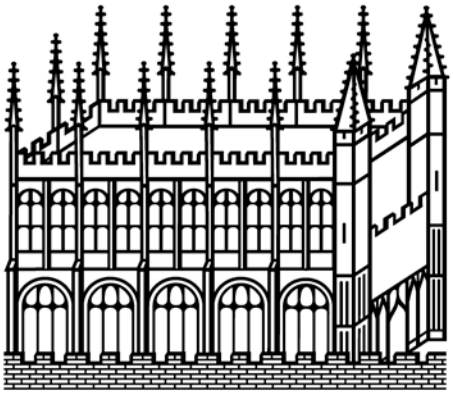

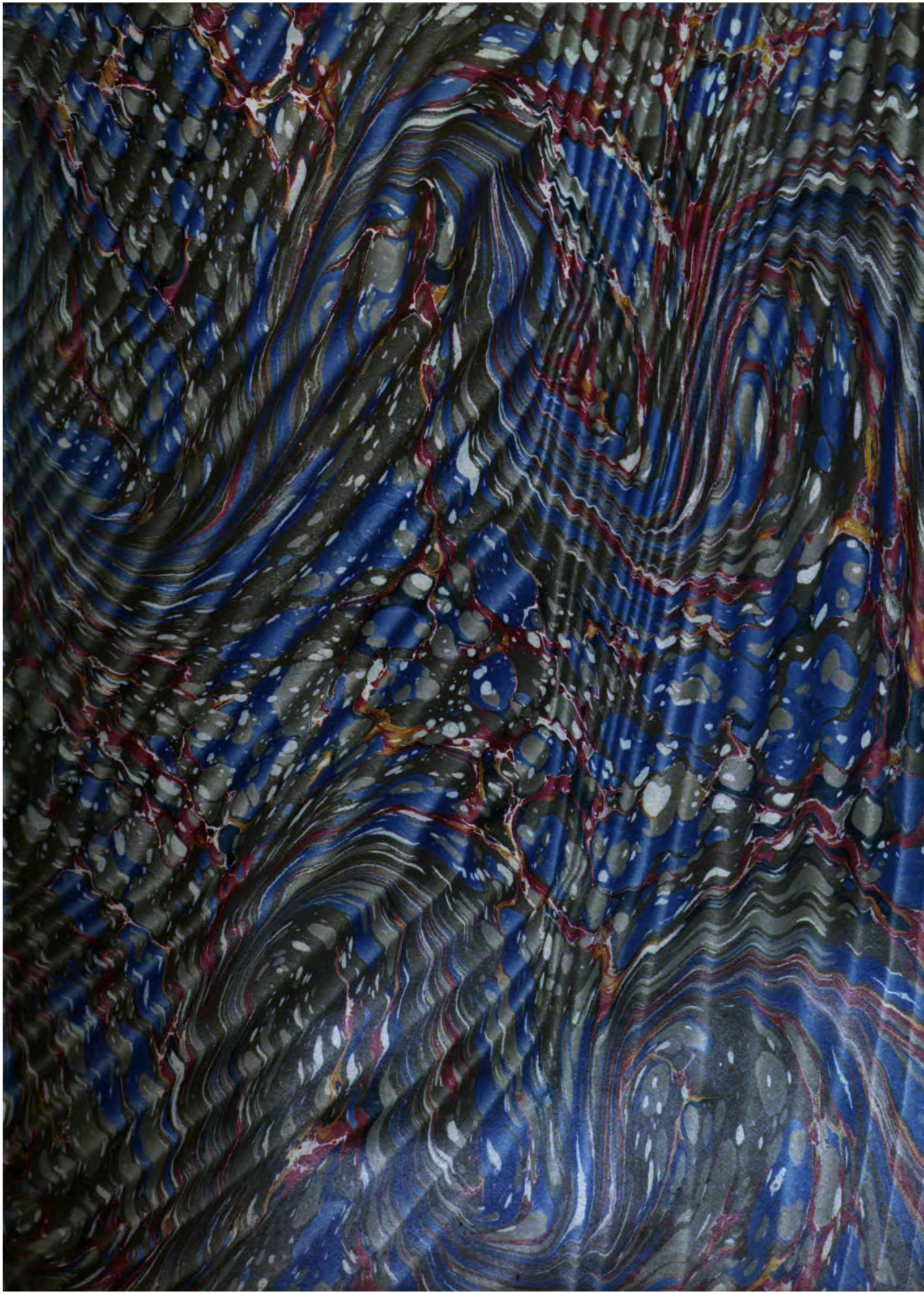

English Reprints.

JOSEPH ADDISON.

Criticism

on

MILTON's

Paradise Lost.

FROM 'THE SPECTATOR.'
31 December, 1711—3 May, 1712.

CAREFULLY EDITED BY
EDWARD ARBER,
Affociate, King's College, London, F.R.G.S., &c.

LARGE PAPER EDITION.

LONDON:
5, QUEEN SQUARE, BLOOMSBURY, W.C.
Ent. Stat. Hall.] 1 October, 1869.

CONTENTS.

JOHN MILTON'S PUBLIC SELF-DEDICATION TO THE COMPOSITION OF A GREAT ENGLISH EPIC.

About Feb. 1642, Milton, æt 32, in his third contribution to the Smectymnuus controversy, *The Reason of Church government urg'd against Prelatry*, to show how little delight he had in that which he believed 'God by his Secretary conscience injcyned' upon him therein; he thus magnificently announces his self-dedication to the magnificent purpose of writing a great Epic in his mother tongue

"I should not chuse this manner of writing wherein knowing my self inferior to my self, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand. And though I shall be foolish in saying more to this purpose, yet since it will be such a folly as wisest men going about to commit, have only confest and so committed, I may trust with more reason, because with more folly to have courteous pardon. For although a Poet soaring in the high region of his fancies with his garland and singing robes about him might without apology speak more of himself then I mean to do, yet for me sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a mortall thing among many readers of no Empyreall conceit, to venture and divulge unusual things of my selfe, I shall petition to the gentler sort, it may not be envy to me. I must say therefore that after I had from my first yeeres by the ceaselesse diligence and care of my father, whom God recompence, bin exercis'd to the tongues, and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers both at home and at the schools, it was found that whether ought was impos'd me by them that had the overlooking, or betak'n to of mine own choise in English, or other tongue, prosing and versing, but chiefly this latter, the stile by certain vital signes it had, was likely to live. But much latelier in the privat Academies of *Italy*, whither I was favor'd to resort, perceiving that some trifles which I had in memory, compos'd 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 lookt for, and other things which I had shifted in scarsity of books and conveniences to patch up amongst them, were receiv'd with written Encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the *Alps*. I began thus farre to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not lesse to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intent study (which I take to be my portion in this life) joyn'd with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die. These thoughts at once possest me, and these other. That if *I* were certain to write as men buy Leases, for three lives and downward, there ought no regard be sooner had, then to Gods glory by the honour 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 Latines, *I* apply'd my selfe to that resolution which *Ariosto* follow'd against the perswasions 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 toylsom vanity, but to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things among mine own Citizens throughout this Iland in the mother dialect. That what the greatest and choycest 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 of being a Christian, might doe for mine: not caring to be once nam'd abroad, though perhaps I could attaine to that, but content with these British Ilands as my world, whose fortune hath hitherto bin, that if the Athenians, as some say, made their small deeds great and renowned by their eloquent writers, *England* hath had her noble atchievments made small by the unskilfull handling of monks and mechanicks.

Time servs 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 her self, though of highest hope, and hardest attempting, whether that Epick form whereof the two poems of *Homer*, and those other two of *Virgil* and *Tasso* are a diffuse, and the book of *Iob* a brief model: or whether the rules of *Aristotle* herein are strictly to be kept, or nature to be follow'd, which in them that know art, and use judgement is no transgression, but an inriching of art. And lastly what King or Knight before the conquest might be chosen in whom to lay the pattern of a Chris-

tian *Heroe*. And as *Tasso* gave to a Prince of *Italy* his chois whether he would command him to write of *Godfreys* expedition against the infidels, or *Belisarius* against the Gothes, or *Charlemain* against the Lombards; if to the instinct of nature and the imboldning of art ought may be trusted, and that there be nothing advers in our climat, or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashnesse from an equal diligence and inclination to present the like offer in our own ancient stories. Or whether those Dramatick constitutions, wherein *Sophocles* and *Euripides* raigne shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a Nation, the Scripture also affords us a divine pastoral Drama in the Song of *Salomon* consisting of two persons and a double *Chorus*, as *Origen* rightly judges. And the Apocalyps of Saint *Iohn* is the majestick image of a high and stately Tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn Scenes and Acts with a sevenfold *Chorus* of halleluja's and harping symphonies: and this my opinion the grave autority of *Pareus* commenting that booke is sufficient to confirm. Or if occasion shall lead to imitat those magnifick Odes and Hymns wherein *Pindarus* and *Callimachus* are in most things worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in their matter most an end faulty: 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 kinds of Lyrick poesy, to be incomparable. These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired guift of God rarely bestow'd, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every Nation: and are of power beside the office of a pulpit, to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of vertu, and publick civility, to allay the pertubations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune, to celebrate in glorious and lofty Hymns the throne and equipage of Gods Almightinesse, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his Church, to sing the 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 Gods true worship. Lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in vertu aimable, or grave, whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is call'd fortune from without, or the wily suttleties and refluxes of mans thoughts from within, all these things with a solid and treatable smoothnesse to paint out and describe. Teaching over the whole book of sanctity and vertu 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 herselfe, unlesse they see her elegantly drest, that whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult, though they be indeed easy and pleasant, they would then appeare 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 liv'd within me ever since I could conceiv my self any thing worth to my Countrie, I return to crave excuse that urgent reason hath pluckt from me by an abortive and foredated discovery. And the accomplishment of them lies not but in a power above mans to promise; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavour'd, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost averre of my self, as farre as life and free leasure will extend, and that the Land had once infranchis'd her self from this impertinent yoke of prelatry, under whose inquisitorious and tyrannical duncery no free and splendid wit can flourish. Neither doe I think it shame to covnant with any knowing reader, that for some few yeers yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be rays'd from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at wast from the pen of some vulgar Amorist, or the trencher fury of a riming parasite, not to be obtain'd by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternall Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallow'd fire of his Altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases: to this must be added industrious and select reading, steddy observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affaires, till which in some measure be compast, at mine own peril and cost I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loath to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them.—*pp.* 37—41. *Ed.* 1641.

