observed, that the curious publication ascribed to Milton's father may be found in the Bodleian Library; that, "it appears to be a satire on characters pretending to wisdom or policy, and is not void of learning and wit, such as we often find affectedly and awkwardly blended in the essay-writers of that age."

By the favor of Mr. Isaac Reed, who was most liberal in the communication of the literary rarities he had collected, I have perused this singular performance, and perfectly agreed with its obliging possessor, and his accomplished friend, Dr. Farmer, that although in the records of the Stationers Company it is ascribed to John Milton, we may rather assign it to John Melton, author of the *Astrologaster*, than to the father of our poet.—

A parent who could enliven the drudgery of a dull profession by a variety of elegant pursuits, must have been happy to discern, and eager to cherish, the first dawning of genius in his child. In this point of view we may contemplate with peculiar delight, the infantine portrait of Milton, by that elegant and faithful artist, Cornelius Jansen. Aubrey, the antiquarian, observing in his manuscript memoirs of our author, that he was ten years old when this picture was drawn, affirms that "he was then a poet." This expression may lead us to imagine, that the portrait was executed to encourage the infant author; and if so, it might operate as a powerful incentive to his future exertion. The permanent bias of an active spirit often originates in the petty incidents of childhood; and as no human mind ever glowed with a more intense, or with a purer flame of literary ambition, than the mind of Milton, it may not be displeasing to con-
jec-

The latter will lose but little in being no longer regarded as its author, especially as we have different and more honorable proofs of his attachment to literature.

ture how it first caught the sparks, and gradually mounted to a blaze of unrivalled vehemence and splendor.

His education, as Dr. Newton has well observed, united the opposite advantages of private and public instruction. Of his early passion for letters he has left the following record, in his second defence*: “ My father destined me from my infancy to the study of polite literature, which I embraced with such avidity, that from the age of twelve, I hardly ever retired from my books before midnight. This proved the first source of injury to my eyes, whose natural weakness was attended with frequent pains of the head; but as all these disadvantages could not repress my ardour for learning, my father

* Pater me puerulum humaniarum literarum studiis destinavit; quas ita avide arripui, ut ab anno ætatis duodecimo vix unquam ante mediam noctem a lucubrationibus cubitum discederem; quæ prima oculorum pernicies fuit, quorum ad naturalem debilitatem accesserant et crebri capitis dolores; quæ omnia cum discendi impetum non retardarent, et in ludo literario, et sub aliis domi magistris erudiendum quotidie curavit.

took care to have me instructed by various preceptors both at home and at school." His domestic tutor was Thomas Young, of Essex, who being obliged to quit his country on account of religious opinions, became minister to the English merchants at Ham-
burgh. It was probably from this learned and conscientious man, that Milton caught not only his passion for literature, but that steadiness and unconquerable integrity of character, by which he was distinguished through all the vicissitudes of a tempestuous life. His reverential gratitude and affection towards this preceptor are recorded in two Latin epistles*, and a Latin elegy addressed

* The high opinion, which Milton entertained of his preceptor, is so gracefully expressed in one of these letters, that I select it as a specimen of his epistolary style in the early period of life.

Thomæ Junio,

Inspectis literis tuis (preceptor optime) unicum hoc mihi supervacaneum occurrebat, quod tardæ scripti-
tionis excusationem attuleris; tametsi enim literis tuis nihil mihi queat optabilius accedere, qui pos-
sim tamen aut debeam sperare otii tibi tantum a
rebus seriis, et sanctoribus esse, ut mihi semper

to him: they suggest a most favorable idea of the poet's native disposition, and furnish

respondere vacet; præsertim cum illud humanitatis omnino sit, officii minime. Te vero oblitum esse mei ut suspicer, tam multa tua de me recens meritâ nequaquam sinunt. Neque enim video quorsum tantis onustum beneficiis ad oblivionem dimitteres. Rus tuum accercitus, simul ac ver adoleverit, libenter adveniam, ad capessendas anni tuique non minus colloquii delicias, et ab urbano strepitu subducam me paulisper, ad stoam tuam Icenorum, tanquam ad celeberrimam illam Zenonis porticum aut Ciceronis Tusculanum, ubi tu in re modica regio sane animo veluti Serranus aliquis aut Curius in agello tuo placide regnas, deque ipsis divitiis, ambitione, pompâ, luxuriâ, et quicquid vulgus hominum miratur et stupet, quasi triumphum agis fortunæ contemptor. Cæterum qui tarditatis culpam deprecatus es, hanc mihi vicissim, ut spero, præcipitantiam indulgebis; cum enim epistolam hanc in extremum distulissem, malui pauca, eaque rudiuscule scribere, quam nihil.—Vale vir observande.

Cantabrigia. Julii 21, 1628.

In perusing your letters, my excellent preceptor, this only appeared to me superfluous, that you apologize for a delay in writing; for although nothing can be more desirable to me than your letters, yet what right have I to hope, that your serious and sacred duties can allow you such leisure, that you can always find time

an effectual antidote to the poison of that most injurious assertion, that "he hated all, whom he was required to obey."—Could untractable pride be the characteristic of a mind, which has expressed its regard for a

enough to answer me, especially when your writing is entirely an act of kindness, and by no means of duty. The many and recent favors I have received from you will by no means suffer me to suspect that you can forget me; nor can I conceive it possible that, having loaded me with such benefits, you should now dismiss me from your remembrance. I shall willingly attend your summons to your rural retirement on the first appearance of Spring, to enjoy with equal relish the delights of the season and of your conversation. I shall withdraw myself for a little time from the bustle of the city, to your porch in Suffolk, as to the famous portico of the Stoic, or the Tusculum of Cicero, where, ennobling a moderate estate by an imperial mind, you reign contentedly in your little field, like a Serranus or a Curius, and triumph, as it were, over opulence, ambition, pomp, luxury (and whatever is idolized by the herd of men) by looking down upon fortune: but as you excuse yourself for delay, let me hope that you will forgive me for haste, since, having deferred this letter to the last moment, I chose to send a few lines, though not very accurately written, rather than to be silent. Farewell my reverend friend.

disciplinarian sufficiently rigid, with a tenderness so conspicuous in the following verses of the fourth Elegy ?

Vivit ibi antiquæ clarus pietatis honore,
 Præsul, christicolas pascere doctus oves ;
 Ille quidem est animæ plusquam pars altera nostræ,
 Dimidio vitæ vivere cogor ego.
 Hei mihi quot pelagi, quot montes interjecti,
 Me faciunt aliâ parte carere mei !
 Charior ille mihi, quam tu, doctissime Graiûm,
 Cliniadi, pronepos qui Telamonis erat ;
 Quamque Stagyrites generoso magnus alumno,
 Quem peperit Lybico Chaonis alma Jovi.
 Qualis Amyntorides, qualis Philyreius heros
 Myrmidonum regi, talis et ille mihi.
 Primus ego Aonios illo præunte recessus
 Lustrabam, et bifidi sacra vireta jugi,
 Pieriosque hausi latices, Clioque favente,
 Castalio sparsi læta ter ora mero.

There lives, deep learn'd, and primitively just,
 A faithful steward of his Christian trust;
 My friend, and favorite inmate of my heart,
 That now is forc'd to want its better part.
 What mountains now, and seas, alas! how wide!
 Me from my other, dearer self divide!

Dear as the sage, renown'd for moral truth,
 To the prime spirit of the Attic youth!
 Dear as the Stagyrite to Ammon's son,
 His pupil, who disdain'd the world he won!
 Nor so did Chiron, or so Phoenix shine,
 In young Achilles' eyes, as he in mine:
 First led by him, thro' sweet Aonian shade,
 Each sacred haunt of Pindus I survey'd;
 Explor'd the fountain, and the Muse my guide,
 Thrice steep'd my lips in the Castalian tide.

And again, in expressing his regret
 upon the length of their separation:

*Nec dum ejus licuit mihi lumina pascere vultu,
 Aut linguæ dulces aure bibisse sonos.*

Nor yet his friendly features feast my sight,
 Nor his sweet accents my fond ear delight.

As the tenderness of the young poet is admirably displayed in the beginning of this Elegy, his more acknowledged characteristic, religious fortitude, is not less admirable in the close of it.

At tu sūme animos, nec spes cadat anxia curis,
 Nec tua concutiat decolor ossa metus.
 Sis etenim quamvis fulgentibus obsitus armis,
 Intententque tibi millia tela necem,
 At nullis vel inerme latus violabitur armis,
 Deque tuo cuspis nulla cruore bibet ;
 Namque eris ipse dei radiante sub ægide tutus,
 Ille tibi custos, et pugil ille tibi :
 Et tu (quod superest miseris) sperare memento,
 Et tu magnanimo pectore vince mala ;
 Nec dubites quandoque frui melioribus annis,
 Atque iterum patrios posse videre lares.

But thou, take courage, strive against despair,
 Shake not with dread, nor nourish anxious care.
 What tho' grim war on every side appears,
 And thou art menac'd by a thousand spears,
 Not one shall drink thy blood, not one offend
 Ev'n the defenceless bosom of my friend ;
 For thee the ægis of thy God shall hide ;
 Jehovah's self shall combat on thy side ;
 Thou, therefore, as the most afflicted may,
 Still hope, and triumph o'er thy evil day ;
 Trust thou shalt yet behold a happier time,
 And yet again enjoy thy native clime.

The reader, inclined to sympathise in
 the joys of Milton, will be gratified in being

informed, that preceptor, whose exile and poverty he pathetically lamented, and whose prosperous return he predicted, was in a few years restored to his country, and became Master of Jesus College, in Cambridge.

As the year in which he quitted England (1623) corresponds with the fifteenth year of his pupil's age, it is probable that Milton was placed, at that time, under the care of Mr. Gill and his son; the former, chief master of St. Paul's school, the latter, his assistant, and afterwards his successor. It is remarkable, that Milton, who has been so uncandidly represented as an uncontrollable spirit, and a spurner of all just authority, seems to have contracted a tender attachment to more than one disciplinarian concerned in his education. He is said to have been the favorite scholar of the younger Gill; and he has left traces of their friendship in three Latin epistles, that express the highest esteem for the literary character and poetical talents of his instructor.

On the 12th of February, 1624, he was entered, not as a sizer, which some of his

biographers have erroneously asserted, but as a pensioner of Christ's College, in Cambridge. "At this time," says Doctor Johnson, "he was eminently skilled in the Latin tongue, and he himself, by annexing the dates to his first compositions, a boast of which the learned Politian had given him an example, seems to commend the earliness of his own proficiency to the notice of posterity; but the products of his vernal fertility have been surpassed by many, and particularly by his contemporary, Cowley. Of the powers of the mind it is difficult to form an estimate; many have excelled Milton in their first essays, who never rose to works like Paradise Lost."

This is the first of many remarks, replete with detraction, in which an illustrious author has indulged his spleen against Milton, in a life of the poet, where an ill-subdued propensity to censure is ever combating with a necessity to commend. The partisans of the powerful critic, from a natural partiality to their departed master, affect to consider his malignity as existing only

in the prejudices of those who endeavour to counteract his injustice. A biographer of Milton ought therefore to regard it as his indispensable duty to shew how far this malignity is diffused through a long series of observations, which affect the reputation both of the poet and the man ; a duty that must be painful in proportion to the sincerity of our esteem for literary excellence ; since different as they were in their principles, their manners, and their writings, both the poet and his critical biographer are assuredly entitled to the praise of exalted genius. Perhaps in the republic of letters there never existed two writers more deservedly distinguished, not only for the energy of their mental faculties, but for a generous and devout desire to benefit mankind by their exertion.

Yet it must be lamented, and by the lovers of Milton in particular, that a moralist, who has given us, in the Rambler, such sublime lessons for the discipline of the heart and mind, should be unable to preserve his own from that acrimonious spirit of detraction which led him to depreciate, to the ut-

most of his power, the rare abilities, and perhaps the still rarer integrity, of Milton. It may be said, that the truly eloquent and splendid encomium, which he has bestowed on the great work of the poet, ought to exempt him from such a charge. The singular beauties and effect of this eulogy shall be mentioned in the proper place, and with all the applause they merit; but here it is just to recollect, that the praise of the encomiast is nearly confined to the sentence he passes as a critic; his more diffusive detraction may be traced in almost every page of the biographer: not to encounter it on its first appearance, and wherever it is visible and important, would be to fail in that justice and regard towards the character of Milton, which, he, perhaps, of all men, has most eminently deserved.

In the preceding citation it is evidently the purpose of Dr. Johnson to degrade Milton below Cowley, and many other poets distinguished by juvenile compositions; but Mr. Warton has, with great taste and judgment, exposed the error of Johnson, in pre-

ferring the Latin poetry of Cowley to that of Milton. An eminent foreign critic has bestowed that high praise on the juvenile productions of our author, which his prejudiced countryman is inclined to deny. Morhoff has affirmed, with equal truth and liberality, that the verses, which Milton produced in his childhood, discover both the fire and judgment of maturer life : a commendation that no impartial reader will be inclined to extenuate, who peruses the spirited epistle to his exiled preceptor, composed in his eighteenth year.

Some of his English verses bear an earlier date. The first of his juvenile productions, in the language which he was destined to ennoble, is a paraphrase of the hundred and fourteenth psalm ; it was executed at the age of fifteen, and discovers a power, that Dryden, and other more presumptuous critics, have unjustly denied to Milton, the power of moving with facility in the fetters of rhyme : this power is still more conspicuous in the poem he wrote at the age of seventeen, on the death of his sister's child ; a

composition peculiarly entitled to the notice of those, who love to contemplate the early dawn of poetical genius. In this performance, puerile, as it is in every sense of the word, the intelligent reader may yet discern as in the bud, all the striking characteristics of Milton; his affectionate sensibility, his superior imagination, and all that native tendency to devotional enthusiasm,

Which sets the heart on fire,
To spurn the sordid world, and unto Heav'n aspire.

Admirably trained as the youth of the poet was to acquire academical honor by the union of industry and talents, he seems to have experienced at Cambridge a chequered fortune, very similar to his destiny in the world. It appears from some remarkable passages in the Latin exercises, which he recited in his College, that he was at first an object of partial severity, and afterwards of general admiration. He had differed in opinion concerning a plan of academical studies with some persons of authority in

his college, and thus excited their displeasure. He speaks of them as highly incensed against him ; but expresses, with the most liberal sensibility, his surprise, delight, and gratitude, in finding that his enemies forgot their animosity to honor him with unexpected applause.

An idle story has been circulated concerning his treatment in College. "I am ashamed," says Dr. Johnson, "to relate what I fear is true, that Milton was the last student in either University that suffered the public indignity of corporal punishment." In confirmation of this incident, which appears improbable, though supported by Mr. Warton, the biographical critic alludes the following passage from the first Elegy ;

Jam nec arundiferum mihi cura revisere Camum,

Nec dudum vetiti me laris angit amor;

Nec duri libet usque minas perferre magistri,

Cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo,

Nor zeal nor duty now my steps impel

To reedy Cam and my forbidden cell;

'Tis time that I a pedant's threats disdain,
And fly from wrongs my soul will ne'er sustain.

Dr. Johnson considers these expressions as an absolute proof, that Milton was obliged to undergo this indignity; but they may suggest a very different idea. From all the light we can obtain concerning this anecdote, it seems most probable, that Milton was threatened, indeed, with what he considered as a punishment, not only dishonorable but unmerited; that his manly spirit disdained to submit to it; and that he was therefore obliged to acquiesce in a short exile from Cambridge.

In speaking of his academical life, it is necessary to obviate another remark of a similar tendency.

“There is reason,” says Johnson, “to suspect that he was regarded in his college with no great fondness.” To counteract this invidious insinuation we are furnished with a reply, made by Milton himself, to this very calumny, originally fabricated by one of his contemporaries; a calumny, which

he had so fully refuted, that it ought to have revived no more! he begins with thanking his reviler for the aspersion: "It has given me," he says, "an apt occasion to acknowledge publicly, with all grateful mind, that more than ordinary favor and respect, which I found, above any of my equals, at the hand of those courteous and learned men, the Fellows of that College, wherein I spent some years; who, at my parting, after I had taken two degrees, as the manner is, signified many ways how much better it would content them that I would stay, as by many letters, full of kindness and loving respect, both before that time and long after, I was assured of their singular affection towards me."—
Prose Works, vol. 1, p. 115.

The Latin poems of Milton are yet entitled to more of our attention because they exhibit lively proofs, that he possessed both tenderness and enthusiasm, those primary constituents of a poet, at an early period of life, and in the highest degree: they have additional value, from making us acquainted

with several interesting particulars of his youth and many of his opinions, which must have had considerable influence on his moral character.

His sixth Elegy, addressed to his bosom friend, Charles Diodati, seems to be founded on the idea, which he may be said to have verified in his own conduct, that strict habits of temperance and virtue are highly conducive to the perfection of great poetical powers. To poets of a lighter class he recommends, with graceful pleasantry, much convivial enjoyment; but for those, who aspire to epic renown, he prescribes even the simple regimen of Pythagoras.

*Ille quidem parce, Samii pro more magistri,
 Vivat, et innocuos præbeat herba cibos;
 Stet prope fagineo pellucida lympha catillo,
 Sobriaque e puro pocula fonte bibat.
 Additur huic scelerisque vacans, et casta juvenus,
 Et rigidi mores, et sine labe manus.
 Qualis veste nitens sacra, et lustralibus undis,
 Surgis ad infensos, augur, iture Deos.*

Simply let these, like him of Samos, live;
 Let herbs to them a bloodless banquet give;

In beechen goblets let their beverage shine;
 Cool from the crystal spring their sober wine:
 Their youth should pass in innocence, secure
 From stain licentious, and in manners pure;
 Pure as Heaven's minister, array'd in white,
 Propitiating the gods with lustral rite.

In his *Elegy on the Spring*, our poet expresses the fervent emotions of his fancy in terms, that may be almost regarded as a prophetic description of his sublimest work

*Jam mihi mens liquidi raptatur in ardua cæli,
 Perque vagas nubes corpore liber eo;
 Intuiturque animus toto quid agatur Olympo,
 Nec fugiunt oculos Tartara cæca meos.*

I mount, and, undepress'd by cumbrous clay,
 Thro' cloudy regions win my easy way;
 My spirit searches all the realms of light,
 And no Tartarean depths elude my sight.

With these verses it may be pleasing to compare a similar passage in his English vacation exercise, where, addressing his native language, as applied to an inconsiderable purpose, he adds,

Yet I had rather, if I were to chuse,
Thy service in some graver subject use ;
Such as may make thee search thy coffers round,
Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound ;
Such, where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and at Heav'n's door
Look in, and see each blissful deity,
How he before the thunderous throne doth lie.

“ It is worth the curious reader's attention to observe how much the *Paradise Lost* corresponds with this prophetic wish,” says Mr. Thyer, one of the most intelligent and liberal of English commentators.

The young poet, who thus expressed his ambition, was then in his nineteenth year. At the age of twenty-one (the period of his life when that pleasing portrait of him was executed, which the Speaker Onslow obtained from the executors of his widow) he composed his *Ode on the Nativity*; a poem that surpasses in fancy and devotional fire a composition on the same subject by that celebrated and devout poet of Spain, Lopez de Vega.

The most trifling performances of Milton

are so singular, that we may regret even the loss of the verses alluded to by Aubrey, as the offspring of his childhood. Perhaps no juvenile author ever displayed, with such early force,

“ The spirit of a youth
Who means to be of note.”

His mind, even in his boyish days, seems to have glowed, like the fancy and furnace of an alchymist, with incessant hope and preparation for astonishing productions.

Such austerity and moroseness have been falsely attributed to Milton, that a reader, acquainted with him only as he appears in the page of Johnson, must suppose him little formed for love ; but his poetry in general, and especially the compositions we are now speaking of, may convince us, that he felt, with the most exquisite sensibility, the magic of beauty, and all the force of female attraction. His seventh Elegy exhibits a lively picture of his first passion ; he represents himself as captivated by an unknown fair, who, though he saw

her but for a moment, made a deep impression on his heart.

Protinus insoliti subierunt corda furores,
 Uror amans intus, flammaque totus eram.
 Interea misero quæ jam mihi sola placebat,
 Ablata est oculis non reditura meis.
 Ast ego progredior tacite querèbundus, et excors,
 Et dubius volui sæpe referre pedem.
 Findor et hæc remanet: sequitur pars altera votum,
 Raptaque tam subito gaudia flere juvat.

A fever, new to me, of fierce desire
 Now seiz'd my soul, and I was all on fire;
 But she the while, whom only I adore,
 Was gone, and vanish'd to appear no more:
 In silent sorrow I pursue my way;
 I pause, I turn, proceed, yet wish to stay;
 And while I follow her in thought, bemoan
 With tears my soul's delight so quickly flown.

The juvenile poet then addresses himself to love, with a request that beautifully expresses all the inquietude, and all the irresolution, of hopeless attachment.

Deme meos tandem, verum nec deme, furores;
 Nescio cur, miser est suaviter omnis amans.

Remove, no, grant me still this raging woe ;
Sweet is the wretchedness that lovers know.

After having contemplated the youthful fancy of Milton under the influence of a sudden and vehement affection, let us survey him in a different point of view, and admire the purity and vigour of mind, which he exerted at the age of twenty-three, in meditation on his past and his future days.

To a friend, who had remonstrated with him on his delay to enter upon active life, he ascribes that delay to an intense desire of rendering himself more fit for it. " Yet (he says) that you may see that I am
" something suspicious of myself, and do
" take notice of a certain belatedness in me,
" I am the bolder to send you some of my
" night-ward thoughts, some while since,
" because they come in not altogether unfitly
" made up in a Petrarchian stanza, which I
" told you of:"

S O N N E T.

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

This sonnet may be regarded, perhaps, as a refutation of that injurious criticism, which has asserted, "the best sonnets of Milton are entitled only to this negative commendation, that they are not bad;" but it has a superior value, which induced me to introduce it here, as it seems to reveal the ruling principle, which gave bias and energy to the mind and conduct of Milton;

I mean the habit, which he so early adopted of considering himself

“As ever in his great task-master’s eye.”

It was, perhaps, the force and permanency with which this persuasion was impressed on his heart, that enabled him to ascend the sublimest heights, both of genius and of virtue.

When Milton began his course of academical study, he had views of soon entering the church, to “whose service,” he says, “by the intentions of my parents and friends “I was destined of a child, and in mine own “resolutions.” It was a religious scruple that prevented him from taking orders ; and though his mode of thinking may be deemed erroneous, there is a refined and hallowed probity in his conduct on this occasion, that is entitled to the highest esteem ; particularly when we consider, that although he declined the office of a minister, he devoted himself with intense application, to what he considered as the interest of true religion.

The sincerity and fervour with which he speaks on this topic must be applauded by every candid person, however differing from him on points, that relate to our religious establishment.

“For me (says this zealous and disinterested advocate for simple christianity) I have determined to lay up, as the best treasure and solace of a good old age, if God vouchsafe it me, the honest liberty of free speech from my youth, where I shall think it available in so dear a concernment as the church’s good.” In the polemical writings of Milton there is a merit to which few polemics can pretend; they were the pure dictates of conscience, and produced by the sacrifice of his favorite pursuits: this he has stated in the following very forcible and interesting language:

“Concerning therefore this wayward subject against prelaty, the touching whereof is so distasteful and disquietous to a number of men, as by what hath been said I may deserve of charitable readers to be credited, that neither envy nor gall hath entered me

upon this controversy, but the enforcement of conscience only, and a preventive fear, lest the omitting of this duty should be against me, when I would store up to myself the good provision of peaceful hours; so lest it should be still imputed to be, as I have found it hath been, that some self pleasing humour of vain glory has incited me to contest with men of high estimation, now while green years are upon my head; from this needless surmial I shall hope to dissuade the intelligent and equal auditor, if I can but say successfully, that which in this exigent behoves me, although I would be heard only, if it might be, by the elegant and learned reader, to whom principally for a while I shall beg leave I may address myself: to him it will be no new thing, though I tell him, that if I hunted after praise by the ostentation of wit and learning, I should not write thus out of mine own season, when I have neither yet completed to my mind the full circle of my private studies (although I complain not of any insufficiency to the matter in hand) or were

I ready to my wishes, it were a folly to commit any thing elaborately composed to the careless and interrupted listening of these tumultuous times. Next, if I were wise only to mine own ends, I would certainly take such a subject, as of itself might catch applause ; whereas this has all the disadvantages on the contrary ; and such a subject, as the publishing whereof might be delayed at pleasure, and time enough to pencil it over with all the curious touches of art, even to the perfection of a faultless picture ; when, as in this argument, the not deferring is of great moment to the good speeding, that if solidity have leisure to do her office, art cannot have much. Lastly, I should not chuse this manner of writing, wherein, knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account, but of my left hand.' Prose Works, vol. 1. page 62.

Such is the delineation that our author has given us of his own mind and motives in his treatise on Church Government, which

the mention of his early design to take orders has led me to anticipate.

Having passed seven years in Cambridge, and taken his two degrees, that of bachelor, in 1628, and that of master, in 1632, he was admitted to the same degree at Oxford, in 1635. On quitting an academical life, he was, according to his own testimony, regretted by the fellows of his College; but he regarded the house of his father as a retreat favorable to his literary pursuits, and, at the age of twenty-four, he gladly shared the rural retirement, in which his parents had recently settled, at Horton, in Buckinghamshire: here he devoted himself, for five years, to study, with that ardour and perseverance, to which, as he says himself, in a letter to his friend, Charles Diodati, his nature forcibly inclined him. The letter I am speaking of, was written in the last year of his residence under the roof of his father, and exhibits a lively picture of his progress in learning, his passion for virtue, and his hope of renown.

“To give you an account of my studies,”

he says, " I have brought down the affairs of the Greeks, in a continued course of reading, to the period in which they ceased to be Greeks. I have long been engaged in the obscurer parts of Italian history, under the Lombards, the Franks and the Germans, to the time in which liberty was granted them by the emperor Rodolphus ; from this point I think it best to pursue in separate histories, the exploits of each particular city*."

He shews himself, in this letter, most passionately attached to the Platonic philosophy : " As to other points, what God may have determined for me, I know not ; but this I know, that if he ever instilled an intense love of moral beauty into the breast of any man, he has instilled it into mine :

* De studiis etiam nostris fiet certior, Græcorum res continuatâ lectione deduximus usquequo illi Græci esse sunt desiti: Italorum in obscurâ re diu versati sumus sub Longobardis et Francis et Germanis ad illud tempus, quo illis ab Rodolpho Germaniæ rege concessa libertas est; exinde quid quæque civitas suo Marte gesserit, separatim legere præstabit.

Ceres, in the fable, pursued not her daughter with a greater keenness of enquiry, than I, day and night, the idea of perfection. Hence, wherever I find a man despising the false estimates of the vulgar, and daring to aspire in sentiment, language, and conduct, to what the highest wisdom, through every age, has taught us as most excellent, to him I unite myself by a sort of necessary attachment ; and if I am so influenced by nature or destiny, that by no exertion or labours of my own, I may exalt myself to this summit of worth and honor, yet no powers of heaven or earth will hinder me from looking with reverence and affection upon those, who have thoroughly attained this glory, or appear engaged in the successful pursuit of it.

“ You enquire with a kind of solicitude even into my thoughts.—Hear then, Diodati, but let me whisper in your ear, that I may not blush at my reply—I think (so help me Heaven) of immortality. You enquire also what I am about? I nurse my wings, and

meditate a flight; but my Pegasus rises as yet on very tender pinions. Let us be humbly wise!*”

* De cætero quidem quid de me statuerit Deus nescio; illud certe, δεινόν μοι ερωτά, εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ, τὴν καλὴν ἐνεσάξει: nec tanto Ceres labore, ut in fabulis est, liberam fertur quæsisisse filiam, quanto ego hanc τὴν καλὴν ἰδεῖαν veluti pulcherrimam quandam imaginem, per omnes rerum formas et facies; (πολλὰι γὰρ μορφαὶ τῶν Δαιμονίων) dies noctesque indagare soleo, et quasi certis quibusdam vestigiis ducentem sector. Unde fit, ut qui, spretis, quæ vulgus pravâ rerum æstimatione opinatur, id sentire, et loqui et esse audet, quod summa per omne ævum sapientia optimum esse docuit, illi me protinus, sicubi reperiam, necessitate quadam adjungam. Quod si ego sive naturâ, sive meo fato ita sum comparatus, ut nullâ contentione, et laboribus meis ad tale decus et fastigium laudis ipse valeam emergere, tamen quo minus qui eam gloriam assecuti sunt, aut eo feliciter aspirant, illos semper colam et suspiciam, nec dii puto nec homines prohibuerint.—Multa sollicite quæris, etiam quid cogitem. Audi, Theodate, verum in aurem ut ne rubeam, et sinito paulisper apud te grandia loquar: quid cogitem quæris? Ita me bonus deus, immortalitatem quid agam vero? πτεροφύω, et volare meditor: sed tenellis admodum adhuc pennis evahit se noster Pegasus: humile sapiamus.

This very interesting epistle, in which Milton pours forth his heart to the favorite friend of his youth, may convince every candid reader, that he possessed, in no common degree, two qualities very rarely united, ambitious ardour of mind and unaffected modesty. The poet, who speaks with such graceful humility of his literary achievements, had at this time written *Comus*, a composition that abundantly displays the variety and compass of his poetical powers. After he had delineated, with equal excellence, the frolics of gaiety and the triumphs of virtue, passing with exquisite transition from the most sportive to the sublimest tones of poetry, he might have spoken more confidently of his own productions without a particle of arrogance.

We know not exactly what poems he composed during his residence at Horton. The *Arcades* seems to have been one of his early compositions, and it was intended as a compliment to his fair neighbour, the accomplished Countess Dowager of Derby; she was the sixth daughter of Sir John

Spencer, and allied to Spencer the poet, who, with his usual modesty and tenderness, has celebrated her under the title of Amarillis. At the house of this lady, near Uxbridge, Milton is said to have been a frequent visitor. The Earl of Bridgewater, before whom, and by whose children, Comus was represented, had married a daughter of Ferdinando Earl of Derby, and thus, as Mr. Warton observes, it was for the same family that Milton wrote both the Arcades and Comus. It is probable that the pleasure which the Arcades afforded to the young relations of the Countess, gave rise to Comus, as Lawes, the musical friend of Milton, in dedicating the mask to the young Lord Brackley, her grandson, says, "this poem, which received its first occasion of birth from yourself and others of your noble family, and much honor from your own person in the performance."

These expressions of Lawes allude, perhaps, to the real incident, which is said to have supplied the subject of Comus, and may seem to confirm an anecdote related by Mr.

Warton, from a manuscript of Oldys ; that the young and noble performers in this celebrated drama were really involved in adventures very similar to their theatrical situation; that in visiting their relations, in Hertfordshire, they were benighted in a forest, and the lady Alice Egerton actually lost.

Whatever might be the origin of the mask, the modesty of the youthful poet appears very conspicuous in the following words of Lawes's dedication : " Although not openly acknowledged by the author, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely and so much desired, that the often copying of it, hath tired my pen, to give my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the public view."

Milton discovered a similar diffidence respecting his *Lycidas*, which was written while he resided with his father, in November, 1637. This exquisite poem, which, as Mr. Warton justly observes, " must have been either solicited as a favor by those whom the poet had left in his college, or was a voluntary contribution of friendship,

sent to them from the country," appeared first in the academical collection of verses on the death of Mr. Edward King, and was subscribed only with the initials of its author.

An animated and benevolent veteran of criticism, Doctor Warton, has considered a relish for the *Lycidas* as a test of true taste in poetry; and it certainly is a test, which no lover of Milton will be inclined to dispute; though it must exclude from the list of accomplished critics that intemperate censor of the great poet, who has endeavoured to destroy the reputation of his celebrated monody with the most insulting expressions of sarcastic contempt; expressions that no reader of a spirit truly poetical can peruse without mingled emotions of indignation and of pity! But the charms of *Lycidas* are of a texture too firm to be annihilated by the breath of derision: and though Dr. Johnson has declared the poem to be utterly destitute both of nature and of art, it will assuredly continue to be admired as long as

tenderness, imagination, and harmony, are regarded as genuine sources of poetical delight.

The effect of this favorite composition is exactly such as the poet intended to produce; it first engages the heart with the simplicity of just and natural sorrow, and then proceeds to elevate the mind with magnificent images, ennobled by affectionate and devotional enthusiasm.

The beauties of this pathetic and sublime monody are sufficiently obvious; but the reader who compares it with a poem on the same subject by Cleveland, once the popular rival of Milton, may derive pleasure from perceiving how infinitely our favorite poet has excelled, on this occasion, an eminent antagonist.

Though we find no circumstances, that may ascertain the date of the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, it seems probable, that those two enchanting pictures of rural life, and of the diversified delights arising from a contemplative mind, were composed at Horton. It was, perhaps, in the same situation, so

favorable to fancy, that Milton wrote the incomparable Latin poem addressed to his father. There are, indeed, some expressions in this performance, which may favor an opinion, that it ought to bear an earlier date; but it has such strength and manliness of sentiment, as incline me to suppose it written at this period; an idea that seems almost confirmed by the lines, that speak of his application to French and Italian, after the completion of his classical studies.

Whatever date may be assigned to it, the composition deserves our particular regard, since, of all his poems, it does the highest honor to his heart.

With what energy and tenderness is his filial gratitude expressed in the following graceful exordium :

Nunc mea Pierios cupiam per pectora fontes
Irriguas torquere vias, totumque per ora
Volvere laxatum gemino de vertice rivum,
Ut tenues oblita sonos, audacibus alis
Surgat in officium venerandi musa parentis.
Hoc utcunque tibi gratum, pater optime, carmen

Exiguum meditatur opus: nec novimus ipsi
 Aptius a nobis quæ possint munera donis
 Respondere tuis, quamvis nec maxima possint
 Respondere tuis, nedum ut par gratia donis
 Esse queat, vacuis quæ redditur arida verbis.

O that Pieria's spring would thro' my breast
 Pour it's inspiring influence, and rush
 No rill, but rather an o'er-flowing flood!
 That for my venerable father's sake,
 All meaner themes renounc'd, my muse, on wings
 Of duty borne, might reach a loftier strain!
 For thee, my father, howsoe'er it please,
 She frames this slender work; nor know I aught
 That may thy gifts more suitably requite;
 Tho' to requite them suitably would ask
 Returns much nobler, and surpassing far
 The meagre gifts of verbal gratitude.

How elegant is the praise he bestows
 on the musical talents of his father, and
 how pleasing the exulting and affectionate
 spirit, with which he speaks of their social
 and kindred studies!

Nec tu perge, precor, sacras contemnere Musas
 Nec vanas inopesque puta, quarum ipse peritus

Munere, mille sonos numeros componis ad aptos,
 Millibus et vocem modulis variare canoram
 Doctus, Arionii merito sis nominis hæres.
 Nunc tibi quid mirum, si me genuisse poetam
 Contigerit, charo si tam prope sanguine juncti,
 Cognatas artes, studiumque affine sequamur?
 Ipse volens Phœbus se dispertire duobus,
 Altera dona mihi, dedit altera dona parenti;
 Dividuumque deum, genitorque puerque, tenemus.
 Tu tamen ut simules teneras odisse camænas,
 Non odisse reor; neque enim, pater, ire jubetas
 Qua via lata patet, qua pronior area lucri,
 Certa que conderdi fulget spes aurea nummi:
 Nec rapis ad leges, male custodita que gentis
 Jura, nec insulsis damnas clamoribus aures;
 Sed magis excultam cupiens ditescere mentem,
 Me procul urbano strepitu, secessibus altis
 Abductum, Aoniæ jucunda per otia ripæ,
 Phœbæo lateri comitem sinis ire beatum.

Nor thou persist, I pray thee, still to slight
 The sacred Nine, and to imagine vain
 And useless, powers, by whom inspir'd thyself
 Art skilful to associate verse with airs
 Harmonious, and to give the human voice
 A thousand modulations! Heir by right
 Indisputable of Arion's fame!
 Now say! What wonder is it, if a son

Of thine delight in verse; if so conjoin'd
 In close affinity, we sympathize
 In social arts, and kindred studies sweet:
 Such distribution of himself to us
 Was Phoebus' choice; thou hast thy gift, and I
 Mine also, and between us we receive,
 Father and son, the whole inspiring God.
 No ho wsoe'er the semblance thou assume
 Of hate, thou hatest not **the gentle muse,**
 My father! for thou never bad'st me tread
 The beaten path and broad, that leads right on
 To opulence; nor didst condemn thy son
 To the insipid clamors of the bar,
 To laws voluminous and ill observ'd;
 But wishing to enrich me more, to fill
 My mind with treasure, ledst me far away
 From civic din to deep retreats, to banks
 And streams Aonian, and with free consent
 Didst place me happy at Apollo's side.

The poet seems to have had a prophetic
 view of the singular calumnies, that awaited
 his reputation, and to have anticipated his
 triumph, over all his adversaries, in the fol-
 lowing magnanimous exclamation:

Este procul vigiles curæ! procul este querelæ!
 Invidiæque acies transverso tortilis hircuo!

*Sæva nec anguiferos extende calumnia rictus:
In me triste nihil, fœdissima turba, potestis,
Nec vestri sum juris ego; securaque tutus
Pectora, viperio gradiar sublimis ab ictu.*

Away then, sleepless care! complaint away!
And envy "with thy jealous leer malign;"
Nor let the monster calumny shoot forth
Her venom'd tongue at me! Detested foes!
Ye all are impotent against my peace;
For I am privileg'd, and bear my breast
Safe, and too high for your viperian wound.

After this high-toned burst of confidence and indignation, how sweetly the poet sinks again into the tender notes of gratitude in the close of this truly filial composition!

*At tibi, chære pater, postquam non æqua merenti
Posse referre datur, nec dona rependere factis,
Sit memorasse satis, repetitaque munera grato
Percensere animo, fidæque reponere menti.
Et vos, O nostri, juvenilia carmina, lusus,
Si modo perpetuos sperare audebitis annos,
Et domini superesse rogo, lucemque tueri,
Nec spissò rapiant oblivia nigra sub orco;
Forsitan has laudes, decantatumque parentis
Nomen, ad exemplum, sero servabitis ævo.*

But thou, my father, since to render thanks
Equivalent, and to requite by deeds
Thy liberality, exceeds my power,
Suffice it that I thus record thy gifts,
And bear them treasur'd in a grateful mind.
Ye too, the favorite pastime of my youth,
My voluntary numbers, if ye dare
To hope longevity, and to survive
Your master's funeral, not soon absorb'd
In the oblivious Lethæan gulph,
Shall to futurity perhaps convey
This theme, and by these praises of my sire
Improve the fathers of a distant age.

“ He began now,” says Johnson, “ to grow weary of the country, and had some purpose of taking chambers in the inns of court.”

This weariness appears to have existed only in the fancy of the biographer. During the five years that Milton resided with his parents, in Buckinghamshire, he had occasional lodgings in London, which he visited, as he informs us himself, for the purpose of buying books, and improving himself in mathematics and in music, at that time his

favorite amusements. The letter, which intimates his intention of taking chambers in the inns of court, was not written from the country, as his biographer seems to have supposed ; it is dated from London, and only expresses, that his quarters there, appeared to him awkward and inconvenient.*

On the death of his mother, who died in April, 1637, and is buried in the chancel of Horton church he obtained his father's permission to gratify his eager desire of visiting the continent, a permission the more readily granted, perhaps, as one of his motives for visiting Italy was to form a collection of Italian music.

Having received some directions for his travels from the celebrated Sir Henry Wotton, he went, with a single servant, to Paris, in 1638 ; he was there honored by the notice of Lord Scudamore, the English ambassador,

* Dicam jam nunc serio quid cogitem, in hospitium juridicorum aliquod immigrare, sicubi amœna et umbrosa ambulatio est, quod et inter aliquot sodales, commodior illic habitatio, si domi manere, et *ορμητηριου ευπρεπεσσερον* quocunque libitum erit excurrere: ubi nunc sum, ut nosti, obscure et angustè sum.

who, at his earnest desire, gave him an introduction to Grotius, then residing at Paris as the minister of Sweden.

Curiosity is naturally excited by the idea of a conference between two persons so eminent and accomplished. It has been conjectured, that Milton might conceive his first design of writing a tragedy on the banishment of Adam from this interview with Grotius; but if the *Adamus Exul* of the Swedish Ambassador were a subject of their discourse, it is probable its author must have spoken of it but slightly, as a juvenile composition, since he does so in a letter to his friend Vossius, in 1616, concerning a new edition of his poetry, from which he particularly excluded this sacred drama, as too puerile in his own judgment, to be republished.*

The letters of Grotius, voluminous and circumstantial as they are, afford no traces

* *Christum patientem recudendum judico, ideoque velim aliquod ejus exemplum ad me mitti, ut errata typographica corrigam, quando ipse nullum habeo. Adami Exulis poema juvenilius est quam ut ausim addere. Grotti Epist. 77.*

of this interesting visit; but they lead me to imagine, that the point, which the learned ambassador most warmly recommended to Milton, on his departure for Italy, was to pay the kindest attention in his power to the sufferings of Galileo, then persecuted as a prisoner by the inquisition in Florence.

In a letter to Vossius, dated in the very month when Milton was probably introduced to Grotius, that liberal friend to science and humanity speaks thus of Galileo; "This old man, to whom the universe is so deeply indebted, worn out with maladies, and still more with anguish of mind, gives us little reason to hope, that his life can be long; common prudence, therefore, suggests to us to make the utmost of the time, while we can yet avail ourselves of such an instructor.*" Milton was, of all travellers, the most likely to seize a hint of this kind with avidity, and expressions in *Paradise Lost* have led an Italian biographer of the poet to suppose,

* Senex is, optime de universo meritis, morbo fractus, insuper et animi ægritudine, haud multum nobis vitæ suæ promittit; quare prudentiæ erit arripere tempus, dum tanto doctore uti licet. Grotii Epist. 964.

that while he resided at Florence he caught from Galileo, or his disciples, some ideas approaching towards the Newtonian philosophy. He says himself, speaking of Italy in his *Areopagitica*, "there it was that I found and visited the famous Galileo grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition for thinking in astronomy, otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought!" It seems not unreasonable to conclude, that he was in some degree indebted to his conference with Grotius for that mournful gratification.