Criticism on 'Paradise Lost.'

INTRODUCTION.

IN the ordinary courſe of writing for *The Spectator*, Addiſon determined upon a ſummary expoſition of *Paradiſe Loſt*; intending in ſome four or half a dozen papers, 'to give a general Idea of its Graces and Imperfections.' Though his ſubject was a recent maſterwork, it was then comparatively unknown and certainly inadequately appreciated. Addiſon's purpoſe was to make Milton's great Epic popular. His ſenſe of the indifference and prejudices to be overcome, may be gathered, not only from his, at firſt, guarded and argued praiſe of Milton; his large comparative criticiſm of Homer and Virgil, as if to make Milton the more acceptable; but alſo from his announcement, ſee page 25: where, under the cover of a Commentary on the great and acceptedly-great name of Ariſtotle, he endeavours to get a hearing for the unknown Milton.

In accordance with this intention, at the cloſe of his ſixth paper,† Addiſon announces the termination of the criticiſm on the following Saturday. The eſſays, however, had met with an unexpected ſucceſs. So that their author —the ſubject growing eaſily under his hand—was induced, inſtead of offering ſamples of the Beauties of the poem, in one eſſay, to give a ſeparate paper to thoſe in each of the twelve books of *Paradiſe Loſt*. His caution however prevented him even then, from announcing his freſh purpoſe, until he was well on in his work; entering upon the conſideration of the Fourth Book.§

Theſe conditions of production not only ſhow the tentativeneſs of the criticiſm, but account in part for the treatment of the ſubject. In particular, for the repetition in expanded form in its later eſſays, of arguments, opinions, &c., epitomized in the earlier

† p. 49. § p. 75.

ones. As, for inſtance; the impropriety of Allegory in Epic poetry.

Before the appearance of the laſt of the Milton papers, Volume IV. of the ſecond (firſt collected) edition of *The Spectator*, which included the firſt ten eſſays, had probably been delivered to its ſubſcribers. The text of this edition ſhows conſiderable additions and corrections. So that Addiſon was reviſing the earlier, poſſibly before he had written the later of theſe papers. The eight laſt papers formed part of Volume V. of the ſecond edition, which was publiſhed in the following year, 1713.

Subſequently—in the Author's lifetime—at leaſt one important addition was made to the text†; but the ſcarcity of early editions of *The Spectator* has prevented any further collation. In this way the growing text grew into final form: that in which it has come down to us.

In the preſent work, the text is that of the original iſſue, in folio. The variations and additions of the ſecond edition, in 8vo, are inſerted between [ ]. Words in the firſt, omitted in the ſecond edition are diſtinguiſhed by having * affixed to them. Subſequent additions are inſerted between { }; which alſo contain the Engliſh tranſlations of the mottoes. Theſe have been verified with thoſe in the earlieſt edition in which I have found them, that of 1744. The reader can therefore watch not only the expanſion of the criticiſm, but Addiſon's method of correcting his work.

Theſe papers do not embody the writer's entire mind on the ſubject. Limited as he was in time, to a week; in ſpace, to the three or four columns of the Saturday folio: he was ſtill more limited by the capacity, taſte, and patience of his readers. Addiſon ſhows not a little art in the way in which, meting out his thought with the meaſure of his readers' minds, he endeavours rather to awaken them from indifference than to expreſs his complete obſervations. The whole four months' leſſon

† pp. 54, 55.

in criticiſm muſt be apprehended, as much with reference to thoſe he was teaching to diſcriminate and appreciate, as to the fettered expreſſion of the critic's own opinion.

The accepted ſtandards in Epic poetry were Homer and Virgil. All that Addiſon tries to do is to perſuade his countrymen to put Milton by their ſide.

> Paganiſm could not furniſh out a real Action for a Fable greater than that of the *Iliad* or *Æneid*, and therefore an Heathen could not form a higher Notion of a Poem than one of that kind, which they call an Heroic. Whether *Milton*'s is not of a ſublimer Nature I will not preſume to determine, it is ſufficient that I ſhew there is in *Paradiſe Loſt* all the Greatneſs of Plan, Regularity of Deſign, and maſterly Beauties which we diſcover in *Homer* and *Virgil*.†

Poſſibly it is owing to the then abſence of an equal acknowledgment in England of Dante, Addiſon's conſequent limitation of purpoſe, and the conditions of the production of this criticiſm, that there is no recognition therein of the great Italian Epic poet.

Theſe papers conſtitute a Primer to *Paradiſe Loſt*. Moſt ſkilfully conſtructed both to intereſt and inſtruct, but ſtill a Primer. As the excellent ſetting may the better diſplay the gem of incalculable value: ſo may Addiſon's thought help us to underſtand Milton's 'greatneſs of Soul, which furniſhed him with ſuch glorious Conceptions.' Let us not ſtop at the Primer, but paſs on to a perſonal apprehenſion of the great Engliſh Epic; in the perſuaſion, that in no ſpeech under heaven, is there a poem of more Sublimity, Delight, and Inſtruction than that which Milton was maturing for a quarter of a century: and that there is nothing human more wonderful and at the ſame time more true, than thoſe viſions of 'the whole System of the intellectual World, the *Chaos* and the Creation; Heaven, Earth, and Hell' over which—in the deep darkneſs of his blindneſs—Milton's ſpirit ſo long brooded, and which at length he revealed to Earth in his aſtoniſhing Poem.

† D 45.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

ADDISON'S CRITICISM ON MILTON'S 'PARADISE LOST.'

* Editions not seen.

The various editions of *The Spectator* are omitted, for want of space, because the scarcity of its early issues, prevents an exact list being given. See note on the three earliest issues, at p. 10.

(a) Issues in the Author's lifetime.

I. *As a separate publication.*

1719. London. 1 vol. 12mo. Notes on the Twelve Books of Paradise Lost, Collected from the SPECTATOR. Written by Mr. Addison.

(b) Issues since the Author's death.

I. *As a separate publication.*

1 Aug. 1868. London. 1 vol. 8vo. *English Reprints:* see title at p. 1.

II. *With other works.*

1721. London. 4 vols. 4to. Addison's works [Ed: with Life by T. TICKELL.] The criticism occupies iii. 268–382.

1761. Birmingham. 4 vols. 4to. *Baskerville edition.* Addison's works. The criticism occupies iii. 246–355.

1762. London. 1 vol. 8vo. A familiar Exposition of the Poetical Works of Milton. To which is prefixed Mr. Addison's Criticism on 'Paradise Lost.' With a preface by the Rev. Mr. DODD. The criticism occupies pp. 1—144.

*1790. Edinburgh. 4 vols. 8vo. Papers in the Tatler, Spectator, Guardian, and Freeholder, together with his Treatise on the Christian Religion, &c. *Watt.*

1801. London. 6 vols. 8vo. The Poetical works of John Milton. Ed. by REV. H. J. TODD, M.A. The criticism occupies i. 24–194.

1804. London. 3 vols. 8vo. Selections from the Spectator, Tatler, Guardian, and Freeholder. With a preliminary Essay by ANNA LÆTITIA BARBAULD. The criticism occupies ii. 38—170.

1804. London. 6 vols. 8vo. Addison's works. Collected by Mr. TICKELL. The criticism occupies ii. 83–221.

1811. London. 6 vols. 8vo. Addison's works. With notes by Bp. HURD. The criticism occupies iv. 78–208.

1819. London. 7 vols. 8vo. Second edition of No. 6. The criticism occupies i. 1–153.

1826. London. 6 vols. 8vo. Third edition of No. 6. The criticism, without quotations, occupies ii. vii.–xcviii.

1849. London. 2 vols. 8vo. A new edition of No. 7. The criticism occupies ii. 169—184.

1856. New York. 6 vols. 8vo. Addison's works. Ed. by G. W. GREENE. The criticism occupies vi. 24–168.

1856. London. 6 vols. 8vo. *Bohn's British Classics.* Addison's works. A new edition of No. 9. The criticism occupies iii. 170–283.

Joseph Addison,

CRITICISM

ON

Milton's

PARADISE LOST.

FROM 'THE SPECTATOR.'

Three Poets, *in three diſtant* Ages *born*,
Greece, Italy, *and* England *did adorn.*
The Firſt *in loftineſs of thought Surpaſs'd*,
The Next *in Majeſty; in both the* Laſt.
The force of Nature *cou'd no farther goe*:
To make a Third *ſhe joynd the former two.*

DRYDEN. Under Milton's picture in Tonſon's folio (the fourth) edition of *Paradiſe Loſt, &c.* 1688.

NOTE ON THE EARLY ISSUES OF 'THE SPECTATOR.'

I. **1711.** Mar. 1. No. 1 of *The Spectator* appears 'To be Continued every Day.' It is a foolscap folio, printed in two columns on each of its two pages; advertisements occupying the greater part of the fourth column. The serial continues for ninety-three weeks.

June 1. No. 80 appears.

II. June 2. No. 81 appears.
Sept. 13. No. 169 appears.

III. Sept. 14. No. 170 appears.
Nov. 20. No. 227 has the following announcement. "There is now Printing by Subscription two Volumes of the SPECTATORS
2nd Ed. on a large character in Octavo; the Price of the two Vols. well Bound and Gilt two Guineas. Those who are inclined to Subscribe, are desired to make their first Payments to Jacob Tonson, Bookseller in the Strand; the Books being so near finished, that they will be ready for the Subscribers ator before Christmas next."
Dec. 18. No. 251 appears.

IV. 19. No. 252 appears.
31. No. 262. The papers on Milton are announced
1712.
Jan. 5. No 267. The first paper on *Paradise Lost* appears.
8. No. 269 has this announcement. "The First and Second Volumes of the SPECTATOR in 8vo are now ready to be de-
2nd Ed. livered to the Subscribers, by J. Tonson at Shakespear's Head over-against Catherine-street in the Strand."
Jan. 12. No. 273. The second Milton paper appears.
18. No. 278 advertises "This Day is Published, A very neat Pocket Edition of the SPECTATOR, in 2 Vols. 12°. Printed for
3rd Ed. Sam. Buckley at the Dolphin in Little-Britain, and J. Tonson at Shakespear's Head over-against Catherine-street in the Strand."
Jan. 19—Mar. 8. Eight more papers on *Paradise Lost* appear.

Collected, in second edition, into volumes VII. VI. V.
2nd Ed. There is no announcement in the Original issue, when Vols. III and IV were ready for delivery to the subscribers of the first two, of which they were issued, with an Index, as a completion. Vol. III contains a List of the subscribers to the second edition of these earlier numbers of *The Spectator*. The list contains 402 names, including a large proportion of aristocratic titles; and among other the names of Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Richard
April ? Blackmore, &c. The probability is that as the subscribers would naturally complete their sets, the reprinting would go on a little in arrear of the Original issue, and that these volumes were delivered some time in April. The 4 volumes apparently realized £1,608.
Aug. 1. 10. Annœ, c. 18 comes into force. It imposes a Stamp duty of an Halfpenny upon every Pamphlet or Paper contained in Half a Sheet, and One Shilling upon every printed advertisement.—*Statutes* ix. 617. This stamp is still seen on many copies.
Nov. 11. No. 533 advertises "This Day is Publish'd, A very neat
3rd Ed. Pocket edition of the 3d and 4th Volumes of the *Spectator* in 12°. To which is added a compleat Index to the whole 4 Volumes. &c."
Dec. 6. No 555, Steele announcing, in his own name, the conclusion of the series, states, "I have nothing more to add, but having swelled this Work to 555 Papers, they will be disposed into
2nd Ed. seven Volumes, four of which are already publish'd, and the three others in the Press. It will not be demanded of me why I now leave off, tho' I must own my self obliged to give an Account to the Town of my Time hereafter, since I retire when their Partiality to me is so great, that an Edition of the former Volumes of *Spectators* of above Nine thousand each Book is already sold off, and the Tax on each half Sheet has brought into the Stamp-Office one Week with another above 20*l*. a Week arising from this single Paper, notwithstanding it at first reduced it to less than half the number that was usually Printed before this Tax was laid." He is evidently referring to the original daily issues.

Two years later, *The Spectator* was revived for about six months.

VIII. **1714.** June 18—Dec. 20. Nos 556-635 are published.

SIX HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE PAPERS CONSTITUTE 'THE SPECTATOR.'

NUMB. CCLXII.

The SPECTATOR.

Nulla venenato Littera miſſa Foco eſt. Ov.

{*Satirical Reflexions I avoid.*
Another translation.
My paper flows from no ſatiric vein,
Contains no poiſon, and conveys no pain. Adapted}

Monday, December 31. 1711.

I Think my ſelf highly obliged to the Publick for their kind Acceptance of a Paper which viſits them every Morning, and has in it none of thoſe *Seaſonings* that recommend ſo many of the Writings which are in vogue among us.

As, on the one Side, my Paper has not in it a ſingle Word of News, a Reflection in Politicks, nor a Stroke of Party; ſo, on the other, there are no faſhionable Touches of Infidelity, no obſcene Ideas, no Satyrs upon Prieſthood, Marriage, and the like popular Topicks of Ridicule; no private Scandal, nor any thing that may tend to the Defamation of particular Perſons, Families, or Societies.

There is not one of theſe abovementioned Subjects that would not ſell a very indifferent Paper, could I think of gratifying the Publick by ſuch mean and baſe Methods: But notwithſtanding I have rejected every thing that ſavours of Party, every thing that is looſe and immoral, and every thing that might create Uneaſineſs in the Minds of particular Perſons, I find that the Demand for my Papers has encreaſed every Month ſince their firſt Appearance in the World. This does not perhaps reflect ſo much Honour upon my ſelf, as on my Readers, who give a much greater Attention to Diſcourſes of Virtue and Morality, than ever I expected, or indeed could hope.

When I broke looſe from that great Body of Writers who have employed their Wit and Parts in propagating Vice and Irreligion, I did not queſtion but I ſhould be treated as an odd kind of Fellow that had a Mind to appear ſingular in my Way of Writing: But the general Reception I have found, convinces me that the World is not ſo corrupt as we are apt to imagine; and that if thoſe Men of Parts who have been employed in viciating the Age had endeavoured to rectify and amend it, they needed not to have ſacrificed their good Senſe and Virtue to their Fame and Reputation. No Man is ſo ſunk in Vice and Ignorance, but there are ſtill ſome hidden Seeds of Goodneſs and Knowledge in him; which give him a Reliſh of ſuch Reflections and Speculations as have an Aptneſs in* them* to improve the Mind and to make the Heart better.

I have ſhewn in a former Paper, with how much Care I have avoided all ſuch Thoughts as are looſe, obſcene, or immoral; and I believe my Reader would ſtill think the better of me, if he knew the Pains I am at in qualifying what I write after ſuch a Manner, that nothing may be interpreted as aimed at private Perſons. For this Reaſon when I draw any faulty Character, I conſider all thoſe Perſons to whom the Malice of the World may poſſibly apply it, and take care to daſh it with ſuch particular Circumſtances as may prevent all ſuch ill-natured Applications. If I write any thing on a black Man, I run over in my Mind all the eminent Perſons in the Nation who are of that Complection: When I place an imaginary Name at the Head of a Character, I examine every Syllable and Letter of it, that it may not bear any Reſemblance to one that is real. I know very well the Value which every Man ſets upon his Reputation, and how painful it is to be expoſed to the Mirth and Deriſion of the Publick, and ſhould therefore ſcorn to divert my Reader at the Expence of any private Man.

As I have been thus tender of every particular Perſon's Reputation, ſo I have taken more than ordi-

nary Care not to give Offence to thoſe who appear in the higher Figures of Life, I would not make my ſelf merry even with a Piece of Paſteboard that is inveſted with a publick Character; for which Reaſon I have never glanced upon the late deſigned Proceſſion of his Holineſs and his Attendants, notwithſtanding it might have afforded Matter to many ludicrous Speculations. Among thoſe Advantages which the Publick may reap from this Paper, it is not the leaſt, that it draws Mens Minds off from the Bitterneſs of Party, and furniſhes them with Subjects of Diſcourſe that may be treated without Warmth or Paſſion. This is ſaid to have been the firſt Deſign of thoſe Gentlemen who ſet on Foot the Royal Society; and had then a very good Effect, as it turned many of the greateſt Genius's of that Age to the Diſquiſitions of natural Knowledge, who, if they had engaged in Politicks with the ſame Parts and Application, might have ſet their Country in a Flame. The Air-Pump, the Barometer, the Quadrant, and the like Inventions, were thrown out to thoſe buſy Spirits, as Tubs and Barrels are to a Whale, that he may let the Ship ſail on without Diſturbance, while he diverts himſelf with thoſe innocent Amuſements.

I have been ſo very ſcrupulous in this Particular of not hurting any Man's Reputation, that I have forborn mentioning even ſuch Authors as I could not name with Honour. This I muſt confeſs to have been a Piece of very great Self-denial: For as the Publick reliſhes nothing better than the Ridicule which turns upon a Writer of any Eminence, ſo there is nothing which a Man that has but a very ordinary Talent in Ridicule may execute with greater Eaſe. One might raiſe Laughter for a Quarter of a Year together upon the Works of a Perſon who has publiſhed but a very few Volumes. For which Reaſons I am aſtoniſhed, that thoſe who have appeared againſt this Paper have made ſo very little of it. The Criticiſms which I have hitherto publiſhed, have been made with an Intention rather to diſcover Beauties and Excellencies in the

Writers of my own Time, than to publiſh any of their Faults and Imperfections. In the mean while I ſhould take it for a very great Favour from ſome of my underhand Detractors, if they would break all Meaſures with me ſo far, as to give me a Pretence for examining their Performances with an impartial Eye: Nor ſhall I look upon it as any Breach of Charity to criticiſe the Author, ſo long as I keep clear of the Perſon.

In the mean while, till I am provoked to ſuch Hoſtilities, I ſhall from Time to Time endeavour to do Juſtice to thoſe who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the politer Parts of Learning, and to point out ſuch Beauties in their Works as may have eſcaped the Obſervation of others.

As the firſt Place among our *Engliſh* Poets is due to *Milton*, and as I have drawn more Quotations out of him than from any other, I ſhall enter into a regular Criticiſm upon his *Paradiſe loſt*, which I ſhall publiſh every *Saturday* till I have given my Thoughts upon that Poem. I ſhall not however preſume to impoſe upon others my own particular Judgment on this Author, but only deliver it as my private Opinion. Criticiſm is of a very large Extent, and every particular Maſter in this Art has his favourite Paſſages in an Author, which do not equally ſtrike the beſt Judges. It will be ſufficient for me if I diſcover many Beauties or Imperfections which others have not attended to, and I ſhould be very glad to ſee any of our eminent Writers publiſh their Diſcoveries on the ſame Subject. In ſhort, I would always be underſtood to write my Papers of Criticiſm in the Spirit which *Horace* has expreſſed in thoſe two famous Lines,

——Si quid noviſti rectius iſtis
Candidus imperti, ſi non his utere mecum.

If you have made any better Remarks of your own, communicate them with Candour; if not, make uſe of theſe I preſent you with.

NUMB. CCLXVII.

The SPECTATOR.