From Paris our author proceeded to Italy, embarking at Nice for Genoa. After a cursory view of Leghorn and Pisa, he settled for two months at Florence; a city, which he particularly regarded for the elegance of its language, and the men of genius it had produced; here, as he informs us, he became familiar with many persons distinguished by their rank and learning; and here, probably, he began to form those great but unsettled projects of future composition which were to prove the sources of his glory and of which he thus speaks himself:

“In the private academies of Italy, whither I was favored to resort, perceiving that some trifles I had in memory, composed at under twenty, or thereabout (for the manner is, that every one must give some proof of his wit and reading there) met with acceptance above what was looked for, and other things, which I had shifted, in scarcity of books and conveniency, to patch up amongst them, were received with written encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the Alps, I began thus far to assent both to them, and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting, which now grew daily upon me, that by labor and intent study, (which I take to be my portion in this life) joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might, perhaps, leave something so written to after-times as they should not willingly let it die. These thoughts at once possessed me, and these other, that if I were certain to write as men buy leases, for three lives and downward, there ought no regard to be sooner had than to God’s

glory, by the honor and instruction of my country ; for which cause, and not only for that I knew it would be hard to arrive at the second rank among the Latins, I applied myself to that resolution, which Ariosto followed against the persuasions of Bembo to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue ; not to make verbal curiosities the end, (that were a toilsome vanity) but to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things among mine own citizens throughout this island in the mother dialect ; that what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old, did for their country, I in my proportion, with this over and above o being a Christian, might do for mine, not caring to be once named abroad, though, perhaps, I could attain to that, but content with these British islands as my world." Prose Works, vol 1. p. 62.

It is delightful to contemplate such a character as Milton, thus cherishing, in his own mind, the seeds of future greatness and

animating his youthful spirit with visions of renown, that time has realized and extended beyond his most sanguine wishes.

He appears, on every occasion, a sincere and fervent lover of his country, and expresses, in one of his Latin Poems, the same patriotic idea, that he should be satisfied with glory confined to these islands,

Mi satis ampla

Merces, et mihi grande decus (sim ignotus in ævum
Tum licet, externo penitusque inglorius orbi)
Si me flava comas legat Usa, et potor Alauni,
Vorticibusque frequens Abra, et nemus omne Treantæ,
Et Thamesis meus ante omnes, et fusca metallis
Tamara, et extremis me discant Orcades undis.

Epitaphium Damonis.

And it shall well suffice me, and shall be
Fame and proud recompence enough for me,
If Usa golden-hair'd my verse may learn;
If Alain, bending o'er his crystal urn,
Swift whirling Abra, Trent's o'ershadow'd stream,
If, lovelier far than all in my esteem,
Thames, and the Tamar ting'd with mineral hues,
And northern Orcades, regard my muse.

In tracing the literary ambition of

Milton from the first conception of his great purposes to their accomplishment, we seem to participate in the triumph of his genius, which, though it aspired only to the praise of these British islands, is already grown an object of universal admiration, and may find hereafter, in the western world, the amplest theatre of his glory.

Dr. Johnson takes occasion, from the passage in which Milton speaks of the literary projects he conceived in Italy, to remark, that "he had a lofty and steady confidence in himself, perhaps not without some contempt of others." The latter part of this observation is evidently invidious; it is completely refuted by the various commendations, which the graceful and engaging manners of the poetical traveller received from the Italians: a contemptuous spirit, indeed, appears utterly incompatible with the native disposition of Milton, whose generous enthusiasm led him to conceive the fondest veneration for all, who were distinguished by genius or virtue; a disposition which he has expressed in the strongest

terms, as the reader may recollect, in a letter already cited, to his friend Diodati! His prejudiced biographer endeavours to prove, that his spirit was contemptuous, by observing that he was frugal of his praise. The argument is particularly defective, as applied to Milton on his travels; since the praises he bestowed on those accomplished foreigners, who were kind to him, are liberal in the highest degree, and apparently dictated by the heart.

After a short visit to Sienna, he resided two months in Rome, enjoying the most refined society, which that city could afford. By the favor of Holstenius, the well known librarian of the Vatican (whose kindness to him he has recorded in a Latin epistle equally grateful and elegant) he was recommended to the notice of Cardinal Barberini, who honored him with the most flattering attention; it was at the concerts of the Cardinal that he was captivated by the charms of Leonora Baroni, whose extraordinary musical powers he has celebrated in Latin verse, and whom he is supposed to

address as a lover in his Italian poetry. The most eloquent of the passions, which is said to convert almost every man who feels it into a poet, induced the imagination of Milton to try its powers in a foreign language, whose difficulties he seems to have perfectly subdued by the united aids of genius and of love.

His Italian sonnets have been liberally commended by natives of Italy, and one of them contains a sketch of his own character, so spirited and singular as to claim a place in this narrative.

Giovane piano, e semplicetto amante

Poi che fuggir me stesso in dubbio sono,

Madonna a voi del mio cuor l' humil dono

Farò divoto; io certo a prove tante

L' hebbi fedele, intrepido, costante

De pensieri leggiadri accorto, e buono;

Quando rugge il gran mondo, e scocca il tuono,

S' arma di se, e d' intero diamante;

Tanto del forse, e d' invidia sicuro,

Di timori, e speranze, al popol use,

Quanto d'ingegno, e d' alto valor vago,

E di cetra sonora, e delle muse:

Sol troverete in tal parte men duro,
Ove' Amor mise l' insanabil ago.

Enamour'd, artless, young, on foreign ground,
Uncertain whither from myself to fly,
To thee, dear lady, with an humble sigh,
Let me devote my heart, which I have found
By certain proofs, not few, intrepid, sound,
Good, and addicted to conceptions high :
When tempest shakes the world, and fires the sky,
It rests in adamant, self wrapt around,
As safe from envy and from outrage rude,
From hopes and fears, that vulgar minds abuse,
As fond of genius, and fixt solitude,
Of the resounding lyre, and every muse :
Weak you will find it in one only part,
Now pierc'd by love's immedicable dart.

It was at Rome that Milton was complimented in Latin verse, by Selvaggi and Salsilli: his reply to the latter, then suffering from a severe malady, is so remarkable for its elegance, tenderness, and spirit, that Mr. Warton praises it as one of the finest lyrical compositions, which the Latin poetry of modern times can exhibit.

The circumstances that happened to our

author in his travels, and indeed, the most striking particulars of his life, are related by himself, in his "Second Defence." He there tells us, that in passing from Rome to Naples his fellow-traveller was a hermit, who introduced him to Baptista Manso, Marquis of Villa, an accomplished nobleman, and singularly distinguished as the friend and the biographer of two eminent poets, Tasso and Marino; they have both left poetical memorials of their esteem for the Marquis, who acquired his title as a soldier in the service of Spain, but retiring early, with considerable wealth to Naples, his native city, he founded there a literary academy, and lived in splendor as its president.

This graceful and venerable hero, whose politeness and learning had been fondly celebrated by Tasso, in a dialogue on friendship, that bears the name of Manso, was near eighty when Milton became his guest: he seems to have been endeared to the imagination of our poet by the liberal and affectionate tribute, he had paid to the memory of

his illustrious poetical friends; a tribute very feelingly described by Milton in the following lines, addressed to the noble and generous biographer—they speak first of Marini:

Ille itidem moriens tibi soli debita vates
 Ossa, tibi soli, supremaque vota reliquit:
 Nec manes pietas tua chara fefellit amici;
 Vidimus arridentem operoso ex ære poetam:
 Nec satis hoc visum est in utrumque; et nec pia cessant
 Officia in tumulo; cupis integros rapere orco,
 Qua potes, atque avidas Parcarum eludere leges:
 Amborum genus, et varia sub sorte peractum,
 Describis vitam, moresque, et dona Minervæ,
 Æmulus illius, Mycalen qui natus ad altam,
 Rettulit Æolii vitam facundus Homeri.

To thee alone the poet would entrust
 His latest vows, to thee alone his dust:
 And thou with punctual piety hast paid,
 In labour'd brass, thy tribute to his shade;
 Nor this contented thee; thy zeal would save
 Thy bards uninjur'd from the whelming grave;
 In more induring history to live
 An endless life is also thine to give;
 And thou hast given it them; and deigned to teach
 The manners, fortunes, lives, and gifts of each,

Rival to him, whose pen, to nature true,
The life of Homer eloquently drew!

If the two Latin verses, in which this amiable old man expressed his admiration of the young English bard, deserve the name of a "sorry distich," which Johnson bestows upon them, they still present Milton to our fancy in a most favorable light. A traveller, so little distinguished by birth or opulence, would hardly have obtained such a compliment from a nobleman of Manso's experience, age, and dignity, had he not been peculiarly formed to engage the good opinion and courtesy of strangers, by the expressive comeliness of his person, the elegance of his manners, and the charm of his conversation.

In Manso, says Milton, I found a most friendly guide, who shewed me himself the curiosities of Naples, and the palace of the Viceroy. He came more than once to visit me, while I continued in that city; and when I left it, he earnestly excused himself, that although he greatly wished to render me more good offices, he was unable to do

so in Naples, because in my religion I had disdained all disguise*.

Pleasing and honorable as the civilities were that our young countryman received from this Nestor of Italy, he has amply repaid them in a poem, which, to the honor of English gratitude and English genius, we may justly pronounce superior to the compliments bestowed on this engaging character by the two celebrated poets, who wrote in his own language, and were peculiarly attached to them.

Of the five sonnets, indeed, that Tasso addressed to his courteous and liberal friend,

* Neapolim perrexi: illic per eremitam quendam, quicum Româ iter feceram, ad Joannem Batistam Mansum, Marchionem Villensem, virum nobilissimum atque gravissimum (ad quem Torquatus Tassus, insignis poeta Italus, de amicitia scripsit) sum introductus; eodemque usus, quamdiu illic fui, sane amicissimo; qui et ipse me per urbis loca et proregis aulum circumduxit, et visendi gratiâ haud semel ipse ad hospittium venit: discendenti seriò excusavit se, tametsi multò plura detulisse mihi officia maxime cupiebat, non potuisse illâ in urbe, propterea quod nolebam in religione esse tectior.—Defensio Secunda.

two are very beautiful ; but even these are surpassed, both in energy and tenderness, by the following conclusion of a poem, inscribed to Manso, by Milton.

Diis dilecte senex, te Jupiter æquus oportet
 Nascentem, et miti lustrarit lumine Phœbus,
 Atlantisque nepos; neque enim, nisi charus ab ortu
 Diis superis, poterit magno favisse poetæ:
 Hinc longæva tibi lento sub flore senectus
 Vernat, et Æsonios lucratur vivida fusos;
 Nondum deciduos servans tibi frontis honores,
 Ingeniumque vicens, et adultum mentis acumen.
 O mihi sic mea sors talem concedat amicum,
 Phœbæos decorasse viros qui tam bene norit,
 Siquando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,
 Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem!
 Aut dicam invictæ sociali fœdere mensæ
 Magnanimos heroas; et O modo spiritus adsit,
 Frangam Saxonicas Britonum sub marte phalanges!
 Tandem ubi non tacitæ permensus tempora vitæ,
 Annorumque satur, cineri sua jura relinquam,
 Ille mihi lecto madidis astartet ocellis,
 Astanti sat erit si dicam sim tibi curæ:
 Ille meos artus, liventi morte solutos,
 Curaret parvâ componi molliter urnâ;
 Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus,
 Nectens aut Paphia myrti aut Parnasside lauri

Fronde comas; at ego securâ pace quiescam.
 Tum quoque, si qua fides, si præmia certa bonorum,
 Ipse ego cœlicolum semotus in æthera divum,
 Quo labor et mens pura vehunt, atque ignea virtus,
 Secreti hæc aliquâ mundi de parte videbo,
 Quantum fata sinunt: et tota mente serenum
 Ridens, purpureo suffundar lumine vultus,
 Et simul ætherio plaudam mihi lætus olympos.

Well may we think, O dear to all above,
 Thy birth distinguish'd by the smile of Jove,
 And that Apollo shed his kindest power,
 And Maia's son, on that propitious hour;
 Since only minds so born can comprehend
 A poet's worth, or yield that worth a friend:
 Hence on thy yet unfaded cheek appears
 The lingering freshness of thy greener years;
 Hence in thy front and features we admire
 Nature unwither'd, and a mind entire.
 O might so true a friend to me belong,
 So skill'd to grace the votaries of song,
 Should I recall hereafter into rhyme
 The kings and heroes of my native clime,
 Arthur the chief, who even now prepares
 In subterraneous being future wars,
 With all his martial knights to be restor'd,
 Each to his seat around the fed'ral board;

And O! if spirit fail me not, disperse
Our Saxon plunderers in triumphant verse
Then after all, when with the past content,
A life I finish, not in silence spent,
Should he, kind mourner, o'er my death bed bend,
I shall but need to say "be still my friend!"
He, faithful to my dust, with kind concern,
Shall place it gently in a modest urn;
He too, perhaps, shall bid the marble breathe
To honor me, and with the graceful wreath,
Or of Parnassus, or the Paphian Isle,
Shall bind my brows—but I shall rest the while.
Then also, if the fruits of faith endure,
And virtue's promis'd recompence be sure,
Borne to those seats, to which the blest aspire,
By purity of soul and virtuous fire,
These rites, as fate permits, I shall survey
With eyes illumin'd by celestial day,
And, every cloud from my pure spirit driven,
Joy in the bright beatitude of heaven.

The preceding verses have various claims to attention; they exhibit a lively picture of the literary project that occupied the mind of Milton at this period; they forcibly prove with what vehemence of desire

he panted for poetical immortality, and for the superior rewards of a laborious life, devoted to piety and virtue.

His acquaintance with Manso may be regarded as the most fortunate incident of his foreign excursion. Nothing could have a greater tendency to preserve and call forth the seeds of poetic enterprize in the mind of the young traveller, than his familiarity with this eminent and engaging personage, the bosom friend of Tasso; the friend who had cherished that great and afflicted poet under his roof in a season of his mental calamity, had restored his health, re-animated his fancy, and given a religious turn to the latest efforts of his majestic muse. The very life of Tasso, which this noble biographer had written with the copious and minute fidelity of personal knowledge, and with the ardour of affectionate enthusiasm, might be sufficient to give new energy to Milton's early passion for poetical renown: his conversation had, probably, a still greater tendency to produce this effect. Circumstances remote, and apparently of little moment, have often a mar-

vellous influence on the works of imagination ; nor is it too wild a conjecture to suppose, that the zeal of Manso, in speaking to Milton of his departed friend, might give force and permanence to that literary ambition, which ultimately rendered his aspiring guest the great rival of Tasso, and, in the estimation of Englishmen, his superior.

From Naples it was the design of Milton to pass into Sicily and Greece ; but receiving intelligence of the civil war in England, he felt it inconsistent with his principles to wander abroad, even for the improvement of his mind, while his countrymen were contending for liberty at home.

In preparing for his return to Rome, he was cautioned against it by some mercantile friends, whose letters intimated that he had much to apprehend from the machinations of English jesuits, if he appeared again in that city ; they were incensed against him by the freedom of his discourse on topics of religion ; “ I had made it a rule (says Milton) never to start a religious subject in this country ; but if I were questioned on my faith,

never to dissemble, whatever I might suffer. I returned, nevertheless to Rome," continues the undaunted traveller, "and, whenever I was interrogated, I attempted no disguise; if any one attacked my principles, I defended the true religion in the very city of the pope, and during almost two months, with as much freedom as I had used before. By the protection of God I returned safe again to Florence, revisiting friends, who received me as gladly as if I had been restored to my native home."*

* In Siciliam quoque et Græciam trajicere volentem me, tristis ex Anglia belli civilis nuntius revocavit; turpe enim existimabam, dum mei cives domi de libertate dimicarent, me animi causâ otiose peregrinari. Romam autem reversurum, monebant mercatores se didicisse per literas parari mihi ab jesuitis Anglis insidias, si Romam reverterem, eó quod de religione nimis liberè loquutus essem. Sic enim mecum statueram, de religione quidem iis in locis sermones ultro non inferre: interrogatus de fide, quicquid essem passurus, nihil dissimulare. Romam itaque nihilominus redii: quid essem, si quis interrogabat, nemine celavi; si quis adoriebatur, in ipsâ urbe pontificis, alteros prope duos menses, orthodoxam religionem, ut antea, liberrimè tuebar; deoque

After a second residence of almost two months in Florence, whence he made an excursion to Lucca, a place endeared to him by having produced the ancestors of his favorite friend Diodati, he extended his travels through Bologna and Ferrara to Venice. Here, he remained a month, and having sent hence a collection of books, and particularly of music, by sea, he proceeded himself through Verona and Milan to Geneva. In this city he was gratified by the society and kindness of John Diodati, uncle of his young friend, whose untimely death he lamented in a Latin poem, of which we shall soon have occasion to speak. Returning by his former road through France, he reached England at a period that seems to have made a strong impression on his mind, when the king was waging, in favor of episcopacy, his unprosperous war with the Scots. The time of Milton's absence from his native

sic volente, incolumis Florentiam rursus perveni : haud minus mei cupientes revisens, ac si in patriam revertissem.—Defensio Secunda.

country exceeded not, by his own account a year and three months.

In the relation that he gives himself of his return, the name of Geneva recalling to his mind one of the most slanderous of his political adversaries, he animates his narrative by a solemn appeal to heaven on his unspotted integrity; he protests that, during his residence in foreign scenes, where licentiousness was universal, his own conduct was perfectly irreproachable*. I dwell the more zealously on whatever may elucidate the moral character of Milton, because even among those who love and revere him, the splendor of the poet has in some measure eclipsed the merit of the man; but in proportion as the particulars of his life are studied with intelligence and candour, his virtue will become, as it ought to be, the friendly

* *Quæ urbs, cum in mentem mihi hinc veniat Mori calumniatoris, facit ut deum hic rursus testem invocem, me his omnibus in locis, ubi tam multa licent, ab omni flagitio ac probro integrum atque intactum vixisse, illud perpetuo cogitatem, si hominum latere oculos possem, dei certe non posse.*

rival of his genius, and receive its due share of admiration and esteem. Men, indeed, of narrow minds, and of servile principles, will for ever attempt to depreciate a character so absolutely the reverse of their own; but liberal spirits, who allow to others that freedom of sentiment, which they vindicate for themselves, however they disapprove or oppose the opinions of the sectary and the republican, will render honorable and affectionate justice to the patriotic benevolence, the industry, and the courage, with which Milton endeavoured to promote what he sincerely and fervently regarded as the true interest of his country.

We have now attended him to the middle stage of his life, at which it may not be improper to pause, and make a few remarks on the years, that are passed, and those that are yet in prospect. We behold him, at the age of thirty-two, recalled to England, from a foreign excursion of improvement and delight, by a manly sense of what he owed to his country in a season of difficulty and danger. His thoughts and conduct on this

occasion, are the more noble and becoming, as all his preceding years had been employed in forming, for the most important purposes, a firm and lofty mind, and in furnishing it abundantly with whatever might be useful and honorable to himself and others, in the various exigences and vicissitudes both of public and private life.

We have traced him through a long course of infantine, academical, domestic, and foreign study; we have seen him distinguished by application, docility and genius; uncommonly attached to his instructors, and most amiably grateful to his parents; in friendship, ardent and steady; in love, though tender not intemperate; as a poet, sensible of his rare mental endowments, yet peculiarly modest in regard to his own productions; enamoured of glory, yet as ready to bestow as anxious to merit praise: in his person and manners so fashioned to prepossess all men in his favor, that even foreigners gave him credit for those high literary achievements, which were to shed peculiar lustre on his latter days, and

considered him already as a man, of whom his country might be proud.

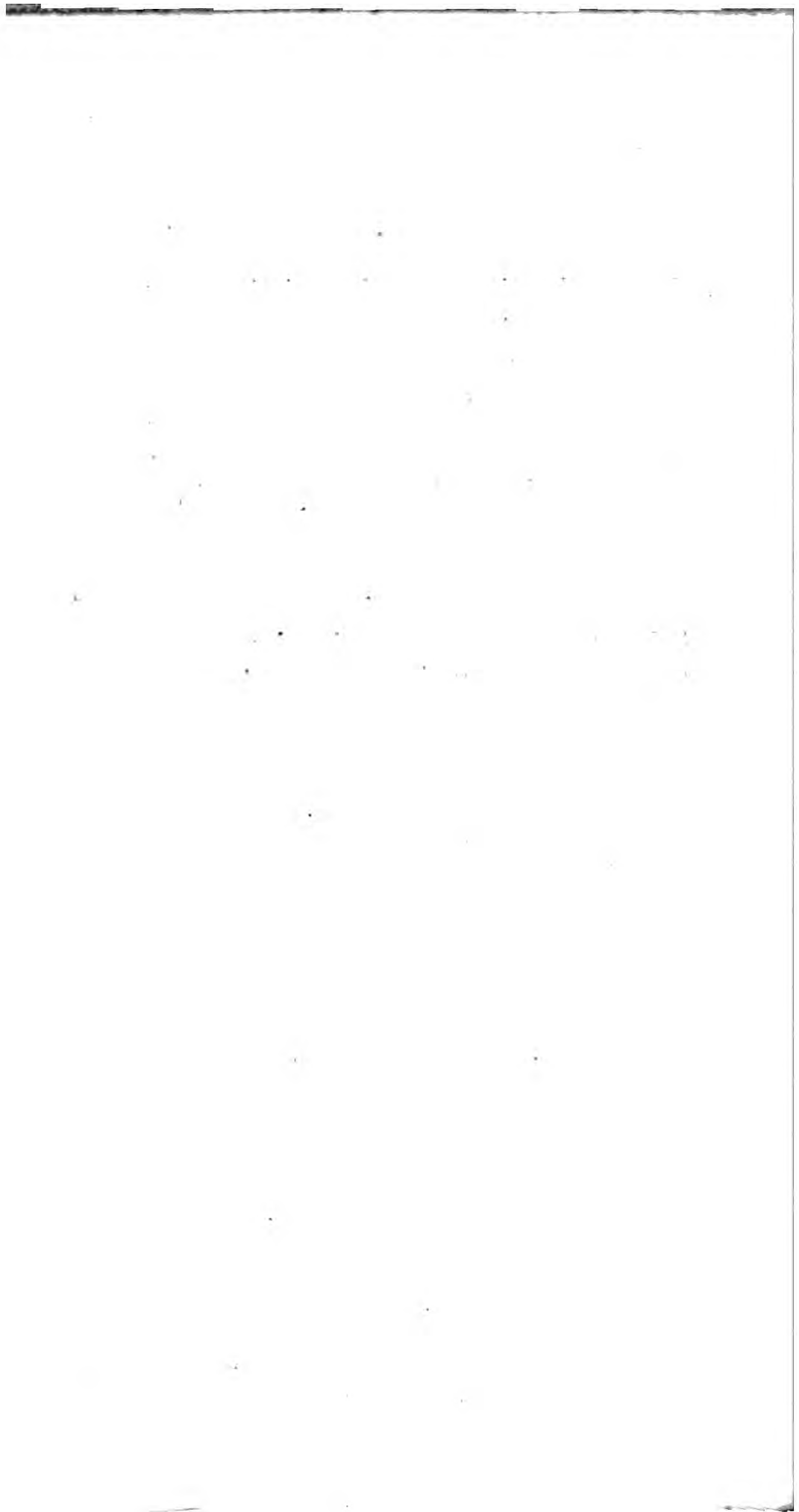
With such accomplishments, and such expectations in his behalf, Milton returned to England. The subsequent portion of his life, however gloomy and tempestuous, will be found to correspond, at least in the close of it, with the radiant promise of his youth. We shall see him deserting his favorite haunts of Parnassus to enter the thorny paths of ecclesiastical and poetical dissent: his principles as a disputant will be condemned and approved, according to the prevalence of opposite and irreconcilable opinions, that fluctuate in the world; but his upright consistency of conduct deserves applause from all honest and candid men of every persuasion. The Muse indeed, who had blessed him with singular endowments, and given him so lively a sense of his being constituted a poet by nature, that when he wrote not verse, he had the use (to borrow his own forcible expression) "but of his left hand;" the Muse alone might have a right to reproach him with

having acted against inward conviction ; but could his Muse have visibly appeared to reprove his desertion of her service in a parental remonstrance, he might have answered her, as the young Harry of Shakespear answers the tender and keen reproof of his royal father,

“ I will redeem all this,
And in the closing of some glorious day
Be bold to tell you, that I am your son.”



END OF THE FIRST PART.



THE
LIFE OF MILTON.

PART II.

INCONCUSSA TENENS DUBIO VESTIGIA MUNDO.

LUCAN.

THE narrative may proceed from the information of Milton himself. On his return he procured a residence in London, ample enough for himself and his books, and felt happy in renewing his interrupted studies.* This first establishment (as we learn from his

* Ipse, sicubi possem, tam rebus turbatis & fluctuantibus, locum consistendi circumspiciens mihi librisque meis, sat amplam in urbe domum conduxì; ibi ad intermissa studia beatulus me recepi; rerum exitu deo imprimis & quibus id muneris populus dabat, facilè permissò.

nephew) was a lodging in St. Bride's Church yard, where he received, as his disciples, the two sons of his sister, John and Edward Philips; the latter is his biographer; but although he has written the life of his illustrious relation with a degree of laudable pride and affectionate spirit, he does not communicate that abundance of information, which might have been expected from the advantage he possessed. In one article his pride has a ludicrous effect, as it leads him into an awkward attempt to vindicate his uncle from the fancied opprobrium of having engaged professionally in the education of youth; a profession which from its utility and importance, from the talents and virtues it requires, is unquestionably entitled to respect. Philips will not allow that his uncle actually kept a school, as he taught only the sons of his particular friends. Johnson ridicules this distinction, and seems determined to treat Milton as a profest schoolmaster, for the sake of attempting to prove, that he did not sustain the character with advantage, but adopted a vain and preposterous plan of education.

“Let me not be censured,” says the Doctor, as pedantic or paradoxical; for if I have Milton against me, I have Socrates on my side: it was his labour to turn philosophy from the study of nature to speculations upon life; but the innovators, whom I oppose, are turning off attention from life to nature; they seem to think that we are placed here to watch the growth of plants, or the motions of the stars; Socrates was father of opinion, that what we had to learn was how to do good and avoid evil.”

Ὅτι τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακὸντ' ἀγαθὸίε τίτυχλαι,

This insidious artifice of representing Milton and Socrates as antagonists is peculiarly unfortunate, since no man appears to have imbibed the principles of Socratic wisdom more deeply than our poet; his regard and attachment to them is fervently expressed, even in his juvenile letters; the very maxims of moral truth, which he is accused of counteracting, never shone with more lustre than in the following passage of the *Paradise Lost*:

But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
Uncheck'd, and of that roving is no end,
Till warn'd, or by experience taught, she learn,
That not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That, which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom; what is more is fume,
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,
And renders us in things, that most concern,
Unpractis'd, unprepar'd, and still to seek.

These beautiful lines are built in some measure, as Bentley has remarked, upon a verse of Homer, the very verse admired by Socrates, which Dr. Johnson has not scrupled to quote, as a part of his singular ill-grounded attempt to prove that Milton's ideas of education were in direct opposition to those of the great moralist of Greece: an attempt that arose from a very inoffensive boast of Milton's nephew, who gives a long list of books perused by the scholars of his uncle, which merely proves, that they read more books than are usually read in our common schools; and that their diligent instructor thought it advisable for boys, as

they approach towards sixteen, to blend a little knowledge of the sciences with their Greek and Latin.

That he taught the familiar and useful doctrine of the Attic philosopher, even in his lighter poetry, we have a pleasing instance in the following lines of his sonnet to Syriac Skinner, who was one of his scholars :

“ To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way.”

But his brief treatise, addressed to Hartlib, affords perhaps, the best proof, that his ideas of moral discipline were perfectly in unison with those of Socrates ; he says, in that treatise, “ I call a complete and generous education that, which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war.” Who can define a good education in terms more truly Socratic ?

Milton, however, in his attachment to morality, forgot not the claims of religion ;

his Sundays were devoted to theology, and Johnson duly praises the care, with which he instructed his scholars in the primary duties of men.

With a critic so sincerely devout as Johnson unquestionably was, we might have hoped that the sublime piety of our author would have secured him from sarcastic attacks; but we have yet to notice two insults of this kind, which the acrimony of uncorrected spleen has lavished upon Milton as a preceptor.

“From this wonder-working academy” says the biographer, “I do not know that there ever proceeded any man very eminent for knowledge; its only genuine product, I believe, is a small history of poetry, written in Latin by his nephew, of which, perhaps none of my readers ever heard.” The contemptuous spirit and the inaccuracy of this sarcasm are equally remarkable. The scholars of Milton were far from being numerous. Can it be just to speak with derision of a small academy, merely because it raises no celebrated author, when we consider how

few of that description every nation produces? We know little of those, who were under the tuition of our poet, except his two nephews; these were both writers; and a biographer of Milton should not have utterly forgotten his obligations to Edward Philips, if he allowed no credit to his brother for the spirited Latin treatise, in which that young man appeared as the defender of his uncle. But the striking inaccuracy of the critic consists in not giving a just account of a book that particularly claimed his attention, Philips's *Theatrum Poetarum*, a book, that under a Latin title, contains in English, a very comprehensive list of poets, ancient and modern, with reflections upon many of them, particularly those of our own nation. It is remarkable that this book was licensed Sept. 14, 1674, just two months before the death of Milton, and printed the following year. The author assigns an article both to his uncle and his brother. After enumerating the chief works of the former, he modestly says, "how far he hath revived the majesty and true decorum of heroic poesy

and tragedy, it will better become a person less related than myself to deliver his judgment."

Though he here suppresses a desire to praise his most eminent relation, it bursts forth in an amiable manner, when he comes to speak of his brother; for he calls him, "the maternal nephew and disciple of an author of most deserved fame, late deceased being the exactest of heroic poets (if the truth were well examined, and it is the opinion of many, both learned and judicious persons) either of the ancients or moderns, either of our own or whatever nation else."

I transcribe with pleasure this honest and simple eulogy; it does credit to the intelligence and affection of the poet's disciple, and it in some measure vindicates the good sense of our country, by shewing that, in the very year of Milton's decease, when some writers have supposed that his poetical merit was almost utterly unknown, there were persons in the nation, who understood his full value.

Let us return to the author in his little

academy, and the second sarcastic insult, which his biographer has bestowed upon him as the master of a school. The lodging in which he settled, on his arrival from the continent, was soon exchanged for a more spacious house and garden, in Aldersgate-street, that supplied him with conveniences for the reception of scholars: on this occasion Johnson exclaims, "let not our veneration for Milton forbid us to look with some degree of merriment on great promises and and small performance; on the man who hastens home, because his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and when he reaches the scene of action, vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding-school."

To excite merriment by rendering Milton ridiculous for having preferred the pen to the sword, was an enterprise that surpassed the powers of Johnson; the attempt affords a melancholy proof how far prejudice may mislead a very vigorous understanding. What but the blind hatred of bigotry could have tempted one great author to deride another, merely

for having thought that he might serve his country more essentially by the rare and highly cultivated faculties of his mind, than by the ordinary service of a soldier. But let us hear Milton on this subject. We have this obligation to the malice of his contemporaries, that it led him to speak publicly of himself, and to relate in the most manly and explicit manner, the real motives of his conduct.

Speaking of the English people, in the commencement of his *Second Defence*, he says*, "it was the just vindication of their

* Quos non legum contemptus aut violatio in effrœnata licentiam effudit; non virtutis & gloriæ falsa species, aut stulta veterum æmulatio inani nomine libertatis incendit, sed innocentia vitæ, morumque sanctitas rectum atque solum iter ad libertatem veram docuit, legum et religionis justissima defensio necessariò armavit. Atque illi quidem Deo perinde confisi, servitatem honestissimis armis pepulere: cujus laudis etsi nullam partem mihi vindico, a reprehensione tamen vel timiditatis vel ignaviæ, si qua infertur, facile me tueor. Neque enim militiae labores & pericula sic defugi, ut non alia ratione, & operam, multo utiliore, nec minore cum periculo meis civibus navarim, & animum dubiis in rebus neque

laws and their religion, that necessarily led them into civil war; they have driven servitude from them by the most honorable arms; in which praise, though I can claim no personal share, yet I can easily defend myself from a charge of timidity or indolence, should any such be alledged against me; for I have avoided the toil and danger of a military life only to render my country assistance more useful, and not less to my own peril, exerting a mind never dejected in adversity, never influenced by unworthy terrors of detraction or of death; since from my infancy I had been addicted to literary pursuits, and was stronger in mind than in

demissum unquam, neque ullius invidiæ, vel etiam mortis plus æquo metuentem præstiterim. Nam cum ab adolescentulo humanioribus essem studiis, ut qui maxime deditus, & ingenio semper quam corpore validior, posthabitâ castrensi operâ, quâ me gregarius quilibet robustior facile superasset, ad ea me contuli, quibus plus potui; ut parte mei meliore ac potiore, si saperem, non deteriore, ad rationes patriæ, causamque hanc præstantissimam, quantum maxime possem momentum accederem.

body, declining the duties of a camp, in which every muscular common man must have surpassed me, I devoted myself to that kind of service for which I had the greatest ability, that, with the better portion of myself, I might add all the weight I could to the pleas of my country and to this most excellent cause."

He thus justifies, on the noblest ground the line of life he pursued. In the same composition he frankly states the motives, which prompted him to execute each particular work that raised him to notice in his new field of controversy; but before we attend to the order, in which he treated various public questions, that he considered of high moment to his country, it is just to observe his fidelity and tenderness in first discharging, as a poet, the duties of private friendship.

Before he quitted Florence, Milton received intelligence of the loss he had to sustain, by the untimely death of Charles Diodati, the favorite associate of his early studies. On his arrival in England, the bit-

terness of such a loss was felt with redoubled sensibility by his affectionate heart, which relieved and gratified itself by commemorating the engaging character of the deceased in a poem of considerable length, entitled, *Epitaphium Dāmonis*, a poem mentioned by Johnson with supercilious contempt, yet possessing such beauties as render it pre-eminent in that species of composition.

Many poets have lamented a friend of their youth, and a companion of their studies, but no one has surpassed the affecting tenderness with which Milton speaks of his lost *Diodati*.

— *Quis mihi fidus*

*Hærebit lateri comes, ut tu sæpe solebas,
Frigoribus duris, et per loca fœta pruinis,
Aut rapido sub sole, siti morientibus herbis?*

*Pectora cui credam? Quis me lenire docebit
Mordaces curas, quis longam fallere noctem
Dulcibus alloquiis, grato cum sibilat igni
Molle pyrum, et nucibus strepitat focus, et malus Auster
Miscet cuncta foris, et desuper intonat ulmo?*

Aut æstate, dies medio dum vertitur axe,
 Cum Pan æsculea somnum capit abditus umbra,
 Quis mihi blanditiasque tuas, quis tum mihi risus,
 Cecropiosque sales referet, cultosque lepores ?

Who now my pains and perils shall divide,
 As thou was won't, for ever at my side,
 Both when the rugged frost annoy'd our feet,
 And when the herbage all was parch'd with heat ?

In whom shall I confide, whose counsel find
 A balmy medicine to my troubled mind ?
 Or whose discourse with innocent delight
 Shall fill me now, and cheat the wintry night ?
 While hisses on my hearth the pulpy pear,
 And black'ning chesnuts start, and crackle there ;
 While storms abroad the dreary scene o'erwhelm,
 And the wind thunders thro' the riven elm ?

Or who, when summer suns their summit reach,
 And Pan sleeps hidden by the shelt'ring beech,
 Who then shall render me thy Attic vein,
 Of wit, too polish'd to inflict a pain ?

With the spirit of a man most able to feel
 and most worthy to enjoy, the delights of
 true friendship, he describes the rarity of

that inestimable blessing, and the anguish we suffer from the untimely loss of it.

*Vix sibi quisque parem de millibus invenit unum;
Aut si sors dederit tandem non aspera votis,
Illum inopina dies, qua non speraveris hora,
Surripit, æternum linquens in sæcula damnum.*

Scarce one in thousands meets a kindred mind;
And if the long-sought good at last he find,
When least he fears it, death his treasure steals,
And gives his heart a wound that nothing heals.

There is, indeed, but one effectual lenitive for wounds of this nature, which Milton happily possessed in the sincerity and fervor of his religion. He closes his lamentation for his favorite friend, as he had closed his Lycidas, with just and soothing reflections on the purity of life, by which the object of his regret was distinguished, and with a sublime conception of that celestial beatitude, which he confidently regarded as the infallible and immediate recompence of departed virtue.

Having paid what was due to friend-

ship in his poetical capacity, he devoted his pen to public affairs, and entered on that career of controversy, which estranged him so long, and carried him so far from those milder and more engaging studies, that nature and education had made the *darlings of his mind*. If to sacrifice favorite pursuits in which acknowledged genius had qualified an ambitious spirit to excel; if to sacrifice these to irksome disputes, from a sense of what he owed to the exigencies of his country; if such conduct deserve, as it assuredly does, the name of public virtue, it may be as difficult, perhaps, to find an equal to Milton in genuine patriotism, as in poetical power; for who can be said to have sacrificed so much, or to have shewn a firmer affection to the public good? If he mistook the mode of promoting it; if his sentiments both on ecclesiastical and civil policy, are such as the majority of our countrymen think it just and wise to reject, let us give him the credit he deserves for the merit of his intention; let us respect, as we ought to do, the probity of an exalted un-

derstanding, animated by a fervent, steady, and laudable desire to enlighten mankind, and to render them more virtuous and happy.

In the year 1640, when Milton returned to England, the current of popular opinion ran with great vehemence against episcopacy. He was prepared to catch the spirit of the time, and to become an advocate for ecclesiastical reformation, by having peculiar and domestic grounds of complaint against religious oppression. His favorite preceptor had been reduced to exile, and his father disinherited, by intolerance and superstition. He wrote, therefore, with the indignant enthusiasm of a man resenting the injuries of those, who are most entitled to his love and veneration. The ardour of his affections conspired with the warmth of his fancy to enflame him with that puritanical zeal, which blazes so intensely in his controversial productions: no less than four of these were published within two years after his return; and he thus speaks of the mo-

tives, that led him to this species of composition, in his Second Defence.

“Being* animated by this universal

* Ut primum loquendi saltem cæpta est libertas concedi, omnia in episcopos aperiri ora; alii de ipsorum vitiis, alii de ipsius ordinis vitio conqueri—Ad hæc sane expectatus, cum veram affectari viam ad libertatem cernerem, ab his initiis, his passibus, ad liberandam servitute vitam omnem mortalium rectissime procedi, si ab religione disciplina orta, ad mores & instituta reipublicæ emanaret, cum etiam me ita ab adolescentia parassem, ut quid divini, quid humani esset juris, ante omnia possem non ignorare, meque consulissem eo quando ullius usus essem futurus, si nunc patriæ, immo vero ecclesiæ totque fratribus evangelii causa periculo sese objicientibus deessem, statui, etsi tunc alia quædam meditabar, huc omne ingenium, omnes industriæ vires transferre. Primum itaque de reformanda ecclesia Anglicana, duos ad amicum quendam libros conscripsi; deinde, cum duo præ cæteris magni nominis episcopi suum jus contra ministros quosdam primarios assererent, ratus de iis rebus, quas amore solo veritatis, & ex officii christiani ratione didiceram, haud pejus me dicturum quam qui de sui quæstu & injustissimo dominatu contendebant, ad hunc libris duobus, quorum unus De Episcopatu Prælativo, alter De Ratione Disciplinæ Ecclesiasticæ, inscribitur, ad illum scriptis quibusdam ani-

outcry against the bishops, as I perceived that men were taking the true road to liberty, and might proceed with the utmost rectitude from these beginnings to deliver human life from all base subjection, if their discipline, drawing its source from religion proceeded to morals and political institutions ; as I had been trained from my youth to the particular knowledge of what belonged to divine, and what to human jurisdiction ; and as I thought I should deserve to forfeit the power of being useful to mankind, if I now failed to assist my country and the church, and so many brethren, who for the sake of the gospel, were exposing themselves to peril, I resolved, though my thoughts had been pre-engaged by other designs, to transfer to this object, all my talents and all my application : first, therefore, I wrote of reformation in England, two

madversionibus, & mox Apologia respondi, et ministris facundiam hominis, ut ferebatur ægre sustinentibus, suppetias tuli, & ab eo tempore, si quid postea responderent, interfui.

books addressed to a friend : afterwards, when two bishops of eminence had asserted their cause against the leading ministers of the opposite party, as I conceived that I could argue, from a love of truth and a sense of christian duty, not less forcibly than my antagonists, (who contended for lucre and their own unjust dominion) I answered one of them in two books with the following titles, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy, Of Church Government :* and the other, first in *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence against Smectymnuus*, and secondly, in my *Apology*. As the ministers were thought hardly equal to their opponent in eloquence I lent them my aid, and from that time, if they made any farther reply, I was a party concerned."

I have inserted this passage at full length, because it gives us a clear insight into the motives of Milton on his first engaging in controversy, and discovers the high opinion which he entertained, both of the christian purity and the argumentative powers of his own cultivated mind ; the two

bishops to whom he alludes, were, Hall bishop of Norwich, famous as our first satirist, and the learned Usher, primate of Ireland. Hall published, in 1640, "An humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament in Behalf of Episcopacy"—an answer to this appeared written by six ministers, under the title of Smectymnuus, a word casually formed from the initial letters of their respective names. This little band of religious writers included Thomas Young, the beloved preceptor of Milton; so that personal attachment conspired with public enthusiasm to make our author vehement in his reply to the two bishops, who failed not to encounter the confederate antagonists of their order. He probably recollected the sufferings of his favorite instructor, when he exclaimed in his treatise of reformation, "What numbers of faithful and free born Englishmen and good christians have been constrained to forsake their dearest home, their friends and kindred, whom nothing but the wide ocean, or the savage deserts

of America, could hide and shelter from the fury of the bishops.”

However furious the persecution might be, which excited antipathy and abhorrence in Milton against the order of bishops, it must be confessed that he frequently speaks with that intemperance of zeal, which defeats its own purpose. There are some passages in his controversial writings, that must be read with concern by his most passionate admirers; yet even the gloom and severity of these are compensated by such occasional flashes of ardent fancy, of sound argument and of sublime devotion, as may extort commendation even from readers who love not the author.

In his first Ecclesiastical Treatise of Reformation, he makes the following very solemn appeal to heaven on his integrity as a writer: “And here withal I invoke the immortal deity, revealer and judge of secrets that wherever I have in this book plainly and roundly, though worthily and truly, laid open the faults and blemishes of fathers

martyrs, or christian emperors, or have otherways, inveighed against error and superstition with vehement expressions, I have done it neither out of malice, nor list to speak evil, nor any vain glory, but of mere necessity, to vindicate the spotless truth from an ignominious bondage.”

Towards the close of this performance he gives a distant mysterious hint of his great and unsettled poetical designs, with a very striking mixture of moral, political, and religious enthusiasm.

“ Then, amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, some one may, perhaps, be heard offering at high strains, *in new and lofty measures*, to sing and celebrate thy divine mercies and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages.”