Cedite Romani Scriptores, cedite Graii. Propert.
{*Give place, ye* Roman, *and ye* Grecian *Wits.*}

Saturday, January, 5. 1712.

THERE is nothing in Nature ſo irkſom[e] as general Diſcourſes, eſpecially when they turn chiefly upon Words. For this Reaſon I ſhall wave the Diſcuſſion of that Point which was ſtarted ſome Years ſince, Whether *Milton*'s *Paradiſe Loſt* may be called an Heroick Poem? Thoſe who will not give it that Title, may call it (if they pleaſe) a Divine Poem. It will be ſufficient to its Perfection, if it has in it all the Beauties of the higheſt kind of Poetry; and as for thoſe who ſay [alledge] it is not an Heroick Poem, they advance no more to the Diminution of it, than if they ſhould ſay *Adam* is not *Æneas*, nor *Eve Helen.*

I ſhall therefore examine it by the Rules of Epic Poetry, and ſee whether it falls ſhort of the *Iliad* or *Æneid*, in the Beauties which are eſſential to that kind of Writing. The firſt Thing to be conſidered in an Epic Poem, is the Fable, which is perfect or imperfect, according as the Action which it relates is more or leſs ſo. This Action ſhould have three Qualifications in it. Firſt, It ſhould be but one Action. Secondly, It ſhould be an entire Action; and Thirdly, It ſhould be a great Action. To conſider the Action of the *Iliad*, *Æneid*, and *Paradiſe Loſt* in theſe three ſeveral Lights. *Homer* to preſerve the Unity of his Action haſtens into the midſt of things, as *Horace* has obſerved: Had he gone up

to *Leda*'s Egg, or begun much later, even at the Rape of *Helen*, or the Inveſting of *Troy*, it is manifeſt that the Story of the Poem would have been a Series of ſeveral Actions. He therefore opens his Poem with the Diſcord of his Princes, and with great Art interweaves in the ſeveral ſucceeding parts of it, an account of every thing [material] which relates to the Story [them], and had paſſed before that fatal Diſſenſion. After the ſame manner *Æneas* makes his firſt appearance in the *Tyrrhene* Seas, and within ſight of *Italy*, becauſe the Action propoſed to be celebrated was that of his Settling himſelf in *Latium*. But becauſe it was neceſſary for the Reader to know what had happened to him in the taking of *Troy*, and in the preceding parts of his Voyage, *Virgil* makes his Hero relate it by way of Epiſode in the ſecond and third Books of the *Æneid*. The Contents of both which Books come before thoſe of the firſt Book in the Thread of the Story, tho' for preſerving of this Unity of Action, they follow them in the Diſpoſition of the Poem. *Milton*, in Imitation of theſe two great Poets, opens his *Paradiſe Loſt* with an Infernal Council plotting the Fall of Man, which is the Action he propoſed to celebrate; and as for thoſe great Actions, which preceded in point of time, the Battel of the Angels, and the Creation of the World, (which would have entirely deſtroyed the Unity of his Principal Action, had he related them in the ſame Order that they happened) he caſt them into the fifth, ſixth and ſeventh Books, by way of Epiſode to this noble Poem.

Ariſtotle himſelf allows, that *Homer* has nothing to boaſt of as to the Unity of his Fable, tho' at the ſame time that great Critick and Philoſopher endeavours to palliate this Imperfection in the *Greek* Poet, by imputing it in ſome Meaſure to the very Nature of an Epic Poem. Some have been of Opinion, that the *Æneid* labours alſo in this particular, and has Epiſodes which may be looked upon as Excreſcencies rather than as Parts of the Action. On the contrary, the

Poem which we have now under our Conſideration, hath no other Epiſodes than ſuch as naturally ariſe from the Subject, and yet is filled with ſuch a multitude of aſtoniſhing Circumſtances [Incidents], that it gives us at the ſame time a Pleaſure of the greateſt Variety, and of the greateſt Simplicity. {uniform in its Nature, though diverſified in the Execution.}

I muſt obſerve alſo, that as *Virgil* in the Poem which was deſigned to celebrate the Original of the *Roman* Empire, has deſcribed the Birth of its great Rival, the *Carthaginian* Commonwealth. *Milton* with the like Art in his Poem on the Fall of Man, has related the Fall of thoſe Angels who are his profeſſed Enemies. Beſides the many other Beauties in ſuch an Epiſode, it's running Parallel with the great Action of the Poem, hinders it from breaking the Unity ſo much as another Epiſode would have done, that had not ſo great an Affinity with the principal Subject. In ſhort, this is the ſame kind of Beauty which the Criticks admire in the *Spaniſh Fryar*, or the *Double Diſcovery*, where the two different Plots look like Counterparts and Copies of one another.

The ſecond Qualification required in the Action of an Epic Poem is, that it ſhould be an *entire* Action: An Action is entire when it is compleat in all its Parts; or as *Ariſtotle* deſcribes it, when it conſiſts of a Beginning, a Middle, and an End. Nothing ſhould go before it, be intermix'd with it, or follow after it, that is not related to it. As on the contrary, no ſingle Step ſhould be omitted in that juſt and regular Progreſs [Proceſs] which it muſt be ſuppoſed to take from its Original to its Conſummation. Thus we ſee the Anger of *Achilles* in its Birth, its Continuance and Effects; and *Æneas*'s Settlement in *Italy*, carried on through all the Oppoſitions in his way to it both by Sea and Land. The Action in *Milton* excels (I think) both the former in this particular; we ſee it contrived in Hell, executed upon Earth, and puniſhed by Heaven. The parts of it are told in the moſt diſtinct manner,

and grow out of one another in the moſt natural Method.

The third Qualification of an Epic Poem is its *Greatneſs*. The Anger of *Achilles* was of ſuch Conſequence, that it embroiled the Kings of *Greece*, deſtroy'd the Heroes of *Troy*, and engaged all the Gods in Factions. *Æneas*'s Settlement in *Italy* produced the *Cæſars*, and gave Birth to the *Roman* Empire. *Milton*'s Subject was ſtill greater than either of the former; it does not determine the Fate of ſingle Perſons or Nations, but of a whole Species. The united Powers of Hell are joyned together for the Deſtruction of Mankind, which they effected in part, and would have completed, had not Omnipotence it ſelf interpoſed. The principal Actors are Man in his greateſt Perfection, and Woman in her higheſt Beauty. Their Enemies are the fallen Angels: The Meſſiah their Friend, and the Almighty their Protector. In ſhort, every thing that is great in the whole Circle of Being, whether within the Verge of Nature, or out of it, has a proper Part aſſigned it in this noble Poem.

In Poetry, as in Architecture, not only the whole, but the principal Members, and every part of them, ſhould be Great. I will not preſume to ſay, that the Book of Games in the *Æneid*, or that in the *Iliad*, are not of this nature, nor to reprehend *Virgil*'s Simile of a Top, and many other of the ſame nature in the *Iliad*, as liable to any Cenſure in this Particular; but I think we may ſay, without offence to [derogating from] thoſe wonderful Performances, that there is an unqueſtionable Magnificence in every Part of *Paradiſe Loſt*, and indeed a much greater than could have been formed upon any Pagan Syſtem.

But *Ariſtotle*, by the Greatneſs of the Action, does not only mean that it ſhould be great in its Nature, but alſo in its Duration, or in other Words, that it ſhould have a due length in it, as well as what we properly call Greatneſs. The juſt Meaſure of this kind of Magnitude, he explains by the following

Similitude. An Animal, no bigger than a Mite, cannot appear perfect to the Eye, becauſe the Sight takes it in at once, and has only a confuſed Idea of the whole, and not a diſtinct Idea of all its Parts; If on the contrary you ſhould ſuppoſe an Animal of ten thouſand Furlongs in length, the Eye would be ſo filled with a ſingle Part of it, that it could not give the Mind an Idea of the whole. What theſe Animals are to the Eye, a very ſhort or a very long Action would be to the Memory. The firſt would be, as it were, loſt and ſwallowed up by it, and the other difficult to be contained in it. *Homer* and *Virgil* have ſhewn their principal Art in this Particular; the Action of the *Iliad*, and that of the *Æneid*, were in themſelves exceeding ſhort, but are ſo beautifully extended and diverſified by the Intervention [Invention] of *Epiſodes*, and the Machinery of Gods, with the like Poetical Ornaments, that they make up an agreeable Story ſufficient to employ the Memory without overcharging it. *Milton*'s Action is enriched with ſuch a variety of Circumſtances, that I have taken as much Pleaſure in reading the Contents of his Books, as in the beſt invented Story I ever met with. It is poſſible, that the Traditions on which the *Iliad* and *Æneid* were built, had more Circumſtances in them than the Hiſtory of *the Fall of Man*, as it is related in Scripture. Beſides it was eaſier for *Homer* and *Virgil* to daſh the Truth with Fiction, as they were in no danger of offending the Religion of their Country by it. But as for *Milton*, he had not only a very few Circumſtances upon which to raiſe his Poem, but was alſo obliged to proceed with the greateſt Caution in every thing that he added out of his own Invention. And, indeed, notwithſtanding all the Reſtraints he was under, he has filled his Story with ſo many ſurpriſing Incidents, which bear ſo cloſe an Analogy with what is delivered in Holy Writ, that it is capable of pleaſing the moſt delicate Reader, without giving Offence to the moſt ſcrupulous.

The Modern Criticks have collected from ſeveral Hints in the *Iliad* and *Æneid* the Space of Time, which is taken up by the Action of each of thoſe Poems; but as a great Part of *Milton*'s Story was tranſacted in Regions that lie out of the reach of the Sun and the Sphere of Day, it is impoſſible to gratifie the Reader with ſuch a Calculation, which indeed would be more curious than inſtructive; none of the Criticks, either Ancient or Modern, having laid down Rules to circumſcribe the Action of an Epic Poem with any determined number of Years, Days, or Hours.†

This piece of Criticiſm on Milton's Paradiſe Loſt, *ſhall be carried on in following* [Saturdays] *Papers.*

† See p. 151.