In his subsequent work, on the reason of Church Government, he gratifies us with a more enlarged view of his literary projects not yet moulded into form, but, like the unarranged elements of creation, now floating at large in his capacious mind.

I transcribe the long passage alluded to,

because it illustrates the mental character of Milton, with a mild energy, a solemn splendor of sentiment and expression peculiar to himself.

“ Time serves not now, and perhaps, I might seem too profuse to give any certain account of what the mind at home, in the spacious circuits of her musing, hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope and hardest attempting ; whether that epic form, whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of Virgil and Tasso, are a diffuse, and the book of Job a brief model ; or whether the rules of Aristotle herein are strictly to be kept, or nature to be followed ; which in them that know art, and use judgment, is no transgression, but an enriching of art : and lastly, what king or knight, before the Conquest, might be chosen, in whom to lay the pattern of a Christian hero. And as Tasso gave to a prince of Italy his choice, whether he would command him to write of Godfrey’s expedition against the infidels, Belisarius against the Goths, or Charlemain against the Lom-

bards; if to the instinct of nature, and the emboldening of art aught may be trusted, and that there be nothing adverse in our climate, or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashness, from an equal diligence and inclination, to present the like offer in our antient stories. Or whether those dramatic constitutions, wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign, shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation— Or, if occasion shall lead, to imitate those magnificent odes and hymns, wherein Pindarus and Callimachus are in most things worthy. But those frequent songs throughout the law and prophets, beyond all these, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made appear over all the kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable. These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every nation; and are of power, besides the office of a pulpit, to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility,

to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ; to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship. Lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave, whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that, which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and reflexes of man's thoughts from within; all these things, with a solid and treatable smoothness to paint out and describe, teaching over the whole book of sanctity and virtue, through all the instances of example, with such delight, to those especially of soft and delicious temper, who will not so much as look upon truth herself, unless they see her ele-

gantly drest; that whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult, though they be indeed easy and pleasant, they will then appear to all men both easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed.

“ The thing which I had to say, and those intentions, which have lived within me ever since I could conceive myself any thing worth to my country, I return to crave excuse that urgent reason hath pluckt from me by an abortive and fore-dated discovery; and the accomplishment of them lies not but in a power above man's to promise; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost aver of myself, as far as life and free leisure will extend. Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few 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, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from

the pen 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; 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; 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. Although it nothing content me to have disclosed thus much before-hand; but that I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with chearful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noise and hoarse dis-

putes, put from beholding the bright countenance of truth, in the quiet and still air of delightful studies.”

Mr. Warton, who has cited the last sentence of this very interesting passage, as a proof that Milton, then engaged in controversy, sighed for his more congenial pursuits, laments, “that the vigorous portion of his life, that those years in which imagination is on the wing, were unworthily and unprofitably wasted on temporary topics.” Many lovers of poetry will sympathise with this amiable writer in his regret; but others may still entertain very different sensations on the subject. Allowing for a moment that the controversial writings of Milton deserve to be neglected and forgotten, reasons may be found to rejoice, rather than lament, that he exerted his faculties in composing them. The occupation, however, it might suspend his poetical enterprizes, cherished the ardour and energy of his mind, and, above all, confirmed in him that well founded and upright self-esteem, to which we are prin-

cipally indebted for his sublimest production: The works I allude to were, in his own estimation, indispensable and meritorious; had he not written them, as he frankly informs us, "he would have heard within himself, all his life after, of discourage and reproach." Nothing, perhaps, but this retrospect on a life passed, as his own conscience assured him in the faithful discharge of arduous and irksome duties, could have afforded to the declining days of Milton that confident vigor of mind, that intense and inextinguishable fire of imagination, which gave existence and perfection to his *Paradise Lost*.

He appears to have thought with a celebrated ancient, that perfect morality is necessary to the perfection of genius; and that sublimity in composition may be expected only from the man, who has attained the sublime in the steady practice of virtue.

These noble and animating ideas seem to have had great influence on his conduct very early in life; for in speaking of the studies and sentiments of his youth, he says,—“I was confirmed in this opinion,

that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is. a composition and pattern of the honourablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men, or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praise worthy."

In reply to the absurd charge of his leading a dissolute life, he gives an engaging and spirited account of his domestic conduct. "Those morning haunts are where they should be, at home; not sleeping or concocting the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring; in winter often ere the sound of any bell awake men to labor or to devotion; in summer, as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier, to read good authors, or cause them to be read, till the attention be weary, or memory have its full fraught; then with useful and generous labours, preserving the body's health and hardiness, to render lightsome, clear, and not lumpish obedience to the mind."

Had the prose works of Milton no merit but of occasionally affording us little sketches of his sentiments, his manners, and occupations, they would on this account be highly valuable to every reader, whom a passionate admiration of the poet has induced to wish for all possible acquaintance with the man. To gratify such readers I select very copiously from his various works those passages, that display, in the strongest point of view, his moral and domestic character. It is my firm belief, that as this is more known, it will become more and more an object of affection and applause; yet I am far from surveying it with that blind idolatry, which sees no defect, or with that indiscreet partiality, which labours to hide the failing it discovers; a biographer must have ill understood the nature of Milton, who could suppose it possible to gratify his spirit by homage so unworthy; for my own part, I am persuaded his attachment to truth was as sincere and fervent as that of the honest Montaigne, who says, "I would come again with

all my heart from the other world to give any one the lye, who should report me other than I was, though he did it to honor me."

I shall not therefore attempt to deny or to excuse the fatiguing heaviness or the course asperity of his ecclesiastical disputes. The sincerest friends of Milton may here agree with Johnson, who speaks of his controversial merriment as disgusting; but when the critic adds, such is his malignity, that "Hell grows darker at his frown," they must abhor this base misapplication, I had almost said, this profanation, of Miltonic verse.

In a controversial treatise, that gave rise to such an imputation, we should expect to find the polemic savagely thirsting for the blood of his adversaries: it is just the reverse. Milton's antagonist had, indeed, suggested to the public, with *infernal malignity*, that he was a miscreant, "who ought, in the name of Christ, to be stoned to death." This antagonist, as Milton supposed, was a son of Bishop Hall, and

scrupled not to write thus outrageously against one, who (to use the milder words of our author) "in all his writing spake not that any man's skin should be razed."

"The style of his piece," says Johnson, in speaking of this apology, "is rough, and such, perhaps, is that of his antagonist." The different degrees of roughness, that the two writers displayed, give a singular effect to this observation of the critic, who confounds the coarse and intemperate vehemence of the one with the outrageous barbarity of the other. Milton sometimes wrote with the unguarded and ungraceful asperity of a man in wrath; but let equity add, that when he did so, he was exasperated by foes, who exerted against him all the persecuting ferocity of a fiend.

The incidents of his life were calculated to put his temper and his fortitude to the most arduous trials, and in the severest of these he will be found constant and exemplary in the exercise of gentle and beneficent virtue. From the thorns of controversy he was plunged into the still sharper

thorns of connubial dissension. During the Whitsuntide of the year 1643, at the age of thirty-five, he married Mary, the daughter of Richard Powell, a gentleman who resided at Forest Hill, near Shotover, in Oxfordshire. This ill-starr'd union might arise from an infantine acquaintance, as the grandfather of Milton had probably lived very near the seat of the Powells. What led to the connection we can only conjecture, but we know it was unhappy, as the lady, after living only a few weeks with her husband in London, deserted him, under the decent pretence of passing the summer months on a visit to her father, with whom the indulgent poet gave her permission to remain till Michaelmas: during the interval he was engaged in kind attention to his father, whom he now established under his own roof. The old man had been settled at Reading, with his younger son Christopher, a lawyer and a royalist, but thought it expedient to quit that place on its being taken by Essex, the parliamentary general, and found a comfortable asylum for the re-

sidue of his long life in the filial piety and tender protection of the poet.

At the time appointed, Milton solicited the return of his wife; she did not condescend even to answer his letter: he repeated his request by a messenger, who, to the best of my remembrance (says Philips) reported, that he was dismissed with some sort of contempt. This proceeding, in all probability (continues the biographer, whose situation made him the best judge of occurrences so extraordinary) was grounded "upon no other cause but this, namely, that the family, being generally addicted to the cavalier party, as they called it, and some of them possibly engaged in the king's service, who by this time had his head-quarters at Oxford, and was in some prospect of success, they began to repent them of having matched the eldest daughter of the family to a person so contrary to them in opinion, and thought it would be a blot in their escutcheon when that court came to flourish again; however, it so incensed our author, that he thought it would be dis-

honorable ever to receive her again after such a repulse.

Milton had too tender and too elevated a spirit not to feel this affront with double poignancy, as it affected both his happiness and his dignity; but it was one of his noble characteristics to find his mental powers rather invigorated than enfeebled by injury and affliction; he thought it the prerogative of wisdom to find remedies against every evil, however unexpected, by which vice or infirmity can embitter life. In reflecting on his immediate domestic trouble, he conceived the generous design of making it subservient to the public. He found that in discordant marriage there is misery, for which he thought there existed a very easy remedy, and perfectly consistent both with reason and religion: with these ideas he published, in 1644, the *Doctrine of Divorce*. He addresses the work to the parliament, with great spirit and eloquence, and after asserting the purity of his precepts, and the beneficence of his design, he says, with patriotic exultation, "let not England for-

get her precedence of teaching nations how to live."

Sanguine as Milton was in the hope of promoting the virtue and happiness of private life by this publication, the Presbyterian clergy, notwithstanding their past obligations to the author, endeavoured to persecute him for the novelty and freedom of his sentiments. "The assembly of divines, sitting at Westminster, impatient," says Anthony Wood, "of having the clergy's jurisdiction, as they reckoned it, invaded, did, instead of answering or disproving what those books had asserted, cause him to be summoned before the House of Lords; but that house, whether approving the doctrine, or not favoring his accusers, did soon dismiss him."

Milton, whom no opposition could intimidate when he believed himself engaged, in the cause of truth and justice, endeavoured to support his doctrine by subsequent publications; first, "The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce;" this also he addresses to the parliament, and

says, with his usual spirit, " God, it seems, intended to prove me, whether I durst alone take up a rightful cause against a world of disesteem, and found I durst. My name I did not publish, as not willing it should sway the reader either for me or against me; but when I was told that the stile (which what it ails to be so soon distinguishable I cannot tell) was known by most men, and that some of the clergy began to inveigh and exclaim on what I was credibly informed they had not read, I took it then for my proper season, both to shew them a name, that could easily contemn such an indiscreet kind of censure, and to reinforce the question with a more accurate diligence; that if any of them would be so good as to leave railing, and to let us hear so much of his learning and Christian wisdom, as will be strictly demanded of him in his answering to this problem, care was had he should not spend his preparations against a nameless pamphlet."

These expressions displayed the frankness and fortitude of a noble mind, perfectly

conscious of its own integrity, in discussing a very delicate point, that materially affects the comfort of human life. This integrity he had indeed protested very solemnly in his former Address to the Parliament, where after asserting that the subject concerned them chiefly as redressers of grievances, he proceeds thus, "Me it concerns next, having with much labour and faithful diligence, first found out, or at least with a fearless communicative candour first published, to the manifest good of christendom, that which, calling to witness every thing mortal and immortal, I believe unfeignedly to be true." The solemnity of this protestation, confirmed as it was by the singular regularity of his morals, and the sincerity of his zeal as a christian, could not secure him from censures of every kind, which vehement as they were, he seems to have despised. His ideas were derided by libertines, and calumniated by hypocrites and bigots ; but superior to ridicule and to slander, he proceeded resolutely in what he thought his duty, by shewing how completely his doc-

trine was consonant, in his own opinion to that gospel, which he had sedulously made not only the favorite study, but the constant guide of his life. With this view he published, in 1645, his *Tetrachordon*, expositions upon the four chief places of scripture, which speak of marriage. He introduces this work by a third Address to the Parliament, and, speaking of their justice and candour in disdaining to think of persecuting him for his doctrine, according to the instigation of his enemies, he expresses his gratitude in the following animated terms: "For which uprightnes and incorrupt refusal of what ye were incensed to, lords and commons (though it were done to justice, not to me, and was a peculiar demonstration how far your ways are different from the rash vulgar) besides those allegiances of oath and duty, which are my public debt to your public labors, I have yet a store of gratitude laid up, which cannot be exhausted, and such thanks, perhaps they may live to be, as shall more than whisper to the next ages." This sentence is remarkable in va-

rious points of view, but chiefly as it shews us that the peculiar eagerness and energy with which Milton, at a future period, defended the parliament, originated not only in his passionate attachment to freedom, but in his ardent sense of personal gratitude to the legislature of his country. He was however, too magnanimous to wish for shelter under any authority, without vindicating his innocence and the merit of his cause; he therefore says to the parliament, in speaking of an antagonist who, in their presence had traduced him from the pulpit, "I shall take licence by the right of nature, and that liberty wherein I was born, to defend myself publicly against a printed calumny, and do willingly appeal to those judges to whom am accused."

The preacher had represented the doctrine of divorce as a wicked book, for allowing other causes of divorce than Christ and his Apostles mentioned, and the parliament as sinners for not punishing its authors.

This induces Milton to exclaim with devotional spirit, which seems predominant in

his mind on every occasion, "first, lords and commons, I pray to that God, before whom ye then were prostrate, so to forgive ye those omissions and trespasses, which ye desire most should find forgiveness, as I shall soon shew to the world how easily ye absolve yourselves of that, which this man calls your sin, and is indeed your wisdom and nobleness, whereof to this day ye have done well not to repent."

The scope of Milton, in his doctrine of divorce, is thus explained by himself: "This shall be the task and period of this discourse to prove, first that other reasons of divorce besides adultery were by the law of Moses, and are yet to be allowed by the Christian magistrate, as a piece of justice, and that the words of Christ, are not hereby contraried; next that, to prohibit absolutely any divorce whatsoever, except those which Moses excepted, is against the reason of law."

This doctrine he first delivered as the result of his own diligent study of the scripture. He afterwards found and declared it consonant to what many eminent divines of the

reformed church, particularly Martin Bucer and Erasmus, had maintained; lastly to grace his opinions with the highest human support, he asserts, "they were sanctioned by the whole assembled authority of England, both church and state, and in those times which are on record for the purest and sincerest that ever shone yet on the Reformation of this land, the time of Edward the Sixth. That worthy prince, having utterly abolished the canon law out of his dominions, as his father did before him, appointed by full vote of parliament, a committee of two and thirty chosen men, divines and lawyers, of whom Cranmer the archbishop, Peter Martyr, and Walter Haddon, not without the assistance of Sir John Cheek, the king's tutor, a man at that time accounted the learnedest of Englishmen, and for piety not inferior, were the chief to frame anew some ecclesiastical laws, that might be instead of what was abrogated. The work with great diligence was finished, and with as great approbation of that reforming age was received, and had been doubtless, as

the learned preface thereof testifies, established by act of parliament, had not the good king's death so soon ensuing arrested the farther growth of religion also from that season to this. Those laws, thus founded on the memorable wisdom and piety of that religious parliament and synod, allow divorce and second marriage, not only for adultery and desertion, but for any capital enmity, or plot laid against the other(s) life, and likewise for evil and fierce usage. Nay, the twelfth chapter of that title, by plain consequence declares, that lesser contentions, if they be perpetual, may obtain divorce, which is all one really with the position by me held in the former treatise published on this argument herein only differing, that there the cause of perpetual strife was put, for example, in the unchangeable discord of some natures; but in these laws, intended us by the best of our ancestors, the effect of continual strife is determined no unjust plea of divorce, whether the cause be natural or wilful."

The author exults so much in this au-

thority, that he concludes with the following expressions of confidence and triumph :

“Henceforth let them, who condemn the assertion of this book for new and licentious, be sorry, lest, while they think to be of the graver sort, and take on them to be teachers, they expose themselves rather to be pledged up and down by men who intimately know them, to the discovery and contempt of their ignorance and presumption.”

I have dwelt the longer on this subject, because it occupied so deeply the mind and heart of Milton. In these treatises the energy of his language, is very striking ; it forcibly proves how keenly he felt the anguish of connubial infelicity, and how ardently he labored to remove from himself and others that “secret affliction” (to use one of his own expressive phrases) “of an unconscionable size to human strength.”

He argues, indeed, for what the majority of modern legislators and divines have thought inconsistent with sound morality and true religion ; but they, who deem his

arguments inconclusive, may yet admire the powers and the probity of the advocate. His view of the question is as extensive and liberal as his intention was pure and benevolent: if a few words of our Saviour, in their literal sense, are against him, the spirit of the gospel may be thought, by sincere Christians, to allow him all the latitude for which he contends; the most rigid opponent of his doctrine may be frequently charmed with his rich vein of fervid eloquence and christian philanthropy.

His three publications on divorce were followed by *Côlasterion*, a reply to a nameless answer against his doctrine. This work is an angry invective, in which he endeavours, but not happily, to overwhelm his antagonist with ridicule.

In the account which he gives of his own compositions, in his *Second Defence*, he speaks of his treatise on divorce, as forming a part of his progressive labour to vindicate liberty in various points of view; he considered it in three different shapes, ecclesiastical, domestic, and civil; he thought

it of high moment to establish a more enlarged system of domestic liberty, at a time when connubial discord was so common, in consequence of civil dissension; when to use his own forcible expression, alluding probably to his particular situation, “the wife might be found in the camp of the enemy, threatening ruin and slaughter to her husband.” He seems to exult in saying, that his doctrine of divorce was most abundantly demonstrated, about two years after his publication, by the illustrious Selden, in his *Uxor Hebræa*.*

* Cum itaque tres omnino animadverterem libertatis esse species, quæ nisi adsint, vita ulla transigi commodè vix possit, ecclesiasticam, domesticam, seu privatam, atque civilem, deque primâ jam scripsissem, deque tertia magistratum sedulò agere viderem, quæ reliqua secunda erat, domesticam mihi desumpsi; ea quoque tripartita, cum videretur esse, si res conjugalis, si liberorum institutio recte se haberet, si denique libere philosophandi potestas esset, de conjugio non solum rite contrahendo, verum etiam, si necesse esset, dissolvendo, quid sentirem explicui; idque ex divinâ lege, quam Christus non sustulit, nedum aliam, tota lege Mosaicâ graviolem civiliter sanxit: quid item de exceptâ solum

Those who love not Milton, affect to speak scornfully of his writings on this subject, and intimate, that they were received at first with universal contempt; but this was far from being the case; they were applauded by many, on whose judgment the author set the highest value, though they were made a source of indecent mirth by the vulgar; and we may reasonably conclude it was this circumstance that induced him to wish he had written them in Latin. To the low ribaldry, with which they were attacked, he alludes in the sonnet, celebrated for the following admirable lines on the hypocritical or intemperate assertors of liberty,

fornicatione sentiendum sit, et meam aliorumque sententiam expromsi, et clarissimus vir Seldenus noster, in Uxore Hebræâ plus minus biennio post editâ, uberius demonstravit. Frustrâ enim libertatem in comitiis et foro crepat, qui domi servitatem viro indignissimam, inferiori etiam servit; eâ igitur de re aliquot libros edidi; eo præsertim tempore cùm vir sæpe et conjux, hostes inter se acerrimi, hic domi cum liberis, illa in castris hostium materfamilias versaretur, viro cædem atque perniciem minitans.—Prose Works, vol. 2. p. 385. quarto.

That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
And still revolt, when truth would set them free;
Licence they mean, when they cry liberty,
For who loves that, must first be wise and good.

This noble sentiment he has inculcated more than once in prose; and as his life was in harmony with his precept, it might have taught his enemies to avoid the gross absurdity of representing him as the lover of anarchy and confusion. Never was a mind better constituted, than Milton's, to set a just value on the prime blessings of peace and order; if he ran into political errors, they arose not from any fondness for scenes of turbulence, but rather from his generous credulity respecting the virtue of mankind; from believing that many hypocrites, who affected a wish to establish peace and order in his country, on what he esteemed the surest foundation, were as sincere and disinterested as himself.

“ From this time (says Johnson) it is observed, that he became an enemy to the Presbyterians, whom he had favored before.

He that changes his party by his humour is not much more virtuous than he that changes it by his interest ; he loves himself rather than truth." Notwithstanding the air of morality in this remark, it may be questioned if ever an observation was made on any great character more invidious, or more unjust. When the Presbyterians were favored by Milton, they spake the language of the oppressed ; on their being invested with power, they forgot their own pleas for liberty of conscience, and became, in their turn, persecutors ; it was the consistency of virtue, therefore, in Milton, that made him at one time their advocate, and at another their opponent : so far from loving himself better than truth, he was perhaps of all mortals the least selfish.—He contended for religion without seeking emoluments from the church ; he contended for the state without aiming at any civil or military employment ; truth and justice were the idols of his heart, and the study of his life ; if he sometimes failed of attaining them, it was not because he loved any thing better, but

because he overshot the object of his sincere affection from the fondness and ardour of his pursuit.

His wife still persisted in her desertion, but he amused his mind under the mortification her conduct had occasioned by frequent visits to the Lady Margaret Ley, whose manners and conversation were peculiarly engaging. Her father, the Earl of Marlborough, had held the highest offices in a former reign, and of his virtues she used to speak with such filial eloquence as inspired Milton with a sonnet in her praise.

He continued also to manifest his firm affection to the public good, by two compositions intended to promote it; the little tractate on education, addressed to Mr. Hartlib, who had requested his thoughts upon that interesting subject, and his *Areopagitica*, a speech for the liberty of unlicensed printing. The latter has been reprinted, with a spirited preface by Thompson, a poet whom a passion for freedom, united to genius, had highly qualified as an editor and eulogist of Milton.

Had the author of the *Paradise Lost*, left us no composition but his *Areopagitica*, he would be still entitled to the affectionate veneration of every Englishman, who exults in that intellectual light, which is the noblest characteristic of his country, and for which England is chiefly indebted to the liberty of the press. Our constant advocate for freedom, in every department of life, vindicated this most important privilege with a mind fully sensible of its value; he poured all his heart into this vindication, and, to speak of his work in his own energetic language, we may justly call it, what he has defined a good book to be, "the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life."

His late biographer, instead of praising Milton for a service so honorably rendered to literature, seems rather desirous of annihilating its merit, by directing his sarcastic animosity against the liberty of the press. "It seems not more reasonable," says Johnson, "to leave the right of printing unrestrained, because writers may be afterwards

censured, than it would be to sleep with doors unbolted, because by our laws we can hang a thief.”

This is servile sophistry ; the author’s illustration of a thief may be turned against himself. To suffer no book to be published without a licence, is tyranny as absurd as it would be to suffer no traveller to pass along the highway without producing a certificate that he is not a robber.

Even bad books may have their use, as Milton observes ; and I mention this observation, chiefly to shew how liberally he introduces a just compliment to a great author of his own time, in support of this idea. “ What better witness,” says the advocate for unlicenced printing, “ can ye expect I should produce, than one of your own, now sitting in parliament, the chief of learned men reputed in this land, Mr. Selden, whose volume of natural and national laws proves, not only by great authorities brought together, but by exquisite reasons and theorems almost mathematically demonstrative that all opinions, yea errors, known, read,

and collected, are of main service and assistance towards the speedy attainment of what is truest." This eulogy appears sufficient to refute a remark unfriendly to Milton, that he was frugal of his praise; such frugality will hardly be found united to a benevolent heart and a glowing imagination.

In 1645, his early poems, both English and Latin, were first published in a little volume by Humphry Mosely, who informs the reader in his advertisement, that he had obtained them by solicitation from the author, regarding him as a successful rival of Spenser.

Milton had now passed more than three years in that singular state of mortification, which the disobedience of his wife occasioned. His time had been occupied by the incessant exercise of his mental powers; but he probably felt with peculiar poignancy

"A craving void left aching in the breast."

As he entertained serious thoughts of enforcing, by his example, his doctrine of

divorce, and of marrying another wife, who might be worthy of the title, he paid his addresses to the daughter of Doctor Davies: the father seems to have been a convert to Milton's arguments; but the lady had scruples. She possessed, according to Philips, both wit and beauty. A novelist could hardly imagine circumstances more singularly distressing to sensibility, than the situation of the poet, if, as we may reasonably conjecture, he was deeply enamoured of this lady; if her father was inclined to accept him as a son-in-law; and if the object of his love had no inclination to reject his suit, but what arose from a dread of his being indissolubly united to another.

Perhaps Milton alludes to what he felt on this occasion in those affecting lines of *Paradise Lost*, where Adam, prophetically enumerating the miseries to arise from woman, says, in closing the melancholy list, that man sometimes

“ His happiest choice too late
Shall meet, already link'd and wedlock-bound

To a fell adversary, his hate or shame !
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound."

However strong the scruples of his new favorite might have been, it seems not improbable that he would have triumphed over them had not an occurrence, which has the air of an incident in romance, given another turn to the emotions of his heart. While he was conversing with a relation, whom he frequently visited in St. Martin's-lane, the door of an adjoining apartment was suddenly opened : he beheld his repentant wife kneeling at his feet, and imploring his forgiveness. After the natural struggles of honest pride and just resentment, he forgave and received her, " partly from the intercession of their common friends, and partly," says his nephew, " from his own generous nature, more inclinable to reconciliation, than to perseverance in anger and revenge."

Fenton justly remarks, that the strong impression which this interview must have made on Milton, " contributed much to the

painting of that pathetic scene in *Paradise Lost*, in which Eve addresses herself to Adam for pardon and peace; the verses, charming as they are, acquire new charms, when we consider them descriptive of the poet himself and the penitent destroyer of his domestic comfort.

“ Her lowly plight

Immovable, till peace obtain'd from fault
Acknowledg'd and deplor'd, in Adam wrought
Commiseration; soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress!
Creature so fair his reconciliation seeking,
His counsel, whom she had displeas'd, his aid:
As one disarm'd, his anger all he lost.”

It has been said, that Milton resembled his own Adam in the comeliness of his person; but he seems to have resembled him still more in much nobler endowments, and particularly in uniting great tenderness of heart to equal dignity of mind. Soon after he had pardoned, and lived again with his wife, he afforded an asylum, in his own

house, to both her parents, and to their numerous family. They were active royalists and fell into great distress by the ruin of their party: these were the persons who had not only treated Milton with contemptuous pride, but had embittered his existence for four years, by instigating his wife to persist in deserting him. The mother, as Wood intimates, was his greatest enemy, and occasioned the perverse conduct of her daughter. The father, though sumptuous in his mode of life when he first received Milton as his son-in-law, had never paid the marriage portion of a thousand pounds, according to his agreement, and was now stripped of his property by the prevalence of the party he had opposed. On persons thus contumelious and culpable towards him, Milton bestowed his favor and protection. Can the records of private life exhibit a more magnanimous example of forgiveness and beneficence?

At the time of his wife's unexpected return, he was preparing to remove from Aldersgate to a larger house in Barbican,

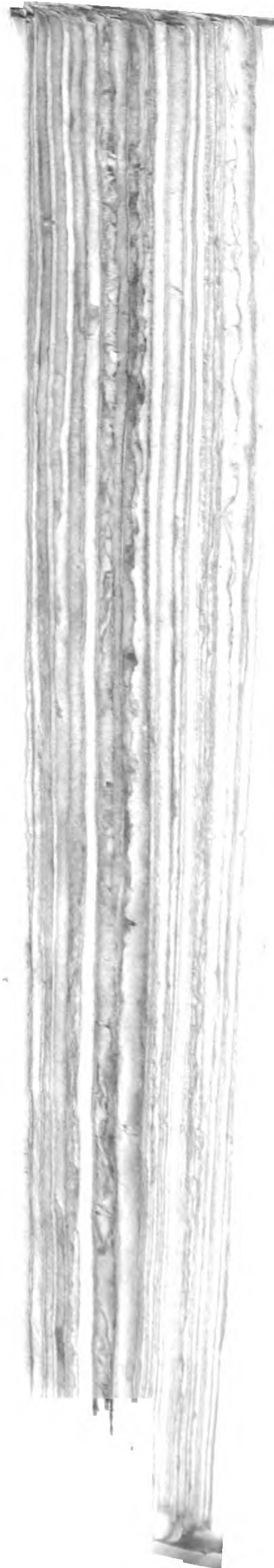
with a view of increasing the number of his scholars. It was in this new mansion that he received the forgiven penitent, and provided a refuge for her relations, whom he retained under his roof, according to Fenton, "till their affairs were accommodated by his interest with the victorious party."

They left him soon after the death of his father, who ended a very long life, in the year 1647, and not without the gratification, peculiarly soothing to an affectionate old man, of bestowing his benediction on a grand-child; for, within the year of Milton's re-union with his wife, his family was increased by a daughter, Anne, the eldest of his children, born July 29, 1646.

When his apartments were no longer occupied by the guests, whom he had so generously received, he admitted more scholars; but their number was small, and Philips imagines, that he was induced to withdraw himself from the business of education by a prospect of being appointed adjutant general in Sir William Waller's army: whatever might have been the motive for

his change of life, he quitted his large house in Barbican for a smaller one in Holborn, "among those (says his nephew) that open backwards into Lincoln's Inn Fields," where he lived, according to the same author, in great privacy, and perpetually engaged in a variety of studies.

Three years elapsed without any new publication from his pen; a silence which the various affecting occurrences in his family would naturally produce. In 1649, he published *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*; and in his summary account of his own writings, he relates the time and occasion of this performance. He declares, that without any personal malevolence against the deceased monarch, who had been tried and executed before this publication appeared, it was written to compose the minds of the people, disturbed by the duplicity and turbulence of certain presbyterian ministers, who affected to consider the sentence against the king as contrary to the principles of every protestant church, "a falsehood (says Milton) which, without



inveighing against Charles, I refuted by the testimony of their most eminent theologians*.”

His observations on the articles of peace between the Earl of Ormond and the Irish papists appeared in the same year; a performance that he probably thought too inconsiderable to enumeratè in his own account of what he had published; it includes

* Tum verò tandem, cùm presbyteriani quidam ministri, Carolo priùs infestissimi, nunc independentium partes suis anteferri, et in senatu plus posse indignantes, parliamenti sententiæ de rege latae (non facto irati, sed quod ipsorum factio non fecisset) reclamarent, et quantum in ipsis erat tumultuarentur, ausi affirmare protestantium doctrinam, omnesque ecclesias reformatas ab ejusmodi in reges atroci sententiâ abhorrere, ratus falsitati tam apertæ palàm eundum obviám esse, ne tum quidem de Carolo quicquam scripsi aut suasi, sed quid in genere contra tyrannos liceret, adductis haud paucis summorum theologorum testimoniis ostendi; et insignem hominum meliora profitentium, sive ignorantiam sive impudentiam propé concionabundus inessi. Liber iste non nisi post mortem regis prodiit, ad componendos potius hominum animos factus, quam ad statuendum de Carolo quicquam quod non mea, sed magistratum intererat, et peractum jam tum erat.—Prose works, vol. ii. p. 385.

however, some remarkably keen strictures on a letter written by Ormond, to tempt Colonel Jones, the governor of Dublin, to desert the Parliament, who had entrusted him with his command. Ormond, having imputed to the prevailing party in England a design to establish a perfect Turkish tyranny, Milton, with great dexterity, turns the expression against Ormond, observing, that the design of bringing in that tyranny is a monarchical design, and not of those who have dissolved monarchy. "Witness (says he) that consultation had in the court of France, under Charles the IXth, at Blois, wherein Poncet, a certain court projector, brought in secretly by the chancellor Biragha, after many praises of the Ottoman government, proposes ways and means at large, in the presence of the king, the queen regent, and Anjou the king's brother, how, with best expedition and least noise, the Turkish tyranny might be set up in France." I transcribe the passage as an example of Milton's applying historical anecdotes with peculiar felicity.

He now began to employ himself in one of the great works, with which he hoped to enrich his native language. The sketch that he has drawn of himself and his studies, at this period, is so interesting and honourable, that it would be injurious not to translate the Latin expressions to which I allude.

“ * Thus (says Milton) as a private

* Hanc intra privatos parietes meam operam nunc ecclesiæ, nunc reipublicæ, dedi; mihi vicissim vel hæc vel illa præter incolumitatem nihil; bonam certe conscientiam, bonam apud bonos existimationem, et honestam hanc dicendi libertatem facta ipsa reddidere: comoda alii, alii honores gratis ad se trahebant; me nemo ambientem, nemo per amicos quicquam petentem, curiæ foribus affixum petitoris vultu aut minorum conventuum vestibulis hærentem nemo me unquam vidit. Domi fere me continebam; meis ipse facultatibus, tametsi hoc civili tumultu magnâ ex parte sæpe detentis, et censum fere iniquius mihi impositum et vitam utcunque frugi tolerabam. His rebus confectis, cum jam abunde otii existimarem mihi futurum, ad historiam gentis ab ultima origine repetitam ad hæc usque temporum, si possem, perpetuo filo deducendam me converti: Quatuor jam libros absolveram, cum ecce nihil tale cogitantem me Caroli regno in rempublicam redacto, concilium status

citizen, I gratuitously gave my assistance to the church and state; on me, in return, they bestowed only the common benefit of protection; but my conduct assuredly gave me a good conscience, a good reputation among good men, and this honorable freedom of discourse: others have been busy in drawing to themselves unmerited emoluments and honor; no one has ever beheld me soliciting any thing, either in person or by my friends; I have confined myself much at home; and by my own property, though much of it has been withheld from me in this civil tumult, I have supported life, however sparingly, and paid a tax imposed upon me, not in the most equitable proportion.

“ Having now a prospect of abundant leisure, I directed my studies to the history of my country, which I began from its remotest source, and intended to bring down

quod dicitur cum primúm auctoritate parlamenti constitutum ad se vocat, meâque operâ ad res præsertim externas uti voluit.—Prose Works, vol. ii. p. 386.

if possible, in a regular process, to the present times. I had executed four books, when, on the settlement of the republic, the council of state, then first established by the authority of parliament, called me most unexpectedly to its service, and wished to employ me chiefly in its foreign concerns." It has not yet, I believe, been ascertained to whom Milton was particularly indebted for a public appointment. "He was (says Wood) without any seeking of his, by the endeavours of a private acquaintance, who was a member of the new council of state, chosen Latin secretary. The new council consisted of thirty-nine members, including two persons, whom we may suppose equally inclined to promote the interest of Milton; these were Serjeant Bradshaw and Sir Henry Vane the younger: it seems probable that he owed his station of secretary to the former, since, in his Second Defence, he mentions him as a friend entitled to his particular regard, and draws his character in colors so vivid, that the portrait may be thought worthy of preser-

vation, even by those who have no esteem for the original.

The character of a man so extraordinary, derived from personal intimacy, and delineated by a hand so powerful, can hardly fail to be interesting; yet it becomes still more so, if we consider it as a monument of Milton's gratitude to the friend who fixed him in that public station, which gave signal exercise to the energy of his mind, and first made him, as a Latin writer, the admiration of Europe.

Whatever influence gratitude might have on the description, and however different the ideas may be, that are commonly entertained of Bradshaw, the eulogy bestowed on him by Milton was certainly sincere; for though not frugal of his praise, yet such was his probity, that it may, I think, be fairly proved, he never bestowed a particle of applause where he did not think it deserved; a point that I hope to establish, by refuting, in the course of this narrative, the charge of servile flattery, which he is

falsely accused of having lavished upon Cromwell.

To praise, indeed, appears to have been occupation peculiarly suited to his spirit, which was naturally sanguine, free from the gloom of sarcastic melancholy, and ever ready to glow with affectionate enthusiasm. His character of Bradshaw may illustrate this remark; it was written with peculiar elegance and affection; the following portion of it will be sufficient to shew, not only the fervency of his friendship, but his facility and force of pencil in the delineation of character.*

“ * Attulerat ad legum scientiam ingenium liberale, animum excelsum, mores integros ac nemini obnoxios; — nec tristis, nec, severus, sed comis ac placidus. In consiliis ac laboribus publicis maxime omnium indefessus, multisque par unus; domi, si quis alius, pro suis facultatibus hospitalis ac splendidus; amicus longe fidelissimus, atque in omni fortunâ certissimus; bene merentes quoscunque nemo citius aut libentius agnoscit, neque majore benevolentia prosequitur; nunc pios, nunc doctos, aut quavis ingenii laude cognitos, nunc militares etiam et fortes viros ad inopiam redactos suis opibus sublevat; iis, si non indigent, colit tamen libens

“ He had, united to the knowledge of law, a liberal disposition, an elevated mind, and irreproachable integrity of morals, neither gloomy nor severe, but courteous and mild.

“ In public councils and labours he is the most indefatigable of men, and alone equal to many; in his house he, if any man, may be esteemed hospitable and splendid, in proportion to his fortune; as a friend faithful in the highest degree, and most surely to be depended upon in every emergency; no man sooner or more freely acknowledges merit, wherever it may be found; no man rewards it with greater benevolence;

amplectitur; alienas laudes perpetuo prædicare, suas tacere solitus. Quod si causa oppressi cujuspian defendenda palam, si gratia aut vis potentiorum oppugnanda, si in quemquam benemeritum ingratitude publica objurganda sit, tum quidem in illo viro, vel facundiam vel constantiam nemo desideret, non patronum, non amicum, vel idoneum magis et intrepidum, vel disertiozem alium quisquam sibi optet; habet, quem non minæ dimovere recto, non metus aut munera proposito bono atque officio, vultusque, ac mentis firmissimo statu dejicere valeant.—Prose Works, vol. ii. p. 389.

he raises from indigence at his own cost, sometimes men of piety, learning, and talents, sometimes those brave military men, whose prosperity has not been equal to their valor : such persons, if they are not indigent, he still honors with his regard ; it is his nature to proclaim the desert of others, and to be silent on his own.

“ If the cause of any one under oppression is to be openly defended, if the influence or authority of men in power is to be opposed, if the ingratitude of the public towards any individual of merit is to be re-proved, no want will be found in this man, either of eloquence or courage ; nor can any sufferer wish to find, on such occasions, a patron and a friend more suited to his necessities, more resolute, or more accomplished ; he already possesses such a friend, and such a patron as no menaces can drive from the line of rectitude, whom neither terrors nor bribes can divert from the duty he is pursuing, or shake from his settled firmness of mind and countenance.”

A writer of sanguine imagination, who

delineates a public character he admires in the glowing colors of affection, has rarely the good fortune to find the personage whom he has praised acting in perfect conformity to his panegyric ; but Milton, in one particular circumstance, had this rare felicity, in regard to the friend whom he so fervently commended ; for Bradshaw resisted the tyrannical orders of Cromwell, in the plenitude of his power, with such firmness, that we might almost suppose him animated by a desire to act up to the letter of the eulogy, with which he had been honored by the eloquence and the esteem of Milton. This will sufficiently appear by the following anecdote, in Ludlow's Memoirs, who, after speaking of Oliver's usurpation, and the universal terror he inspired, relates how he himself was summoned, with Bradshaw, Sir Henry Vane, and Colonel Rich, to appear before the usurper in council. "Cromwell (says Ludlow) as soon as he saw the lord president, required him to take out a new commission for his office of chief justice of Chester, which he refused, alledging that he

held that place by a grant from the parliament of England, to continue, 'quamdiu se bene gesserit ;' and whether he had carried himself with that integrity, which his commission exacted, he was ready to submit to a trial by twelve Englishmen, to be chosen even by Cromwell himself.

This opposition to the usurper was assuredly magnanimous, and the more so as Bradshaw persisted in it, and actually went his circuit as chief justice without paying any regard to what Cromwell had required. The odium which the president justly incurred in the trial of Charles seems to have prevented even our liberal historians from recording with candour the great qualities he possessed ; he was undoubtedly not only an intrepid but a sincere enthusiast in the cause of the common wealth. His discourse on his death-bed is a sanction to his sincerity ; he regarded it as meritorious to have pronounced sentence on his king, in those awful moments when he was passing himself to the tribunal of his God. Whatever we may think of his political tenets, let us

render justice to the courage and the consistency with which he supported them.—The mind of Milton was in unison with the high-toned spirit of this resolute friend, and we shall soon see how little ground there is to accuse the poet of servility to Cromwell ; but we have first to notice the regular series of his political compositions.

Soon after his public appointment, he was requested by the council to counteract the effect of the celebrated book, entitled, *Icon Basilike, the Royal Image*, and in 1649, he published his *Iconoclastes, the Image Breaker*. The sagacity of Milton enabled him to discover, that the pious work imputed to the deceased king was a political artifice to serve the cause of the royalists ; but as it was impossible for him to obtain such evidence to detect the imposition, as time has since produced, he executed a regular reply to the book, as a real production of the king, intimating at the same time, his suspicion of the fraud.

This reply has recently drawn on the name of Milton, much liberal praise, and much in-

jurious obloquy. A Scottish critic of great eminence, Lord Monboddo, has celebrated the opening of the *Iconoclastes* as a model of English prose, or, to use his own just expressions, "a specimen of manly eloquence." Johuson, from the same work takes occasion to insinuate, that Milton was a dishonest man. A charge so serious, and from a moralist who professed such attachment to truth, deserves some discussion. "As faction (says the unfriendly biographer) seldom leaves a man honest, however it may find him, Milton is suspected of having interpolated the book called *Icon Basilike*, by inserting a prayer taken from Sidney's *Arcadia*, and imputing it to the king, whom he charges, in his *Iconoclastes*, with the use of this prayer, as with a heavy crime, in the indecent language with which prosperity had emboldened the advocates for rebellion to insult all that is venerable and great."

A simple question will shew the want of candour in this attempt to impeach the moral credit of Milton. By whom is he suspected or this dishonesty? His biogra-

pher sinks the name of his own old dishonorable associate in depreciating Milton, and does not inform us that it was the infamous Lauder, who, having failed to blast the reputation of the poet, with equal impotence and fury pursued his attack against the probity of the man in an execrable pamphlet entitled "King Charles the First vindicated from the Charge of Plagiarism brought against him by Milton, and Milton himself convicted of Forgery." Instead of naming Lauder who persisted in trying to substantiate this most improbable charge, Johnson would insidiously lead us to believe, that the respectable Dr. Birch, supported it, though Birch, who had indeed printed, in the appendix to his Life of Milton, the idle story which Lauder urges as a proof of Milton's imposture, had properly rejected that story from the improved edition of his work, and honorably united with another candid biographer of the poet, the learned bishop of Bristol, in declaring that "such contemptible evidence, is not to be admitted against a

man, who had a soul above being guilty of so mean an action.”