NUMB. CCLXXIII.

The SPECTATOR.

———*Notandi ſunt tibi* Mores. Hor.

{*Note well the* Manners.}

Saturday, January 12. 1712.

HAVING examined the Action of *Paradiſe Loſt*, let us in the next place conſider the Actors. Theſe are what *Ariſtotle* means by [This is *Ariſtotle's* Method of conſidering; firſt] the Fable, and [ſecondly] the Manners, or, as we generally call them in *Engliſh*, the Fable and the Characters.

Homer has excelled all the Heroic Poets that ever wrote, in the multitude and variety of his Characters. Every God that is admitted into his Poem, acts a Part which would have been ſuitable to no other Deity. His Princes are as much diſtinguiſhed by their Manners as by their Dominions; and even thoſe among them, whoſe Characters ſeem wholly made up of Courage, differ from one another as to the particular kinds of Courage in which they excell. In ſhort, there is ſcarce a Speech or Action in the *Iliad*, which the Reader may not aſcribe to the Perſon that ſpeaks or acts, without ſeeing his Name at the Head of it.

Homer does not only out-ſhine all other Poets in the Variety, but alſo in the Novelty of his Characters. He has introduced among his *Græcian* Princes a Perſon, who had lived thrice the Age of Man, and converſed with *Theſeus*, *Hercules*, *Polyphemus*, and the firſt Race of Heroes. His principal Actor is the Off-ſpring [Son] of a Goddeſs, not to mention the Son [Off-ſpring] of *Aurora* [other Deities], who has [have] likewiſe a Place in his Poem, and the venerable *Trojan* Prince, who was the Father of ſo many Kings and Heroes. There is in theſe ſeveral Characters of *Homer*,

a certain Dignity as well as Novelty, which adapts them in a more peculiar manner to the Nature of an Heroic Poem. Tho', at the ſame time, to give them the greater variety, he has deſcribed a *Vulcan*, that is, a Buffoon among his Gods, and a *Therſites* among his Mortals.

Virgil falls infinitely ſhort of *Homer* in the Characters of his Poem, both as to their Variety and Novelty. *Æneas* is indeed a perfect Character, but as for *Achates*, tho' he is ſtiled the Hero's Friend, he does nothing in the whole Poem which may deſerve that Title. *Gyas*, *Mneſteus*, *Sergeſtus*, and *Cloanthus*, are all of them Men of the ſame Stamp and Character,

——*Fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthum* [Virg.]

There are indeed ſeveral very natural Incidents in the Part of *Aſcanius*; as that of *Dido* cannot be ſufficiently admired. I do not ſee any thing new or particular in *Turnus*. *Pallas* and *Evander* are [remote] Copies of *Hector* and *Priam*, as *Lauſus* and *Mezentius* are almoſt Parallels to *Pallas* and *Evander*. The Characters of *Niſus* and *Eurialus* are beautiful, but common. [We muſt not forget the Parts of *Sinon*, *Camilla*, and ſome few others, which are beautiful Improvements on the Greek Poet.] In ſhort, there is neither that Variety nor Novelty in the Perſons of the *Æneid*, which we meet with in thoſe of the *Iliad*.

If we look into the Characters of *Milton*, we ſhall find that he has introduced all the Variety that his Poem was capable of receiving. The whole Species of Mankind was in two Perſons at the time to which the Subject of his Poem is confined. We have, however, four diſtinct Characters in theſe two Perſons. We ſee Man and Woman in the higheſt Innocence and Perfection, and in the moſt abject State of Guilt and Infirmity. The two laſt Characters are, indeed, very common and obvious, but the two firſt are not only more magnificent, but more new than any Characters either in *Virgil* or *Homer*, or indeed in the whole Circle of Nature.

Milton was ſo ſenſible of this Defect in the Subject of his Poem, and of the few Characters it would afford

him, that he has brought into it two Actors of a Shadowy and Fictitious Nature, in the Perſons of Sin and Death, by which means he has interwoven in the Body of his Fable a very beautiful and well invented Allegory. But notwithſtanding the Fineneſs of this Allegory may atone for it in ſome meaſure; I cannot think that Perſons of ſuch a Chymerical Exiſtence are proper Actors in an Epic Poem; becauſe there is not that meaſure of Probability annexed to them, which is requiſite in Writings of this kind. [as I ſhall ſhew more at large hereafter.]

Virgil has, indeed, admitted Fame as an Actreſs in the *Æneid*, but the Part ſhe acts is very ſhort, and none of the moſt admired Circumſtances in that Divine Work. We find in Mock-Heroic Poems, particularly in the *Diſpenſary* and the *Lutrin*, ſeveral Allegorical Perſons of this Nature, which are very beautiful in thoſe Compoſitions, and may, perhaps, be uſed as an Argument, that the Authors of them were of Opinion, that * ſuch Characters might have a Place in an Epic Work. For my own part, I ſhould be glad the Reader would think ſo, for the ſake of the Poem I am now examining, and muſt further add, that if ſuch empty unſubſtantial Beings may be ever made uſe of on this occaſion, there were never any more nicely imagined, and employed in more proper Actions, than thoſe of which I am now ſpeaking. †

Another Principal Actor in this Poem is the great Enemy of Mankind. The part of *Ulyſſes* in *Homer*'s *Odyſſey* is very much admired by *Ariſtotle*, as perplexing that Fable with very agreeable Plots and Intricacies, not only by the many Adventures in his Voyage, and the Subtilty of his Behaviour, but by the various Concealments and Diſcoveries of his Perſon in ſeveral parts of that Poem. But the Crafty Being I have now mentioned, makes a much longer Voyage than *Ulyſſes*, puts in practice many more Wiles and Stratagems, and hides himſelf under a greater variety of Shapes and Appearances, all of which are ſeverally detected, to the great Delight and Surprize of the Reader.

† See also pp. 45: 70-72: 133-135.

We may likewiſe obſerve with how much Art the Poet has varied ſeveral Characters of the Perſons that ſpeak in his infernal Aſſembly. On the contrary, how has he repreſented the whole Godhead exerting it ſelf towards Man in its full Benevolence under the Three-fold Diſtinction of a Creator, a Redeemer and a Comforter!

Nor muſt we omit the Perſon of *Raphael*, who amidſt his Tenderneſs and Friendſhip for Man, ſhews ſuch a Dignity and Condeſcention in all his Speech and Behaviour, as are ſuitable to a Superior Nature. [The Angels are indeed as much diverſified in *Milton*, and diſtinguiſhed by their proper Parts, as the Gods are in *Homer* or *Virgil*. The Reader will find nothing aſcribed to *Uriel*, *Gabriel*, *Michael*, or *Raphael*, which is not in a particular manner ſuitable to their reſpective Characters.]

There is another Circumſtance in the principal Actors of the *Iliad* and *Æneid*, which gives a particular [peculiar] Beauty to thoſe two Poems, and was therefore contrived with very great Judgment. I mean the Authors having choſen for their Heroes Perſons who were ſo nearly related to the People for whom they wrote. *Achilles* was a *Greek*, and *Æneas* the remote Founder of *Rome*. By this means their Countrymen (whom they principally propoſed to themſelves for their Readers) were particularly attentive to all the parts of their Story, and ſympathized with their Heroes in all their Adventures. A *Roman* could not but rejoice in the Eſcapes, Succeſſes and Victories of *Æneas*, and be grieved at any Defeats, Misfortunes, or Diſappointments that befel him; as a *Greek* muſt have had the ſame regard for *Achilles*. And it is plain, that each of thoſe Poems have loſt this great Advantage, among thoſe Readers to whom their Heroes are as Strangers, or indifferent Perſons.

Milton's Poem is admirable in this reſpect, ſince it is impoſſible for any of its Readers, whatever Nation, Country or People he may belong to, not to be related to the Perſons who are the principal Actors in it; but what is ſtill infinitely more to its Advantage, the principal Actors in this Poem are not only our

Progenitors, but our Repreſentatives. We have an actual Intereſt in every thing they do, and no leſs than our utmoſt Happineſs or *Miſery* is concerned, and lies at Stake in all their Behaviour.

I ſhall ſubjoyn as a Corollary to the foregoing Remark, an admirable Obſervation out of *Ariſtotle*, which hath been very much miſrepreſented in the Quotations of ſome Modern Criticks. 'If a Man of perfect 'and conſummate Virtue falls into a Misfortune, it 'raiſes our Pity, but not our Terror, becauſe we do 'not fear that it may be our own Caſe, who do 'not reſemble the Suffering Perſon. But as that great Philoſopher adds, 'If we ſee a Man of Virtues mixt 'with Infirmities, fall into any Misfortune, it does not 'only raiſe our Pity but our Terror; becauſe we are afraid 'that the like Misfortunes may happen to our ſelves, 'who reſemble the Character of the Suffering Perſon.

I ſhall take another Opportunity to obſerve, that a Perſon of an abſolute and conſummate Virtue ſhould never be introduced in Tragedy, and ſhall only remark in this Place, that this [the foregoing] Obſervation of *Ariſtotle*, tho' it may be true in other Occaſions, does not hold in this; becauſe in the preſent Caſe, though the Perſons who fall into Misfortune are of the moſt perfect and conſummate Virtue, it is not to be conſidered as what may poſſibly be, but what actually is our own Caſe; ſince we are embark'd with them on the ſame Bottom, and muſt be Partakers of their Happineſs or Miſery.

In this, and ſome other very few Inſtances, *Ariſtotle*'s Rules for Epic Poetry (which he had drawn from his Reflections upon *Homer*) cannot be ſuppoſed to quadrate exactly with the Heroic Poems which have been made ſince his Time; as it is plain his Rules would have been ſtill more perfect, cou'd he have peruſed the *Æneid* which was made ſome hundred Years after his Death.

In my next I ſhall go through other parts of Milton's *Poem; and hope that what I ſhall there advance, as well as what I have already written, will not only ſerve as a Comment upon* Milton, *but upon* Ariſtotle.

NUMB. CCLXXIX.

The SPECTATOR.

Reddere perſonæ ſcit convenientia cuique. Hor

{*He knows what beſt befits each Character.*}

Saturday, January 19. 1712.

WE have already taken a general Survey of the Fable and Characters in *Milton*'s *Paradiſe Loſt:* The Parts which remain to be conſider'd, according to *Ariſtotle*'s Method, are the *Sentiments* and the Language. Before I enter upon the firſt of theſe, I muſt advertiſe my Reader, that it is my Deſign as ſoon as I have finiſhed my general Reflections on theſe four ſeveral Heads, to give particular Inſtances out of the Poem which is now before us of Beauties and Imperfections which may be obſerved under each of them, as alſo of ſuch other Particulars as may not properly fall under any of them. This I thought fit to premiſe, that the Reader may not judge too haſtily of this Piece of Criticiſm, or look upon it as Imperfect, before he has ſeen the whole Extent of it.

The Sentiments in an [all] Epic Poem are the Thoughts and Behaviour which the Author aſcribes to the Perſons whom he introduces, and are *juſt* when they are conformable to the Characters of the ſeveral Perſons. The Sentiments have likewiſe a relation to *Things* as well as *Perſons*, and are then perfect when they are ſuch as are adapted to the Subject. If in either of theſe Caſes the Poet argues, or explains, magnifies or diminiſhes, raiſes Love or Hatred, Pity or Terror, or any other Paſſion, we ought to conſider whether the Sentiments he makes uſe of are proper for theſe [their] Ends. *Homer* is cenſured by the Criticks for

his Defect as to this Particular in ſeveral parts of the *Iliad* and *Odyſſey*, tho' at the ſame time thoſe who have treated this great Poet with Candour, have attributed this Defect to the Times in which he lived. It was the fault of the Age, and not of *Homer*, if there wants that Delicacy in ſome of his Sentiments, which appears in the Works of Men of a much inferior Genius. Beſides, if there are Blemiſhes in any particular Thoughts, there is an infinite Beauty in the greateſt part of them. In ſhort, if there are many Poets who wou'd not have fallen into the mea[n]neſs of ſome of his Sentiments, there are none who cou'd have riſe[n] up to the Greatneſs of others. *Virgil* has excelled all others in the Propriety of his Sentiments. *Milton* ſhines likewiſe very much in this Particular: Nor muſt we omit one Conſideration which adds to his Honour and Reputation. *Homer* and *Virgil* introduced Perſons whoſe Characters are commonly known among Men, and ſuch as are to be met with either in Hiſtory, or in ordinary Converſation. *Milton*'s Characters, moſt of them, lie out of Nature, and were to be formed purely by his own Invention. It ſhews a greater Genius in *Shakeſpear* to have drawn his *Caliban*, than his *Hotſpur* or *Julius Cæſar*: The one was to be ſupplied out of his own Imagination, whereas the other might have been formed upon Tradition, Hiſtory and Obſervation. It was much eaſier therefore for *Homer* to find proper Sentiments for an Aſſembly of *Grecian* Generals, than for *Milton* to diverſifie his Infernal Council with proper Characters, and inſpire them with a variety of Sentiments. The Loves of *Dido* and *Æneas* are only Copies of what has paſſed between other Perſons. *Adam* and *Eve*, before the Fall, are a different Species from that of Mankind, who are deſcended from them; and none but a Poet of the moſt unbounded Invention, and the moſt exquiſite Judgment, cou'd have filled their Converſation and Behaviour with ſuch Beautiful Circumſtances during their State of Innocence.

Nor is it ſufficient for an Epic Poem to be filled with ſuch Thoughts as are *Natural*, unleſs it abound alſo with ſuch as are *Sublime*. *Virgil* in this Particular falls ſhort of *Homer*. He has not indeed ſo many Thoughts that are Low and Vulgar; but at the ſame time has not ſo many Thoughts that are Sublime and Noble. The truth of it is, *Virgil* ſeldom riſes into very aſtoniſhing Sentiments, where he is not fired by the *Iliad*. He every where charms and pleaſes us by the force of his own Genius; but ſeldom elevates and tranſports us where he does not fetch his Hints from *Homer*.

Milton's chief Talent, and indeed his diſtinguiſhing Excellence, lies in the Sublimity of his Thoughts. There are others of the Moderns who rival him in every other part of Poetry; but in the greatneſs of his Sentiments he triumphs over all the Poets both Modern and Ancient, *Homer* only excepted. It is impoſſible for the Imagination of Man to diſtend it ſelf with greater Ideas, than thoſe which he has laid together in his firſt, [ſecond,] and ſixth* [tenth] Book[s]. The ſeventh, which deſcribes the Creation of the World, is likewiſe wonderfully Sublime, tho' not ſo apt to ſtir up Emotion in the Mind of the Reader, nor conſequently ſo perfect in the Epic way of Writing, becauſe it is filled with leſs Action. Let the Reader compare what *Longinus* has obſerved on ſeveral Paſſages of *Homer*, and he will find Parallels for moſt of them in the *Paradiſe Loſt*.

From what has been ſaid we may infer, that as there are two kinds of Sentiments, the Natural and the Sublime, which are always to be purſued in an Heroic Poem, there are alſo two kinds of Thoughts which are carefully to be avoided. The firſt are ſuch as are affected and unnatural; the ſecond ſuch as are mean and vulgar. As for the firſt kind of Thoughts we meet with little or nothing that is like them in *Virgil*: He has none of thoſe little Points and Puerilities that are ſo often to be met with in *Ovid*, none of the

Epigrammatick Turns of *Lucan*, none of thoſe ſwelling Sentiments which are ſo frequent[ly] in *Statius* and *Claudian*, none of thoſe mixed Embelliſhments of *Taſſo*. Everything is juſt and natural. His Sentiments ſhew that he had a perfect Inſight into Human Nature, and that he knew every thing which was the moſt proper to affect it. *I remember but one Line in him which has been objected againſt, by the Criticks, as a point of Wit. It is in his ninth Book, where *Juno* ſpeaking of the *Trojans*, how they ſurvived the Ruins of their City, expreſſes her ſelf in the following Words;

Num capti potuere capi, num incenſa cremarunt
Pergama?———

Were the Trojans *taken even after they were Captives, or did Troy burn even when it was in Flames?*

Mr. *Dryden* has in ſome Places, which I may hereafter take notice of, miſrepreſented *Virgil*'s way of thinking as to this Particular, in the Tranſlation he has given us of the *Æneid*. I do not remember that *Homer* any where falls into the Faults above mentioned, which were indeed the falſe Refinements of later Ages. *Milton*, it muſt be confeſt, has ſometimes erred in this Reſpect, as I ſhall ſhew more at large in another Paper; tho' conſidering how all the Poets of the Age in which he writ, were infected with this wrong way of thinking, he is rather to be admired that he did not give more into it, than that he did ſometimes comply with that [the] vicious Taſte which prevails ſo much among Modern Writers.

But ſince ſeveral Thoughts may be natural which are low and groveling, an Epic Poet ſhould not only avoid ſuch Sentiments as are unnatural or affected, but alſo ſuch as are low and vulgar. *Homer* has opened a great Field of Raillery to Men of more Delicacy than Greatneſs of Genius, by the Homelineſs of ſome of his Sentiments. But, as I have before ſaid, theſe

* From 'I remember' to '*Flames?*' omitted in second edition.

are rather to be imputed to the Simplicity of the Age in which he lived, to which I may alſo add, of that which he deſcribed, than to any Imperfection in that Divine Poet. *Zoilus*, among the Ancients, and Monſieur *Perrault*, among the Moderns, puſhed their Ridicule very far upon him, on account of ſome ſuch Sentiments. There is no Blemiſh to be obſerved in *Virgil* under this Head, and but very few in *Milton*.

I ſhall give but one Inſtance of this Impropriety of Sentiments in *Homer*, and at the ſame time compare it with an Inſtance of the ſame nature, both in *Virgil* and *Milton*. Sentiments which raiſe Laughter, can very ſeldom be admitted with any decency into an Heroic Poem, whoſe Buſineſs it* is to excite Paſſions of a much nobler Nature. *Homer*, however, in his Characters of *Vulcan* and *Therſites*, in his Story of *Mars* and *Venus*, in his Behaviour of *Irus*, and in other Paſſages, has been obſerved to have lapſed into the Burleſque Character, and to have departed from that ſerious Air which ſeems eſſential to the Magnificence of an Epic Poem. I remember but one Laugh in the whole *Æneid*, which riſes in the Fifth Book upon *Monætes*, where he is repreſented as thrown overboard, and drying himſelf upon a Rock. But this Piece of Mirth is ſo well timed, that the ſevereſt Critick can have nothing to ſay againſt it, for it is in the Book of Games and Diverſions, where the Reader's Mind may be ſuppoſed to be ſufficiently relaxed for ſuch an Entertainment. The only Piece of Pleaſantry in *Paradiſe Loſt*, is where the Evil Spirits are deſcribed as rallying the Angels upon the Succeſs of their new invented Artillery. This Paſſage I look upon to be the ſilleſt [moſt exceptionable] in the whole Poem, as being nothing elſe but a ſtring of Punns, and thoſe too very indifferent ones.

———Satan beheld their Plight,
And to his Mates thus in deriſion call'd.
O Friends, why come not on theſe Victors proud!

E'er while they fierce were coming, and when we,
To entertain them fair with open Front,
And Breaſt, (what could we more) propounded terms
Of Compoſition, ſtraight they chang'd their Minds,
Flew off, *and into ſtrange Vagaries fell,*
As they would dance, yet for a Dance they ſeem'd
Somewhat extravagant, and wild, perhaps
For Joy of offer'd Peace; but I ſuppoſe
If our Propoſals once again were heard,
We ſhould compel them to a quick Reſult.
To whom thus Belial *in like gameſome mood.*
Leader, the Terms we ſent, were Terms of weight,
Of hard Contents, *and full of force urg'd home,*
Such as we might perceive amus'd them all,
And ſtumbled *many; who receives them right,*
Had need, from Head to Foot, well underſtand;
Not underſtood, *this Gift they have beſides,*
They ſhew us when our Foes walk not upright.
Thus they among themſelves in pleaſant vein
Stood ſcoffing———

NUMB. CCLXXXV.