There are some calumnies so utterly despicable and absurd, that to refute them elaborately is almost a disgrace; did not the calumny I am now speaking of, belong to this description, it might be here observed that a writer who published remarks on Johnson's Life of Milton, in which the asperity of that biographer is opposed with superior asperity, has proved, with new arguments, the futility of the charge in question. Instead of repeating these, let me observe, that the attempt of Johnson, to revive a base and sufficiently refuted imputation against the great author, whose life he was writing, is one of the most extraordinary proofs, that literature can exhibit, how far the virulence of political hatred may pervert a very powerful mind, even a mind which makes moral truth its principal pursuit, and assiduously labors to be just. This remark is not made in enmity to Johnson, but to shew how cautious the most cultivated understanding

should be in watching the influence of any hostile prejudice. Milton himself may be also urged as an example to enforce the same caution; for though he was certainly no impostor in imputing the prayer in question to the king, yet his considering the king's use of it as an offence against heaven is a pitiable absurdity as glaring as it would be to affirm, that the divine poet is himself profane in assigning to a speech of the Almighty, in his poem, the two following verses:

Son of my bosom, son who art alone
My word, my wisdom, and effectual might—

Because they are partly borrowed from a line in Virgil, addressed by a heathen goddess to her child:

“Nate, meæ vires, mea magna potentia solus.”

The heat of political animosity could thus throw a mist over the bright intellects of Milton; yet his *Iconoclastes*, taken altogether, is a noble effort of manly reason; it

tage than glory itself, ought to be more eligible in the estimation of every man ; I resolved therefore to make what short use I might yet have of my eyes as conducive as possible to public utility : you see what I preferred, and what I lost, with the principle on which I acted ; let slanderers therefore cease to talk irreverently on the judgment of God, and to make me the subject of their fictions ; let them know that I am far from considering my lot with sorrow or repentance ; that I persist immovable in my sentiment ; that I neither fancy nor feel the anger of God, but, on the contrary, experience and acknowledge his paternal clemency and kindness in my most important concerns, in this especially, that, by the comfort and confirmation, which he himself infuses into my spirit, I acquiesce in his divine pleasure, continually considering rather what he has bestowed upon me, than what he has denied. Finally, that I would not exchange the consciousness of my own conduct for their merit, whatever it may be, or part with a remembrance, which is to my

own mind a perpetual source of tranquility and satisfaction.”

Whenever he is induced to mention himself, the purity and vigor of Milton's mind, appear in full lustre, whether he speaks in verse or in prose: the preceding passage from his *Second Defence*, is consonant to the sonnet on his blindness, addressed to Cyriac Skinner, which, though different critics have denied the author to excel in this minute species of composition, has hardly been surpassed; it deserves double praise for energy of expression and heroism of sentiment.

Cyriac, this three-years day these eyes, tho' clear
 To outward view of blemish or of spot,
 Bereft of sight their seeing have forgot,
 Nor to their idle orbs does day appear,
 Or sun, or moon, or star throughout the year,
 Or man or woman; yet I argue not
 Against Heav'n's hand or will, nor bate a jot,
 Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
 Right onward. What supports me dost thou ask?
 The conscience, friend, to have lost them over-ply'd
 In liberty's defence, my noble task,
 Of which all Europe talks from side to side:

This thought might lead me thro' the world's vain
 mask
 Content, tho' blind, had I no better guide."

The ambition of Milton was as pure as his genius was sublime; his first object on every occasion was to merit the approbation of his conscience and his God; when this most important point was secured, he seems to have indulged the predominant passion of great minds, and to have exulted, with a triumph proportioned to his toil, in the celebrity he acquired: he must have been insensible indeed to public applause, had he not felt elated by the signal honors which were paid to his name in various countries, as the eloquent defender of the English nation. "**This I can truly affirm,*" (says Milton, in mentioning the reception of his great political performance) "that as soon as

** Hoc etiam vere possum dicere, quo primum tempore nostra defensio est edita, et legentium studia incaluerunt, nullum vel principis vel civitatis legatum in urbe tum fuisse, qui non vel fortè obvio mihi gratularetur, vel conventum apud se cuperet vel domi inviseret. — Prose Works, vol. 2. p. 394.*

my defence of the people was published, and read with avidity, there was not, in our metropolis, any ambassador from any state or sovereign, who did not either congratulate me if we met by chance, or express a desire to receive me at his house, or visit me at mine."

Toland relates, that he received from the parliament a present of a thousand pounds for the defence. The author does not include this circumstance among the many particulars he mentions of himself; and if such a reward was ever bestowed upon him, it must have been after the publication of his *Second Defence*, in which he affirms, that he was content with having discharged what he considered as an honorable public duty, without aiming at a pecuniary recompence; and that instead of having acquired the opulence with which his adversary reproached him, he received not the slightest gratuity for that production.* Yet he appears to

* Contentus quæ honesta factu sunt, ea propter se solum appetisse, et gratis persequi: id alii viderint tuque

have been perfectly satisfied with the kindness of his associates ; for, in speaking of his blindness, he says, that “ far from being neglected on this account, by the highest characters in the republic, they constantly regarded him with indulgence and favor, not seeking to deprive him either of distinction or emolument, though his powers of being useful were diminished ;” hence he compares himself to an ancient Athenian, supported by a decree of honor at the expence of the public.* Among the foreign compli-

scito me illas “opimitates,” atque “opes,” quas mihi exprobas, non atti gisse neque eo nomine quo maxime accusas obolo factum ditiozem.—Prose Works, vol. ii. p. 378.

* Quin et summi quoque in republica viri quandoquidem non otio torpentem me, sed impigrum et summa discrimina pro libertate inter primos adeuntem oculi deseruerunt, ipsi non deferunt; verum humana qualia sint secum reputantes, tanquam merito favent, indulgent vacationem atque otium faciles concedunt; si quid publici muneris, non adimunt; si quid ex ea re commodi, non minuunt; et quamvis non æque nunc utili, præbendum nihilo minus benignè censent; eodem plane honore ac si, ut olim Atheniensibus mos erat, in Prytanèo alendum decrevisset.—Prose Works, vol. ii. p. 376.

ments he received, the applause of Christina afforded him the highest gratification ; for he regarded it as an honorable proof of what he had ever affirmed, that he was a friend to good sovereigns, though an enemy to tyrants: he understood that the queen of Sweden had made this distinction in commending his book, and in the warmth of his gratitude he bestowed on the nothern princess a very splendid panegyric, of which the subsequent conduct of that singular and fantastic personage too clearly proved her unworthy ; yet Milton cannot fairly be charged with servile adulation. Christina, when he appeared as her eulogist, was the idol of the literary world. The candour with which she spake as a queen on his defence of the people would naturally strike the author as an engaging proof of her discernment and magnanimity ; he was also gratified in no common degree by the coolness with which she treated his adversary ; for Salmasius, whom she invited to her court for his erudition, was known to have lost her favor, when his literary arrogance and imbecility were ex-

posed and chastised by the indignant spirit of Milton. The wretched Salmasius, indeed, was utterly overwhelmed in the encounter ; he had quitted France, his native country, where he honorably disdained to purchase a pension by flattering the tyranny of Richlieu, and had settled in Leyden as an asylum of liberty ; he seemed, therefore, as one of his Parisian correspondents observed to him, “ to cancel the merit of his former conduct by writing against England.” Salmasius was extravagantly vain, and trusted too much to his great reputation as a scholar ; his antagonist, on the contrary, was so little known as a Latin writer before the defence appeared that several friends advised Milton not to hazard his credit against a name so eminent as that of Salmasius. Never did a literary conflict engage the attention of a wider circle ; and never did victory declare more decidedly in favor of the party from whom the public had least expectation. Perhaps no author ever acquired a more rapid and extensive celebrity than Milton gained by this contest. Let us however remark, for the

interest of literature, that the two combatants were both to blame in their reciprocal use of weapons utterly unworthy of the great cause that each had to sustain : not content to wield the broad and bright sword of national argument, they both descended to use the mean and envenomed dagger of personal malevolence. They have indeed great authorities of modern time to plead in their excuse, not to mention the bitter disputants of antiquity. It was the opinion of Johnson, and Milton himself seems to have entertained the same idea, that it is allowable in literary contention to ridicule, vilify, and depreciate as much as possible, the character of an opponent. Surely this doctrine is unworthy of the great names, who have endeavoured to support it, both in theory and practice ; a doctrine not only morally wrong but prudentially defective ; for a malevolent spirit in eloquence is like a dangerous varnish in painting, which may produce, indeed, a brilliant and forcible effect for a time but ultimately injures the success of the production ; a remark that may be verified in

perusing the Latin prose of Milton, where elegance of language and energy of sentiment, suffer not a little from being blended with the tiresome asperity of personal invective.

It is a pleasing transition to return from his enemies to his friends. He had a mind and a heart most feelingly alive to the duties and delights of friendship, and seems to have been peculiarly happy in this important article of human life. In speaking of his blindness, he mentions, in the most interesting manner, the assiduous and tender attention, which he received on that occasion from his friends in general: some of them he regarded as not inferior in kindness to Theseus and Pylades, the ancient demigods of amity. We have lost, perhaps, some little poems that flowed from the heart of Milton, by their being addressed to persons who, in the vicissitudes of public fortune, were suddenly plunged into obscurity with the honors they had received. Some of his sonnets that we possess did not venture into public till many years after the

death of their author for political reasons ; others might be concealed from the same motive, and in such concealment they might easily perish. I can hardly believe that he never addressed a verse to Bradshaw, whom we have seen him praising so eloquently in prose ; and among those whom he mentions with esteem in his Latin works, there is a less known military friend, who seems still more likely to have been honored with some tribute of the poet's affection, that time and chance may have destroyed ; I mean his friend Overton, a soldier of eminence in the service of the parliament, whom Milton describes " as endeared to him through many years by the sweetness of his manners, and by an intimacy surpassing even the union of brothers.*" A character so highly and tenderly esteemed by the poet has a claim to the attention of his biographer. Overton is

* Te, Overtone, mihi multis ab hinc annis et studiorum similitudine, et morum suavitate, concordia plusquam fraternâ conjunctissime.—Prose Work, Vol. II, p. 400.

commended by the frank ingenuous Ludlow as a brave and faithful officer; he is also ridiculed in a ballad of the royalists as a religious enthusiast. He had a gratuity of 300l. a-year conferred upon him for his bravery by the parliament, and had risen to the rank of a major general. Cromwell, apprehensive that Overton was conspiring against his usurpation, first imprisoned him in the tower, and afterwards confined him in the island of Jersey. A letter, in which Marvel relates to Milton his having presented to the Protector at Windsor a recent copy of the Second Defence, expresses at the same time, an affectionate curiosity concerning the business of Overton, who was at that time just brought to London by a mysterious order of Cromwell. He did not escape from confinement till after the death of Oliver, when, in consequence of a petition from his sister to the parliament, he obtained his release. Soon after the restoration, he was again imprisoned in the tower with Colonel Desborow, on a rumour of their being concerned in a treasonable

commotion ; but as that rumour seems to have been a political device of the royalists, contrived to strengthen the new government, he probably regained his freedom, though we know not how his active days were concluded. The anxiety and anguish that Milton must have indured in the various calamities to which his friends were exposed on the vicissitude of public affairs, formed, I apprehend, the severest sufferings of his extraordinary life, in which genius and affliction seem to have contended for pre-eminence.

Some traces of the sufferings I allude to, though mysteriously veiled, are yet visible in his poetry, and will be noticed hereafter. Not to anticipate the severest evil of his destiny, let me now speak of a foreign friend, in whose lively regard he found only honor and delight. On the publication of his defence, Leonard Philaras, a native of Athens, who had distinguished himself in Italy, and risen to the rank of envoy from the Duke of Parma to the court of France, conceived a flattering desire to

cultivate the friendship of Milton. With this view he sent him his portrait, with very engaging letters, and the highest commendation of the recent defence. The reply of Milton is remarkable for its elegance and spirit; after thanking his correspondent for presents so agreeable, he says,—“ * If

* Cum enim Alexander ille magnus in terris ultimis bellum gerens, tantos se militiae labores pertulisse testatus sit, της παρ' Αθηναίων ευδοξίας ἕνεκα; quidni ergo mihi gratuler, meque ornari quam maxime putem, ejus viri laudibus, in quo jam uno priscorum Atheniensium artes, atque virtutes illae celebratissimæ, renasci tam longo intervallo, et reflorescere videntur. Quâ ex urbe cum tot viri disertissimi prodierint, eorum potissimum scriptis ab adolescentia pervolvendis, didicisse me libens fateor quicquid ego literis profeci. Quod si mihi tanta vis dicendi accepta ab illis et quasi transfusa inesset, ut exercitos nostros et classes ad liberandam ab Ottomanico tyranno Græciam, eloquentiæ patriam, excitare possem; ad quod facinus egregium nostras opes pene implorare videris, facerem profecto id quo nihil mihi antiquius aut in votis prius esset. Quid enim vel fortissimi olim viri, vel eloquentissimi gloriosius aut se dignius esse duxerunt, quam vel suadendo vel fortiter faciendo ἐλευθερος και ἀνιόνους ποιησθαι τους Ελληνας? Verum et aliud quiddam præterea tentandum est, meâ quidem sententiâ longe maxi-

Alexander in the midst of his martial toil confessed, that he laboured but to gain an eulogy from Athens, I may think myself fortunate indeed, and esteem it as the highest honor, to be thus commended by the man in whom alone the genius and virtue of the ancient Athenians seem, after so long an interval, to revive and flourish. As your city has produced many most eloquent men, I am perfectly willing to confess, that whatever proficiency I have made in literature is chiefly owing to my long and incessant study of their works. Had I acquired from them such powers of language as might enable me to stimulate our fleets and armies

mum, ut quis antiquam in animis Græcorum virtutem, industriam, laborum tolerantiam, antiqua illa studia dicendo, suscitare atque accendere possit. Hoc si quis effecerit, quod à nemine potius quam abs te, pro tua illa insigni erga patriam pietate, cum summa prudentia rei-que militaris peritia, summo denique recuperandæ libertatis pristinæ studio conjunctâ, expectare debemus; neque ipsos sibi Græcos neque ullam gentem Græcis defuturam esse confido. Vale.—Prose Works, Vol. II p. 575.

to deliver Greece, the native seat of eloquence, from the tyranny of the Turks (a splendid enterprise, for which you almost seem to implore our assistance) I would assuredly do what would then be among the first objects of my desire; for what did the bravest or most eloquent men of antiquity consider as more glorious or more worthy of themselves, than by persuasive language or bold exploits to render the Greeks free, and their own legislators." He closes his letter by observing very justly, that "it is first necessary to kindle in the minds of the modern Greeks, the spirit and virtue of their ancestors," (politely adding) that "if this could be accomplished by any man, it might be most reasonably expected from the patriotic enthusiasm, and the experience, civil and military, of his accomplished correspondent." This letter is dated June 1652. Milton had soon afterwards the gratification of a visit from this liberal Athenian, who took so tender an interest in the blindness of his friend, that, on his return to Paris, he wrote to him on the subject. The

following answer of Milton relates the particulars of his disorder, and shews at the same time with what cheerful magnanimity he supported it.

“ * To Leonard Philaras.

“ As I have cherished from my childhood (if ever mortal did) a reverential fondness for the Grecian name, and for your native Athens in particular, so have I continually persuaded myself, that at some period I should receive from that city a very

* Leonardo Philaræ Atheniensi.

Cum sim a pueritiâ totius Græci nominis, tuarumque in primis Athenarum cultor, si quis alius, tum una hoc semper mihi persuasissimum habebam, fore ut illa urbs præclaram aliquando redditura vicem esset benevolentiae erga se meæ. Neque defuit sane tuæ patriæ nobilissimæ antiquus ille genius augurio meo; deditque te nobis et germanum Atticum et nostri amantissimum; qui me, scriptis duntaxat notum, et locis ipse disjunctus, humanissime per literas compellaveris et Londinum postea inopinatus adveniens, visensque non videntem, etiam in ea calamitate, propter quam conspectior nemini, despectior multis fortassis sim, eâdem benevolentia prosequaris. Cum itaque author mihi sis, ut visus recuperandi spem

signal return for my benevolent regard : nor has the antient genius of your most noble country failed to realize my presage ; he has

omnem ne abjiciam, habere, te amicum ac necessarium tuum Parisiis Tevenotum medicum, in curandis præsertim oculis præstantissimum, quem sis de meis luminibus consulturus, si modo acceperis a me unde is causas morbi et syptomata possit intelligere; faciam equidem quod hortaris, ne ablatam undecunque divinitus fortassis opem repudiare videar. Decennium, opinor, plus minus est, ex quo debilitari atque hebescere visum sensi, eodemque tempore lumen, visceraque omnia gravari, flatibusque vexari; et mane quidem, si quid pro more legere cœpisssem, oculi statim penitus dolere, lectionemque refugere, post mediocrem deinde corporis exercitationem recreari; quam aspexissem lucernam, iris quædam visa est redimere: haud ita multo post sinistra in parte oculi sinistri (is enim oculus aliquot annos prius altera nubilavit) caligo oborta, quæ ad latus illud siti erant, omnia eripiebat. Anteriora quoque, si dexterum forte oculum clausissem, minora visa sunt. Deficiente per hoc fere trennium sensim atque paulatim altero quoque lumine, aliquot ante mensibus quam visus omnis aboleretur, quæ immotus ipse cernerem, visa sunt omnia nunc dextrorsum, nunc sinistrorsum natæ; frontem totam atque tempora inveterati quidem vapores videntur insedissee; qui somnolenta quadam gravitate oculos, a cibo præsertim usque ad vesperam, plerumque urgent atque depri-

given me in you an Attic brother, and one most tenderly attached to me. Though I was known to you only by my writings,

munt; ut mihi haud raro veniat in mentem Salmydessii vatis Phinei in Argonauticis:

— κάρος δέ μιν ἀμφεχάλυψεν

Πορφύρεος. γαίαν δὲ περίξ' ἔδοκῆσε φερεσθαι

Νειόθεν, ἀβληχρῶ δ' ἐπι κώματι κέκλι' ἄναυδος.

Sed neque illud omisserim, dum adhuc visûs aliquantulum supererat, ut primum in lecto decubissem meque in alterutrum latus reclinasset, consuevisse copiosum lumen clausis oculis emicare; deinde, imminuto indies visu colores perinde obscuriores cum impetu et fragore quodam intimo exilire; nunc autem, quasi extincto lucido, merus nigror, aut cineraceo distinctus, et quasi intextus solet se affundere; caligo tamen quæ perpetuo observatur, tam noctu, quam interdiu albenti semper quam nigricanti propior videtur; et volvente se oculo aliquantulum lucis quasi per rimulam admittit. Ex quo tametsi medico tantundem quoque spei possit elucere, tamen ut in re plane insanabili ita me paro atque compono; illudque sæpe cogito, cum destinati cuique dies tenebrarum, quod monet sapiens, multi sint, meas adhuc tenebras, singulari numinis benignitate, inter otium et studia, vocesque amicorum, et salutationes, illis lethalibus multo esse mitiores. Quod si, ut scriptum est, non solo pane vivit homo, sed omni verbo prodeunte per os Dei, quid est,

and though your residence was far distant from mine, you first addressed me in the most engaging terms by letter; and afterwards coming unexpectedly to London, and visiting the stranger, who had no eyes to see you, continued your kindness to me under that calamity, which can render me a more eligible friend to no one, and to many, perhaps, may make me an object of disregard.

“ Since, therefore, you request me not to reject all hope of recovering my sight, as you have an intimate friend at Paris, in Thevenot the physician, who excels, particularly in relieving ocular complaints, and whom you wish to consult concerning my

cur quis in hoc itidem non acquiescat, non solis se oculis sed Dei ductu an providentia satis oculatum esse. Sane dummodo ipse mihi prospicit, ipse mihi providet, quod facit, meque per omnem vitam quasi manu ducit atque deducit, ne ego meos oculos, quandoquidem ipsi sic visum est, libens feriari jussero. Teque, mi Philara, quocunque res cecidit, non minus forti et confirmato animo, quam si Lynceus essem, valere jubeo.

Westmonasterio, Septemb. 28, 1654.

Prose Works, Vol. II. p. 577.

eyes, after receiving from me such an account as may enable him to understand the source and symptoms of my disorder, I will certainly follow your kind suggestion, that I may not appear to reject assistance thus offered me, perhaps providentially.

“ It is about ten years, I think, since I perceived my sight to grow weak and dim, finding at the same time my intestines afflicted with flatulence and oppression.

“ Even in the morning, if I began as usual to read, my eyes immediately suffered pain, and seemed to shrink from reading, but, after some moderate bodily exercise, were refreshed; whenever I looked at a candle I saw a sort of iris around it. Not long afterwards, on the left side of my left eye (which began to fail some years before the other) a darkness arose, that hid from me all things on that side;—if I chanced to close my right eye, whatever was before me seemed diminished.—In the last three years, as my remaining eye failed by degrees some months before my sight was utterly gone, all things that I could

discern, though I moved not myself, appeared to fluctuate, now to the right, now to the left. Obstinate vapours seem to have settled all over my forehead and my temples, overwhelming my eyes with a sort of sleepy heaviness, especially after food, till the evening ; so that I frequently recollect the condition of the prophet Phineus in the Argonautics :

Him vapours dark

Envelop'd, and the earth appear'd to roll

Beneath him, sinking in a lifeless trance.

But I should not omit to say, that while I had some little sight remaining, as soon as I went to bed, and reclined on either side, a copious light used to dart from my closed eyes ; then, as my sight grew daily less, darker colors seemed to burst forth with vehemence, and a kind of internal noise ; but now, as if every thing lucid were extinguished, blackness, either absolute or chequered, and interwoven as it were with ash-color, is accustomed to pour itself on my eyes ; yet the darkness perpetually be

fore them, as well during the night as in the day, seems always approaching rather to white than to black, admitting, as the eye rolls, a minute portion of light as through a crevice.

“ Though from your physician such a portion of hope also may arise, yet, as under an evil that admits no cure, I regulate and tranquilize my mind, often reflecting, that since the days of darkness allotted to each, as the wise man reminds us, are many, hitherto my darkness, by the singular mercy of God, with the aid of study, leisure, and the kind conversation of my friends, is much less oppressive than the deadly darkness to which he alludes. For if, as it is written, man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, why should not a man acquiesce even in this? not thinking that he can derive light from his eyes alone, but esteeming himself sufficiently enlightened by the conduct or providence of God.

“ As long, therefore, as he looks forward, and provides for me as he does, and

leads me backward and forward by the hand, as it were, through my whole life, shall I not cheerfully bid my eyes keep holiday, since such appears to be his pleasure? But whatever may be the event of your kindness, my dear Philaras, with a mind not less resolute and firm than if I were Lynceus himself, I bid you farewell.

“ Westminster, Sept. 28, 1654.”

We have no reason to imagine that Milton received any kind of medical benefit from the friendly intention of this amiable foreigner. Strange as the idea may at first appear, perhaps it was better for him as a poet, to remain without a cure; for his devout tenderness and energy of mind had so far converted his calamity into a blessing, that it seems rather to have promoted than obstructed both the happiness of his life and the perfection of his genius. We have seen, in the admirable sonnet on his blindness, how his reflections on the conscientious labour by which he lost his eyes gave a dignified satisfaction to his spirit. In one of his prose works he expresses a sentiment

on the same subject, that shews, in the most striking point of view, the meekness and sublimity of his devotion. He exults in his misfortune, and feels it endeared to him by the persuasion, that to be blind is to be placed more immediately under the providence of God:* when regarded in this manner, it could not fail to quicken and invigorate his mental powers. Blindness, indeed, without the aid of religious enthusiasm, has a natural tendency to favor that undisturbed,

*Sed neque ego cæcis, afflictis, mœrentibus, imbecillis tametsi vos id miserum ducitis, aggregari me discrucior; quando quidem spes est, eo me propiùs ad misericordiam summi patris atque tutelam pertinere. Est quoddam per imbecillitatem præeunte apostolo ad maximas vires iter: sim ego debilissimus; dummodo in mea debilitate immortalis ille et melior vigor eo se efficacius exerat; dummodo in meis tenebris divini vultus lumen eo clarius eluceat, tum enim infirmissimus ero simul et validissimus cæcus eodem tempore et perspicacissimus; hac possim ego infirmitate consummari, hac perfici, possim in hac obscuritate sic ego irradiari. Et sanè haud ultima Dei cura cæci sumus; qui nos quo minus quicquam aliud præter ipsum cernere valemus, eo clementius atque benignius respicere dignatur.—Prose Works, vol 2. p. 376.

intense, and continual meditation, which works of magnitude require. Perhaps we sometimes include in the catalogue of disadvantages the very circumstances that have been partly instrumental in leading extraordinary men to distinction. In examining the lives of illustrious scholars we may discover, that many of them arose to glory by the impulse of personal misfortune; Bacon and Pope were deformed; Homer and Milton were blind.

It has been frequently remarked, that the blind are generally cheerful; it is not therefore marvellous that Milton was very far from being dispirited by the utter extinction of his sight; but his unconquerable vigour of mind was signally displayed in continuing to labor under all the pains and inconveniencies of approaching blindness, a state peculiarly unfavorable to mental exertion.

From the very eloquent preface to his Defence we learn, that while he was engaged on that composition, and eager to throw into it, all the force of his exalted mind, "his

infirmity obliged him to work only by starts, and scarce to touch, in short periods of study broken by hourly interruptions, what he wished to pursue with continued application.*” In this most uneasy and perilous labor he exerted his failing eyes to the utmost, and, to repeat his own triumphant expression,

Lost them overply'd
In liberty's defence.

His left eye became utterly blind in 1651, the year in which the book that he alludes to was published, and he lost the use of the other in 1654, the year in which he wrote

* Quod si quis miretur fortè cur ergò tam diu intactum et ovantem, nostroque omnium silentio inflamatum volitare passi sumus, de aliis sane nescio, de me audacter possum dicere, non mihi verba aut argumenta quibus causam tuerer tam bonam diu quærenda aut investiganda fuisse, si otium et valetudinem (quæ quidem scribendi laborem ferre possit) nactus essem. Quâ cum adhuc etiam tenui admodum utar carptim hæc cogor et intercisis penè singulis horis vix attingere, quæ continenti stylo atque studio persequi debuissim.—
Prose Works, vol. 2, p. 278.

concerning his blindness to his Athenian friend. In this interval he repeatedly changed his abode. As every spot inhabited by such a man acquires a sort of consecration in the fancy of his admirers, I shall here transcribe from his nephew, the particulars of his residence.

“First he lodged at one Thomson’s, next door to the Bull Head tavern at Charing Cross, opening into the Spring Garden, which seems to have been only a lodging taken till his designed apartment in Scotland Yard, was prepared for him; for hither he soon removed from the aforesaid place, and here his third child, a son, was born, which, through the ill-usage or bad constitution, of an ill chosen nurse, died an infant. From this apartment, whether he thought it not healthy or otherwise convenient for his use, or whatever else was the reason, he soon after took a pretty garden-house in Petty France, in Westminster, next door to the Lord Scudamore’s, and opening into St. James’s Park, where he remained no less than eight years; namely, from 1652, till

within a few weeks of King Charles the Second's restoration."

Philips also informs us, that while his uncle lodged at Thomson's he was employed in revising and polishing the Latin work of his youngest nephew John, who on the publication of a severe attack upon Milton, ascribed (but injuriously as Mr. Todd has clearly proved) to Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, vindicated his illustrious relation, and satirized his supposed adversary with a keenness and vehemence of invective, which induced, perhaps, some readers to suspect that the performance was written entirely by Milton. The traces however, of a young hand, are evident in the work; and John Philips, at the time it appeared, 1652, was a youth of nineteen or twenty, eager (as he declares) to engage unsolicited in a composition, which however abounding in juvenile defects, proves him attached to his country, and grateful to his friends.

In 1654, Milton, now utterly blind, appeared again in the field of controversy, first in his Second Defence of the English Peo-

ple, and the following year in a defence of himself, "Autoris pro se Defensio." The first of these productions is in truth, his own vindication; it is the work in which he speaks most abundantly of his own character and conduct; it displays that true eloquence of the heart, by which probity and talents are enabled to defeat the malevolence of an insolent accuser; it proves that the mind of this wonderful man united to the poetic imagination of Homer, the argumentative energy of Demosthenes.

It must however be allowed, that while Milton defended himself with the spirit of the Grecian orator, in imitating the eloquent Athenian he promiscuously caught both his merits and defects. It is to be regretted, that these mighty masters of rhetoric, permitted so large an alloy of personal virulence to debase the dignity of national argument; yet as the great orators of an age more humanized are apt, we see, to be hurried into the same failing, we may conclude that it is almost inseparable, from the weakness of nature, and we must not expect to find,

though we certainly should endeavour to introduce, the charity of the Gospel in political contention.

If the utmost acrimony of invective, could in any case be justified, it might assuredly be so by the calumnies which hurried both Demosthenes and Milton, into those intemperate expressions, which appear in their respective vindications like specks of a meaner mineral in a mass of the richest ore. The outrages that called forth the vindictive thunders of the eloquent Athenian, are sufficiently known. The indignation of Milton was awakened by a Latin work, published at the Hague in 1652, entitled, *Regii Sanguinis Clamor ad Cælum*; The Cry of Royal Blood to Heaven. In this book all the bitter terms of abhorrence and reproach, with which the malignity of passion can dishonor learning, were lavished on the eloquent defender of the English commonwealth. The secret author of this scurrility was Peter du Moulin, a Protestant divine, and son of a French author, whom the biographers of his own

country describe as a satirist without taste and a theologian without temper. Though du Moulin seems to have inherited the acrimonious spirit of his father, he had not the courage to publish himself what he had written as the antagonist of Milton, but sent his papers to Salmasius, who entrusted them to Alexander More, a French protestant of Scotch extraction, and a divine, who agreed in his principles with the author of the manuscript.

Most unfortunately for his own future comfort, More published, without a name the work of Du Moulin, with a dedication to Charles the second, under the signature of Ulac, the Dutch printer. He decorated the book with a portrait of Charles, and applied at the same time to Milton the Virgilian delineation of Polypheme :

Monstrum horrendum informe ihgens, cui lumen
ademptum.

A monstrous bulk deform'd depriv'd of sight.

DRYDEN.

Never was a savage insult more completely avenged ; for Milton, having discovered that

More was unquestionably the publisher of the work, considered him as its author, which, according to legal maxims, he had a right to do, and in return exposed, with such severity of reproof, the irregular and licentious life, of his adversary, that, losing his popularity as a preacher, he seems to have been overwhelmed with public contempt.

There is a circumstance hitherto unnoticed in this controversy, that may be considered as a proof of Milton's independent and inflexible spirit. More having heard accidentally, from an acquaintance of the English author, that he was preparing to expose him as the editor of the scurrilous work he had published, contrived to make great interest in England, first, to prevent the appearance, and again, to soften the personal severity of Milton's *Second Defence*. The Dutch ambassador endeavoured to prevail on Cromwell to suppress the work. When he found that this was impossible, he conveyed to Milton the letters of More, containing a protestation that he was not the author of the invective, which had given so

much offence; the ambassador at the same time made it his particular request to Milton that, in answering the book, as far as it related to the English government, he would abstain from all hostility against More.—Milton replied, “that no unbecoming words should proceed from his pen;” but his principles would not allow him to spare, at any private intercession, a public enemy of his country. These particulars are collected from the last of our author’s political treatises in Latin, the defence of himself, and they form, I trust, a favorable introduction to a refutation, which it is time to begin, of the severest and most plausible charge, that the recent enemies of Milton have urged against him; I mean the charge of servility and adulation, as the sycophant of an usurper.

I will state the charge in the words of his most bitter accuser, and without abridgment, that it may appear in its full force:

“Cromwell (says Johnson) had now dismissed the Parliament, by the authority of which he had destroyed the monarchy,

and commenced monarch himself under the title of protector, but with kingly, and more than kingly power.—That his authority was lawful, never was pretended; he himself founded his right only in necessity; but Milton, having now tasted the honey of public employment, would not return to hunger and philosophy, but, continuing to exercise his office under a manifest usurpation, betrayed to his power, that liberty which he had defended. Nothing can be more just than that rebellion should end in slavery; that he who had justified the murder of the king for some acts, which to him seemed unlawful, should now sell his services and his flatteries to a tyrant, of whom it was evident that he could do nothing lawful.”

Let us observe, for the honor of Milton, that the paragraph, in which he is arraigned with so much rancour, contains a political dogma, that, if it were really true, might blast the glory of all the illustrious characters who are particularly endeared to every English heart. If nothing can be more just than that rebellion should end in slavery,

why do we revere those ancestors, who contended against kings? why do we not resign the privileges that we owe to their repeated rebellion? but the dogma is utterly unworthy of an English moralist; for assuredly we have the sanction of truth, reason, and experience, in saying, that rebellion is morally criminal or meritorious, according to the provocation by which it is excited, and the end it pursues. This doctrine was supported even by a servant of the imperious Elizabeth. "Sir Thomas Smith," (says Milton in his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*) "a protestant and a statesman, in his Commonwealth of England, putting the question, whether it be lawful to rise against a tyrant, answers, that the vulgar judge of it, according to the event, and the learned according to the purpose of them that do it." Dr. Johnson, though one of *the learned* here shews not that candor which the liberal statesman had described as the characteristic of *their* judgment. The biographer uttering himself political tenets of the most servile complexion, accuses Milton of servility; and, in his mode of using the

words honey and hunger, falls into a petulant meanness of expression, that too clearly discovers how cordially he detested him. But perhaps his detestation was the mere effect of political prejudice, the common but unchristian abhorrence that a vehement royalist thinks it virtue to harbour and to manifest against a republican. We might indeed, easily believe that Johnson's rancour against Milton, was merely political, had he not appeared as the biographer of another illustrious republican ; but when we find him representing as honorable in Blake the very principles and conduct which he endeavours to make infamous and contemptible in Milton, can we fail to observe, that he renders not the same justice to the heart of the great republican author, which he had nobly rendered to the gallant admiral of the republic. To Blake he generously assigns the praise of intrepidity, honesty, contempt of wealth, and love of his country. Assuredly these virtues were as eminent in Milton, and however different their lines in life may appear, the celebrated speech of Blake

to his seamen, "It is our business to hinder foreigners from fooling us," by which, he justified his continuance in his post under Cromwell, is singularly applicable to Milton who, as a servant, engaged by the state to conduct, in Latin, its foreign correspondence might think himself as strongly bound in duty and honor, as the justly applauded admiral, "to hinder his country from being fooled by foreigners." "But Milton," says his uncandid biographer, "continuing to exercise his office under a manifest usurpation, betrayed to his power, that liberty which he had defended." Was the usurpation more manifest to Milton, than to Blake? Or is it a deeper crime against liberty to write the Latin dispatches, than to fight the naval battles of a nation under the controul of an usurper? Assuredly not: nor had either Blake or Milton, the least intention of betraying that liberty, which was equally the darling idol of their elevated and congenial spirits; but in finding the learned and eloquent biographer of these two immortal worthies so friendly to the admiral,

and so inimical to the author, have we not reason to lament and reprove such inconsistent hostility.

That the Latin secretary of the nation, deserved not this bitterness of censure for remaining in his office, may be thought sufficiently proved by the example of Blake.— If his conduct in this article required farther justification, we might recollect with the candid bishop Newton, that the blameless Sir Mathew Hale, the favorite model of integrity, exercised under Cromwell the higher office of a judge ; but the heaviest charge against Milton, is yet unanswered, the charge of lavishing the most servile adulation on the usurper.

In replying to this most plausible accusation, let me be indulged in a few remarks, that may vindicate the credit not only of a single poet, but of all Parnassus. The poetical fraternity have been often accused of being ever ready to flatter ; but the general charge is in some measure, inconsistent with a knowledge of human nature. As poets, generally speaking, have more sensibility and

less prudence than other men, we should naturally expect to find them rather distinguished by an abundance, than by a want of sincerity; when they are candidly judged, they will generally be found so; a poet indeed, is as apt to applaud a hero, as a lover is to praise his mistress, and both, according to the forcible and true expression of Shakspear,

“Are of imagination all compact.”

Their descriptions are more faithful to the acuteness of their own feelings, than to the real qualities of the objects described. Paradoxical as it may sound, they are often deficient in truth, in proportion to the excess of their sincerity; the charm or the merit they celebrate, is partly the phantom of their own fancy; but they believe it real, while they praise it as a reality; and as long as their belief is sincere, it is unjust to accuse them of adulation. Milton himself gives us an excellent touchstone for the trial of praise in the following passage of his *Areopagitica*; “there are three principal things, without

which, all praising is but courtship, and flattery; first when that only is praised, which is solidly worth praise; next, when greatest likelihoods are brought, that such things are truly and really in those persons to whom they are ascribed; the other, when he who praises, by shewing that such his actual persuasion is of whom he writes, can demonstrate that he flatters not." If we try Milton by this, his own equitable law, we must honorably acquit him of the illiberal charge, that might almost be thought sufficiently refuted by its apparent inconsistency with his elevated spirit.

Though in the temperate judgment of posterity, Cromwell appears only a bold bad man, yet he dazzled and deceived his contemporaries, with such a strong and continued blaze of real and visionary splendour, that almost all the power and all the talents on earth seemed eager to pay him unsolicited homage: but I mean not to rest the vindication of Milton on the prevalence of example, which however high and dignified it might be, could never serve as a sanction for the man,

to whom the rare union of spotless integrity with consummate genius had given an elevation of character, that no rank and no powers unsupported by probity could possibly bestow ; though all the potentates and all the literati of the world conspired to flatter the usurper, we might expect Milton to remain like his own faithful Abdiel,

Unshaken, uneduc'd, unterrified.

Assuredly he was so ; and in praising Cromwell he praised a personage, whose matchless hypocrisy assumed before him a mask that the arch apostate of the poet could not wear in the presence of Abdiel, the mask of affectionate zeal towards man, and of devout attachment to God ; a mask that Davenant has described with poetical felicity in the following couplet :

Dissembled zeal, ambition's old disguise,
The vizard, in which fools outface the wise.

It was more as a saint than as an hero, that Cromwell deluded the generous credulity of Milton ; and, perhaps, the recollec-

tion of his having been thus deluded, inspired the poet with his admirable apology for Uriel deceived by Satan.

For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil, that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By his permissive will, thro' heav'n and earth;
And oft, tho' wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems.

That sublime religious enthusiasm, which was the predominant characteristic of the poet, exposed him particularly to be duped by the prime artifice of the political impostor, who was indeed so consummate in the art of deception, that he occasionally deceived the prudent unheated Ludlow and the penetrating inflexible Bradshaw; nay, who carried habitual deception to such a length, that he is supposed, by some acute judges of human nature, to have been ultimately the dupe of his own hypocritical fervor, and to have thought himself, what he induced many to think him, the selected

servant of God, expressly chosen to accomplish wonders, not only for the good of his nation, but for the true interest of Christendom.

Though Cromwell had assumed the title of Protector, when Milton in his second defence sketched a masterly portrait of him (as we have seen he did of Bradshaw in the same production) yet the new potentate had not, at this period, completely unveiled his domineering and oppressive character; on the contrary, he affected, with the greatest art, such a tender concern for the people; he represented himself, both in his public and private protestations, so perfectly free from all ambitious desires, that many persons, who possessed not the noble unsuspecting simplicity of Milton, believed the Protector sincere in declaring, that he reluctantly submitted to the cares of government, merely for the settlement and security of the nation. With a mind full of fervid admiration for his marvellous achievements, and generally disposed to give him credit for every upright intention, Milton hailed

him as the father of his country, and delineated his character; if there were some particles of flattery in his panegyric, which, if we adhere to our author's just definition of flattery, we cannot allow, it was completely purified from every cloud or speck of servility by the most splendid and sublime admonition, that was ever given to a man possessed of great talents and great power by a genuine and dauntless friend, to whom talents and power were only objects of reverence, when under the real or fancied direction of piety and virtue.

“ * Revere (says Milton to the Pro-

* Reverere tantam de te expectationem, spem patriæ de te unicam; reverere vultus et vulnera tot fortium virorum, quotquot, te duce, pro libertate tam strenuè, decertarunt; manes etiam eorum qui in ipso certamine occubuerunt; reverere exterarum quoque civitatum existimationem de nobis atque sermones, quantas res de libertate nostra tam fortiter parta, de nostra republica tam gloriose exorta sibi polliceantur, quæ si tam cito quasi aborta evanuerit, profecto nihil æque dedecorosum huic genti, atque pudendum fuerit; teipsum denique reverere, ut pro qua adipiscendâ libertate tot ærumnas pertulisti, tot pericula adiisti, eam adeptus violatam per

tector) the great expectation, the only hope, which our country now rests upon you—revere the sight and the sufferings of so

te, aut ulla in parte imminutam aliis ne sinas esse. Profecto tu ipse liber sine nobis esse non pōtes, sic enim naturā comparatum est, ut qui aliorum libertatem occupat, suam ipse primum omnium amittat; seque primum omnium intelligat servire; atque id quidem non injuria. At vero, si patronus ipse libertatis, et quasi tutelar̄is deus, si is, quo nemo justior, nemo sanctior est habitus, nemo vir melior, quam vindicavit ipse, eam postmodum invaserit, id non ipsi tantum sed universæ virtutis ac pietatis rationi perniciosum ac lethale prope modum sit necesse est: ipsa honestas ipsa virtus decoxisse videbitur religionis augusta fides, existimatio perexigua in posterum erit, quo gravius generi humano vulnus, post illud primum, infligi nullum poterit. Onus longe gravissimum suscepisti, quod te penitus explorabit totum te atque intimum perscrutabitur atque ostendet, quid tibi animi, quid virium insit, quid ponderis; vivatue in te vere illa pietas, fides, justitia, animique moderatio, ob quas evectum te præcæteris Dei numine ad hanc summam dignitatem credimus. Tres nationes validissimas consilio regere, populos ab institutis pravis ad meliorem, quam antehac, frugem ac disciplinam velle perducere, remotissimas in partes, sollicitam mentem, cogitationes immittere, vigilare, prævidere, nullum laborem recusare, nulla voluptatum blandimenta non spernere, divitiarum atque potentiæ

many brave men, who, under your guidance, have fought so strenuously for freedom—revere the credit we have gained in foreign nations—reflect on the great things they promise themselves from our liberty, so acquired; from our republic, so gloriously founded, which, should it perish like an abortion, must expose our country to the utmost contempt and dishonor.