The SPECTATOR.

Ne quicunque Deus, quicunque adhibebitur heros,
Regali conſpectus in auro nuper & oſtro,
Migret in Obſcuras humili ſermone tabernas:
Aut dum vitat humum, nubes & inania captet. Hor.

{*But then they did not wrong themſelves ſo much,*
To make a God, a Hero, or a King
(*Stript of his golden Crown, and purple Robe*)
Deſcend to a Mechanick Dialect;
Nor (*to avoid ſuch Meanneſs*) *ſoaring high,*
With empty Sound, and airy Notions, fly.
Roſcommon.}

Saturday, January 26. 1712.

HAVING already treated of the Fable, the Characters, and Sentiments in the *Paradiſe Loſt*, we are in the laſt place to conſider the *Language*; and as the learned World is very much divided upon *Milton* as to this Point, I hope they will excuſe me if I appear particular in any of my Opinions, and encline to thoſe who judge the moſt advantagiouſly of the Author.

It is requiſite that the Language of an Heroic Poem ſhould be both Perſpicuous and Sublime. In proportion as either of theſe two Qualities are wanting, the Language is imperfect. Perſpicuity is the firſt and moſt neceſſary Qualification; inſomuch, that a good-natured Reader ſometimes overlooks a little Slip even in the Grammar or Syntax, where it is impoſſible for him to miſtake the Poet's Senſe. Of this kind is that Paſſage in *Milton*, wherein he ſpeaks of *Satan*.

———*God and his Son except,*
Created thing nought valu'd he nor ſhunn'd.

And that in which he deſcribes *Adam* and *Eve.*

Adam *the goodlieſt Man of Men ſince born*
His Sons, the faireſt of her Daughters Eve.

It is plain, that in the former of theſe Paſſages, according to the natural Syntax, the Divine Perſons mentioned in the firſt Line are repreſented as created Beings; and that in the other, *Adam* and *Eve* are confounded with their Sons and Daughters. Such little Blemiſhes as theſe, when the Thought is great and natural, we ſhould, with *Horace*, impute to a pardonable Inadvertency, or to the Weakneſs of Human Nature, which cannot attend to each minute Particular, and give the laſt finiſhing to every Circumſtance in ſo long a Work. The Ancient Criticks therefore, who were acted by a Spirit of Candour, rather than that of Cavilling, invented certain figures of Speech, on purpoſe to palliate little Errors of this nature in the Writings of thoſe Authors, who had ſo many greater Beauties to atone for them.

If Clearneſs and Perſpicuity were only to be conſulted, the Poet would have nothing elſe to do but to cloath his Thoughts in the moſt plain and natural Expreſſions. But, ſince it often happens, that the moſt obvious Phraſes, and thoſe which are uſed in ordinary Converſation, become too familiar to the Ear, and contract a kind of Meanneſs by paſſing through the Mouths of the Vulgar, a Poet ſhould take particular care to guard himſelf againſt Idiomatick ways of ſpeaking. *Ovid* and *Lucan* have many Poorneſſes of Expreſſion upon this account, as taking up with the firſt Phraſes that offered, without putting themſelves to the trouble of looking after ſuch as would not only have been natural, but alſo elevated and ſublime. *Milton* has but few Failings in this kind, of which,

however, you may ſee an Inſtance or two [meet with ſome Inſtances, as] in the following Paſſages.

Embrio's and Idiots, Eremites and Fryars
White, Black, *and* Grey, *with all their* Trumpery,
Here Pilgrims roam———
————*Awhile Diſcourſe they hold,*
No fear leſt Dinner cool; *when thus began*
Our Author———
Who of all Ages to ſucceed, but feeling
The Evil on him brought by me, will curſe
My Head, ill fare our Anceſtor impure,
For this we may thank *Adam*——

The great Maſters in Compoſition know very well that many an elegant Phraſe becomes improper for a Poet or an Orator, when it has been debaſed by common uſe. For this reaſon the Works of Ancient Authors, which are written in dead Languages, have a great Advantage over thoſe which are written in Languages that are now ſpoken. Were there any mean Phraſes or Idioms in *Virgil* and *Homer*, they would not ſhock the Ear of the moſt delicate Modern Reader, ſo much as they would have done that of an old *Greek* or *Roman*, becauſe we never hear them pronounced in our Streets, or in ordinary Converſation.

It is not therefore ſufficient, that the Language of an Epic Poem be Perſpicuous, unleſs it be alſo Sublime. To this end it ought to deviate from the common Forms and ordinary Phraſes of Speech. The Judgment of a Poet very much diſcovers it ſelf in ſhunning the common Roads of Expreſſion, without falling into ſuch ways of Speech as may ſeem ſtiff and unnatural; he muſt not ſwell into a falſe Sublime, by endeavouring to avoid the other Extream. Among the *Greeks*, *Eſchylus*, and ſometimes *Sophocles*, were guilty of this Fault; among the *Latins*, *Claudian* and *Statius*; and among our own Countrymen, *Shakeſpear* and *Lee*. In theſe Authors the Affectation of Greatneſs often hurts the Perſpicuity of the Stile, as in

many others the Endeavour after Perſpicuity prejudices its Greatneſs.

Ariſtotle has obſerved, that the Idiomatick Stile may be avoided, and the Sublime formed, by the following Methods. Firſt, by the uſe of Metaphors, like thoſe of *Milton.*

Imparadis'd *in one anothers Arms,*
——And in his Hand a Reed
Stood waving tipt *with Fire;——*
The graſſie Clods now calv'd.——

In theſe and ſeveral [innumerable] other Inſtances, the Metaphors are very bold but beautiful; I muſt however obſerve, that the Metaphors are not thick ſown in *Milton*, which always favours too much of Wit; that they never claſh with one another, which as *Ariſtotle* obſerves, turns a Sentence into a kind of an Enigma or Riddle; and that he ſeldom makes uſe of them where the proper and natural Words will do as well.

Another way of raiſing the Language, and giving it a Poetical Turn, is to make uſe of the Idioms of other Tongues. *Virgil* is full of the *Greek* Forms of Speech, which the Criticks call *Helleniſms*, as *Horace* in his Odes abounds with them much more than *Virgil.* I need not mention the ſeveral Dialects which *Homer* has made uſe of for this end. *Milton*, in conformity with the Practice of the Ancient Poets, and with *Ariſtotle*'s Rule has infuſed a great many *Latiniſms*, as well as *Græciſms*, [and ſometimes *Hebraiſms*,] into the Language of his Poem; as towards the Beginning of it.

Nor *did they* not *perceive the evil plight*
In which they were, or *the fierce Pains* not *feel.*
[*Yet to their Gen'ral's Voice they ſoon obey'd.*]
——— Who ſhall tempt with wandring Feet
The dark unbottom'd Infinite Abyſs,
And through the palpable Obſcure *find out his way,*

His uncouth way, or ſpread his airy Flight
Upborn with indefatigable Wings
Over the vaſt Abrupt!——
[————*So both aſcend*
In the Viſions of God—— B. 2.]

Under this Head may be reckoned the placing the Adjective after the Subſtantive, the tranſpoſition of Words, the turning the Adjective into a Subſtantive, with ſeveral other Foreign Modes of Speech, which this Poet has naturalized to give his Verſe the greater Sound, and throw it out of Proſe.

The third Method mentioned by *Ariſtotle*, is that which [what] agrees with the Genius of the *Greek* Language more than with that of any other Tongue, and is therefore more uſed by *Homer* than by any other Poet. I mean the lengthning of a Phraſe by the Addition of Words, which may either be inſerted or omitted, as alſo by the extending or contracting of particular Words by the Inſertion or Omiſſion of certain Syllables. *Milton* has put in practice this Method of raiſing his Language, as far as the nature of our Tongue will permit, as in the Paſſage above-mentioned, *Eremite*, [for] what is Hermit[e], in common Diſcourſe. If you obſerve the Meaſure of his Verſe, he has with great Judgment ſuppreſſed a Syllable in ſeveral Words, and ſhortned thoſe of two Syllables into one, by which Method, beſides the abovementioned Advantage, he has given a greater Variety to his Numbers. But this Practice is more particularly remarkable in the Names of Perſons and of Countries, as *Beëlzebub*, *Heſſebon*, and in many other Particulars, wherein he has either changed the Name, or made uſe of that which is not the moſt commonly known, that he might the better deviate from the Language of the Vulgar.

The ſame Reaſon recommended to him ſeveral old Words, which alſo makes his Poem appear the more venerable, and gives it a greater Air of Antiquity.

I muſt likewiſe take notice, that there are in *Milton*

ſeveral Words of his own Coining, as *Cerberean*, *miſcreated*, *Hell-doom'd*, *Embryon* Atoms, and many others. If the Reader is offended at this Liberty in our *Engliſh* Poet, I would recommend him to a Diſcourſe in *Plutarch*, which ſhews us how frequently *Homer* has made uſe of the ſame Liberty.

Milton, by the above-mentioned Helps, and by the choice of the nobleſt Words and Phraſes which our Tongue wou'd afford him, has carried our Language to a greater height than any of the *Engliſh* Poets have ever done before or after him, and made the Sublimity of his Stile equal to that of his Sentiments.

I have been the more particular in theſe Obſervations of *Milton*'s Stile, becauſe it is that part of him in which he appears the moſt ſingular. The Remarks I have here made upon the Practice of other Poets, with my Obſervations out of *Ariſtotle*, will perhaps alleviate the Prejudice which ſome have taken to his Poem upon this Account; tho' after all, I muſt confeſs, that I think his Stile, tho' admirable in general, is in ſome places too much ſtiffened and obſcured by the frequent uſe of thoſe Methods, which *Ariſtotle* has preſcribed for the raiſing of it.