“ Finally, revere yourself; and having sought and sustained every hardship and danger for the acquisition of this liberty, let it not be violated by yourself, or impaired by others, in the smallest degree. In truth, it is impossible for you to be free yourself unless we are so; for it is the ordinance of nature, that the man who first invades the

ostentationem fugere, hæc sunt illa ardua, præ quibus bellum ludus est; hæc te ventilabunt atque excutient, hæc virum poscunt divino fultum auxilio, divino pene colloquio monitum atque edoctum. Quæ tu, et plura, æpenumero quin tecum reputes atque animo revolvas, non dubito; uti et illud, quibus potissimum queas modis et illa maxima perficere et libertatem salvam nobis reddere et auctiorem.—Prose Works, Vol. II. p. 399.

liberty of others must first lose his own, and first feel himself a slave. This indeed is just. But if the very patron and tutelary angel of liberty, if he who is generally regarded as pre-eminent in justice, in sanctity, and virtue; if he should ultimately invade that liberty which he asserted himself, such invasion must indeed be pernicious and fatal, not only to himself, but to the general interest of piety and virtue. Truth, probity, and religion would then lose the estimation and confidence of mankind, the worst of wounds, since the fall of our first parents, that could be inflicted on the human race. You have taken upon you a burthen of weight inexpressible; it will put to the severest perpetual test the inmost qualities, virtues, and powers of your heart and soul; it will determine whether there really exists in your character that piety, faith, justice, and moderation, for the sake of which we believe you raised above others, by the influence of God, to this supreme charge.

“ To direct three most powerful nations by your counsel, to endeavour to reclaim

the people from their depraved institutions to better conduct and discipline, to send forth into remotest regions your anxious spirit and incessant thoughts, to watch, to foresee, to shrink from no labor, to spurn every allurements of pleasure, to avoid the ostentation of opulence and power, these are arduous duties, in comparison of which war itself is mere sport; these will search and prove you; they require, indeed, a man supported by the assistance of heaven, and almost admonished and instructed by immediate intercourse with God. These and more I doubt not but you diligently revolve in your mind, and this in particular, by what methods you may be most able to accomplish things of highest moment, and secure to us our liberty not only safe but enlarged."

If a private individual thus speaking to a man of unbounded influence, whom a powerful nation had idolized and courted to assume the reins of government, can be called a flatterer, we have only to wish that all the flatterers of earthly power may be of

the same complexion. The admonition to the people, with which Milton concludes his second defence, is by no means inferior in dignity and spirit to the advice he bestowed on the protector. The great misfortune of the monitor was, that the two parties to whom he addressed his eloquent and patriotic exhortation, were neither of them so worthy of his counsel as he wished them to be, and endeavoured to make them. For Cromwell, as his subsequent conduct sufficiently proved, was a political impostor with an arbitrary soul; and as to the people, they were alternately the dishonored instruments and victims of licentiousness and fanaticism. The protector, his adherents, and his enemies, to speak of them in general, were as little able to reach the disinterested purity of Milton's principles, as they were to attain, and even to estimate the sublimity of his poetical genius. But Milton, who passionately loved his country though he saw and lamented the various corruptions of his contemporaries, still continued to hope, with the native ardour of a

sanguine spirit, that the mass of the English people would be enlightend and improved. His real sentiments of Cromwell, I am persuaded, were these : he long regarded him as a person not only possessed of wonderful influence and ability, but disposed to attempt, and likely to accomplish, the purest and noblest purposes of policy and religion ; yet often thwarted and embarrassed in his best designs, not only by the power and machinations of the enemies with whom he had to contend, but by the want of faith, morality, and sense in the motley multitude, whom he attempted to guide and govern. As religious enthusiasm was the predominant characteristic of Milton, it is most probable that his fervid imagination beheld in Cromwell a person destined by heaven to reduce, if not to annihilate, what he considered the most enormous grievance of earth, the prevalence of popery and superstition. The several humane and spirited letters which he wrote, in the name of Cromwell, to redress the injuries of the persecuted protestants, who suffered in Piedmont, were

highly calculated to promote, in equal degrees, his zeal for the purity of religion, and his attachment to the protector.

Yet great as the powers of Cromwell were to dazzle and delude, and willing as the liberal mind of Milton was to give credit to others for that pure public spirit, which he possessed himself, there is great reason to apprehend, that his veneration and esteem for the protector were entirely destroyed by the treacherous despotism of his latter days. But however his opinion of Oliver might change, he was far from betraying liberty, according to Johnson's ungenerous accusation, by continuing to exercise his office; on the contrary, it ought to be esteemed a proof of his fidelity to freedom, that he condescended to remain in an office, which he had received from no individual, and in which he justly considered himself as the servant of the state. From one of his familiar letters, written in the year preceding the death of Cromwell, it is evident that he had no secret intimacy or influence with the protector; and that instead of engaging in am-

bitious machinations, he confined himself as much as possible to the privacy of domestic life. Finally on a full and fair review of all the intercourse between Milton and Cromwell, there is not the smallest ground to suspect, that Milton ever spoke or acted as a sycophant or a slave; he bestowed indeed, the most liberal eulogy, both in prose and rhyme, upon the protector; but at a period when it was the general opinion, that the utmost efforts of panegyric could hardly equal the magnitude and the variety of the services rendered to his country by the acknowledged hero and the fancied patriot; at a period when the eulogist who understood the frailty of human nature, and foresaw the temptations of recent power, might hope that praise so magnificent, united to the noblest advice, would prove to the ardent spirit of the protector the best preservative against the delirium of tyranny. These generous hopes were disappointed; the despotic proceedings of Cromwell convinced his independent monitor, that he deserved not the continued applause of a free spirit;

and though the achievements of the protector were so fascinating, that poetical panegyrics encircled even his grave, yet Milton praised him no more, but after his decease fondly hailed the revival of parliamentary independence, as a new dawning of God's providence on the nation. In contemplating these two extraordinary men together, the real lover of truth and freedom can hardly fail to observe the striking contrast of their characters; one was an absolute model of false, and the other of true grandeur. Mental dignity and public virtue were in Cromwell fictitious and delusive; in Milton they were genuine and unchangeable; Cromwell shews the formidable wonders that courage and cunning can perform, with the assistance of fortune; Milton, the wonders, of a superior kind, that integrity and genius can accomplish, in despite of adversity and affliction.

An eager solicitude to vindicate a most noble mind from a very base and injurious imputation has led me to anticipate some public events. From these observations on

the native and incorruptible independence of Milton's mind, let us return to the incidents of his domestic life.

Soon after his removal to his house in Westminster, his fourth child, Deborah, was born, on the second of May, 1652. The mother, according to Philips, died in child-bed. The situation of Milton at this period was such as might have depressed the mind of any ordinary man : at the age of forty-four he was left a widower, with three female orphans, the eldest about six years old, deformed in her person, and with an impediment in her speech; his own health was very delicate; and with eyes that were rapidly sinking into incurable blindness, he deeply engaged in a literary contest of the highest importance. With what spirit and success he triumphed over his political and personal enemies the reader is already informed. When these in 1654, were all silenced and subdued by the irresistible power of his superior talents and probity, " he had leisure again (says his nephew) for his own studies and private designs."

It seems to have been the habit of Milton to devote as many hours in every day to intense study as the mental faculties could bear, and to render such constant exertion less oppressive to the mind, by giving variety to the objects of its application, engaging in different works of magnitude at the same time, that he might occasionally relieve and inspirit his thoughts by a transition from one species of composition to another. If we may rely on the information of Philips, he now began to employ himself in this manner on three works; a voluminous Latin Dictionary, a History of England, and an Epic Poem; of the two last I shall speak again according to the order of their publication. The first, and least important, a work to which blindness was peculiarly unfavorable, was never brought to maturity, yet served to amuse this most diligent of authors, by a change of literary occupation, almost to the close of his life. His collection of words amounted to three folios; but the papers, after his decease, were so discomposed and deficient. (to use the expression of his ne-

phew) that the work could not be made fit for the press. They proved serviceable however to future compilers, and were used by those who published the Latin Dictionary at Cambridge, in 1693.

Though he had no eyes to choose a second wife, Milton did not long continue a widower. He married Catherine, the daughter of Captain Woodcock, a rigid sectarist, says Mr. Warton, of Hackney. This lady appears to have been the most tender and amiable of the poet's three wives, and is the only one of the three, whom the muse of Milton has immortalized with an affectionate memorial. Within the year of their marriage she gave birth to a daughter, and very soon followed her to the grave. "Her husband" says Johnson "has honored her memory with a poor sonnet;" an expression of contempt, which only proves that the rough critic was unable to sympathise with the tenderness that reigns in the pathetic poetry of Milton: in the opening of this sonnet;

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me, like Alcestis, from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from death by force, tho' pale and faint :

and in the latter part of it,

Her face was veil'd, yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd
So clear, as in no face with more delight ;
But O, as to embrace me she inclin'd
I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night.

Milton has equalled the mournful graces of Petrarch and of Camoens, who have each of them left a plaintive composition on a similar idea. The curious reader, who may wish to compare the three poets on this occasion, will find the similarity I speak of in the 79th sonnet of Petrarch, and the 72d of Camoens.

The loss of a wife so beloved, and the severe enthrallment of his country under the increasing despotism of Cromwell, must have wounded very deeply the tender and patriotic feelings of Milton. His variety of

affliction from these sources might probably occasion his being silent, as an author, for some years. In 1655, he is supposed to have written a national manifesto in Latin, to justify the war against Spain. From that time, when his defence of himself also appeared, we know not of his having been engaged in any publication till the year 1659, excepting a political manuscript of Sir Walter Raleigh, called the Cabinet Council, which he printed in 1658, with a brief advertisement. What his sentiments were concerning the last years of Cromwell, and the following distracted period, we have a striking proof in one of his private letters, written not long after the death of the protector. In reply to his foreign friend Oldenburgh (he says) “ * I am very far from

* *Ab historiâ nostrorum motuum concinnandâ, quod hortari videris, longe absum; sunt enim silentio digniores quam præconio: nec nobis qui motuum historiam concinnare, sed qui motus ipsos componere feliciter possit est opus; tecum enim vereor ne libertatis ac religionis hostibus nunc nuper sociatis, nimis opportuni inter has nostras civiles discordias vel potius insanias,*

preparing a history of our commotions, as you seem to advise, for they are more worthy of silence than of panegyric ; nor do we want a person with ability to frame an history of our troubles, but to give those troubles a happy termination ; for I sympathise with you in the fear, that the enemies of our liberty and our religion, who are recently combined, may find us too much exposed to their attack in these our civil dissensions, or rather our fits of frenzy ; they cannot, however, wound our religion more than we have done ourselves by our own enormities." The interest of religion appears on every occasion to have maintained its due ascendancy in the mind of Milton, and to have formed, through the whole course of his life, the primary object of his pursuit ; it led him to publish in 1659, two distinct treatises, the first on civil power in ecclesiastical causes ; the

videamur; verum non illi gravius quam nosmetipsi jamdiu flagitiis nostris religioni vulnus intulerint.—Prose Works, vol. 2. p. 585.

second, on the likeliest means to remove hirelings out of the church ; performances which Johnson presumes to characterize by an expression not very consonant to the spirit of Christianity, representing them as written merely to gratify the author's malevolence to the clergy ; a coarse reproach, which every bigot bestows upon enlightened solicitude for the purity of religion, and particularly uncandid in the present case, because the devout author has conscientiously explained his own motives in the following expressions, addressed to the long parliament restored after the decease of Cromwell.

“ Of civil liberty I have written heretofore by the appointment, and not without the approbation of civil power ; of Christian liberty I write now, which others long since having done with all freedom under heathen emperors, I should do wrong to suspect that I now shall with less under Christian governors, and such especially as profess openly their defence of Christian liberty ; although I write this not otherways ap-

pointed or induced than by an inward persuasion of the Christian duty, which I may usefully discharge herein to the common Lord and Master of us all, and the certain hope of his approbation, first and chiefest to be sought." Milton was not a being of that common and reptile class, who assume an affected devotion as the mask of malignity. In addressing his second treatise also to the parliament, he describes himself as a man under the protection of the legislative assembly, who had used, during eighteen years, on all occasions to assert the just rights and freedom both of church and state.

Had he been conscious of any base servility to Cromwell, he would certainly have abstained from this manly assertion of his own patriotic integrity, which, in that case, would have been only ridiculous and contemptible. His opinions might be erroneous, and his ardent mind over heated; but no man ever maintained, with more steadiness and resolution, the native dignity of an elevated spirit, no man more sedul-

ously endeavoured to discharge his duty both to earth and heaven.

In February 1659, he published *The Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth*, a work not approved even by republican writers: I will only make one observation upon it: the motto to this performance seems to display the just opinion that Milton entertained concerning the tyranny of Cromwell;

— et nos,
Consilium Syllæ dedimus, demus populo nunc.

— e'en we have given
Counsel to Sylla---to the people now ;

a very happy allusion to the noble but neglected advice which he bestowed on the Protector.

Amidst the various political distractions towards the end of the year 1659, he addressed a letter to a nameless friend, who had conversed with him the preceding evening on the dangerous ruptures of the commonwealth. This letter and a brief paper,

containing a sketch of a commonwealth, addressed to General Monk, were, soon after the author's death communicated by his nephew to Toland, who imparted them to the public.

Milton gave yet another proof of his unwearied attention to public affairs, by publishing brief notes on a sermon preached by Dr. Griffith, at Mercer's Chapel, March 25th, 1660, "wherein (says the annotator) many notorious wrestings of scripture, and other falsities, are observed."

When the repeated protestations of Monk to support the republic had ended in his introduction of the king, the anxious friends of Milton, who thought the literary champion of the parliament might be exposed to revenge from the triumphant royalists, hurried him into concealment. The solicitude of those who watched over his safety was so great, that, it is said, they deceived his enemies by a report of his death, and effectually prevented a search for his person (during the first tumultuary and vindictive rage of the royalists) by a

pretended funeral. A few weeks before the restoration (probably in April) he quitted his house in Westminster, and did not appear in public again till after the act of oblivion, which passed on the 29th of August. In this important interval some events occurred, which greatly affected both his security and reputation. The House of Commons, on the 16th of June, manifested their resentment against his person as well as his writings, by ordering the attorney general to commence a prosecution against him, and petitioning the king, that his two books, the Defence of the People, and his Answer to Icon Basilike, might be publicly burnt.

Happily for the honor of England, the person of the great author was more fortunate than his writings in escaping from the fury of persecution. Within three days after the burning of his books, he found himself relieved from the necessity of concealment, and sheltered under the common protection of the law by the general act of indemnity, which had not included his name in the list of exceptions. It has been

thought wonderful by many, that a writer whose celebrated compositions had rendered him an object of abhorrence to the royal party, could elude the activity of their triumphant revenge, and various conjectures have been started to account for the safety of Milton, after his enemies had too plainly discovered an inclination to crush him. One of these conjectural causes of his escape represents two contemporary poets in so amiable a light, that though I am unable to confirm the anecdote entirely by any new evidence, I shall yet dwell upon it with pleasure. Richardson, whose affectionate veneration for the genius and virtue he celebrates, makes ample amends for all the quaintness of his style, has the following passage on the subject in question.

“ Perplexed and inquisitive as I was, I at length found the secret, which he from whom I had it thought he had communicated to me long ago, and wondered he had not. I will no longer keep you in expectation:—’twas Sir William Davenant obtained his remission, in return for his own

life procured by Milton's interest, when himself was under condemnation, anno 1650—a life was owing to Milton (Davenant's) and 'twas paid nobly; Milton's at Davenant's intercession. It will now be expected I should declare what authority I have for this story; my first answer is, Mr. Pope, who told it me. Whence had he it? From Mr. Betterton—Sir William was his patron—Betterton was prentice to a bookseller, John Holden, the same who printed Davenant's *Gondibert*. There Sir William saw him, and, persuading his master to part with him, brought him first on the stage. Betterton then may be well allowed to know this transaction from the fountain head."

On this interesting anecdote Johnson makes the following remark: "Here is a reciprocation of generosity and gratitude so pleasing, that the tale makes its own way to credit, but if help were wanted I know not where to find it; the danger of Davenant

is certain from his own relation, but of his escape there is no account."

This passage of the critical biographer affords a striking proof, that he is sometimes as inaccurate in narration as he is defective in sentiment. Impressed as I am with the clearest conviction of his repeated endeavours to depreciate the character of Milton, I will not suppose that Johnson could designedly suppress an evidence of the poet's generosity, which, while he is speaking of it in terms of admiration, he still endeavours to render problematical; yet certain it is, that of Milton's protection of Davenant a very obvious evidence exists in Anthony Wood, who says, under the article Davenant, "he was carried prisoner to the Isle of Wight, anno 1650, and afterwards to the Tower of London, in order to be tried for his life in the High Court of Justice, anno 1651; but upon the mediation of John Milton and others, especially two godly aldermen of York (to whom he had shewn great civility when they had been taken pri-

sóners in the north, by some of the forces under William Marquis of Newcastle) he was saved, and had liberty allowed him as a prisoner at large.’’

Thus far the pleasing story is sufficiently proved to the honor of Milton. That Davenant endeavoured to return the favor is highly probable, from the amiable tenderness and benevolent activity of his character. Perhaps this probability may seem a little strengthened by the following verses of Davenant, in a poem addressed to the king on his happy return.

Your clemency has taught us to believe
 It wise, as well as virtuous, to forgive ;
 And now the most offended shall proceed
 In great forgiving, till no laws we need ;
 For laws slow progresses would quickly end
 Could we forgive, as fast as men offend.

If Davenant was in any degree instrumental to the security of Milton, it is probable that he served him rather from gratitude than affection, as no two writers of the time

were more different from each other in their religious and political opinions. That the poet-laureat of Charles was utterly unconscious of those inestimable poetic powers, which the blind secretary of the republic was providentially reserved to display, we may infer from a very remarkable couplet, towards the close of a second poem, addressed by Davenant to the King, he ventures to assert, that

Heav'n never made but one, who, being blind,
Was fit to be a painter of the mind.

It is however very possible that Davenant might doubly conduce to the production of *Paradise Lost*; first, as one of those who exerted their interest to secure the author from molestation; and secondly, as affording by his *Gondibert* an incentive to the genius of Milton to shew how infinitely he could surpass a poem which Hobbs (whose opinions he despised) had extravagantly extolled as the most exquisite production of the epic muse. In Aubrey's manuscript *Anecdotes of Milton* it is said, that he be-

gan his *Paradise Lost* about two years before the return of the king, and finished it about three years after that event; the account appears the more probable, as the following lines in the commencement of the seventh book pathetically allude to his present situation.

More safe I sing with mortal voice unchang'd
To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days,
On evil days though fall'n and evil tongues,
In darkness and with dangers compass'd 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 Rodope, where rocks and woods had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drown'd
Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend
Her son: so fail not thou who thee implores,
For thou art heav'nly, she an empty dream.

How peculiarly affecting are these beautiful verses, when the history of the

poet suggests that he probably wrote them while he was concealed in an obscure corner of the city, that resounded with the triumphant roar of his intoxicated enemies, among whom drunkenness arose to such extravagance, that even the festive royalists found it necessary to issue a proclamation, which forbade the drinking of healths. How poignant at this time must have been the personal and patriotic feelings of Milton, who had passed his life in animating himself and his country to habits of temperance, truth, and public virtue, yet had the mortification of finding that country, so dear to him, now doubly disgraced; first, by the hypocrisy and treacherous ambition of republicans, to whose pretended virtues he had given too easy credit; and now by the mean licentious servility of royalists, whose more open but not more dangerous vices his upright and high-toned spirit had ever held in abhorrence. For his country had every thing to apprehend from the blind infatuation with which the parliament had rejected the patriotic suggestion of Hale (afterwards

the illustrious chief justice) to establish constitutional limitations to the power of the king at the critical period of his reception. The neglect of this measure contributed not a little to subsequent evils, and the reign of Charles the Second was in truth deformed with all the public misery and disgrace which Milton had predicted, when he argued on the idea of his re-admission. For his own person, the literary champion of the people had no less to dread from the barbarity of public vengeance, or from the private dagger of some over-heated royalist, who, like the assassins of Dorislaus in Holland, and of Ascham in Spain, might think it meritorious to seize any opportunity of destroying a servant of the English republic. When royal government, restored to itself, could yet descend to authorise a mean and execrable indignity against the dead body of a man so magnanimous and so innocent as Blake, it was surely natural, and by no means unbecoming the spirit of Milton, to speak as he does, in the preceding verses, of evil days and evil tongues, of darkness and of danger.

“ This darkness (says Johnson) had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deserved compassion.” What! had Milton no title to compassion for his personal calamity, because he had nobly sacrificed his sight to what he esteemed an important discharge of his public duty?— Oh egregious morality! to which no feeling heart can subscribe. No, say his implacable enemies, he lost his eyes in the vindication of wickedness; but admitting their assertion in its full force, justice and humanity still contend, that, instead of diminishing, it rather doubles his claim to compassion; to suffer in a spirited defence of guilt, that we mistake and esteem as virtue, is, perhaps, of all pitiable misfortunes, what a candid and considerate mind should be most willing to pity.

But Johnson proceeds to say,—“ of evil tongues for Milton to complain required impudence at least equal to his other powers; Milton, whose warmest advocates allow, that he never spared any asperity of reproach or brutality of insolence.”

These are, perhaps, the most bitter words that were ever applied by an author, illustrious himself for great talents, and still more for Christian virtue, to a character pre-eminent in genius and in piety. By shewing to what a marvellous degree a very cultivated and devout mind may be exasperated by party rage, may they serve to caution every fervid spirit against that outrageous animosity, which a difference of sentiment in politics and religion is so apt to produce. It would seem almost an affront to the memory of Milton to vindicate him elaborately from a charge, whose very words exhibit so palpable a violation of decency and truth.

His coldest advocates, instead of allowing that he never spared any brutality of insolence, may rather contend, that his native tenderness of heart, and very graceful education, rendered it hardly possible for him at any time to be insolent and brutal. It would have been wonderful indeed, had he not written with some degree of asperity, when his antagonist Salmasius asserted, that

he ought to suffer an ignominious and excruciating death. Against the unfortunate (but not innocent) Charles the First, he expressly declares, that he published nothing till after his decease; and that he meant not, as he says in one of his Latin works, to insult the Manes of the king, is indeed evident to an unprejudiced reader, from the very beautiful and pathetic sentence, with which he begins his answer to the Icon Basilike:

“ 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 of itself a thing commendable, nor the intention of this discourse.” Those who fairly consider the exasperated state of the contending parties, when Milton wrote, and compare his political compositions with the savage ribaldry of his opponents, however mistaken they may think him in his ideas of government, will yet find more reason to admire his temper, than to condemn his asperity.

If in a quiet study, at a very advanced

period of life, and at the distance of more than a century from the days of the republic, if a philosopher so situated could be hurried by political heat to speak of Milton with such harsh intemperance of language, though writing under the friendly title of his biographer, with what indulgence ought we to view that asperity in Milton himself, which arose from the immediate pressure of public oppression and of private outrage; for his spirit had been inflamed, not only by the sight of many national vexations, but by seeing his own moral character attacked with the most indecent and execrable calumny that can incite the indignation of insulted virtue. If the fascinating powers of his sacred poem, and the lustre of his integrity, have failed to soften the virulence of an aged moralist against him in our days, what must he not have had to apprehend from the raging passions of his own time, when his poetical genius had not appeared in its meridian splendor, and when most of his writings were considered as recent crimes against those, who were entering on

their career of triumph and revenge? Johnson, indeed, asserts in his barbarous censure of Milton's exquisite picture of his own situation, that the poet, in speaking of his danger, was ungrateful and unjust; that the charge itself seems to be false, for it would be hard to recollect any reproach cast upon him, either serious or ludicrous through the whole remaining part of his life; yet Lauder, once the associate of Johnson in writing against Milton, expressly affirms, that it was warmly debated for three days, whether he should suffer death with the regicides or not, as many contended that his guilt was superior to theirs. Lauder, indeed, mentions no authority for his assertion; and the word of a man so supremely infamous would deserve no notice, were not the circumstance rendered probable by the rancour and atrocity of party spirit. To what detestable excesses this spirit could proceed we have not only an example in Lauder himself (of whose malignity to the poet I shall have subsequent occasion to speak) but in that col-

lection of virulent invectives against Milton, composed chiefly by his contemporaries, which Lauder added as an appendix to his own most malignant pamphlet. The most singular and indecent of these invectives, whose scurrility is too gross to be transcribed, has been imputed to that very copious writer, Sir Roger L'Estrange; and if a pen employed so savagely against Milton could obtain public encouragement and applause, he might surely, without affectation or timidity, think himself exposed to the dagger of some equally hostile and more sanguinary royalist. L'Estrange, for such sufferings in the cause of royalty, as really entitled him to reward, obtained, not long after the restoration, the revived, but unconstitutional office of licenser to the press. It was happy for literature that he possessed not that oppressive jurisdiction when the author of the *Paradise Lost* was obliged to solicit an imprimatur, since the excess of his malevolence to Milton might have then exerted itself in such a manner as to entitle both the office and its possessor to the exe-

creation of the world. The licenser of that period, Thomas Tomkyns, chaplain to Archbishop Sheldon, though hardly so full of rancour as L'Estrange (if L'Estrange was the real author of the ribaldry ascribed to him) was absurd or malignant enough to obstruct, in some measure, the publication of *Paradise Lost*. "He, among other frivolous exceptions (says Toland) would needs suppress the whole poem, for imaginary treason in the following lines ;

—as when the sun new risen
Looks thro' 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——"

By what means the poet was happily enabled to triumph over the malevolence of an enemy in office, we are not informed by the author, who has recorded this very interesting anecdote ; but from the peril to which his immortal work was exposed, and which the mention of a licenser to the press

has led me to anticipate, let us return to his personal danger: the extent of this danger, and the particulars of his escape, have never been completely discovered. The account that his nephew gives of him at this momentous period is chiefly contained in the following sentence:

“ It was a friend’s house in Bartholomew Close, where he lived till the act of oblivion came forth, which, it pleased God, proved as favorable to him as could be hoped or expected, through the intercession of some that stood his friends both in council and parliament; particularly in the house of commons, Mr. Andrew Marvel, a member for Hull, acted vigorously in his behalf, and made a considerable party for him.”

Marvel, like the superior author whom he so nobly protected, was himself a poet and a patriot. He had been associated with Milton in the office of Latin secretary in 1657, and cultivated his friendship by a tender and respectful attachment. As he probably owed to that friendship the improvement of his own talents and virtues, it

is highly pleasing to find, that he exerted them on different occasions in establishing the security, and in celebrating the genius of his incomparable friend. His efforts of regard on the present emergency are liberally described in the preceding expression of Philips; and his friendly verses on the publication of the *Paradise Lost*, deserve no common applause; for the records of literature hardly exhibit a more just, a more spirited, or a more generous compliment paid by one poet to another.

But the friendship of Marvel, vigilant, active, and beneficial as it was, could not secure Milton from being seized and hurried into confinement. It appears from the minutes of the House of Commons, that he was prisoner to their serjeant, on the 15th. of December. The particulars of his imprisonment are involved in darkness; but Dr. Birch (whose copious life of Milton, is equally full of intelligence and candour) conjectures, with great probability, that on his appearing in public, after the act of indemnity, and adjournment of Parliament,

On the thirteenth of September, he was seized in consequence of the order formerly given by the Commons for his prosecution.

The exact time of his continuing in custody no researches have ascertained. The records of Parliament only prove, that on the fifteenth of December the House ordered his release; but the same upright and undaunted spirit, which had made Milton in his younger days a resolute opposer of injustice and oppression, still continued a characteristic of his declining life, and now induced him, disadvantageously situated as he was for such a contest, to resist the rapacity of the parliamentary officer, who endeavoured to extort from him an exorbitant fee on his discharge. He remonstrated to the House on the iniquity of their servant; and as the affair was referred to the committee of privileges, he probably obtained the redress, that he had the courage to demand.

In this fortunate escape from the grasp of triumphant and vindictive power, Milton maybe considered as terminating his political

life: commencing from his return to the continent, it had extended to a period of twenty years; in three of these he had been afflicted with partial but increasing blindness, and in six he had been utterly blind. His exertions in this period of his life had exposed him to infinite obloquy, but his generous and enlightened country, whatever may be the state of her political opinions, will remember with becoming equity and pride, that the sublimest of her poets, though deceived as he certainly was by extraordinary pretenders to public virtue, and subject to great illusion in his ideas of government, is entitled to the first of encomiums, the praise of being truly an honest man: since it was assuredly his constant aim to be the steady disinterested adherent and encomiast of truth and justice; hence we find him continually displaying those internal blessings, which have been happily called, "the clear witnesses of a benign nature," an innocent conscience, and a satisfied understanding.

Such is the imperfection of human existence, that mistaken notions and principles

are perfectly compatible with elevation, integrity, and satisfaction of mind. The writer must be a slave of prejudice, or a sycophant to power, who would represent Milton as deficient in any of these noble endowments. Even Addison himself seems to lose his rare Christian candour, and Hume his philosophical precision, when these two celebrated though very different authors speak harshly of Milton's political character, without paying due acknowledgment to the rectitude of his heart. I trust, the probity of a very ardent but uncorrupted enthusiast is in some measure vindicated in the course of these pages, happy if they promote the completion of his own manly wish to be perfectly known, if they impress a just and candid estimate of his merits and mistakes on the temperate mind of his country.

END OF THE SECOND PART.

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THE
LIFE OF MILTON.

PART III.



E' PER VECCHIEZZA IN LUI VIRTU NON MANCA—
DRITTO EI TENEVA INVERSO IL CIEL IL VOLTO.

TASSO.



IN beginning to contemplate the latter years of Milton, it may be useful to remark, that they afford, perhaps, the most animating lesson, which biography, instructive as it is, can supply ; they shew to what noble use a cultivated and religious mind may convert even declining life, though embittered by a variety of afflictions, and darkened by personal calamity.

On regaining his liberty, he took a

house in Holborn near Red Lion Fields, but soon removed to Jewin-street, and there married in his fifty-fourth year, his third wife Elizabeth Minshall, the daughter of a gentleman in Cheshire. As the misfortune of blindness seems particularly to require a female companion, and yet almost precludes the unhappy sufferer from selecting such as might suit him, Milton is said to have formed this attachment on the recommendation of his friend Dr. Paget, an eminent physician of the city, to whom the lady was related. Some biographers have spoken harshly of her temper and conduct; but let me observe, in justice to her memory, that the manuscript of Aubrey, to whom she was probably known, mentions her as a gentle person, of a peaceful and agreeable humour. That she was particularly attentive to her husband, and treated his infirmities with tenderness, is candidly remarked by Mr. Warton, in a posthumous note to the testamentary papers relating to Milton, which his indefatigable researches at length discovered, and committed to the press, a few

months before his own various and valuable labours were terminated by death. These very curious and interesting papers afford information respecting the latter days of the poet, which his late biographers were so far from possessing, that they could not believe it existed. Indeed, Mr. Warton himself had concluded, that all further enquiries for the will must be fruitless, as he had failed in a tedious and intricate search. At last however, he was enabled, by the friendship of Sir William Scott, to rescue from oblivion a curiosity so precious to poetical antiquarians. He found in the prerogative register the will of Milton, which though made by his brother Christopher, a lawyer by profession, was set aside from a deficiency in point of form—the litigation of this will produced a collection of evidence relating to the testator, which renders the discovery of those long forgotten papers peculiarly interesting; they shew very forcibly, and in new points of view, his domestic infelicity, and his amiable disposition, The tender and sublime poet, whose sensibility and sufferings were

so great, appears to have been almost as unfortunate in his daughters as the Lear of Shakespeare. A servant declares in evidence that her deceased master, a little before his last marriage, had lamented to her the ingratitude and cruelty of his children. He complained, that they had combined to defraud him in the economy of his house, and sold several of his books in the basest manner. His feelings on such an outrage, both as a parent and as a scholar must have been singularly painful; perhaps they suggested to him those very pathetic lines, where he seems to paint himself, in Sampson Agonistes :

I dark in light, expos'd
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors or without; still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own,
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.

Unfortunate as he had proved in matrimony, he was probably induced to venture once more into that state by the bitter want of a domestic protector against his inhuman daughters, under which description

I include only the two eldest; and in palliation even of their conduct, detestable as it appears, we may observe, that they are entitled to pity, as having been educated without the inestimable guidance of maternal tenderness, under a father afflicted with loss of sight; they were also young; at the time of Milton's last marriage his eldest daughter had only reached the age of fifteen, and Deborah, his favorite, was still a child of nine years.

His new connection seems to have afforded him what he particularly sought; that degree of domestic tranquillity and comfort essential to his perseverance in study, which appears to have been, through all the vicissitudes of fortune the prime object of his life; and while all his labours were under the direction of religion or of philanthropy, there was nothing too arduous or too humble for his mind. In 1661 he published a little work, entitled, "Accidence commenced Grammar," benevolently calculated for the relief of children, by shortening their very tedious and irksome

progress in learning the elements of Latin. He published also, in the same year, another brief composition of Sir Walter Raleigh's, containing (like the former work of that celebrated man, which the same editor had given to the public) a series of political maxims; one of these I am tempted to transcribe, by the persuasion that Milton regarded it with peculiar pleasure, from its tendency to justify the parliamentary contention with Charles the First. Had the misguided monarch observed the maxim of Raleigh, he would not, like that illustrious victim to the vices of his royal father, have perished on the scaffold.—The maxim is the seventeenth of the collection, and gives the following instruction to a prince for preserving an hereditary kingdom.

“ To be moderate in his taxes and impositions, and, when need doth require to use the subjects purse, to do it by parliament, and with their consent, making the cause apparent to them, and shewing his unwillingness in charging them. Finally, so to use it, that it may seem rather an offer

from his subjects, than an exaction by him."

However vehement the enmity of various persons against Milton might have been, during the tumult of passions on the recent restoration, there is great reason to believe, that his extraordinary abilities and probity so far triumphed over the prejudices against him, that, with all his republican offences upon his head, he might have been admitted to royal favor had he been willing to accept it. Richardson relates, on very good authority, that the post of Latin secretary, in which he had obtained so much credit as a scholar, was again offered to him after the Restoration; that he rejected it, and replied to his wife, who advised his acceptance of the appointment,—“ You, as other women, would ride in your coach; for me, my aim is to live and die an honest man.” Johnson discovers an inclination to discredit this story, because it does honor to Milton, and seemed inconsistent with his own ideas of probability. “ He that had shared authority, either with the parliament, or

Cromwell," says Johnson, "might have forborne to talk very loudly of his honesty." How miserably narrow is the prejudice, that cannot allow perfect honesty to many individuals on both sides in a contest like that, which divided the nation in the civil wars. Undoubtedly there were men in each party, and men of great mental endowments, who acted, during that calamitous contention, according to the genuine dictates of conscience. Those who examine the conduct of Milton with impartiality will be ready to allow, that he possessed not only one of the most cultivated, but one of the most upright minds, which the records of human nature have taught us to revere. His retaining his employment under Cromwell has, I trust, been so far justified, that it can no more be represented as a blemish on his integrity. His office, indeed, was of such a nature, that he might, without a breach of honesty, have resumed it under the king; but his return to it, though not absolutely dishonorable, would have ill accorded with that refined purity and eleva-

tion of character, which, from his earliest youth, it was the noblest ambition of Milton to acquire and support. He would have lost much of his title to the reverence of mankind for his magnanimity, had he accepted his former office under Charles the Second, whom he must have particularly despised as a profligate and servile tyrant, as ready to betray the honor of the nation as he was careless of his own; a personage whom Milton could never have beheld without horror, on reflecting on his singular barbarity to his celebrated friend, that eccentric but interesting character, Sir Henry Vane. The king, so extolled for his mercy, had granted the life of Sir Henry to the joint petition of the Lords and Commons; but, after promising to preserve him, signed a warrant for his execution—one of the most inhuman and detestable acts of duplicity that was ever practised against a subject by his sovereign. It is to the fate of Vane, with others of that party, and to his own personal sufferings, that the great poet al-

ludes in the admirable reflections, assigned to the chorus in his Sampson Agonistes :

Many are the sayings of the wise
In antient and in modern books enroll'd,
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude,
And to the bearing well of all calamities,
All chances incident to man's frail life,
Consolatories writ
With studied argument, and much persuasion sought,
Lenient of, grief and anxious thought ;
But with th' afflicted in his pangs their sound
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
Harsh and of dissonant mood from his complaint,
Unless he feel within
Some source of consolation from above,
Secret refreshings that repair his strength,
And fainting spirits uphold.
God of our fathers ! what is man ?
That thou towards him with hand so various,
Or might I say contrarious,
Temperest thy Providence through his short course
Not evenly, as thou rul'st
The angelic orders, and inferior creatures mute,
Irrational and brute.
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That wand'ring loose about,
Grow up and perish as the summer fly,

Heads without name, no more remembered;
But such as thou hast solemnly elected.
With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd,
To some great work, thy glory,
And people's safety, which in part they effect:
Yet toward these, thus dignified, thou oft
Amidst their heighth of noon
Changest thy countenance and thy hand, with no
 regard
Of highest favors past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.
Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscur'd, which were a fair dismissal,
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them
 high;
Unseemly falls in human eye,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission!
Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword
Of heathen and profane, their carcasses
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captiv'd;
Or to th' unjust tribunals under change of times,
And condemnation of th' ungrateful multitude.
If these they scape, perhaps in poverty,
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
Painful diseases and deform'd,
In crude old age;
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suff'ring
The punishment of dissolute days.

Warburton was the first, I believe, to remark how exactly these concluding lines describe the situation of the poet himself afflicted by his loss of property, and "his gout, not caused by intemperance." The same acute but very unequal critic is by no means so happy in his observation, that Milton seems to have chosen the subject of this sublime drama for the sake of the satire on bad wives; it would be hardly less absurd to say, that he chose the subject of Paradise Lost for the sake of describing a conjugal altercation. The nephew of Milton has told us, that he could not ascertain the time when this drama was written; but it probably flowed from the heart of the indignant poet soon after his spirit had been wounded by the calamitous destiny of his friends, to which he alludes with so much energy and pathos. He did not design the drama for a theatre, nor has it the kind of action requisite for theatrical interest; but in one point of view the Sampson Agonistes is the most singularly affecting composition, that was ever produced by sensibility of

heart and vigour of imagination. To give it this peculiar effect, we must remember, that the lot of Milton had a marvellous coincidence with that of his hero, in three remarkable points; first (but we should regard this as the most inconsiderable article of resemblance) he had been tormented by a beautiful but disaffectionate and disobedient wife; secondly, he had been the great champion of his country, and as such the idol of public admiration; lastly, he had fallen from that height of unrivalled glory, and had experienced the most humiliating reverse of fortune:

His foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind.

In delineating the greater part of Samson's sensations under calamity, he had only to describe his own. No dramatist can have ever conformed so literally as Milton to the Horatian precept.

Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi.

And if, in reading the *Samson Agonistes*, we observe how many passages, expressed with the most energetic sensibility, exhibit to our fancy the sufferings and real sentiments of the poet, as well as those of his hero, we may derive from this extraordinary composition a kind of pathetic delight, that no drama can afford; we may applaud the felicity of genius, that contrived in this manner, to relieve a heart overburthened with anguish and indignation, and to pay a half concealed yet hallowed tribute to the memories of dear though dishonored friends, whom the state of the times allowed not the afflicted poet more openly to deplore.

The concluding verses of the beautiful chorus (which I have already cited in part) appear to me particularly affecting, from the persuasion that Milton, in composing them, addressed the two last immediately to Heaven, as a prayer for himself:

In fine,

Just or unjust alike seem miserable,
For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,
The image of thy strength, and mighty minister.
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?
Behold him in his state calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou can'st, to peaceful end.

If the conjecture of this application be just, we may add, that never was the prevalence of a righteous prayer more happily conspicuous; and let me here remark, that however various the opinions of men may be concerning the merits or demerits of Milton's political character, the integrity of his heart appears to have secured to him the favor of Providence: since it pleased the Giver of all good not only to turn his labours to a peaceful end, but to irradiate his declining life with the most abundant portion of those pure and sublime mental powers, for which he had constantly and fervently prayed, as the choicest bounty of Heaven.

At this period, his kind friend and physician, who had proved so serviceable to him in the recommendation of an attentive, and affectionate wife, introduced to his notice a

young reader of Latin, in that singular character, Thomas Ellwood, the quaker, who has written a minute history of his own life; a book, which suggests the reflection, how strangely a writer may sometimes mistake his way in his endeavours to engage posterity. Had the honest quaker bequeathed to the world as circumstantial an account of his great literary friend, as he has done of himself, his book would have engrossed no common share of public regard: we are indebted to him, however, for his incidental mention of the great poet; and as there is a pleasing air of simplicity and truth in his narrative, I shall gratify the reader by inserting it with very little abridgment:

“ John Milton, a gentleman of great note for learning throughout the learned world, having filled a public station in former times, lived now a private life in London; and having wholly lost his sight, kept always a man to read to him, which usually was the son of some gentleman of his acquaintance, whom in kindness he took to improve in his learning.

“ By the mediation of my friend, Isaac Penington, with Dr. Paget, and of Dr. Paget with John Milton, was I admitted to come to him, not as a servant to him, which at that time he needed not, nor to be in the house with him, but only to have the liberty of coming to his house at certain hours, when I would, and to read to him what books he should appoint me, which was all the favor I desired.”

Ellwood was at this time an ingenious but undisciplined young man, about three-and-twenty ;—his father, a justice of Oxfordshire, had taken him, very unseasonably from school, with a view to lessen his own expences, and this his younger son, after wasting some years at home, attached himself, with great fervency, to the sect of quakers. His religious ardour involved him in a long and painful quarrel with his father, and in many singular adventures—he united with his pious zeal a lively regard for literature ; and being grieved to find that his interrupted education had permitted him to acquire but a slender portion of classical

learning, he anxiously sought the acquaintance of Milton in the hope of improving it.

“ I went, therefore (says the candid quaker) and took my lodging near to his house, which was then in Jewin-street, as conveniently as I could, and from thence forward went every day in the afternoon, except on the first days of the week, and sitting by him in his dining-room, read to him such books in the Latin tongue as he pleased to hear me read.

“ At my first sitting to read to him, observing that I used the English pronunciation, he told me, if I would have the benefit of the Latin tongue, not only to read and understand Latin authors, but to converse with foreigners, either abroad or at home, I must learn the foreign pronunciation ; to this I consenting, he instructed me how to sound the vowels, this change of pronunciation proved a new difficulty to me, but

Labor omnia vincit
Improbis ;

And so did I ; which made my reading the

more acceptable to my master, He, on the other hand, perceiving with what earnest desire I pursued learning, gave me not only all the encouragement, but all the help he could; for having a curious ear, he understood by my tone when I understood what I read, and when I did not, and accordingly would stop me, examine me, and open the most difficult passages to me."

The clearness and simplicity of Ellwood's narrative, brings us as it were, into the company of Milton, and shews, in a very agreeable point of view, the native courtesy and sweetness of a temper, that has been strangely misrepresented as morose and austere.

Johnson, with his accustomed asperity to Milton, discovers an inclination to censure him for his mode of teaching Latin to Ellwood; but Milton, who was instructing an indigent young man, had probably very friendly reasons for wishing him to acquire immediately the foreign pronunciation; and assuredly, the patience, good nature, and

success, with which he condescended to teach this singular attendant, do credit both to the disciple and the preceptor.

Declining health soon interrupted the studies of Ellwood, and obliged him to retire to the house of a friend and physician in the country. Here, after great suffering from sickness, he revived, and returned again to London.

“ I was very kindly received by my master (continues the interesting quaker) who had conceived so good an opinion of me, that my conversation, I found, was acceptable, and he seemed heartily glad of my recovery and return, and into our old method of study we fell again, I reading to him, and he explaining to me, as occasion required.”

But learning (as poor Ellwood observes) was almost a forbidden fruit to him. His intercourse with Milton was again interrupted by a second calamity; a party of soldiers rushed into a meeting of quakers, that included this unfortunate scholar, and he was hurried with his friends, from prison

to prison. Though tenpence was all the money he possessed, his honest pride prevented his applying to Milton for relief in this exigence, and he contrived to support himself by his industry, in confinement, with admirable fortitude.

Moderate prosperity, however, visited at last this honest and devout man, affording him an agreeable opportunity of being useful to the great poet, who had deigned to be his preceptor.

An affluent quaker, who had resided at Chalfont, in Buckinghamshire, settled Ellwood in his family, to instruct his children, and in 1665, when the pestilence raged in London, Milton requested his friendly disciple to find a refuge for him in his neighbourhood.

“ I took a pretty box for him,” says this affectionate friend, “ in Giles Chalfont, a mile from me, of which I gave him notice, and intended to have waited on him, and seen him well settled in it, but was prevented by imprisonment.”

This was a second captivity that the

unfortunate young man had to sustain ; for, in consequence of a recent and most iniquitous persecution of the quakers, he was apprehended at the funeral of a friend, and confined in the gaol of Aylesbury.

“ But being now released,” continues Ellwood, “ I soon made a visit to him, to welcome him into the country.

“ After some common discourses had passed between us, he called for a manuscript of his, which, being brought, he delivered to me, bidding me take it home with me, and read it at my leisure, and when I had so done, return it to him, with my judgment thereupon.

“ When I came home, and set myself to read it, I found it was that excellent poem, which he entitled *Paradise Lost*.

“ After I had, with the best attention, read it through, I made him another visit, and returned him his book, with due acknowledgment of the favor he had done me in communicating it to me. He asked me how I liked it, and what I thought of it ; which I modestly and freely told him ; and,

after some farther discourse about it, I pleasantly said to him, ‘Thou hast said much here of Paradise Lost, but what hast thou to say of Paradise Found.’ He made me no answer, but sat some time in a muse, then brake off that discourse, and fell upon another subject.

“After the sickness was over, and the city well cleansed, and become safely habitable again, he returned thither; and when afterwards I went to wait on him there (which I seldom failed of doing, whenever my occasions led me to London) he shewed me his second poem, called Paradise Regain’d, and in a pleasant tone, said to me, ‘This is owing to you, for you put it into my head, by the question your put to me at Chalfont, which before I had not thought of.’”

The personal regard of this ingenuous quaker for Milton, and his giving birth to a composition of such magnitude and merit as Paradise Regain’d, entitle him to distinction in a life of his great poetical friend, and I have, therefore, rather transcribed

than abridged his relation. My reader, I doubt not, will join with me in wishing that we had more sketches of the venerable bard, thus minutely delineated from the life, in the colors of fidelity and affection.

The last of Milton's familiar letters in Latin relates to this period; it speaks with devotional gratitude of the safe asylum from the plague, which he had found in the country; it speaks also with so much feeling of his past political adventures, and of the present inconvenience which he suffered from the loss of sight, that I apprehend an entire translation of it can hardly fail of being acceptable to the English reader. It is dated from London, August 15, 1666, and addressed to Heimbach, an accomplished German, who is stiled Counsellor to the Elector of Brandenburg. An expression in a former letter to the same correspondent, seems to intimate, that this learned foreigner, who visited England in his youth, had resided with Milton, perhaps in the character of a disciple—But here is the interesting letter:

* “ If among so many funerals of my countrymen, in a year so full of pestilence and sorrow, you were induced, as you say, by rumour to believe that I also was snatched

* Ornatissimo Viro Petro Heimbachio, Electoris Brandenburgici Consiliario.

Si inter tot funera popularium meorum, anno tam gravi ac pestilenti, abreptum me quoque, ut scribis, ex rumore præsertim aliquo credidisti, mirum non est; atque ille rumor apud vestros, ut videtur, homines, si ex eo quod de salute meâ solliciti essent, increbuit, non displicet; indicium enim suæ erga me benevolentiaë fuisse existimo. Sed Dei benignitate, qui tutum mihi receptum in agris paraverat, et vivo adhuc et valeo; utinam ne inutilis, quicquid muneris in hac vita restat mihi peragendum. Tibi vero tam longo intervallo venisse in mentem mei, pergratum est; quamquam prout rem verbis exornas, præbere aliquem suspicionem videris, oblitum mei te potius esse, qui tot virtutum diversarum conjugium in me, ut scribis, admirere. Ego certe ex tot conjugiiis numerosam nimis prolem expavescerem, nisi constaret in re arcta, rebusque duris, virtutes ali maxime et vigere: tametsi earum una non ita belle charitatem hospitii mihi reddidit: quam enim politicam tu vocas, ego pietatem in patriam dictam abs te mallet, ea me pulchro nomine delinitum prope, ut ita dicam, expatriavit. Reliquarum tamen chorus clare concinit. Pa-

away, it is not surprising ; and if such a rumour prevailed among those of your nation, as it seems to have done, because they were solicitous for my health, it is not unpleasing. for I must esteem it as a proof of their benevolence towards me. But by the graciousness of God, who had prepared for me a safe retreat in the country, I am still alive and well ; and I trust not utterly an unprofitable servant, whatever duty there yet remains for me to fulfil. That you remember me, after so long an interval in our correspondence, gratifies me exceedingly, though, by the politeness of your expression, you seem to afford me room to suspect, that you

tria est, ubicunque est bene. Finem faciam, si hoc prius abs te impetravero, ut, si, quid mendose descriptum aut non interpunctum repereris, id puero, qui hæc excepit, Latine prorsus nescienti velis imputare; cui singulas plane literulas annumerare non sine miseriâ dictans cogebat. Tua interim viri merita, quem ego adolescentem spei eximiæ cognovi, ad tam honestum in principis gratiâ provexisse te locum, gaudeo, ceteraque fausta omnia et cupio tibi, et spero vale.

Londini, Aug. 15, 1666.

have rather forgotten me, since, as you say, you admire in me so many different virtues wedded together. From so many weddings I should assuredly dread a family too numerous, were it not certain that, in narrow circumstances and under severity of fortune, virtues are most excellently reared, and are most flourishing. Yet one of these said virtues has not very handsomely rewarded me, for entertaining her; for that which you call my political virtue, and which I should rather wish you to call my devotion to my country (enchancing me with her captivating name) almost, if I may say so, expatriated me. Other virtues, however, join their voices to assure me, that wherever we prosper in rectitude, there is our country. In ending my letter, let me obtain from you this favor, that if you find any parts of it incorrectly written, and without stops, you will impute it to the boy who writes for me, who is utterly ignorant of Latin, and to whom I am forced (wretchedly enough) to repeat every single syllable that I dictate. I still rejoice that your merit as an accomplished

man, whom I knew as a youth of the highest expectation, has advanced you so far in the honorable favor of your prince. For your prosperity in every other point you have both my wishes and my hopes. Farewell.

“London, August 15, 1666,”

How interesting is this complaint when we recollect that the great writer, reduced to such irksome difficulties in regard to his secretary, was probably engaged at this period in polishing the sublimest of the poems.

From Ellwood's account, it appears that *Paradise Lost* was complete in 1665. Philips and Toland assert, that it was actually published the following year; but I believe no copy has been found of a date so early. The first edition on the list of the very accurate Mr. Loft, was printed by Peter Parker in 1665, and, probably, at the expence of the author, who sold the work to Samuel Simmons, by a contract dated the 27th of April, in the same year.

The terms of this contract are such as

a lover of genius can hardly hear without a sigh of pity and indignation. The author of the *Paradise Lost*, received only an immediate payment of five pounds for a work, which is the very master-piece of sublime and refined imagination ; a faculty not only naturally rare, but requiring an extraordinary coincidence of circumstances to cherish and strengthen it for the long and regular exercise essential to the production of such a poem. The bookseller's agreement, however, entitled the author to a conditional payment of fifteen pounds more ; five to be paid after the sale of thirteen hundred copies of the first edition, and five in the same manner, both on a second and third. The number of each edition was limited to fifteen hundred copies.

The original size of the publication was a small quarto, and the poem was at first divided into ten books ; but in the second edition the author very judiciously increased the number to twelve, by introducing a pause in the long narration of the

seventh and of the tenth, so that each of these books became two.

Simmons was a printer, and his brief advertisement to the work he had purchased, is curious enough to merit insertion :

“ Courteous Reader, there was no argument at first intended to the book ; but for the satisfaction of many that have desired it, I have procured it, and withal a reason of that, which stumbled many others, why the poem rhymes not.” Here we may plainly see that the novelty of blank verse was considered as an unpalatable innovation. The book, however, advanced so far in its sale, that thirteen hundred were dispersed in two years. In April, 1669, the author received his second payment of five pounds. The second edition came forth in the year of his death, and the third in four years after that event : his widow, who inherited a right to the copy, sold all her claims to Simmons for eight pounds, in December, 1680 ; so that twenty-eight pounds, paid at different times in the course of thirteen years, is the whole pecuniary

reward which this great performance produced to the poet and his widow.

But although the emolument, which the author derived from his noblest production, was most deplorably inadequate to its merit, he was abundantly gratified with immediate and fervent applause from several accomplished judges of poetical genius. It has been generally supposed that *Paradise Lost* was neglected to a mortifying degree on its first appearance; and that the exalted poet consoled his spirit under such mortification by a magnanimous confidence in the justice of future ages, and a sanguine anticipation of his poetical immortality. The strength and dignity of his mind would indeed have armed him against any possible disappointment of his literary ambition; but such was the reception of his work, that he could not be disappointed. Johnson has vindicated the public on this point with judgment and success: "The sale of books (he observes) was not in Milton's age what it is in the present; the nation had been satisfied, from

1623 to 1664, that is forty-one years, with only two editions of the works of Shakespeare, which probably did not together make one thousand copies. The sale of thirteen hundred copies in two years, in opposition to so much recent enmity, and to a style of versification new to all, and disgusting to many, was an uncommon example of the prevalence of genius." These remarks are perfectly just; but when their author proceeds to say, "the admirers of Paradise Lost did not dare to publish their opinion," he seems to forget the very spirited eulogies that were, during the life of the poet, bestowed on that performance. Panegyric can hardly assume a bolder tone than in the English and Latin verses addressed to Milton by Marvel and Barrow. He received other compliments not inferior to these. The muse of Dryden assured, him, that he possessed the united excellencies of Homer and of Virgil; and, if we may rely on an anecdote related by Richardson, the Paradise Lost was announced to the world in a very singular manner, that

may be thought not ill-suited to the pre-eminence of the work. Sir John Denham a man distinguished as a soldier, a senator, and a poet, came into the House of Commons with a proof sheet of Milton's new composition wet from the press ; and being questioned concerning the paper in his hand, he said, it was " part of the noblest poem that ever was written in any language or in any age." I cannot think this anecdote deserves to be rejected, on account of the supposed improbability imputed to it; for one of the arguments employed against it appears to me a proof that it is probable.

Richardson, whose active and liberal affection for the poet led him to search with intelligent alacrity and success for every occurrence that could redound to his honor, has recorded another incident, which must be particularly interesting to every lover of literary anecdote, as it discovers how the *Paradise Lost* was first introduced to Dryden, and with what fervency of admiration he immediately spoke of it. The Earl of Dorset and Fleetwood

Shepard, the friend of Prior, found the poem, according to this story, at a bookseller's in Little Britain, who, lamenting its want of circulation, entreated the Earl to recommend it; Dorset, after reading it himself, sent it to Dryden, who said, in returning the book,—“ This man cuts us all out, and the ancients too.” These were probably the real sentiments of Dryden on his first perusal of the poem; but as that unhappy genius was not blest with the independent magnanimity of Milton, his opinions were apt to fluctuate according to his interest, and we find him occasionally disposed to exalt or degrade the transcendent performance, which he could not but admire. As the six celebrated verses, in which he has complimented the English Homer, so much resemble what he said of him to Lord Dorset, it is probable that those verses were written while his mind was glowing with admiration from his first survey of the *Paradise Lost*; and as long as Milton lived, Dryden seems to have paid him the deference so justly due to his age, his genius,

and his virtue. Aubrey relates, in the manuscript which I have repeatedly cited, that the poet laureat waited on Milton for the purpose of soliciting his permission to put his *Paradise Lost* into a drama. "Mr. Milton (says Aubrey) received him civilly and told him, he would give him leave to tag his verses," an expression that probably alluded to a couplet of Marvel's, in his poetical eulogy on his friend. The opera which Dryden wrote, in consequence of this permission, entitled the *State of Innocence*, was not exhibited in the theatre, and did not appear in print till two years after the death of Milton, who is mentioned in becoming terms of veneration and gratitude in the preface. The drama itself is a very singular and striking performance, with all the beauties and all the defects of Dryden's animated unequal versification, it has peculiar claims to the attention of those, who may wish to investigate the respective powers of English rhyme and blank verse, and it may furnish arguments to the partizans of each; for, if in many passages the

images and harmony of Milton are deplorably injured by the necessity of rhyming, in a few instances, perhaps, rhyme has imparted even to the ideas of Milton new energy and grace. There are prefixed to this opera some very animated but injudicious verses by poor Nat. Lee, who has lavished the most exaggerated praise on his friend Dryden, at the expence of the superior poet.

It is highly pleasing to reflect, that Milton, who had so many evils to sustain in the course of his chequered life, had yet the high gratification of being assured, by very competent judges, that he had gloriously succeeded in the prime object of his literary ambition, the great poetical achievement, which he projected in youth, and accomplished in old age. He probably received such animating assurances from many of his friends, whose applause, being intended for his private satisfaction, has not descended to our time; but when we recollect the honors already mentioned, that were paid to the living poet by Denham,

Dryden, and Marvel, we may rest satisfied in the persuasion, that he enjoyed a grateful earnest of his future renown, and, according to the petition he addressed to Urania,

“Fit audience found, tho’ few.”

If the spirit of a departed bard can be gratified by any circumstances of posthumous renown, it might gratify Milton to perceive, that his divine poem was first indebted for general celebrity to the admiration of Sommers and of Addison, two of the most accomplished and most amiable of English names. Sommers promoted the first ornamented edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1688; and Addison wrote his celebrated papers on Milton in 1712.

But to return to the living author; in the year 1670, the great poet aspired to new distinction, by appearing in the character of an historian. He had long meditated a work, which in his time, was particularly wanted in our language, and which the greater cultivation bestowed by the present age on this branch of literature has not yet produced in perfection—an eloquent and impartial His-

tory of England. Milton executed only six books, beginning with the most early fabulous period, and closing with the Norman conquest. "Why he should have given the first part (says Johnson) which he seems not to believe, and which is universally rejected, it is difficult to conjecture." Had the critic taken the trouble to peruse a few pages of the work in question his difficulty would have vanished; he would at least have found the motive of the author, if he had not esteemed it satisfactory :

"I have determined (says Milton) in speaking of the antient and rejected British fables, to bestow the telling over even of these reputed tales, be it for nothing else but in favor of our English poets and rhetoricians, who by their art will know how to use them judiciously." This sentiment implies a striking fondness for works of imagination, and a good natured disposition to promote them.

The historian discovers higher aims as he advances in his work, and expresses a moral and patriotic desire to make the les-

sons suggested by the early calamities of this nation a source of wisdom and virtue to his improving countrymen. The very passage, which was most likely to produce such an effect, was struck out of the publication by the gothic hand of the licenser, an incident that seems to give new energy to all the noble arguments, which the injured author had formerly adduced in vindicating the liberty of the press.

The passage in question contained a very masterly sketch of the long parliament and assembly of divines, contrasting their situation and their misconduct, after the death of Charles the First, with those of the antient Britons, when, by the departure of the Roman power, "they were left (according to the expression of the historian) to the sway of their own councils." The author gave a copy of this unlicenced parallel to the celebrated Earl of Anglesey, a man distinguished by erudition, with a liberal respect for genius, and though a minister of Charles the Second, a frequent visiter of Milton. This curious fragment was pub-

lished in 1681, with a short preface, declaring, that it originally belonged to the third book of Milton's history, and in the edition of his prose works, in 1738, it was properly replaced. The poet would have succeeded more eminently as an historian, had his talents been exercised on a period more favorable to their exertion. We have reason to regret his not having executed the latter part of his original intention, instead of dwelling on the meagre and dark annals of Saxon barbarity. In his early history, however, there are passages of great force and beauty; his character of Alfred in particular is worthy that engaging model of an accomplished monarch, and verifies a sentiment, which Milton professed, even while he was defending the commonwealth, that although a resolute enemy to tyrants, he was a sincere friend to such kings as merited the benediction of their people.*

* The attractive merit of Alfred, and the affectionate zeal, with which Milton appears to have delineated his character, form a double motive for inserting it in a note, as a specimen of the great author's style in historical composition.

In 1671, the year after the first appear-

“ After which troublesome time Alfred enjoying three years of peace, by him spent, as his manner was, not idly or voluptuously, but in all virtuous employments, both of mind and body, becoming a prince of his renown, ended his days in the year nine hundred, the fifty-first of his age, the thirtieth of his reign, and was buried regally at Winchester: he was born at a place called Wanading, in Berkshire, his mother Osburga, the daughter of Oslac the king's cup-bearer, a Goth by nation, and of noble descent. He was of person comlier than all his brethren, of pleasing tongue, and graceful behaviour, ready wit and memory; yet, through the fondness of his parents towards him, had not been taught to read till the twelfth year of his age: but the great desire of learning which was in him soon appeared, by his conning of Saxon poems day and night, which with great attention, he heard by others repeated. He was besides excellent at hunting, and the new art then of hawking, but more exemplary in devotion, having collected into a book certain prayers and psalms, which he carried ever with him in his bosom to use on all occasions. He thirsted after all liberal knowledge, and oft complained, that in his youth he had no teachers, in his middle age so little vacancy from wars, and the cares of his kingdom; yet leisure he found sometimes, not only to learn much himself, but to communicate thereof what he could to his people, by translating books out of Latin into English, Orosius, Boethius, Beda's History, and others; permitted none unlearned to bear office, either

ance of his history, he published the *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*.

Many groundless remarks have been

in court or commonwealth. At twenty years of age, not yet reigning, he took to wife Egelswitha, the daughter of Ethelred, a Mercian earl. The extremities which befel him in the sixth of his reign, Neothan Abbot told him were justly come upon him for neglecting, in his younger days, the complaint of such as, injured and oppressed, repaired to him, as then second person in the kingdom, for redress; which neglect, were it such indeed, were excusable in a youth, through jollity of mind, unwilling perhaps to be detained long with sad and sorrowful narrations; but from the time of his undertaking regal charge, no man more patient in hearing causes, more inquisitive in examining, more exact in doing justice, and providing good laws, which are yet extant; more severe in punishing unjust judges, or obstinate offenders, thieves especially and robbers, to the terror of whom in cross-ways were hung upon a high post certain chains of gold, as it were daring any one to take them thence; so that justice seemed in his days not to flourish only, but to triumph: no man can be more frugal of two precious things in man's life, his time and his revenue; no man wiser in the disposal of both. His time, the day and night, he distributed by the burning of certain tapers into three equal portions; the one was for devotion, the other for private affairs, the third for bodily re-

made on the supposed want of judgment in Milton to form a proper estimate of his own compositions. “ His last poetical offspring

freshment; how each hour passed he was put in mind by one who had that office. His whole annual revenue, which his first care was should be justly his own, he divided into two equal parts; the first he employed to secular uses, and subdivided those into three; the first to pay his soldiers, household servants, and guards, of which divided into three bands, one attended monthly by turn; the second was to pay his architects and workmen, whom he had got together of several nations for he was also an elegant builder, above the custom and conceit of Englishmen in those days; the third he had in readiness to relieve and honor strangers, according to their worth, who came from all parts to see him, and to live under him. The other equal part of his yearly wealth he dedicated to religious uses; those of four sorts; the first to relieve the poor, the second to the building and maintenance of two monasteries, the third of a school, where he had persuaded many noblemen to study sacred knowledge and liberal arts, some say at Oxford; the fourth was for the relief of foreign churches, as far as India to the shrine of St. Thomas, sending thither Sigelm bishop of Sherburn, who both returned safe and brought with him many rich gems and spices; gifts also and a letter, he received from the patriarch at Jerusalem; sent many to Rome, and from them received reliques. Thus far,

(says Johnson) was his favorite; he could not, as Ellwood relates, endure to have Paradise Lost preferred to Paradise Regained." In this brief passage, there is more than one misrepresentation. It is not Ellwood, but Philips, who speaks of Milton's esteem for his latter poem; and instead of saying that the author preferred it to his greater work, he merely intimates, that Milton was offended with the general censure, which condemned the Paradise Regained as infinitely inferior to the other. Instead of supposing, therefore, that the great poet was under the influence of an absurd predilection, we have only reason to conclude, that he heard with lively scorn such idle witticism as we find recorded by

and much more might be said of his noble mind, which rendered him the mirror of princes. His body was diseased in his youth with a great soreness in the seige, and that ceasing of itself, with another inward pain of unknown cause, which held him by frequent fits to his dying day; yet not disenabled to sustain those many glorious labours of his life both in peace and war.—Prose Works vol. II p. 97.

Toland, " that Milton might be seen in Paradise Lost, but not in Paradise Regained. His own accomplished mind, in which sensibility and judgment were proportioned to extraordinary imagination, most probably assured him what is indisputably true, that uncommon energy of thought and felicity of composition are apparent in both performances, however different in design, dimension, and effect. To censure the Paradise Regained, because it does not more resemble the preceding poem, is hardly less absurd than it would be to condemn the moon for not being a sun, instead of admiring the two different luminaries, and feeling that both the greater and the less are visibly the work of the same divine and inimitable power.

Johnson has very liberally noticed one peculiarity in Milton, and calls it, with a benevolent happiness of expression, " a kind of humble dignity, which did not disdain the meanest services to literature. The epic poet, the controvertist, the politician,

having already descended to accommodate children with a book of rudiments, now, in the last years of his life, composed a book of Logic, for the initiation of students in philosophy, and published, 1672, *Artis Logicæ plenior Institutio ad Petri Rami Methodum concinnata*, that is, a new scheme of Logic, according to the method of Ramus."

It is so pleasing to find one great author speaking of another in terms, which do honor to both, that I transcribe, with singular satisfaction, the preceding passage of the eminent biographer, whose frequent and injurious asperity to Milton I have so repeatedly noticed and must continue to notice, with reprehension and regret.

In the very moment of delivering the just encomium I have commended, the critic discovers an intemperate eagerness to revile the object of his praise; for he proceeds to say of Milton, "I know not whether, even in this book, he did not intend an act of hostility against the universities, for Ramus was one of the first oppugners of the old

philosophy, who disturbed with innovations the quiet of the schools." Is there not a visible want of candor in shewing so wildly a wish to impute a very inoffensive and meritorious work of science to a malevolent motive ?

Ramus was a man, whose writing and memory were justly regarded by Milton ; for he resembled our great countryman in temperance, in fortitude, in passion for study, and, above all, in a brave and inflexible opposition to ignorance, tyranny, and superstition ; his life was a continued struggle with these merciless enemies, and he perished at last with circumstances of peculiar barbarity, in the atrocious massacre of St. Bartholomew.

A desire of rendering justice to the talents and virtues of such a sufferer in the cause of learning might surely be ascribed to Milton, as a more probable and becoming motive on this occasion, than dark intentions of hostility against the universities. It is but a sorry compliment to those universities to insinuate, that he engaged in

warfare against them, who republished a simple and seasonable treatise on the management of human reason. Milton with great judgment augmented the logic of Ramus, and added to his system an abridgment of the Latin life, which Fregius had written, of its unfortunate author.

The long literary career of Milton was now drawing towards its termination, and it closed as it began, with a fervent regard to the interest of religion.—Alarmed by that encroachment, which the Romish superstition was making under the connivance of Charles the Second, and with the aid of his apostate brother, Milton published “A Treatise of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and the best Means to prevent the Growth of Popery.” The patriotic scope of this work was to unite and consolidate the jarring sects of the protestants, by persuading them to reciprocal indulgence, and to guard them against those impending dangers from Rome, which, in a short period, burst upon this island, and very happily terminated in our signal deliverance from many

of those religious and political evils, which the spirit of Milton had, through a long life, most resolutely and conscientiously opposed.

His Treatise against the Growth of Popery, which was published in 1673, was the last considerable performance that he gave to the world; but publication in some shape seems to have contributed to his amusement as long as he existed. In the same year he reprinted his smaller poems, with the Tractate on Education; and in the year following, the last of his laborious life, he published his Familiar Letters, and a Declaration of the Poles in praise of their heroic sovereign, John Sobieski, translated from the Latin original. A brief History of Moscovia, which he appears to have compiled, in the early parts of his life, from various travellers who had visited that country, was published a few years after his death, and two of his compositions (both perhaps intended for the press) have probably perished; the first, a System of Theology in Latin, that seems to have been

entrusted to his friend Cyriac Skinner; the second, an Answer to a scurrilous libel upon himself which his nephew supposes him to have suppressed from just contempt of his reviler.

Soon after his marriage in 1661, he had removed from Jewin-street, to a house in the artillery walk, leading to Bunhill-fields, a spot that to his enthusiastic admirers may appear consecrated by his genius: here he resided in that period of his days, when he was peculiarly entitled to veneration; here he probably finished no less than three of his admirable works; and here with a dissolution so easy, that it was unperceived by the persons in his chamber, he closed a life, clouded indeed by uncommon and various calamities, yet ennobled by the constant exercise of such rare endowments as render his name perhaps, the very first in that radiant and comprehensive list, of which England, the most fertile of countries in the produce of mental power, has reason to be proud.

For some years he had suffered much from the gout, and in July, 1674, he found

his constitution so broken by that distemper, that he was willing to prepare for his departure from the world. With this view he informed his brother Christopher, who was then a bencher in the Inner Temple, of the disposition he wished to make of his property. " Brother (said the invalide) the portion due to me from Mr. Powel, my first wife's father, I leave to the unkind children I had by her ; but I have received no part of it ; and my will and meaning is, they shall have no other benefit of my estate than the said portion, and what I have besides done for them, they having been very undutiful to me ; and all the residue of my estate I leave to the disposal of Elizabeth, my loving wife." Such is the brief testament, which Milton dictated to his brother, about the 20th of July, but which Christopher does not appear to have committed to paper, till a few days after the decease of the testator, who expired on Sunday night, the 8th. of November, 1674. " All his learned and great friends in London, (says Toland) not

without a friendly concourse of the vulgar, accompanied his body to the church of St. Giles, near Cripplegate, where he lies buried in the chancel." This biographer, who though he had the misfortune to think very differently from Milton, on the great article of religion, yet never fails to speak of him with affectionate respect, indulged a pleasing expectation, when he wrote his life in the close of the last century, that national munificence would speedily raise a monument worthy of the poet, to protect and to honor his remains. To the discredit of our country, she has failed to pay this decent tribute to the memory of a man, from whose genius she had derived so much glory ; but an individual, Mr. Benson, in the year 1737, placed a bust of the great author in Westminster Abbey ; an act of liberality that does him credit, though Johnson and Pope have both satyri- zed the monumental inscription with a degree of cynical asperity : such asperity appears unseasonable, because all the ostentation so severely censured in Mr.

Benson, amounts merely to his having said in the plainest manner, that he raised the monument; and to his having added to his name a common enumeration of the offices he possessed; a circumstance in which candour might have discovered rather more modesty than pride.—Affluence appears particularly amiable when paying a voluntary tribute to neglected genius, even in the grave; nor is Benson the only individual of ample fortune, who has endeared himself to the lovers of literature by generous endeavours to promote the celebrity of Milton. Affectionate admirers of the poet will honor the memory of the late Mr. Hollis, in recollecting that he devoted much time and money to a similar pursuit; and they will regret that he was unable to discover the Italian verses, and the marble bust, which he diligently sought for in Italy, on a suggestion that such memorials of our poetic traveller had been carefully preserved in that country. But from this brief digression on the recent admirers of Milton, let us return to his family at the time of his decease.

His will was contested by the daughters, whose undutiful conduct it condemned; being deficient in form, it was set aside, and letters of administration were granted to the widow, who is said to have allotted an hundred pounds to each daughter, a sum which being probably too little in their opinion, and too much in her's, would naturally produce reciprocal animosity and censure between the contending parties.

It has been already observed, that the recent discovery of this forgotten will, and the allegations annexed to it, throw considerable light on the domestic life of Milton; and the more insight we can gain into his social and sequestered hours, the more we shall discover, that he was not less entitled to private affection, than to public esteem; but let us contemplate his person before we proceed to a minuter examination of his mind and manners.

So infatuated with rancour were the enemies of this illustrious man, that they delineated his form, as they represented his character, with the utmost extravagance of

malevolent falshood : he was not only compared to that monster of deformity, the eyeless Polypheme, but described as a diminutive, bloodless, and shrivelled creature. Expressions of this kind, in which absurdity and malice are equally apparent, induced him to expose the contemptible virulence of his revilers by a brief description of his own figure.* He represents himself as a man of

* Veniamus nunc ad mea crimina ; estne quod in vita aut moribus reprehendat ? Certe nihil. Quid ergo ? Quod nemo nisi immanis ac barbarus fecisset, formam mihi ac cæcitatem objectat.

Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum.

Nunquam existimabam quidem fore, ut de forma, cum Cyclope certamen mihi esset ; versum statim se revocat. “ Quanquam nec ingens, quo nihil est exilius exsanguius contractius.” Tametsi virum nihil attinet de forma dicere, tandem quando hic quoque est unde gratias Deo agam et mendaces redarguam ne quis (quod Hispanorum vulgus de hereticis, quos vocant, plus nimio sacerdotibus suis credulum opinatur) me forte cynocephalum quempiam aut rhinocerota esse putet, dicam. Deformis quidem a nemine quod sciam, qui modo me vidit sum unquam habitus ; formosus necne minus laboro ; statura fateor non sum proçera ; sed quæ mediocri tamen quam

moderate stature, not particularly slender, and so far endued with strength and spirit, that as he always wore a sword, he wanted not, in his healthy season of life, either skill or courage to use it; having practised fencing with great assiduity, he considered him-

parvæ proprior sit; sed quid si parva, qua et summi sæpe tum pace tum bello viri fuere, quanquam parva cur dicitur, quæ ad virtutem satis magna est? Sed neque exilis admodum eo sane animo iisque viribus ut cum ætas vitæque ratio sic ferebat, nec ferrum tractare, nec stringere quotidiano usu exercitatus nescirem; eo accinctus, ut plerumque eram, cuivis vel multo robustiori exæquatum me putabam, securus quid mihi quis injuriæ vir viro inferre posset. Idem hodem hodie animus, cædem vires, oculi non iidem; ita tamen extrinsecus illæsi isa sine nube clari ac lucidi, ut eorum qui acutissimum cernunt; in hac solum parte, memet invito, simulator sum. In vultu quo "nihil exsanguius" esse dixit, is manet etiamnum color exsanguis et pallenti planè contrarius, ut quadragenario major vix sit cui non denis prope annis videar natu minor; neque corpore contracto neque cute. In his ego si ulla ex parte mentior multis millibus popularium meorum qui de facie me norunt, exteris etiam non paucis, ridiculus meritò sim; sin iste in re minimè necessaria tam impudentur gratuito mendax comperietur poteritis de reliquo eandem conjecturam facere. Atque hæc de forma mea vel coactus.

self as a match for any antagonist, however superior to him in muscular force; his countenance (he says) was so far from being bloodless, that when turned of forty, he was generally allowed to have the appearance of being ten years younger; even his eyes (he adds) though utterly deprived of sight, did not betray their imperfection, but on the contrary appeared as speckless and as lucid as if his powers of vision had been peculiarly acute—"In this article alone" says Milton "and much against my will, I am a hypocrite."

Such is the interesting portrait, which this great writer has left us of himself. Those who had the happiness of knowing him personally, speak in the highest terms even of his personal endowments, and seem to have regarded him as a model of manly grace and dignity in his figure and deportment.

"His harmonical and ingenious soul" says Aubrey "dwelt in a beautiful and well-proportioned body."

"In toto nusquam corpore menda fuit."

His hair was a light brown, his eyes dark

grey, and his complexion so fair, that at college, according to his own expression, he was styled "The Lady," an appellation which he could not relish; but he consoled himself under absurd raillery on the delicacy of his person, by recollecting that similar raillery had been lavished on those manly and eminent characters of the ancient world, Demosthenes and Hortensius. His general appearance approached not in any degree to effeminacy. "His deportment" says Anthony Wood, "was affable, and his gait erect and manly, bespeaking courage and undauntedness." Richardson, who laboured with affectionate enthusiasm to acquire and communicate all possible information concerning the person and manners of Milton, has left the two following sketches of his figure at an advanced period of life.

"An ancient clergyman of Dorsetshire (Dr. Wright) found John Milton in a small chamber hung with rusty green, sitting in an elbow chair, and dressed neatly in black, pale but not cadaverous, his hands and fingers gouty and with chalk stones.

“ He used also to sit, in a grey coarse cloth coat, at the door of his house near Bunhill-fields, in warm sunny weather, to enjoy the fresh air, and so, as well as in his room, received the visits of people of distinguished parts as well as quality.” It is probable, that Milton, in his youth, was, in some measure, indebted to the engaging graces of his person for that early introduction into the politest society, both in England and abroad, which improved the natural sweetness of his character (so visible in all his genuine portraits) and led him to unite with profound erudition, and with the sublimest talents, an endearing and cheerful delicacy of manners, very rarely attained by men, whose application to study is continual and intense.

The enemies of Milton, indeed, (and his late biographer, I must reluctantly include under that description) have laboured to fix upon him a fictitious and most unamiable character of austerity and harshness. “ What we know” says Johnson

“ of Milton’s character in domestic relations is, that he was severe and arbitrary. His family consisted of women, and there appears in his books something like a Turkish contempt of females, as subordinate and inferior beings; that his own daughters might not break the ranks, he suffered them to be depressed by a mean and penurious education. He thought woman made only for obedience, and man for rebellion.” This is assuredly the intemperate language of hatred, and very far from being consonant to truth.

As it was thought a sufficient defence of Sophocles, when he was barbarously accused of mental imbecility by his unnatural children, to read a portion of his recent dramatic works, so, I am confident, the citation of a few verses from our English bard may be enough to clear him from a charge equally groundless, and almost as ungenerous.

No impartial reader of genuine sensibility will deem it possible, that the poet

could have entertained a Turkish contempt of females, who has thus delineated woman :

All higher knowledge in her presence falls
 Degraded ; wisdom, in discourse with her,
 Loses discountenanc'd, and like folly shews ;
 Authority and reason on her wait,
 As one intended first, not after made
 Occasionally ; and to consummate all,
 Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
 About her, as a guard angelic plac'd.

A description so complete could arise only from such exquisite feelings in the poet, as insured to every deserving female his tenderest regard. This argument might be still more enforced by a passage in the speech of Raphael ; but the preceding verses are, I trust, sufficient to counteract the uncandid attempt of the acrimonious biographer to prejudice the fairest part of the creation against a poet, who has surpassed his peers in delineating their charms, whose poetry, a more enchanting mirror than the lake that he describes in Paradise, represents their mental united to their personal graces, and exhi-

bits in perfection all the loveliness of woman.

As to Milton's depressing his daughters by a mean and penurious education, it is a calumny resting only on a report, that he would not allow them the advantage of learning to write. This is evidently false, since Aubrey, who was personally acquainted with the poet, and who had probably consulted his widow in regard to many particulars of his life, expressly affirms, that his youngest daughter was his amanuensis; a circumstance of which my friend Romney has happily availed himself to decorate the folio edition of this life with a production of his pencil. The youngest daughter of Milton had the most frequent opportunities of knowing his temper, and she happens to be the only one of his children who has delivered a deliberate account of it; but her account, instead of confirming Johnson's idea of her father's domestic severity, will appear to the candid reader to refute it completely. "She spoke of him," says Richardson, "with great tenderness; she said he was delightful

company, the life of the conversation, and that on account of a flow of subject, and an unaffected cheerfulness and civility." It was this daughter, who related the extraordinary circumstance that she and one of her sisters read to their father several languages, which they did not understand; it is remarkable, that she did not speak of it as a hardship; nor could it be thought an intolerable grievance by an affectionate child, who thus assisted a blind parent in labouring for the maintenance of his family. Such an employment, however, must have been irksome; and the considerate father, in finding that it was so, "sent out his children (according to the expression of his nephew) to learn some curious and ingenious sorts of manufacture, particularly embroideries in gold, or silver." That he was no penurious parent is strongly proved by an expression that he made use of in speaking of his will, when he declared, that "he had made provision for his children in his life time, and had spent the greatest part of his estate in providing for them." It is the more barbarous to ar-

raign the poet for domestic cruelty, because he appears to have suffered from the singular tenderness and generosity of his nature. He had reason to lament that excess of indulgence, with which he forgave and received again his disobedient and long-alienated wife, since their re-union not only disquieted his days, but gave birth to daughters, who seem to have inherited the perversity of their mother:

The wisest and best men full oft beguil'd
With goodness principled, not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Intangled with a pois'nous bosom-snake.

These pathetic lines in a speech of his Samson Agonistes, strike me as a forcible allusion to his own connubial infelicity. If in his first marriage he was eminently unhappy, his success in the two last turned the balance of fortune in his favor. That his second wife deserved, possessed, and retained his affection is evident from his sonnet occasioned by her death; of the care and kindness which he had long experienced, from

the partner of his declining life, he spoke with tender gratitude to his brother, in explaining his testamentary intention; and we are probably indebted to the care and kindness which the aged poet experienced from this affectionate guardian, for the happy accomplishment of his inestimable works. A blind and desolate father must be utterly unequal to the management of disobedient daughters conspiring against him, the anguish he endured from their filial ingratitude, and the base deceptions, with which they continually tormented him, must have rendered even the strongest mind very unfit for poetical application. The marriage, which he concluded by the advice and the aid of his friend Dr. Paget, seems to have been his only resource against a most exasperating and calamitous species of domestic disquietude; it appears therefore, not unreasonable to regard those immortal poems, which recovered tranquillity enabled him to produce, as the fruits of that marriage. As matrimony has, perhaps, annihilated many a literary design, let it be remembered to its

honor, that it probably gave birth to the brightest offspring of literature.

The two eldest daughters of Milton appear to me utterly unworthy of their father; but those, who adopt the dark prejudices of Johnson, and believe with him, that the great poet was an austere domestic tyrant, will find, in their idea of the father, an apology for his children, whose destiny in the world I shall immediately mention, that I may have occasion to speak of them no more. Anne, the eldest, who with a deformed person had a pleasing face, married an architect, and died, with her first infant in child bed. Mary, the second, and apparently the most deficient in affection to her father, died unmarried. Deborah, who was the favorite of Milton, and who, long after his decease, discovered, on a casual sight of his genuine portrait, very affecting emotions of filial tenderness and enthusiasm, even Deborah deserted him without his knowledge, not in consequence of his paternal severity, of which she was very far from complaining, but, as Richardson inti-

mates, from a disgust she had conceived against her mother-in-law. On quitting the house of her father, she went to Ireland with a lady, and afterwards became the wife of Mr. Clarke, a weaver, in Spitalfields. As her family was numerous, and her circumstances not affluent, the liberal Addison made her a present, from his regard to the memory of her father, and intended to procure her some decent establishment, but died before he could accomplish his generous design. From Queen Caroline, she received fifty guineas, a donation as ill proportioned to the rank of the donor as to the mental dignity of the great genius, whose indigent daughter was the object of this unprincely munificence. Mrs. Clarke had ten children, but none of them appear to have attracted public regard, till Dr. Birch and Dr. Newton, two benevolent and respectable biographers of the poet, discovered his grand-daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Foster, keeping a little chandler's shop in the city, poor, aged, and infirm; they publicly spoke of her condition, Johnson

was then writing as the coadjutor of Lauder in his attempt to sink the glory of Milton; but as the critics charity was still greater than his spleen, he seized the occasion of recommending, under Lauder's name, this necessitous descendant of the great poet to the beneficence of his country; Comus was represented for her benefit, in the year 1750, and Johnson to his honor contributed a prologue on the occasion, in which noble sentiments are nobly expressed.

The poor grand-daughter of Milton gained but one hundred and thirty pounds by this public benefaction; this sum, however, small as it was, afforded peculiar comfort to her declining age, by enabling her to retire to Islington with her husband; she had seven children, who died before her, and by her own death it is probable that the line of the poet became extinct. Let us hasten from this painful survey of his progeny to the more enlivening contemplation of his rare mental endowments. The most diligent researches into all that can elucidate the real temper of Milton only confirm the

opinion, that his native characteristics were mildness and magnanimity. In controversy his mind was undoubtedly overheated, and passages may be quoted from his prose works, that are certainly neither mild nor magnanimous; but if his controversial asperity is compared with the outrageous insolence of his opponents, even that asperity will appear moderation; in social intercourse he is represented as peculiarly courteous and engaging. When the celebrity of his Latin work made him esteemed abroad, many enquiries were made concerning his private character among his familiar acquaintance, and the result of such enquiry was, that mildness and affability were his distinguishing qualities. "Virum esse miti comique ingenio aiunt," says the celebrated Heinsius, in a letter that he wrote concerning Milton, in the year 1651, to Gronovius. Another eminent foreigner represents himself in the same pleasing light, and from the best information. Vossius, who was at that time in Sweden, and who mentions the praise, which his royal pa-

troness Christina bestowed on Milton's recent defence of the English people, informs his friend Heinsius, that he had obtained a very particular account of the author from a relation of his own, the learned Junius, who wrote the elaborate and interesting history of ancient painting, resided in England, and particularly cultivated the intimacy of Milton.

Indeed, when we reflect on the poet's uncommon tenderness towards his parents, and all the advantages of his early life, both at home and abroad, we have every reason to believe, that his manners were singularly pleasing. He was fond of refined female society, and appears to have been very fortunate in two female friends of distinction the Lady Margaret Ley, whose society consoled him when he was mortified by the desertion of his first wife, and the no less accomplished Lady Ranelagh, who had placed her son under his care, and who probably assisted him, when he was a widower and blind, with friendly directions for the management of his female infants.

A passage in one of his letters to her son suggests this idea ; for he condoles with his young correspondent, then at the university, on the loss they would both sustain by the long absence of his most excellent mother, passing at that time into Ireland ; “ for to me also she supplied the place of every friend* ; an expression full of tenderness and regret, highly honorable to the lady, and a pleasing memorial of that sensibility and gratitude, which I am persuaded we should have seen most eminent in the character of Milton, if his English letters had been fortunately preserved, particularly his letters to this interesting lady, whose merits are commemorated in an eloquent sermon, preached by Bishop Burnet, on the death of her brother, that mild and accomplished model of virtue and of learning, Robert Boyle. Lady Ranelagh must have been one of the most exemplary and engaging characters that ever existed, since we find she was the darling sister of this illustrious philosopher, and the favorite friend of a

* Nam et mihi omnium necessitudinum loco fuit.

poet still more illustrious. Four of Milton's Latin letters are addressed to her son, and they blend with moral precepts to the young student respectful and affectionate praise of his mother*.

In the Latin correspondence of Milton we have some vestiges of his sentiments concerning the authors of antiquity; and it is remarkable, that in a deliberate opinion on the merits of Sallust †, he prefers

* In the quarto edition of Boyle, there are a few letters from his favorite sister, Lady Ranelagh; one very interesting, in which she speaks of the poet Waller; but she does not mention the name of Milton in the whole collection. Her son (the first and last Earl of Ranelagh) who was in his childhood a disciple of the great poet, proved a man of talents business and pleasure.

† De Sallustio quod scribis, dicam libere; quoniam ita vis plane ut dicam quod sentio, Sallustium cuivis Latino historico me quidem anteferre; quæ etiam constans fere antiquorum sententia fuit. Habet suas laudes tuus Tacitus, sed eas meo quidem judicio maximas, quod Sallustium nervis omnibus sit imitatus. Cum hæc tecum coram dissererem perfecisse videor, quantum ex eo quod scribis conjicio, ut de illo cordatissimo scriptore ipse jam idem prope sentias: adeoque ex me quæris, cum is in

him to all the Roman historians. Milton, did not form himself as a writer on any Roman model: being very early most anxious to excel in literature, he wisely attached himself to those prime examples of

exordio belli Catilinarii perdifficile esse dixerit historiam scribere, propter a quod facta dictis exæquanda sunt, qua potissimum ratione id assequi historiarum scriptorem posse existimem. Ego vero sic existimo; qui gestas res dignas digne scripserit, eum animo non minus magno rerumque usu præditum scribere oportere, quam is qui eas gesserit: ut vel maximas pari animo comprehendere atque metiri possit et comprehensas sermone puro atque casto distincte gravitérque narrare: nam ut ornate non admodum laboro; historicum enim, non oratorem requiro. Cebras etiam sententias, et judicia de rebus gestis interjecta prolixè nollem, ne, interrupta verum serie quod politici scriptoris munus est historicus invadat; qui si in consiliis explicandis, factis que enarrandis, non suum ingenium aut conjecturam, sed veritatem potissimum sequitur, suarum profecto partium satagit. Addiderim et illud Sallustianum, qua in re ipse Catonem maxime laudavit, posse multa paucis absolvere; id quod sine acerrimo iudicio, atque etiam temperantia quadam neminem posse arbitror. Sunt multi in quibus vel sermonis elegantiam vel conjezarum rerum copiam non desideres, qui brevitatem cum copia conjunxerit, id est, qui multa paucis absolverit, princeps meo iudicio est Sallustius.—Prose Works, vol. 2. p. 582.

literary perfection, the Greeks ; among the poets he particularly delighted in Euripides and Homer ; his favorites in prose seem to have been Plato and Demosthenes ; the first peculiarly fit to give richness, purity, and lustre to the fancy ; the second, to invigorate the understanding, and inspire the fervid energy of public virtue. It is a very just remark of Lord Monboddo, that even the poetical speeches in Paradise Lost derive their consummate propriety and eloquence from the fond and enlightened attention with which the poet had studied the most perfect orator of Athens ; the studies of Milton, however, were very extensive ; he appears to have been familiar not only with all the best authors of antiquity, but with those of every refined language in Europe ; Italian, French, Spanish, and Portugueze. Great erudition has been often supposed to operate as an incumbrance on the finer faculties of the mind ; but let us observe to its credit, the sublimest of poets was the most learned : of Italian literature he was particularly fond, as we may collect from one of his letters to

a professor of that language, and from the ease and spirit of his Italian verses. To the honor of modern Italy, it may be said, that she had a considerable share in forming the genius of Milton. In Tasso, her brightest ornament, he found a character highly worthy of his affectionate emulation, both as a poet, and as a man; this accomplished personage had, indeed, ended, his illustrious and troubled life several years before Milton visited his country; but he was yet living in the memory of his ardent friend Manso, and through the medium of Manso's conversation his various excellencies made, I am persuaded, a forcible and permanent impression on the heart and fancy of our youthful countryman. It was hardly the example of Trissino, as Johnson supposes, that tempted Milton to his bold experiment of blank verse; for Trissino's epic poem is a very heavy performance, and had sunk into such oblivion in Italy, that the literary friend and biographer of Tasso considers that greater poet as the first person who enriched the Italian language, with valuable blank

verse: "our early works of that kind," says Manso, "are translations from the Latin, and those not successful." The poem in blank verse, for which this amiable biographer applauds his friend, is an extensive work, in seven books, on the Seven Days of the Creation, a subject that has engaged the poets of many countries. The performance of Tasso was begun at the house of his friend Manso, and at the suggestion of a lady, the accomplished mother of the Marquis. As this poem is formed from the Bible, and full of religious enthusiasm, it probably influenced the English visiter of Manso in his choice of blank verse. Tasso was a voluminous author, and we have reason to believe that Milton was familiar with all his compositions, as the exquisite eulogy on connubial affection, in the *Paradise Lost*, is founded on a prose composition in favor of marriage, addressed by the Italian poet to one of his relations * ; but Milton, who

* Tasso begins this interesting discourse, by informing his kinsman Ercole, that he first heard the news of his

was perhaps of all authors the least addicted to imitation, rarely imitates even Tasso in composition: in life indeed he copied him more closely, and to his great poetical compeer of Italy he discovers a very striking resemblance in application to study, in temperance of diet, in purity of morals and in fervency of devotion. The Marquis of Villa in closing his life of Tasso, has enumerated all the particular virtues by which he was distinguished; these were all equally conspicuous in Milton; and we may truly say of him, what Manso says of the great Italian poet, that the preference of virtue to every other consideration was the predominant passion of his life.

Enthusiasm was the characteristic of

having taken a wife, and then was surprised by reading a composition of his, in which he inveighs not only against the ladies, but against matrimony. The poet, with great politeness and spirit, assumes the defence of both, and in the close of a learned and eloquent panegyric, indulges his heart and fancy in a very animated and beautiful address to wedded love, which Milton has copied with his usual dignity and sweetness of expression.

his mind; in politics, it made him sometimes too generously credulous, and sometimes too rigorously decisive; but in poetry it exalted him to such a degree of excellence as no man has hitherto surpassed; nor is it probable that in this province he will ever will be excelled; for although in all the arts there are undoubtedly points of perfection much higher than any mortal has yet attained, still it requires such a coincidence of so many advantages depending on the influence both of nature and of destiny to raise a great artist of any kind, that the world has but little reason to expect productions of poetical genius superior to the *Paradise Lost*. There was a bold yet refined originality of conception, which characterised the mental powers of Milton, and give him the highest claim to distinction: we are not only indebted to him for having extended and ennobled the province of epic poetry, but he has another title to our regard, as the founder of that recent and enchanting English art, which has embellished our country, and, to speak the glowing

language of a bard very eloquent in its
praise,

— Made Albion smile,
One ample theatre of sylvan grace.

The elegant historian of modern garden-
ing, Lord Orford, and the two accomplished
poets, who have celebrated its charms both
in France and England, De Lille and Mason,
have, with great justice and felicity of ex-
pression, paid their homage to Milton, as the
beneficent genius, who bestowed upon the
world this youngest and most lovely of the
arts. As a contrast to the Miltonic garden,
I may point out to the notice of the reader,
what has escaped, I think, all the learned
writers on this engaging subject, the garden
of the imperious Duke of Alva, described in
a poem of the celebrated Lope de Vega.
The sublime vision of Eden, as Lord Orford
truly calls it, proves indeed, as the same
writer observes, how little the poet suffered
from the loss of sight. The native disposi-
tion of Milton, and his personal infirmity,
conspired to make contemplation his chief

business and chief enjoyment: few poets have devoted so large a portion of their time to intense and regular study; yet he often made a pause of some months in the progress of his great work, if we may confide in the circumstantial narrative of his nephew. "I had the perusal of it from the very beginning," says Philips, "for some years, as I went from time to time to visit him, in parcels of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time (which, being written by whatever hand came next, might possibly want correction as to the orthography and pointing). Having as the summer came on, not been shewed any for a considerable while, and desiring the reason thereof, was answered that his vein never happily flowed but from the autumnal equinox to the vernal."

Johnson takes occasion, from this anecdote, to treat the sensations of Milton with sarcastic severity, and to deride him for submitting to the influence of the seasons; he lavishes ridicule, not less acrimonious, on the great poet for having yielded to a fashionable dread of evils still more fantastic.

“There prevailed in his time (says the critic) an opinion that the world was in its decay, and that we have had the misfortune to be born in the decrepitude of nature.” Johnson exposes, with great felicity of expression this absurd idea, of which his own frame of body and mind was a complete refutation; but instead of deriding the great poet for harbouring so weak a conceit, he might have recollected that Milton himself has spurned this chimera of timid imagination in very spirited Latin verses, written in his twentieth year, and expressly against the folly of supposing nature impaired.

Ergone marcescet, sulcantibus obsita rugis,
 Naturæ facies et rerum publica mater,
 Omniparum contracta uterum, sterilescet ab ævo
 Et se fassa senem male certis passibus ibit,
 Sidereum tremebunda caput;

How! shall the face of nature then be plough'd
 Into deep wrinkles, and shall years at last
 On the great parent fix a sterile curse;
 Shall even she confess old age, and halt
 And palsy-smitten shake her starry brows!

COVPER.

The spirit of the poet was, in truth, little formed for yielding to any weaknesses of fancy that could impede mental exertion; and we may consider it as one of the striking peculiarities of his character, that with an imagination so excursive he possessed a mind so industrious.

His studious habits are thus described by his acquaintance Aubrey and others, who collected their account from his widow:— he rose at four in the summer, at five in the winter, and regularly began the day by hearing a chapter in the Hebrew Bible; it was read to him by a man, who, after this duty, left him to meditation of some hours, and, returning at seven, either read or wrote for him till twelve; he then allowed himself an hour for exercise, which was usually walking, and when he grew blind the occasional resource of a swing: after an early and temperate dinner he commonly allotted some time to music, his favorite amusement; and his own musical talents happily furnished him with a pleasing relaxation from his severer pursuits; he was able to vary his in-

strument, as he played both on the bass viol and the organ, with the advantage of an agreeable voice, which his father had probably taught him to cultivate in his youth. This regular custom of the great poet, to indulge himself in musical relaxation after food, has been recently praised as favorable to mental exertion, in producing all the good effects of sleep, with none of its disadvantages, by an illustrious scholar, who, like Milton, united the passion and the talents of poetry to habits of intense and diversified application. Sir William Jones, in the third volume of the Asiatic researches, has recommended, from his own experience, this practice of Milton, who from music returned to study ; at eight he took a light supper, and at nine retired to bed.

If such extreme regularity could be preserved at any period, it must have been in the closing years of his life. While he was in office, his time was undoubtedly much engaged, not only by official attendance, but by his intercourse with learned foreigners, as the parliament allowed him a

weekly table for their reception. The Latin compositions of Milton had rendered him, on the continent, an object of idolatry; "and strangers (says Wood, who was far from being partial to his illustrious contemporary) visited the house where he was born." Even in his latter days, when he is supposed to have been neglected by his countrymen, intelligent foreigners were solicitous to converse with him as an object of their curiosity and veneration; they regarded him, and very justly, as the prime wonder of England; for he was, in truth, a person so extraordinary, that it may be questioned if any age or nation has produced his parallel. Is there, in the records of literature, an author to be found, who, after gaining such extensive celebrity as a political disputant, cast off the mortal vesture of a polemic, and arose in the purest splendor of poetical immortality?

Biographers are frequently accused of being influenced by affection for their subject; to a certain degree it is right that they should be so; for what is biography

in its fairest point of view ? a tribute paid by justice and esteem to genius and to virtue ; and never is this tribute more pleasing or more profitable to mankind, than when it is liberally paid, with all the fervor and all the fidelity of friendship ; the chief delight and the chief utility that arises from this attractive branch of literature consists in the affectionate interest, which it displays and communicates in favor of the talents and probity, that it aspires to celebrate ; hence the most engaging pieces of biography are those that have been written by relations of the deceased. This remark is exemplified in the life of Agricola by Tacitus, and in that of Racine, the dramatic poet, written by his son, (who was also a poet) and addressed to his grandson.

It has been the lot of Milton to have his life frequently described, and recently, by a very powerful author, who, had he loved the character he engaged to delineate, might, perhaps, have satisfied the admirers of the poet, and closed the list of his numerous biographers. But the very wonder,

ful mind of Johnson was so embittered by prejudice, that in delineating a character confessedly pre-eminent in accomplishments, in genius, and in piety, he perpetually endeavours to represent him as unamiable, and instead of attributing any mistaken opinions, that he might entertain, to such sources as charity and reason conspire to suggest, imputes them to supposed vices in his mind, most foreign to his nature, and the very worst that an enemy could imagine.

In the course of this narrative, I have considered it as a duty incumbent upon me to notice and counteract, as they occurred, many important strokes of the hostility which I am now lamenting ; these become still more remarkable in that portion of the biographer's labor, to which I am at length arrived ; it is in dissecting the mind of Milton, if I may use such an expression, that Johnson indulges the injurious intemperance of his hatred. " It is to be suspected (he says) that his predominant desire was to destroy rather than establish ; and that

he felt not so much the love of liberty as repugnance to authority.' Such a suspicion may indeed be harboured by political rancor, but it must be in direct opposition to justice and truth; for of all men who have written or acted in the service of liberty, there is no individual, who has proved more completely, both by his language and his life, that he made a perfect distinction between liberty and licentiousness. No human spirit could be more sincerely a lover of just and beneficent authority; for no man has written more eloquently in their praise, or given sublimer proofs of his own personal attachment to them by the regulation of his own personal attachment to them by the regulation of his own orderly and peaceful studies. If he hated power (as Johnson asserts) in every established form, he hated not its salutary influence, but its pernicious exertions. Vehement as he occasionally was against kings and prelates, he spoke of the sectaries with equal indignation and abhorrence, when they also became the agents of persecution; and

as he had fully seen, and has forcibly exposed, the gross failings of republican reformers, had his life been extended long enough to witness the Revolution, which he might have beheld without suffering the decrepitude or imbecility of extreme old age, he would probably have exulted as warmly as the sincerest friend of our present constitution can exult, in that temperate and happy reformation of monarchical enormities.

Johnson also intimates, that he was a shallow politician, who supposed money to be the chief good, though with singular inconsistency, he at the same time confesses, "that money seems not to have had much of his care."

Money, in fact, had so little influence over the elevated mind of Milton, that from his want of attention to it, he sustained such losses, as, according to his nephew's expression, "might have ruined a man less temperate than he was." Two thousand pounds he is said to have lost by entrusting

it to government, and as much in a private loan, without sufficient security.

“Towards the latter part of his time,” says one of his early biographers, he contracted his library, both because the heirs he left could not make a right use of it, and that he thought he might sell it more to their advantage than they could be able to do themselves. His enemies reported, that poverty constrained him thus to part with his books; and were this true, it would be a great disgrace, not to him (for persons of the highest merits have been often reduced to that condition) but to any country that should have no more regard to probity or learning. This story, however, is so false, that he died worth fifteen hundred pounds, besides all his goods.”

Such are the remarks of Toland on the pecuniary circumstances of the poet; they shew with becoming spirit, that he was not reduced by absolute indigence to the sale of his library; yet every reader, whose literary feelings are acute, must regret, that the old age of Milton was not guarded and enlivened

by such affluence as might have saved him from a measure, in which those who have a passion for books must suppose him to have suffered some degree of mortification.

The necessities into which many deserving men of letters, have fallen towards the close of life, and in various countries, may be regarded as an universal disgrace to civilized society, which the improving refinement and liberality of mankind, ought effectually to remove. Literature, which is so eminently beneficial to a nation, is frequently ruinous to worthy individuals most fervently attached to it; and it should be regarded as a duty, therefore, by every polished people, to provide a public fund, which might afford a becoming competence to the advanced life of those illustrious scholars, whose public labors entitle them to that honorable distinction. Such meritorious veterans in literature, as Milton and his late aged biographer should have been preserved, in their declining days, from every shadow of indigence, by the public gratitude of the nation, to whom they had devoted their in-

tellectual service. What friend to letters and to genius, could fail to wish affluent comfort to the closing life of such authors, however he might condemn the excesses of republican severity in the one, or those of servile and censorial bigotry in the other ?

There can hardly be any contemplation more painful, than to dwell on the virulent excesses of eminent and good men ; yet the utility of such contemplation may be equal to its pain. What mildness and candor should it not instil into ordinary mortals to observe, that even genius and virtue weaken their title to respect, in proportion as they recede from that evangelical charity, which should influence every man in his judgment of another.

The strength and the acuteness of sensation, which partly constitute genius, have a great tendency to produce virulence, if the mind is not perpetually on its guard against that subtle, insinuating, and corrosive passion, hatred against all, whose opinions are opposite to our own. Johnson professed, in one of his letters, to love a good hater ;

and in the Latin correspondence of Milton, there are words that imply a similarity of sentiment; they both thought there might be a sanctified bitterness, to use an expression of Milton, towards political and religious opponents; yet surely these two devout men were both wrong, and both in some degree unchristian in this principle. To what singular iniquities of judgment such a principle may lead, we might perhaps, have had a most striking, and a double proof, had it been possible for these two energetic writers to exhibit alternately a portrait of each other. Milton, adorned with every graceful endowment, highly and holily accomplished as he was, appears in the dark coloring of Johnson, a most unamiable being; but could he revisit earth in his mortal character, with a wish to retaliate, what a picture might be drawn, by that sublime and offended genius, of the great moralist, who has treated him with such excess of asperity. The passions are powerful colorists, and marvellous adepts in the art of exaggeration; but the portraits executed by love (famous as he is for over-

charging them) are infinitely more faithful to nature, than gloomy sketches from the heavy hand of hatred; a passion not to be trusted or indulged even in minds of the highest purity or power; since hatred, tho' it may enter the field of contest under the banner of justice, yet generally becomes so blind and outrageous, from the heat of contention, as to execute, in the name of virtue, the worst purposes of vice. Hence arises that species of calumny the most to be regretted, the calumny lavished by men of talents and worth on their equals or superiors, whom they have rashly and blindly hated for a difference of opinion. To such hatred the fervid and opposite characters, who gave rise to this observation, were both more inclined, perhaps, by nature and by habit, than Christianity can allow. The freedom of these remarks on two very great, and equally devout, though different writers, may possibly offend the partizans of both: in that case my consolation will be, that I have endeavoured to speak of them with that temperate, though undaunted sincerity,

which may satisfy the spirit of each in a purer state of existence. There is one characteristic in Milton, which ought to be considered as the chief source of his happiness and his fame ; I mean his early and perpetual attachment to religion. It must gratify every christian to reflect, that the man of our country most eminent for energy of mind, for intensesness of application, and for frankness and intrepidity in asserting whatever he believed to be the cause of truth, was so confirmedly devoted to Christianity, that he seems to have made the Bible, not only the rule of his conduct, but the prime director of his genius. His poetry flowed from the scripture, as if his unparalleled poetical powers had been expressly given him by Heaven for the purpose of imparting to religion such lustre as the most splendid of human faculties could bestow. As in the *Paradise Lost* he seems to emulate the sublimity of Moses and the prophets, it appears to have been his wish, in the *Paradise Regained*, to copy the sweetness and simplicity of the milder evan-

gelists. If the futile remarks that were made upon the latter work, on its first appearance, excited the spleen of the great author, he would probably have felt still more indignant could he have seen the comment of Warburton. That disgusting writer, whose critical dictates form a fantastic medley of arrogance, acuseness, and absurdity, has asserted that the plan of *Paradise Regained* is very unhappy, and that nothing was easier than to have invented a good one.

Much idle censure seems to have been thrown on more than one of Milton's poetical works, from want of due attention to the chief aim of the poet:—If we fairly consider it in regard to *Paradise Regained*, the aim I allude to, as it probably occasioned, will completely justify, the plan which the presumptuous critic has so superciliously condemned. Milton had already executed one extensive divine poem, peculiarly distinguished by richness and sublimity of description; in framing a second, he would naturally wish to vary its effect; to make it

rich in moral sentiment, and sublime in its mode of unfolding the highest wisdom that man can learn ; for this purpose it was necessary to keep all the ornamental parts of the poem in due subordination to the preceptive. This delicate and difficult point is accomplished with such felicity, they are blended together with such exquisite harmony and mutual aid, that instead of arraigning the plan, we might rather doubt if any possible change could improve it; assuredly, there is no poem of epic form, where the sublimest moral instruction is so forcibly and abundantly united to poetical delight : the splendour of the poet does not blaze indeed so intensely as in his larger production; here he resembles the Apollo of Ovid, softening his glory in speaking to his son, and avoiding to dazzle the fancy, that he may descend into the heart. His dignity is not impaired by his tenderness. The *Paradise Regained* is a poem, that deserves to be particularly recommended to ardent and ingenious youth, as it is admirably

calculated to inspire that spirit of self-command, which is, as Milton esteemed it, the truest heroism, and the triumph of Christianity.

It is not my intention to enter into a critical analysis of the beauties and the blemishes that are visible in the poetry of Milton, because Addison and Johnson have both written admirably on his greatest work ; I shall therefore confine myself to a single essay, detached from this narrative, under the title of " Conjectures on the Origin of the Paradise Lost."

I must not, however, omit to speak here, as I have engaged to do, of the character bestowed by Johnson on the principal performance of the poet ; the greatest part of that character is, perhaps, the most splendid tribute that was ever paid by one powerful mind to another. Aristotle, Longinus, and Quintilian, have not spoken of their favorite Homer, with more magnificence of praise ; yet the character, taken altogether, is a golden image, that has lower

parts of iron and of clay. The critic seems to prepare a diadem of the richest jewels; he places them, most liberally, on the head of the poet; but in the moment of adjusting his radiant gift, he breathes upon it such a vapour of spleen, as almost annihilates its lustre.

After displaying, in the noblest manner, many of the peculiar excellencies in the poem, he says, "its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure; we read Milton for instruction, retire harrassed and overburthened, and look elsewhere for recreation; we desert our master, and seek for companions."

Injurious as these remarks are to the poet, let us ascribe them, not to the virulence of intended detraction, but to the want of poetical sensibility in the critic; a want that may be sufficiently proved, by comparing this account of the effect produced by *Paradise Lost* on his own feelings, with its effect on a spirit truly poetical. That enchanting poem, *The Task*, very happily fur-

nishes such an illustration ; it is thus, that a mind attuned by nature to poetry, describes the effect in question, as produced even in childhood.

Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms
New to my taste ; his Paradise surpass'd
The strugg'ling efforts of my boyish tongue
To speak its excellence : I danc'd for joy.

But the little delight that Johnson confesses himself to have taken in the poetry of Milton was rather his misfortune than his fault ; it merits pity more than reproach, as it partly arose from constitutional infelicity, and the very wide difference between the native turn of his mind and that of the poet : never were two spirits less congenial or two Christian scholars, who differed more completely in their sentiments of poetry, politics, and religion. In temperament, as well as in opinions, they were the reverse of each other ; the one was sanguine to excess, the other melancholy in the extreme. Milton

“ Might sit in the centre and enjoy bright day ;”

but Johnson,

“ Benighted walk'd under the mid-day sun ;
Himself was his own dungeon.”

Such was the great contrast between these two extraordinary men, that although they were both equally sincere in their attachment to Christianity, and both distinguished by noble intellectual exertions in the service of mankind, the critic was naturally disqualified from being a fair and a perfect judge of the poet. My regard for a departed and meritorious writer (of great powers, but constitutionally unhappy) is such, that I would rather ascribe to any cause, than to mere envious malignity, his outrages against the glory of Milton, which, from the force and celebrity of the very admirable but too austere work that contains them, it becomes the duty of a more recent biographer to expose.

For example, when Johnson says that Milton “ wrote no language, but formed a

Babylonish dialect, harsh and barbarous," though it would be difficult to pronounce a critical censure more bitter or more injurious, we may impute it, not to a malevolent desire of depreciating the poet, but to a natural want of ear for that harmony, which the critic condemns as discord. On this article, the most harmonious of our bards has been very happily vindicated by men of science and taste. Dr. Foster and Lord Monboddo have shewn Milton to be one of the most consummate artificers of language, that ever gave either energy or grace to words; and Mr. Loft, in the preface to his recent edition of *Paradise Lost*, describes the majestic flow of his numbers with such truth and eloquence, as render ample justice to the insulted dignity of the poet.

The insult, gross as it may be thought, loses much of its force when we recollect the inconsistency of the critic, who, though in his latter work he condemns the language of Milton as harsh and barbarous, had before observed, with more truth in the *Rambler*, that the poet "excelled as much in

the lower as in the higher parts of his art, and that his skill in harmony was not less than his invention or his learning ;” but the praise as well as the censure of Johnson, on this article, could not be the result of perfect perception, for the monotony of his own blank verse, and some of his remarks in the Rambler on particular lines of Milton, are striking proofs, that although he was a melodious writer himself in the common measures of rhyme, and in dignified prose, yet he never entered with perfect intelligence and feeling into the musical graces of Miltonic composition ; he was, indeed, as far from enjoying the poet’s ear for the varied modulations and extensive compass of metrical harmony, as he was from possessing the mild elegance of his manners, or the cheerful elevation of his mind.

There is a striking resemblance between the poetical and the moral character of Milton ; they were both the result of the finest dispositions for the attainment of excellence that nature could bestow, and of all the advantages that ardour and per-

severance in study and discipline could add, in a long course of years, to the beneficent prodigality of nature: even in infancy he discovered a passion for glory; in youth he was attached to temperance; and, arriving at manhood, he formed the magnanimous design of building a lofty name upon the most solid and secure foundation.

—“ He all his study bent
To worship God aright, and know his works
Not hid; nor those things last, that might preserve
Freedom and peace to men.

In a noble consciousness of his powers and intentions, he was not afraid to give, in his early life, a most singular promise to his country of producing such future works as might redound to her glory; and though such personal calamities fell upon him, as might fairly have absolved him from that engagement, yet never was any promise more magnificently fulfilled. Seneca has considered a man of resolution struggling with adversity as a spectacle worthy of God; our resolute countryman not only struggled with

adversity, but, under a peculiar load of complicated calamities, he accomplished those works, that are justly reckoned among the noblest offspring of human genius. In this point of view, with what pathetic grandeur is the poet invested. In contemplating the variety of his sufferings, and his various mental achievements, we may declare, without any extravagance of praise, that although sublimity is the predominant characteristic of Milton's poem, his own personal character is still more sublime.

His majestic pre-eminence is nobly described in the following verses of Aken-side, a poet who bore some affinity to Milton in the ardour of his mind, whose sentiments are always noble, though not always accompanied by a graceful felicity of expression.

Mark how the dread Pantheon stands
Amid the domes of modern hands,
Amid the toys of idle state
How simply, how severely great!
Then turn, and while each western clime
Presents her tuneful sons to time,

So mark thou MILTON's name,
And add, thus differs from the throng
The spirit which inform'd thy awful song,
Which bade thy potent voice protect thy country's
fame.

The powers of Milton, indeed, are so irresistible, that even those, whom the blindness of prejudice has rendered his enemies, are constrained to regard him as an object of admiration. In this article, posterity, to whom he made a very interesting appeal, has done him ample justice; still he is more admired than beloved; yet in granting him only admiration, we ungenerously withhold the richest half of that posthumous reward for which he laboured so fervently: we may be confident that he rather wished to excite the affection than the applause of mankind; and assuredly he has the noblest title to both, the title of having exerted superlative genius and literary ambition, under the constant influence of religious philanthropy. In proportion as our country has advanced in purity of taste, she has applauded the poet; and in proportion

as she advances in liberality of sentiment, she will love the man ; but love in this aspect is more volatile than admiration, and a beneficent genius may be easily deprived of it by the detraction of an enemy, or the mistake of a friend : Milton has suffered not a little from both ; and indeed, if one singular mistake of his friends should prevail, he could hardly become an object of general affection. What votary of the Muse could love a poet, however excellent in that capacity, who represented it as a crime in a captive monarch to have made the poetry of Shakespeare the companion of his solitude ? Credulity has imagined that Milton was such a barbarous Goth. Nor is this the suggestion of his enemies ; even Warton, the liberal defender of his poetical reputation, and several living writers of eminence, have lavished their censures on Milton, from a too hasty belief, that puritanical prejudices had hurried him into this rancorous absurdity.

Their censures are all founded on a mistake ; but the merit of correcting it be-

longs not to me ; Mr. Waldron, the sensible and modest editor of a miscellany, entitled, *The Literary Museum*, in a note to *Roscius Anglicanus*, has, in a very liberal manner, collected and refuted the charges against Milton on this point, and abundantly proved, that instead of censuring the unfortunate Charles for amusing himself with Shakespeare, he only censured him for imitating the religious hypocrisy of Richard the Third so closely as to utter the very sentiments that are assigned to Richard in the page of the dramatic poet.

Milton undoubtedly thought, what an ardent political writer of the present age has not scrupled to assert, that " Charles the First lived and died an hypocrite." These two acute judges of mankind were, I believe, mistaken in this idea: it seems more probable, that this unfortunate prince was flattered into a persuasion, that he was really the meritorious martyr his adherents endeavoured to represent him.

But whatsoever his genuine character might be, the severe sentiments which Mil-

ton entertained of the king, and the delusive hopes that he cherished of the protector, had equally their source in the virtuous ardour of his own spirit. The consciousness of his integrity, when time had fully unveiled to him some illusions, gave that tranquillity and vigour to his declining days, which enabled him to produce his astonishing poems, not more astonishing for their intrinsic merit, than for the period of their production; so that his poetry, in this point of view, may be regarded both as the offspring and the witness of his virtue. The world had never been enriched with his two poems on Paradise, if their great author, when he was, according to his own true and pathetic description,

“In darkness and with dangers compass’d round,”
had not, in some little degree, resembled the hero of his latter poem, and like that hallowed personage, whom he delineates so divinely, amid the darkness and the fiends of the desert,

“Sat unappall’d in calm and sinless peace.”

Yet to such misrepresentations has the life and the poetry of Milton been exposed, that both have been considered as too austere to be amiable, though assuredly, both in the one and the other, the most engaging qualities are admirably united to the most awful—the graceful and the tender to the grand and the sublime.

The attractions of his muse have triumphed over obloquy, and in the estimation of the world she is justly thought to resemble the enchanting Eve of the poet,

—Adorn'd

With what all earth or heav'n could bestow
To make her amiable.

But equal justice has not hitherto been rendered to the personal virtues of the author; it has, therefore, been my chief aim, in a delineation of his life, to make Milton rather more beloved than more admired; and I may the more reasonably hope to succeed in that idea, because, though I have

never been attached to his political opinions, yet, in proportion to my researches into his character as a man, he has advanced in my esteem and my affection.

I lament that the necessity of investigating many misrepresentations, and of correcting much asperity against him, has frequently obliged me to speak rather in the tone of an advocate, than of a common biographer; but I may say, in the words of the great Roman author, pleading the cause of a poet, infinitely less entitled to love and admiration; *Hunc ego non diligam, non admirer, non omni ratione defendendum putem? Atque sic a summis hominibus eruditissimisque accepimus, cæterarum rerum studia et doctrina, et præceptis, et arte constare; poetam natura ipsa valere, et mentis viribus excitari, et quasi divine quodam spiritu afflari*—if poetical powers may ever deserve to be regarded as heavenly inspiration, such undoubtedly were those of Milton, and the use to which he applied them, was worthy of the fountain whence they flowed. He is

pre-eminent in that class of poets, very happily described in the two following verses, by the amiable Lord Falkland ;

Who, while of heav'n the glories they recite,
Find it within, and feel the joys they write.

It is by the epic compositions of Milton alone that England may esteem herself as a rival to antiquity in the highest province of literature; and it appears therefore just, that the memory of the man, to whom she is indebted for the purest, the most extensive, and permanent glory, should for ever excite her affectionate veneration.

END OF THE LIFE.

CONJECTURES

ON THE

ORIGIN

OF

THE PARADISE LOST.



CONJECTURES, &c.

CONJECTURES, FANCIES BUILT ON NOTHING FIRM!

MILTON.

TO write an Epic Poem was the prime object of Milton's ambition at an early period of life; a passionate attachment to his country made him first think of celebrating its antient heroes; but in the long interval between the dawn of such a project in his thoughts, and the commencement of his work, a new train of images got possession of his fancy; Arthur yielded to Adam, and England to Paradise.

To consider what various causes might conspire to produce this revolution in the

ideas of the great poet, may be a pleasing speculation, if it is pursued with due respect to the noble mind that it aspires to examine.

An investigation of a similar nature was undertaken some years ago, upon very different principles, when a singular attempt was made to annihilate the poetical glory of Milton, by proving him a plagiary. This attempt was so extraordinary in its nature, and in its end so honorable to the poet and his country, that a brief account of it should I think, be annexed to the Life of Milton, whose admirers may say, on that occasion, to the slanderers of genius,

“*Descite justitiam moniti, & non temnere divos.*”

I shall give, therefore, a sketch of the literary transactions to which I allude; as an introduction to those conjectures, that a long and affectionate attachment to Milton has led me to form, concerning the origin of his greatest work.

In 1746, William Lauder, an unfor-

fortunate adventurer, whom a furious temper, considerable learning, and greater indigence converted into an audacious imposter, attacked the originality of the chief English poet. Having asserted, in a periodical miscellany, that Milton had borrowed all his ideas from the juvenile work of Grotius, or from other less known writers of Latin verse, and finding the novelty of his charge attract the attention of the public, he endeavoured to enforce it in a pamphlet, intitled, "An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns," printed in 1750, and addressed to the two universities of Oxford and Cambridge. In the close of this essay he scrupled not to say of Milton: "His industrious concealment of his helps, his peremptory disclaiming all manner of assistance, is highly ungenerous, nay criminal to the last degree, and absolutely unworthy of any man of common probity and honor. By this mean practice, indeed, he has acquired the title of the British Homer, nay, has been preferred to Homer and

Virgil both, and consequently to every other poet, of every age or nation. Cowley, Waller, Denham, Dryden, Prior, Pope, in comparison with Milton, have borne no greater proportion, than that of dwarfs to a giant, who, now he is reduced to his true standard, appears mortal and uninspired; and in ability little superior to the poets above-mentioned, but in honesty and open dealing, the best quality of the human mind, not inferior, perhaps, to the most unlicensed plagiarist that ever wrote."

In a publication, containing *such language*, Lauder was able to engage the great critic and moralist, Samuel Johnson, as his confederate; for the preface and postscript to the Essay, from which the preceding paragraph is cited, are confessedly the composition of that elaborate and nervous writer.

This confederacy, unbecoming as it may at first appear, will, on candid reflection, seem rather a credit than a disgrace to Johnson; for we certainly ought to believe

that the primary motive, which prompted him to the assistance of Lauder, was that true and noble compassion for indigence, which made him through life so generously willing to afford all the aid in his power to literary mendicants; but in rendering justice to that laudable charity, which he constantly exercised to the necessitous, we cannot fail to observe, that his malevolent prejudices against Milton were equally visible on this signal occasion. Had he not been under the influence of such prejudice, could his strong understanding have failed to point out to his associate, what a liberal monitor very justly observed to Lauder, in convicting him of a fraud and falsehood, that allowing his facts to have been true, his inference from them was unfair. Lauder, with an unexampled audacity of imposture, had corrupted the test of the poets, whom he produced as evidence against Milton, by interpolating several verses, which he had taken from a neglected Latin translation of the Paradise Lost. Expecting probably to escape both discovery and suspicion by the

daring novelty of his deception, and the mental dignity of his patron and coadjutor, he exulted in the idea of blasting the laurels of Milton ; but those laurels were proof, indeed, against the furious and repeated flashes of malevolence and hostility. More than one defence of the injured poet appeared ; the first, I believe, was a pamphlet by Mr. Richardson, of Clare Hall, printed in 1747, and entitled *Zoilomastix, or a Vindication of Milton*, consisting of letters inserted in the miscellany, where the charge of Lauder had made its first appearance ; but the complete overthrow of that impostor was accomplished by Dr. Douglas, who, as he advanced in life, became Bishop of Salisbury, and did honor to his station, by his episcopal character. In 1750, he published a Letter, addressed to Lord Bath, with the title of “ *Milton vindicated from the Charge of Plagiarism ;*” a performance that, in many points of view, may be regarded as a real honor to literature—it unites what we find very rarely united in literary contention, great modesty with great

fervor; and magnanimous moderation with the severity of vindictive justice. The author speaks with amiable liberality of Mr. Bowle, in saying, "that gentleman had first collected materials for an answer to Lauder," and, "and has the justest claim to the honor of being the original detector of this ungenerous critic." The writer of this valuable pamphlet, gave also an admonition to Johnson, which breathes the manly spirit of intelligence, of justice, and of candour. "It is to be hoped (he said) nay it is to be expected, that the elegant and nervous writer, whose judicious sentiments and inimitable style point out the author of Lauder's preface and postscript, will no longer allow one to plume himself with his feathers, who appeareth so little to have deserved his assistance which, I am persuaded, would never have been communicated had there been the least suspicion of those facts, which I have been the instrument of conveying to the world in these sheets, a perusal of which will satisfy our critic, who was pleased to submit his book to the judgment of the

two universities, that it has been examined and carefully read at least by some members of the university of Oxford." The defence of Milton, which I have mentioned, by Mr. Richardson, proves also, for the honor of Cambridge, that *her men of letters* were by no means deficient in such regard, as they peculiarly owe to the reputation of the poet who, "flames in the van" of that poetical host, which has contributed to her renown.

When the pamphlet of Dr. Douglas had completely unveiled the most impudent of literary frauds, Johnson, whom his prejudice against Milton could no longer render blind to the unworthiness of Lauder, recoiled from the wretch whom he had too evidently befriended, and finding him as deficient in the truth of facts, as he was in propriety of sentiment, and decency of language, made him address to his antagonist, who had convicted him of some forgeries, an ample avowal of more extensive fraud, and a most humble supplication for pardon. This expiatory address was dictated by Johnson, whose conduct on the occasion

was manly and moral—but it failed to correct his associate, for prejudice against Milton in Lauder arose almost to madness ; in Johnson it amounted only to a degree of malevolence, too commonly produced by political disagreement ; it had induced him to cherish too eagerly a dettractive deception, fabricated to sink an illustrious character, without allowing himself the due exercise of his keen understanding to investigate its falsehood, or to perceive its absurdity. Lauder seems to have hoped, for some time, that a full confession of his offences would restore him to the favor of the public ; for in the year 1751, he ventured to publish an apology, addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, soliciting patronage for his projected edition of the scarce Latin authors, from whom he had accused Milton of borrowing. The chief purpose of so extraordinary an attack on the renown of the poet, appears to have been a desire, prompted by indigence, to interest the public in the re-appearance of those neglected writers, whom he meant to re-publish. In closing

his apology to the Archbishop, he says, with singular confidence:

“ As for the interpolations (for which I am so highly blamed) when passion is subsided, and the minds of men can patiently attend to truth, I promise amply to replace them, with passages equivalent in value that are genuine, that the public may be convinced that it was rather passion and resentment, than a penury of evidence, the twentieth part of which has not as yet been produced, that obliged me to make use of them.”

He printed the collection of Latin poets as he proposed, one volume in 1752, and a second in 1753. The book may be regarded as a literary curiosity, but it seems to have contributed little to the emolument of its miserable editor, who had thoroughly awakened universal indignation; and as Dr. Douglas observed, in a postscript to his pamphlet, reprinted in 1756, “ the curiosity of the public to see any of these poems was at an end; the only thing which had stamped a value upon them, was a suppo-

sition that Milton had thought them worthy his imitation. As therefore it now appeared, by the detection of Lauder's system of forgery, that Milton had not imitated them, it is no wonder that the design of reprinting them should meet with little or no success."

The assertion of this learned and amiable writer, that Milton had not imitated these poets, is not to be understood in a strict and literal sense; for assuredly there are passages in some of them that Milton may be fairly said to have copied, though his obligations to these Latin poets are very far from being considerable; and had they been infinitely greater, the inference drawn by the malevolent reviler of Milton would still have been preposterously severe.

The detected slanderer was soon overwhelmed with the utter contempt he deserved; but, contemptible as he was, the memory of his offences and of his punishment ought to be preserved, not so much for the honor of Milton, as for the general interest of literature, that if the world can produce a

second Lauder, he may not hope for impunity.

Part of his subsequent history, is related in the following words by Dr. Douglas :

“ Grown desperate by his disappointment, this very man, whom but a little before we have seen as abject in the confession of his forgeries, as he had been bold in the contrivance of them, with an inconsistency, equalled only by his imprudence, renewed his attack upon the author of *Paradise Lost*; and in a pamphlet, published for that purpose, acquainted the world, that the true reason which had excited him to contrive his forgery was, because Milton had attacked the character of Charles the First, by interpolating Pamela's prayer from the *Arcadia*, in an edition of the *Icon Basilike*; hoping, no doubt, by this curious key to his conduct, to be received into favor, if not by the friends of truth, at least by the idolaters of the royal martyr—the zeal of this wild party-man against Milton having at the same time extended itself against his biographer,

the very learned Dr. Birch, for no other reason but because he was so candid as to express his disbelief of a tradition unsupported by evidence ”

Were it requisite to give new force to the many proofs of that malignant prejudice against Milton in a late writer, which I have had too frequent occasion to examine and regret, such force might be drawn from the words just cited from Dr. Douglas. That gentleman here informs us, that Lauder directed his intemperate zeal against Dr. Birch, for rejecting the ill-supported story that represented Milton as an impostor, concerned in forging the remarkable prayer of the king. Yet Johnson ungenerously laboured to fix this suspicion of dishonesty on the great character whose life he delineated, by insinuating that Dr. Birch believed the very story, which Lauder reviled him for having candidly rejected. Is it not too evident from this circumstance, that Lauder's intemperate hatred of Milton had in some degree infected his noble coadjutor? though he very justly discarded that impostor, when con-

victed of forgery, after writing for him a supplicatory confession of his fraud, for which he was afterwards censured by the half-frantic offender, who, finding that it procured him no favor from the public, declared it infinitely too general and too abject for the occasion.

The malevolence of Johnson towards the great poet has been represented as a mere fiction of party rage, acrimoniously reviling an illustrious biographer: but instead of being an injurious fiction of that evil spirit, it is a reality universally felt, and sincerely lamented by those lovers of literature, who, being exempt from all party rage themselves would willingly annihilate the influence of that insidious foe to truth and justice in the republic of letters. It should afford us an antidote against the poison of party rage in all literary discussions, to observe, that by indulging it, a very strong and a very devout mind was hurried into the want of clear and moral perception, and of true christian charity, in describing the conduct and scrutinizing the motives, of Milton. It seems as

if the good angel of this extraordinary poet, had determined that his poetical renown should pass (like his virtue and his genius) through trials most wonderfully adapted to give it lustre ; and hence (as imagination at least may please itself in supposing) hence might such enemies be combined against him, as the world, perhaps, never saw before in a similar confederacy. A base artificer of falsehood, and a magnanimous teacher of moral philosophy, united in a wild endeavour to diminish his reputation ; but, like the rash assailants of Jupiter, in the fables of paganism, they only confirmed the pre-eminence they attacked with preposterous temerity. The philosopher, indeed, made an honorable retreat, and no candid mind will severely censure him for an ill-starred alliance, which, however clouded by prejudice, he might originally form in compassion to indigence, and which he certainly ended by rejection of imposture.

The miserable Lauder was punished by events so calamitous, that even those admirers of Milton, who are most offended by

the enormity of the fraud, must wish that penitence and amendment had secured to this unhappy being, who seems to have possessed considerable scholarship, a milder destiny. Finding himself unable to struggle with public odium in this country, he sought an asylum in the West Indies, and there died, an indigent outcast, and a memorable example, how dangerous it is to incur the indignation of mankind, by base devices to blast the reputation of departed genius. ~~-----~~ May his wretched catastrophe preserve the literary world from being dishonored again by artifice so detestable!

I have said, that the collection he published of Latin poets is entitled to some regard as a literary curiosity: and it may here be proper to enumerate the authors comprized in that collection. The first volume contains the *Poemata Sacra* of Andrew Ramsay, from a copy printed at Edinburgh, 1633; and the *Adamus Exul* of Grotius, from the edition of the Hague, 1601. In the second volume we have the *Sarcotis* of Masenius, from the edition of Cologne, 1644,

omitting the fourth and fifth books, which may be found in a copy of the *Sarcotis* printed at Paris, by Barbou, 1771: the first book of *Dæmonomachia*, a poem by Odoricus Valmarana, printed at Vienna in twenty-five books, 1627: *Paradisus Jacobi Catsii*, a celebrated Dutch poet—the *Paradise of Catsius* is a spirited and graceful epithalamium on the nuptials of Adam and Eve, originally written in the native language of the author; this Latin version of it was executed by the learned Barlæus, and first printed in 1643: *Bellum Angelicum*, Auctore Frederico Taubmanno; a poem, consisting of two books, and a fragment of a third, originally printed in 1604.

Lauder, in publishing this collection of curious Latin verse, has occasionally seasoned it with remarks of his own, both in Latin and English—the tenor of which has a great tendency to confirm the apology, with which Johnson excused the implicit and hasty credit that he gave to the gross forgeries of the impostor: “He thought the man too frantic to be fraudulent.” The

language used by Lauder, in the publication I am speaking of, shews indeed that the contemptuous abhorrence, which this unhappy scholar had conceived of Milton, really bordered upon insanity. Without pointing to any particular instances of plagiarism, he bestows on the poet the extraordinary title of the arch felon ; and inserts a singular epigram, written by a servile foreigner, to prove Milton an atheist. Not contented with reviling the great author himself, he extends the virulent attack to his nephew Philips, whom he accuses of having favored, by a suspicious silence, the secret practice of his uncle, in riffling the treasures of others. " Philips (says Lauder) every where in his 'Theatrum Poetarum,' either wholly passes over in silence such authors as Milton was most obliged to, or, if he chances to mention them, does it in the most slight and superficial manner imaginable."

There is some acuteness, and more truth, in this observation concerning Philips, than Lauder was himself aware of. Though

Milton was indeed no plagiarist, and his nephew of course had no thefts to conceal, it is very remarkable that Philips, giving an account of poets in all languages, omits such of their works as were built on subjects resembling those of his uncle. This omission is not only striking in the brief account he gives of the Latin poets collected by Lauder; it extends to some Italian writers, of whom I shall presently have occasion to speak more at large. Let me first observe, in apology for the omissions of Philips, which are too frequent to be considered as accidental, that he probably chose not to enumerate various poems relating to angels, to Adam, and to Paradise, lest ignorance and malice should absurdly consider the mere existence of such poetry as a derogation from the glory of Milton. That Philips had himself no inconsiderable share of poetical taste, and that he was laudably zealous for the honor of his uncle, appears, I think from the following remarks, which I transcribe with pleasure, from his preface to the little book I am speaking of, as they seem

to contain an oblique and graceful compliment to his renowned relation:—"A poetical fancy is much seen in a choice of verse proper to a chosen subject.

"Wit, ingenuity, and learning in verse, even elegance itself, though that comes nearest, are one thing, true native poetry is another, in which there is a certain air and spirit, which, perhaps, the most learned and judicious in other arts do not perfectly apprehend, much less is it attainable by any study or industry."

This certain air and spirit are assuredly most conspicuous in Milton: he was a poet of nature's creation, but one who added to all her endowments every advantage that study could acquire.

By the force and opulence of his own fancy he was exempted from the inclination and the necessity of borrowing and retailing the ideas of other poets; but, rich as he was in his own proper fund, he chose to be perfectly acquainted, not only with the wealth, but even with the poverty of others. He seems to have read, in different languages,

authors of every class ; and I doubt not, but he had perused every poem collected by Lauder, though some of them hardly afford ground enough for a conjecture, that he remembered any passage they contain, in the course of his nobler composition. Johnson in his preface to Lauder's pamphlet, represents the *Adamus Exul* of Grotius as "the first draught, the *prima stamina* of the *Paradise Lost*." The same critic observes, in touching on this subject, in his *Life of Milton*—"Whence he drew the original design has been variously conjectured by men, who cannot bear to think themselves ignorant of that, which, at last, neither diligence nor sagacity can discover. Some find the hint in an Italian tragedy. Voltaire tells a wild, unauthorized story of a farce seen by Milton in Italy, which opened thus: 'Let the rainbow be the fiddle-stick of the fiddle of heaven.'

The critic was perfectly right in relinquishing his former idea concerning *Adamus Exul* of Grotius ; but, in his remark on Voltaire, he shews how dan-

gerous it is to censure any writer for what he says concerning books, which the censorer has no opportunity of examining. Voltaire, indeed, from his predominant passion for ridicule, and from the rash vivacity, that often led him to speak too confidently of various works from a very slight inspection of their contents, is no more to be followed implicitly in points of criticism; than he is on the more important article of religion; but his opinions in literature are generally worth examination, as he possessed no common degree of taste, a perpetual thirst for universal knowledge, and, though not the most intimate, yet, perhaps, the most extensive acquaintance with literary works and literary men that was ever acquired by any individual.

When Voltaire visited England in the early part of his life, and was engaged in soliciting a subscription for his *Henriade*, which first appeared under the title of "The League," he published, in our language, an *Essay on Epic Poetry*, a work which, though written under such a disadvantage,

possesses the peculiar vivacity of this extraordinary writer, and is indeed so curious a specimen of his versatile talents, that although it has been superseded by a French composition of great extent, under the same title, it ought, I think, to have found a place in that signal monument to the name of Voltaire, the edition of his works in ninety-two volumes.

As my reader may be gratified in seeing the English style of this celebrated foreigner, I will transcribe, without abridgment, what he says of Andreini ;

“ Milton, as he was travelling through Italy in his youth, saw at Florence a comedy called *Adamo*, writ by one Andreini, a player, and dedicated to Mary de Medicis, Queen of France. The subject of the play, was the Fall of Man ; the actors, God, the devils, the angels, Adam, Eve, the Serpent, Death, and the seven mortal sins ; that topic, so improper for a drama, but so suitable to the absurd genius of the Italian stage (as it was at that time) was handled in a manner entirely conformable to the ex-

travagance of the design. The scene opens with a chorus of angels, and a cherubim thus speaks for the rest :—‘ Let the rainbow be the fiddle-stick of the fiddle of the heavens! let the planets be the notes of our music! let time beat carefully the measure, and the winds make the sharps, &c.’ Thus the play begins, and every scene rises above the last in profusion of impertinence!

“ Milton pierced through the absurdity of that performance to the hidden majesty of the subject, which, being altogether unfit for the stage, yet might be (for the genius of Milton, and for his only) the foundation of an epic poem.

“ He took from that ridiculous trifle the first hint of the noblest work, which human imagination has ever attempted, and which he executed more than twenty years after.

“ In the like manner, Pythagoras owed the invention of music to the noise of the hammer of a blacksmith; and thus, in our days, Sir Isaac Newton, walking in his garden, had the first thought of his system of

gravitation upon seeing an apple falling from a tree."

It was thus that, in the year 1727, Voltaire then studying in England, and collecting all possible information concerning our great epic poet, accounted for the origin of *Paradise Lost*. Rolli, another foreign student, in epic poetry, who resided at that time in London, and was engaged in translating Milton into Italian verse, published some severe censures, in English, on the English essay of Voltaire, to vindicate both Tasso and Milton from certain strictures of sarcastic raillery, which the volatile Frenchman had lavished upon both. Voltaire, indeed, has fallen himself into the very inconsistency, which he mentions as unaccountable in Dryden; I mean the inconsistency of sometimes praising Milton with such admiration as approaches to idolatry, and sometimes reproving him with such keenness of ridicule as borders on contempt. In the course of this discussion, we may find, perhaps, a mode of accounting for the inconsistency both of Dryden and Voltaire;

let us attend at present to what the latter has said of Andreini!—If the *Adamo* of this author really gave birth to the divine poem of Milton, the Italian dramatist, whatever rank he might hold in his own country, has a singular claim to our attention and regard. Johnson indeed calls the report of Voltaire a wild and unauthorized story; and Rolli asserts, in reply to it, that if Milton saw the Italian drama, it must have been at Milan, as the *Adamo*, in his opinion, was a performance too contemptible to be endured at Florence. “Andreini (says the critic of Italy) was a stroller (*un istrione*) of the worst age of the Italian letters.” Notwithstanding these terms of contempt, which one of his countrymen has bestowed upon Andreini, he appears to me highly worthy of our notice; for (although in uniting, like Shakespeare and Moliere, the two different arts of writing and of acting plays, he discovered not such extraordinary powers as have justly immortalized those idols of the theatre) he was yet endowed with one quality, not only uncommon, but such as

might render him, if I may hazard the expression, the poetical parent of Milton. The quality I mean is, enthusiasm in the highest degree, not only poetical but religious. Even the preface that Andreini prefixed to his *Adamo* may be thought sufficient to have acted like lightning on the inflammable ideas of the English poet, and to have kindled in his mind the blaze of celestial imagination.

I am aware, that in researches like the present, every conjecture may abound in illusion ; the petty circumstances, by which great minds are led to the first conception of great designs, are so various and volatile, that nothing can be more difficult to discover: fancy in particular is of a nature so airy, that the traces of her step are hardly to be discerned ; ideas are so fugitive, that if poets, in their life time, were questioned concerning the manner in which the seeds of considerable productions first arose in their mind, they might not always be able to answer the enquiry ; can it then be possible to succeed in such an enquiry con-

cerning a mighty genius, who has been consigned more than a century to the tomb, especially when, in the records of his life, we can find no positive evidence on the point in question? However trifling the chances it may afford of success, the investigation is assuredly worthy our pursuit; for, as an accomplished critic has said, in speaking of another poet, with his usual felicity of discernment and expression, "the enquiry cannot be void of entertainment whilst Milton is our constant theme: whatever may be the fortune of the chace, we are sure it will lead us through pleasant prospects and a fine country."

It has been frequently remarked, that accident and genius generally conspire in the origin of great performances; and the accidents that give an impulse to fancy are often such as are hardly within the reach of conjecture. Had Ellwood himself not recorded the occurrence, who would have supposed that a few words, which fell from a simple youth in conversation, were the real source of *Paradise Regained*? Yet the

offsprings of imagination, in this point of view, have a striking analogy to the productions of nature. The noble poem just mentioned resembles a rare and valuable tree, not planted with care and forecast, but arising vigorously from a kernel dropt by a rambling bird on a spot of peculiar fertility. We are perfectly assured that Milton owed one of his great poems to the ingenuous question of a young quaker; and Voltaire, as we have seen, has asserted that he was indebted for the other to the fantastic drama of an Italian stroller. It does not appear that Voltaire had any higher authority for his assertion than his own conjecture from a slight inspection of the drama, which he hastily describes; yet it is mere justice to this rapid entertaining writer to declare, that in his conjecture there is great probability, which the English reader, I believe, will be inclined to admit, in proportion as he becomes acquainted with Andreini and his Adamo; but before we examine their merit, and the degree of influence that we may suppose them to have

had on the fancy of Milton, let us contemplate, in one view, all the scattered hints which the great poet has given us concerning the grand project of his life, his design of writing an epic poem.

His first mention of this design occurs in the following verses of his poetical compliment to Manso:

O mihi sic mea sors talem concedat amicum,
 Phœbæos decorasse viros qui tam bene norit,
 Si quando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,
 Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem,
 Aut dicam invictæ sociali fœdere mensæ
 Magnanimos heroes; et O modo spiritus adsit,
 Frangam Saxonicas Britonum sub marte phalanges!

O might so true a friend to me belong,
 So skill'd to grace the votaries of song,
 Should I recall hereafter into rhyme
 The kings and heroes of my native clime,
 Arthur the chief, who even now prepares
 In subterraneous being future wars,
 With all their martial knights to be restor'd,
 Each to his seat around the fed'ral board;
 And, O! if spirit fail me not, disperse
 Our Saxon plund'ers in triumphant verse.

COWPER.

Mr. Warton says, in his comment on this passage, "It is possible that the advice of Manso, the friend of Tasso, might determine our poet to a design of this kind." The conjecture of this respectable critic may appear confirmed by the following circumstance:—In the discourses on Epic Poetry, which are included in the prose works of Tasso, Arthur is repeatedly recommended as a proper hero for a poem. Thus we find that Italy most probably suggested to Milton his first epic idea, which he relinquished; nor is it less probable that his second and more arduous enterprise, which he accomplished, was suggested to him by his perusal of Italian authors. If he saw the *Adamo* of Andreini represented at Milan, we have reason to believe that performance did not immediately inspire him with the project of writing an epic poem on our First Parents; because we find that Arthur kept possession of his fancy after his return to England.

In the following verses of his *Epitaphium Damonis*, composed at that period,

he still shews himself attached to romantic heroes, and to British story :

Dicam et Pandrasidos regnum vetus Inogeniæ
 Brennumque Arviragumque duces priscumque Be-
 linum,
 Et tandem Armoricos Britonum sub lege colonos,
 Tum gravidam Arturo fatali fraude Iogernen,
 Mendaces vultus assumptaque Gorlois ama
 Merlini dolus.

Of Brutus, Dardan chief, my song shall be,
 How with his barks he plough'd the British sea;
 First from Rutupia's tow'ring headland seen,
 And of his consort's reign, fair Inogen;
 Of Brennus and Belinus, brothers bold,
 And of Arviragus; and how of old
 Our hardy sires th' Armorican controll'd;
 And of the wife of Gorlois who, surpriz'd
 By Uther in her husband's form disguis'd,
 (Such was the force of Merlin's art) became
 Pregnant with Arthur of heroic fame :
 These themes I now revolve.

COWPER.

In one of his controversial works, published in 1641, Milton informs us what poetical ideas were then fluctuating in his

mind ; particularly “ what king or knight before the Conquest might be chosen, in whom to lay the pattern of a Christian hero.” This project, of delineating in a hero a model of Christian perfection, was suggested to the English poet, not only by the example, but by the precepts of Tasso, as they are delivered in his critical discourses. The epic designs of Milton were suspended, we know, for many years, by very different pursuits ; and when he escaped from “ the troubled sea of noise and hoarse dispute to the quiet and still air of delightful studies,” Arthur had so far ceased to be his favorite, that he probably exclaimed, in the words of Tasso ;

Taccia Artu quei suoi
Erranti, che di sogni empion le carte.

Arthur no more thy errant knights rehearse,
Who fill, with idle dreams, delusive verse.

For Adam now reigned in his fancy, not immediately as the subject of an epic poem, but as a capital personage in the plan of a

dramatic composition, that instead of being formed on the narrow ground of Grotius, in his *Adamus Exul*, allowed a wider range to the fancy, and included allegorical characters like the *Adamo* of Andreini.

This composition, first printed at Milan in 1613, and again in 1617, resembles the mysteries of our early stage; and is denominated in Italian *Rappresentazione*, a name which the writers of Italy apply to dramas founded on the scripture.—Dr. Pearce has said, in the preface to his review of Milton's text, that he was informed an Italian tragedy existed, entitled *Il Paradiso Perso*, Paradise Lost; but, in a very extensive research, I can discover no such performance. There is indeed, another Italian drama on the subject, which I have not seen, entitled *Adamo Caduto*, tragedia sacra; but this was not printed until 1647, some years after the return of our poet from the continent.* It

* For the benefit of commentators on our divine bard, let me here insert a brief list of such Italian compositions, as may possibly have afforded him some useful hints :

seems very probable that Milton, in his collection of Italian books, had brought the Adamo of Andreini to England; and that the perusal of an author, wild indeed, and abounding in grotesque extravagance, yet

1. Adamo Caduto, tragedia sacra, di Serafino della Sallandra. Cozenza, 1647. Octavo.
2. La Battaglia Celeste tra Michele e Lucifero, di Antonio Alfani, Palermitano. Palermo, 1568. Quarto.
3. Dell Adamo di Giovanni Soranzo, i due primi libri. Genova 1604. Duodecimo.

These little productions on the subject of Milton, are not to be found in the royal library, nor in the princely collection of Lord Spencer, who possesses that remarkable rarity of Italian literature, the *Theseida* of Boccacio; and whose liberal passion for books is ennobled by his politeness and beneficence to men of letters,

The poets of Italy were certainly favorites of Milton; and perhaps his Samson Agonistes was founded on a sacred drama of that country, La Rappresentatione di Sansone, per Alessandro Roselli. Siena, 1616. Quarto. There is probably considerable poetical merit in this piece, as I find two subsequent editions of it recorded in the historians of Italian literature; yet I am unable to say whether Milton is indebted to it or not, as I have never been so fortunate as to find a copy of Roselli's composition. Yet the mention of it here, may be useful to future editors of the English poet.

now and then shining with pure and united rays of fancy and devotion, first gave a new bias to the imagination of the English poet, or, to use the expressive phrase of Voltaire, first revealed to him the *hidden majesty of the subject*. The apostate angels of Andreini, though sometimes hideously and absurdly disgusting, yet occasionally sparkle with such fire as might awaken the emulation of Milton.

I shall not attempt to produce parallel passages from the two poets, because the chief idea that I mean to inculcate is, not that Milton tamely copied the *Adamo* of Andreini, but that his fancy caught fire from that spirited, though irregular and fantastic composition—that it proved in his ardent and fertile mind the seed of *Paradise Lost*;—this is matter of mere conjecture, whose probability can only be felt in examining the *Adamo*—to the lovers of Milton it may prove a source of amusing speculation.

At all events, the majesty of Milton appears to the utmost advantage when he

is fully compared with every writer, whose poetical powers have been exercised on the subject, to which only his genius was equal.

Let me observe, however, for the credit of Andreini, that although he has been contemptuously called a stroller, he had some tincture of classical learning, and considerable piety. He occasionally imitates Virgil, and quotes the fathers. He was born in Florence, 1578, his mother was an actress, highly celebrated for the excellence of her talents, and the purity of her life; she appeared also as an authoress, and printed a volume of letters and essays, to which two great poets of her country, Tasso and Marini, contributed each a sonnet. Her memory was celebrated by her son, who published, at her death, a collection of poems in her praise. Having distinguished himself as a comedian at Milan, he travelled into France, in the train of the famous Mary de Medici, and obtained, as an actor, the favor of Lewis the XIIIth. The biographical work of Count Mazzuchelli on

the writers of Italy, includes an account of Andreini, with a list of his various productions; they amount to the number of thirty, and form a singular medley of comedies and devout poems. His *Adamo* alone seems likely to preserve his name from oblivion; and that indeed can never cease to be regarded as a literary curiosity, while it is believed to have given a fortunate impulse to the fancy of Milton,

If it is highly probable, as I think it will appear to every poetical reader, who peruses the *Adamo*, that Andreini turned the thoughts of Milton from Alfred to Adam, and led him to sketch the first outlines of *Paradise Lost* in various plans of allegorical dramas, it is possible that an Italian writer, less known than Andreini, first threw into the mind of Milton the idea of converting Adam into an epic personage. I have now before me, a literary curiosity, which my accomplished friend, Mr. Walker, to whom the literature of Ireland has many obligations, very kindly sent me, on his return from an excursion to Italy, where it hap-

pened to strike a traveller, whose mind is peculiarly awakened to elegant pursuits. The book I am speaking of is entitled *La Scena Tragica d'Adamo ed Eva, Estratta dalli primi tre capi della Sacra Genesi, e ridotta a significato Morale da Troilo Lancetta, Benacense. Venetia 1644.* This little work is dedicated to Maria Gonzaga, Dutchess of Mantua, and is nothing more than a drama in prose, of the ancient form, entitled a morality, on the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise. The author does not mention Andreini, nor has he any mixture of verse in his composition; but, in his address to the reader, he has the following very remarkable passage; after suggesting that the Mosaic history of Adam and Eve is purely allegorical, and designed as an incentive to virtue, he says, “Una notte sognai, che Moise mi porse gratiosa espositione, e misterioso significato con parole tali apunto:

“Dio fa parte all' huom di se stesso con l' intervento della ragione, e dispone con infallibile sentenza, che signoreggiando

in lui la medesima sopra le sensuali voglie, preservato il pomo del proprio core dalli appetiti disordinati, per guiderdone di giusta obbedienza li trasforma il mondo in Paradiso.—Di questo s'io parlassi, al sicuro formarei heroico poema convenevole a semi-dei.”

“ One night I dreamt that Moses explained to me the mystery, almost in these words :

“ God reveals himself to man by the intervention of reason, and thus infallibly ordains that reason, while she supports her sovereignty over the sensual inclinations in man, and preserves the apple of his heart from licentious appetites, in reward of his just obedience transforms the world into Paradise. Of this were I to speak, assuredly I might form an heroic poem worthy of demi-gods.”

It strikes me as possible that these last words, assigned to Moses in his vision by Troilo Lancetta, might operate on the mind of Milton like the question of Ellwood, and prove, in his prolific fancy, a kind of rich

graft on the idea he derived from Andreini, and the germ of his greatest production.

A sceptical critic, inclined to discountenance this conjecture, might indeed observe, it is more probable that Milton never saw a little volume not published until after his return from Italy, and written by an author so obscure, that his name does not occur in Tiraboschi's elaborate history of Italian literature; nor in the patient Italian chronicler of poets, Quadrio, though he bestows a chapter on early dramatic compositions in prose. But the mind that has once started a conjecture of this nature, must be weak indeed, if it cannot produce new shadows of argument in aid of a favorite hypothesis. Let me therefore be allowed to advance, as a presumptive proof of Milton's having seen the work of Lancetta, that he makes *a similar use of Moses*, and introduces him to speak a prologue in the sketch of his various plans for an allegorical drama. It is indeed possible that Milton might never see the performances either of Lancetta or Andreini—yet con-

jecture has ground enough to conclude very fairly, that he was acquainted with both ; for Andreini wrote a long allegorical drama on Paradise, and we know that the fancy of Milton first began to play with the subject according to that peculiar form of composition. Lancetta treated it also in the shape of a dramatic allegory ; but said, at the same time, under the character of Moses, that the subject might form an incomparable epic poem ; and Milton, quitting his own hasty sketches of allegorical dramas, accomplished a work which answers to that intimation.

After all, I allow that the province of conjecture is the region of shadows ; and as I offer my ideas on this topic rather as phantoms that may amuse a lover of poetical speculation, than as solid proofs to determine a cause of great moment, I am persuaded every good-natured reader will treat them with indulgence : assuredly I shall feel neither anger, nor inclination to contend in their defence, if any severer critic,

“ Irruat, & frustra ferro diverberet umbras.”

In mentioning the imperfect rudiments of *Paradise Lost*, Johnson says very justly, "It is pleasant to see great works in their seminal state, pregnant with latent possibilities of excellence; nor could there be any more delightful entertainment than to trace their gradual growth and expansion and to observe how they are sometimes suddenly advanced by accidental hints, and sometimes slowly improved by steady meditation." Such entertainment would indeed be peculiarly delightful in respect to Milton. It is in some measure beyond our reach, because, if we except his sketches of plans for an allegorical drama, no real evidence is left concerning the origin and progress of his magnificent conception: but supposition is often a pleasant substitute for absolute knowledge; and in the hope that it may prove so in the present case, let me advance in this shadowy research, and after accounting for the first flashes of Milton's subject on his fancy, pursue the vein of conjecture, in considering various ideas

that might influence him in the prosecution of his work.

When Adam engaged the fancy of Milton, however that personage might first be impressed upon it as a subject of verse, many circumstances might conspire to confirm his ascendancy. The work of different arts, which the poet surveyed in his travels had, perhaps, a considerable influence in attaching his imagination to our first parents. He had most probably contemplated them not only in the colors of Michael Angelo, who decorated Rome with his picture of the creation, but in the marble of Bandinelli, who had executed two large statues of Adam and Eve, which, though they were far from satisfying the taste of connoisseurs, might stimulate even by their imperfections the genius of a poet. In recollecting how painting and sculpture had both exercised their respective powers on these hallowed and interesting characters, the muse of Milton might be tempted to contend with the sister arts. I must confess, however,

that Richardson, a fond idolater of these arts and of Milton, is rather inclined to believe that they did not much occupy the attention of the poet, even during his residence in Italy: yet I am persuaded he must have been greatly struck by the works of Michael Angelo, a genius whom he resembled so much in his grand characteristic, mental magnificence! and to whom he was infinitely superior in the attractive excellencies of delicacy and grace. In touching on a point of resemblance between the poet and this pre-eminent artist, we cannot fail to observe the abundance and variety of charms in the poetry of Milton. All the different perfections, which are assigned as characteristics to the most celebrated painters, are united in this marvellous poet. He has the sublime grandeur of Michael Angelo, the chaste simplicity of Raphael, the sweetness of Correggio, and the richness of Rubens. In his Samson we may admire the force of Rembrandt, and in his Comus the grace and gaiety of Albano and Poussin: in short, there is no charm exhibited by painting,

which his poetry has failed to equal, as far as analogy between the different arts can extend. If Milton did not pay much attention in his travels to those works of the great painter, that he had opportunities of surveying (which I cannot think probable) it is certain that his own works afford a most excellent field to exercise and animate the powers of the pencil.* The article in which I apprehend a painter must find it

* The learned, ingenious, enthusiastic Winckelman has advanced, in his most celebrated work, a very different opinion; but the ardour with which this extraordinary man, had studied and idolized the antients, rendered him deplorably presumptuous and precipitate in several of his ideas relating to modern genius, and particularly in what he has asserted of Milton. Some passionate admirers of antiquity seem to lament the fall of paganism, as fatal to poetry, to painting, and to sculpture; but a more liberal and enlightened spirit of criticism may rather believe, what it is very possible, I apprehend, to demonstrate, that Christianity can hardly be more favorable to the purity of morals, than it might be rendered to the perfection of these delightful arts. Milton himself may be regarded as an obvious and complete proof that the position is true as far as poetry is concerned. In what degrees the

most difficult to equal the felicity of the poet is, the delineation of his apostate angels. Here, perhaps, poetry has some important advantage over her sister art; and even poetry herself is considered by austerer critics as unequal to the task. Johnson regarded the book of *Paradise Lost*, which describes the war of Heaven, as fit to be "the favorite of children."—Imagination itself may be depreciated, by the austerity of logic, as a childish faculty, but those who love even its excesses may be allowed to exult in its delights. No reader truly poetical ever perused the sixth book of Milton, without enjoying a kind of transport, which a stern logician might indeed condemn, but which he might also think it more desirable to share. I doubt not, but while Milton was revolving his subject in his mind, he often heard from critical acquaint-

influence of the Christian religion can affect the other two, it may be pleasing, and perhaps useful, to consider in some future composition devoted to their advancement.

ance such remarks as might have induced him, had his imagination been less energetic, to relinquish the angels as intractable beings, ill suited to the sphere of poetry. But if his glowing spirit was ever damped for a moment by suggestions of this nature, he was probably re-animated and encouraged by recollecting his respectable old acquaintance, the poets of Italy. He had not only seen the infernal powers occasionally delineated with great majesty and effect in the Jerusalem of Tasso, and Marini's "Slaughter of the Innocents," but he was probably acquainted with an Italian poem, little known in England, and formed expressly on the conflict of the apostate spirits. The work I allude to is, the *Angeleida* of Erasmo Valvasone, printed at Venice, in 1590. This poet was of a noble family in the Venetian republic; as his health was delicate, he devoted himself to retired study, and cultivated the Muses in his castle of Valvasone. His works are various, and one of his early compositions was honored by the applause of Tasso, His *Angeleida* consists of three

cantos on the War of Heaven, and is singularly terminated by a sonnet, addressed to the triumphant Archangel Michael. Several passages in Valvasone induce me to think that Milton was familiar with his work.— I will only transcribe the verses, in which the Italian poet assigns to the infernal powers the invention of artillery :

Di salnitro, e di zolfo oscura polve
 Chiude altro in ferro cavo ; e poi la tocca
 Dietro col foco, e in foco la risolve :
 Onde fragoso tuon subito scocca :
 Scocca e lampeggia, e una palla volve,
 Al cui scontro ogni duro arde e trabocca :
 Crudel saetta, ch' imitar s'attenta
 L' arme che 'l sommo Dio dal Cielo aventa.

L' Angelo rio, quando a concorrer sorse
 Di saper, di bellezza, e di possanza
 Con l' eterno fattor, perche s'accorse
 Quell' arme non aver, ch' ogni arme avanza,
 L' empio ordigno a compor l' animo torse,
 Che ferir puo del folgore a sembianza :
 E con questo a' di nostri horrido in terra
 Tiranno, arma di folgori ogni guerra.

Valvasone acknowledges, in his preface that he had been censured for having *spoken so materially* (ragionato così materialmente) of angels, who are only spirit. But he defends himself very ably on this point, and mentions with gratitude two excellent critical discourses, written in his vindication by Giovanni Ralli and Ottavio Menini;—there is a third also, according to Quadrio, by Scipione di Manzano, under the name of Olimpo Marcucci, printed at Venice, in 4to, 1594. They all bestow great praise on the author whom they vindicate, who appears to have been a very amiable man, and a poet of considerable powers, though he possessed not the sublimity and the refinement of Milton or Tasso. In his general ideas of poetry he resembled them both; and in his mode of expressing himself, in the preface to his *Angeleida*, he reminds me very strongly of those passages in the prose works of Milton, where he speaks on the hallowed magnificence of the art. They both considered sacred subjects as peculiarly proper for verse; an idea condemned

by Johnson, who sympathised as little with Milton in his poetic as in his political principles. It was by entertaining ideas of poetry, directly contrary to those of his critic, that Milton rendered himself, in true dignity, the first poet of the world. Nor can we think that dignity in any degree impaired, by discovering that many hints might be suggested to him by various poets, in different languages, who had seized either a part or the whole of his subject before him. On the contrary, the more of these we can discover, and the more we compare them with the English bard, the more reason we shall find to exult in the pre-eminence of his poetical powers. Tasso, in his critical discourses, inculcates a very just maxim concerning the originality of epic poets, which is very applicable to Milton.—
“ Nuovo sarà il poema, in cui nuova sarà la testura de' nodi, nuove le solutioni, nuovi gli episodi, che per entro vi sono traposti, quantunque la materia fosse notissima, e dagli altri prima trattata; perche la novità

del poema si considera piuttosto alla forma, che alla materia.”

This great writer illustrates his position, that the novelty of a poem is to be estimated more from its form than its subject, by the example of Alamanni, an epic poet of Italy, who lost the praise he might otherwise have acquired, by copying too fondly, under modern names, the incidents of Homer.—Milton is of all authors undoubtedly one of the most original, both in thought and expression: the language of his greater works is evidently borrowed from no model, but it seems to have great conformity with the precepts which Tasso has delivered in the discourses I have just cited, for the formation of an epic style. Yet in criticism, as in politics, Milton was undoubtedly

“Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.”

He thought on every topic for himself; justly remarking, that “to neglect rules and follow nature, in them that know art and use judgment, is no transgression, but an enriching of art.” This excellent maxim

insured to him the exercise and the independence of his own elevated mind. There is frequent allusion to the works of antiquity in Milton, yet no poet, perhaps who revered the antients with such affectionate enthusiasm, has copied them so little. This was partly owing to the creative opulence of his own genius, and partly to his having fixed on a subject so different from those of Homer and Virgil, that he may be said to have accomplished a revolution in poetry, and to have purified and extended the empire of the epic muse. One of the chief motives that induced his imagination to desert its early favorite Arthur, and attach itself to our first parents, is partly explained in those admirable verses of the ninth book, where the poet mentions the choice of his own subject, contrasted with those of his illustrious predecessors :

Argument

Not less, but more heroic, than the wrath
Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall, or rage
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespous'd,

Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
Perplex'd the Greek, and Cytherea's son.

— — — —
— — This subject for heroic song
Pleas'd me long choosing, and beginning late;
Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deem'd, chief mast'ry to dissect,
With long and tedious havoc, fabled knights,
In battles feign'd; the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung; or to describe races and games,
Or tilting furniture, emblazon'd shields,
Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds,
Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
At joust and torneament; then marshal'd feast
Serv'd up in hall with sewers and seneschals;
The skill of artifice or office mean,
Not that which justly gives heroic name
To person or to poem: me of these
Nor skill'd, nor studious, higher argument
Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
That name.

Milton seems to have given a purer signification than we commonly give to the word hero, and to have thought it might be assigned to any person eminent and attrac-

tive enough to form a principal figure in a great picture. In truth, when we recollect the etymology which a philosopher and a saint have left us of the term, we cannot admire the propriety of devoting it to illustrious homicides. Plato derives the Greek word from others, that imply either eloquence or love; and St. Augustine, from the Grecian name of Juno, or the air, because original heroes were pure departed spirits, supposed to reside in that element. In Milton's idea, the ancient heroes of epic poetry seem to have too much resembled the modern great man, according to the delineation of that character in Fielding's exquisite history of Jonathan Wild the Great. Much as the English poet delighted in the poetry of Homer, he appears to have thought like an American writer of the present age, whose fervent passion for the Muses, is only inferior to his philanthropy, that the Grecian bard, though celebrated as the prince of moralists by Horace, and esteemed a teacher of virtue by St. Basil, has too great a tendency to nourish that sanguinary madness in man-

kind, which has continually made the earth a theatre of carnage. I am afraid that some poets and historians may have been a little accessory to the innumerable massacres, with which men, ambitious of obtaining the title of hero, have desolated the world ; and it is certain, that a severe judge of Homer may with some plausibility, apply to him the reproach that his Agamemnon utters to Achilles :

Αἰεὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἐρίσ τε φίλκ, πολέμοι τε μάχαι τε.

“For all thy pleasure is in strife and blood.”

Yet a lover of the Grecian bard may observe in his defence, that in assigning these words to the leader of his host, he shews the pacific propriety of his own sentiments ; and that, however his verses may have instigated an Alexander to carnage, or prompted the calamitous frequency of war, even this pagan poet, so famous as the describer of battles, detested the objects of his description.

But whatever may be thought of the heathen bard, Milton, to whom a purer re-

igion had given greater purity, and I think greater force of imagination, Milton from a long survey of human nature, had contracted such an abhorrence for the atrocious absurdity of ordinary war, that his feelings in this point, seem to have influenced his epic fancy. He appears to have relinquished common heroes, that he might not cherish the too common characteristic of man—a sanguinary spirit. He aspired to delight the imagination, like Homer, and to produce, at the same time, a much happier effect on the mind. Has he succeeded in this glorious idea? Assuredly he has:—to please is the end of poetry. Homer pleases perhaps more universally than Milton; but the pleasure that the English poet excites, is more exquisite in its nature, and superior in its effect. An eminent painter of France used to say that in reading Homer, he felt his nerves dilated, and he seemed to encrease in stature. Such an ideal effect as Homer, in this example, produced on the body, Milton produces in the spirit. To a reader who thoroughly relishes the two poems on Paradise,

his heart appears to be purified, in proportion to the pleasure he derives from the poet, and his mind to become angelic. Such a taste for Milton is rare, and the reason why it is so, is this :—to form it completely, a reader must possess, in some degree, what was superlatively possessed by the poet, a mixture of two different species of enthusiasm, the poetical and the religious. To relish Homer, it is sufficient to have a passion for excellent verse ; but the reader of Milton, who is only a lover of the Muses, loses half, and certainly the best half, of that transcendent delight which the poems of this divine enthusiast are capable of imparting. A devotional taste is as requisite for the full enjoyment of Milton as a taste for poetry ; and this remark will sufficiently explain the inconsistency so striking in the sentiments of many distinguished writers, who have repeatedly spoken on the great English poet—particularly that inconsistency, which I partly promised to explain in the judgments of Dryden and Voltaire. These very different men had both a passion for verse,

and both strongly felt the poetical powers of Milton; but Dryden perhaps had not much, and Voltaire had certainly not a particle of Milton's religious enthusiasm; hence, instead of being impressed with the sanctity of his subject, they sometimes glanced upon it in a ludicrous point of view.

Hence they sometimes speak of him as the very prince of poets, and sometimes as a misguided genius, who has failed to obtain the rank he aspired to in the poetical world. But neither the caprices of conceit, nor the cold austerity of reason, can reduce the glory of this pre-eminent bard.—It was in an hour propitious to his renown, that he relinquished Arthur and Merlin for Adam and the Angels; and he might say on the occasion, in the words of his admired Petrarch:

*Io benedico il luogo, il tempo, e l'ora
Che si alto mirarò gli occhi miei.*

*I bless the spot, the season, and the hour,
When my presumptuous eyes were fix'd so high.*

To say that his poem wants human in-

terest, is only to prove, that he who finds that defect wants the proper sensibility of man. A work that displays at full length, and in the strongest light, the delicious tranquillity of innocence, the tormenting turbulence of guilt, and the consolatory satisfaction of repentance, has surely abundance of attraction to awaken sympathy. The images and sentiments, that belong to these varying situations, are so suited to our mortal existence, that they cannot cease to interest, while human nature endures. The human heart, indeed, may be too much depraved, and the human mind may be too gloomy, to have a perfect relish for Milton; but, in honor of his poetry, we may observe, that it has a peculiar tendency to delight and to meliorate those characters, in which the seeds of taste and piety have been happily sown by nature. In proportion as the admiration of mankind shall grow more and more valuable from the progressive increase of intelligence, of virtue, and of religion, this incomparable poet will be more affectionately studied, and more universally admired.

Since the first publication of these conjectures, more than one or two eminent authors have treated the same subject; and, each indulging his favorite fancy, they ascribe to different sources Milton's deliberate choice of Adam and of Satan as the characters of his epic poem. Mr. Dunster imagines that choice to have arisen from the poet's early acquaintance with Sylvester's *Dubartas*, "a book which contains (says that respectable critic,) more material *prima stamina* of the *Paradise Lost* than, as I believe, any other book whatever, and my hypothesis is, that it positively laid the first stone of that *monumentum ære perennius!*"

Mr. Turner, in his excellent *History of the Anglo Saxons*, has awakened the attention of our country to the merits of *Cœdmon*, a venerable Anglo Saxon poet, of whose composition, he justly observes, "it is a *Paradise Lost* in rude miniature." The same observation may also be made on various poems, Latin and Italian, and particularly on the *Adamo* of Soranzo, an Italian poem so rarely seen, that when these conjectures

were first printed, I could not find even the name of it in the accurate Tiraboschi's History of Italian Literature; an obliging friend has since favored me with a copy of this rarity. It is a *brief epic* (to use a phrase of Milton) and the printer says, in recommending the poet to his patron "Riconoscera al sicuro in questo commendatissimo autore la forza di un ingegno eccellente, e l'efficacia d' un eloquenza piu che ordinaria." We learn from that elaborate chronicler of all poets, Quadrio, that Soranzo was a noble Venetian. He published according to the same Historian of Poetry, Rime in four parts, a tragedy, called *Il Battista*, a pastoral drama *Il Ballo del Fiore*, a poetical romance, *L' Armidoro*, in forty-two cantos, and *L' Adamo*, in two books. Quadrio notices only one edition of this rare poem, Genova, 1604, in duodecimo. The copy in my possession was printed in Bergamo, 1606, it is a thin quarto, with designs, the first of which represents the angels expelling the demons from heaven, although this Italian precursor of the English poet has been almost sunk into oblivion,

he was probably read in Italy, at the time when Milton visited his noble literary friend of Naples, the Marquis of Villa. Soranzo unfolds his subject in the four following verses:

L' Innocenza perduta, e Adamo io canto,
Che seminó nel mondo con la moglie,
Che fu prima Cagion del nostro pianto,
Affanni, passion, tormenti, e doglie.

In his first book, he describes the envious rage of Satan on contemplating the felicity of our first parents, and his temptation of Eve. In the second, the remorse and shame of the two human offenders in the presence of their God. The poem closes like that of Milton, with their expulsion from Paradise. A few passages from this curious and very scarce little work shall follow the Adamo of Andreini.

The learned and zealous Mr. Todd, in his elaborate edition of Milton, has enumerated many poets of different nations, who have sung the Loss of Paradise, and it is probable that our divine bard had perused

the most remarkable of his predecessors, if not all, who preceded him on that hallowed subject. If they contributed in any degree, to the amplitude and the splendor of his genius, it could only be as rivers impart their tribute to the Ocean. The grandest of those rivers may indeed reflect a considerable portion of the sky, but it is only that expansive and sublime mirror of God, the Ocean itself, that completely represents the omnipotence of its Creator,

“And all the dread magnificence of Heaven.”

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