This Redundancy of thoſe ſeveral ways of Speech which *Ariſtotle* calls *foreign Language*, and with which *Milton* has ſo very much enriched, and in ſome places darkned the Language of his Poem, is [was] the more proper for his uſe, becauſe his Poem is written in Blank Verſe. Rhyme, without any other Aſſiſtance, throws the Language off from Proſe, and very often makes an indifferent Phraſe paſs unregarded; but where the Verſe is not built upon Rhymes, there Pomp of Sound, and Energy of Expreſſion, are indiſpenſably neceſſary to ſupport the Stile, and keep it from falling into the Flatneſs of Proſe.

Thoſe who have not a Taſte for this Elevation of Stile, and are apt to ridicule a Poet when he departs from the common Forms of Expreſſion, would do well to ſee how *Ariſtotle* has treated an ancient Author,

called *Euclid*, for his inſipid Mirth upon this Occaſion. Mr. *Dryden* uſed to call this ſort of Men his Proſe-Criticks.

I ſhould, under this Head of the Language, conſider *Milton*'s Numbers, in which he has made uſe of ſeveral Eliſions, that are not cuſtomary among other *Engliſh* Poets, as may be particularly obſerved in his cutting off the Letter *Y*, when it precedes a Vowel. This, and ſome other Innovations in the Meaſure of his Verſe, has varied his Numbers in ſuch a manner, as makes them incapable of ſatiating the Ear and cloying the Reader, which the ſame uniform Meaſure would certainly have done, and which the perpetual Returns of Rhyme never fail to do in long Narrative Poems. I ſhall cloſe theſe Reflections upon the Language of *Paradiſe Loſt*, with obſerving that *Milton* has copied after *Homer*, rather than *Virgil*, in the length of his Periods, the Copiouſneſs of his Phraſes, and the running of his Verſes into one another.

NUMB. CCXCI.

The SPECTATOR.

——Ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendor maculis, quas aut Incuria fudit,
Aut Humana parum cavit Natura—— Hor.

{But in a Poem elegantly writ,
I will not quarrel with a ſlight Miſtake,
Such as our Nature's frailty may excuſe.
Roſcommon.}

Saturday, February 2. 1712.

I Have now conſider'd *Milton*'s *Paradiſe Loſt* under thoſe four great Heads of the Fable, the Characters, the Sentiments, and the Language; and have ſhewn that he excels, in general, under each of theſe Heads. I hope that I have made ſeveral Diſcoveries that [which] may appear new, even to thoſe who are verſed in Critical Learning. Were I indeed to chuſe my Readers, by whoſe Judgment I would ſtand or fall, they ſhould not be ſuch as are acquainted only with the *French* and *Italian* Criticks, but alſo with the Ancient and Moderns who have written in either of the learned Languages. Above all, I would have them well verſed in the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets, without which a Man very often fancies that he underſtands a Critick, when in reality he does not comprehend his Meaning.

It is in Criticiſm, as in all other Sciences and Speculations; one who brings with him any implicit Notions and Obſervations which he has made in his reading of the Poets, will find his own Reflections methodized and explained, and perhaps ſeveral little Hints that had paſſed in his Mind, perfected and im-

proved in the Works of a good Critick; whereas one who has not theſe previous Lights, is very often an utter Stranger to what he reads, and apt to put a wrong Interpretation upon it.

Nor is it ſufficient, that a Man who ſets up for a Judge in Criticiſm, ſhould have peruſed the Authors above-mentioned, unleſs he has alſo a clear and Logical Head. Without this Talent he is perpetually puzzled and perplexed amidſt his own Blunders, miſtakes the Senſe of thoſe he would confute, or if he chances to think right, does not know how to convey his Thoughts to another with Clearneſs and Perſpicuity. *Ariſtotle*, who was the beſt Critick, was alſo one of the beſt Logicians that ever appeared in the World.

Mr. *Lock*'s Eſſay on Human Underſtanding would be thought a very odd Book for a Man to make himſelf Maſter of, who would get a Reputation by Critical Writings; though at the ſame time it is very certain, that an Author who has not learn'd the Art of diſtinguiſhing between Words and Things, and of ranging his Thoughts, and ſetting them in proper Lights, whatever Notions he may have, will loſe himſelf in Confuſion and Obſcurity. I might further obſerve, that there is not a *Greek* or *Latin* Critick, who has not ſhewn, even in the ſtile of his Criticiſms, that he was a Maſter of all the Elegance and Delicacy of his Native Tongue.

The truth of it is, there is nothing more abſurd, than for a Man to ſet up for a Critick, without a good Inſight into all the Parts of Learning; whereas many of thoſe who have endeavoured to ſignalize themſelves by Works of this Nature among our *Engliſh* Writers, are not only defective in the above-mentioned Particulars, but plainly diſcover by the Phraſes which they make uſe of, and by their confuſed way of thinking, that they are not acquainted with the moſt common and ordinary Syſtems of Arts and Sciences. A few general Rules extracted out of the *French* Authors, with a certain Cant of Words, has ſometimes ſet up an Illiterate heavy Writer for a moſt judicious and formidable Critick.

One great Mark, by which you may diſcover a Critick who has neither Taſte nor Learning, is this, that he ſeldom ventures to praiſe any Paſſage in an Author which has not been before received and applauded by the Publick, and that his Criticiſm turns wholly upon little Faults and Errors. This part of a Critick is ſo very eaſie to ſucceed in, that we find every ordinary Reader, upon the publiſhing of a new Poem, has Wit and Ill-nature enough to turn ſeveral Paſſages of it into Ridicule, and very often in the right Place. This Mr. *Dryden* has very agreeably remarked in thoſe two celebrated Lines,

Errors, like Straws, upon the Surface flow;
He who would ſearch for Pearls muſt dive below.

A true Critick ought to dwell rather upon Excellencies than Imperfections, to diſcover the concealed Beauties of a Writer, and communicate to the World ſuch things as are worth their Obſervation. The moſt exquiſite Words and fineſt Strokes of an Author are thoſe which very often appear the moſt doubtful and exceptionable, to a Man who wants a Reliſh for polite Learning; and they are theſe, which a ſower [ſoure] undiſtinguiſhing Critick generally attacks with the greateſt Violence. *Tully* obſerves, that it is very eaſie to brand or fix a Mark upon what he calls *Verbum ardens*, or, as it may be rendered into *Engliſh*, a *glowing bold Expreſſion*, and to turn it into Ridicule by a cold ill-natured Criticiſm. A little Wit is equally capable of expoſing a Beauty, and of aggravating a Fault; and though ſuch a Treatment of an Author naturally produces Indignation in the Mind of an underſtanding Reader, it has however its effect among the generality of thoſe whoſe Hands it falls into, the Rabble of Mankind being very apt to think that every thing which is laughed at with any mixture of Wit, is ridiculous in it ſelf.

Such a Mirth as this, is always unſeaſonable in a Critick, as it rather prejudices the Reader than con-

vinces him, and is capable of making a Beauty, as well as a Blemiſh, the Subject of Deriſion. A Man, who cannot write with Wit on a proper Subject, is dull and ſtupid, but one who ſhews it in an improper place, is as impertinent and abſurd. Beſides, a Man who has the Gift of Ridicule is very* apt to find Fault with any thing that gives him an Opportunity of exerting his beloved Talent, and very often cenſures a Paſſage, not becauſe there is any Fault in it, but becauſe he can be merry upon it. Such kinds of Pleaſantry are very unfair and diſingenuous in Works of Criticiſm, in which the greateſt Maſters, both Ancient and Modern, have alwaysappeared with a ſerious and inſtructive Air.

As I intend in my next Paper to ſhew the Defects in *Milton's Paradiſe Loſt*, I thought fit to premiſe theſe few Particulars, to the End that the Reader may know I enter upon it, as on a very ungrateful Work, and that I ſhall juſt point at the Imperfections, without endeavouring to enflame them with Ridicule. I muſt alſo obſerve with *Longinus*, that the Productions of a great Genius, with many Lapſes and Inadvertencies, are infinitely preferable to the Works of an inferior kind of Author, which are ſcrupulouſly exact and conformable to all the Rules of correct Writing.

I ſhall conclude my Paper with a Story out of *Boccalini*, which ſufficiently ſhews us the Opinion that Judicious Author entertained of the ſort of Criticks I have been here mentioning. A famous Critick, ſays he, having gathered together all the Faults of an Eminent Poet, made a Preſent of them to *Apollo*, who received them very graciouſly, and reſolved to make the Author a ſuitable Return for the Trouble he had been at in collecting them. In order to this, he ſet before him a Sack of Wheat, as it had been juſt threſhed out of the Sheaf. He then bid him pick out the Chaff from among the Corn, and lay it aſide by it ſelf. The Critick applied himſelf to the Task with great Induſtry and Pleaſure, and after having made the due Separation, was preſented by *Apollo* with the Chaff for his Pains.

NUMB. CCXCVII.

The SPECTATOR.

——————velut ſi
Egregio inſperſos reprendas corpore nævos. Hor.
{*As perfect beauties often have a Mole.* Creech.}

Saturday, February 9, 1712.

AFTER what I have ſaid in my laſt *Saturday*'s Paper, I ſhall enter on the Subject of this without farther Preface, and remark the ſeveral Defects which appear in the Fable, the Characters, the Sentiments, and the Language of *Milton*'s *Paradiſe Loſt*; not doubting but the Reader will pardon me, if I alledge at the ſame time whatever may be ſaid for the Extenuation of ſuch Defects. The firſt Imperfection which I ſhall obſerve in the Fable is, that the Event of it is unhappy.

The Fable of every Poem is according to *Ariſtotle*'s Diviſion either *Simple* or *Implex*. It is called Simple when there is no change of Fortune in it, Implex when the Fortune of the chief Actor changes from Bad to Good, or from Good to Bad. The Implex Fable is thought the moſt perfect; I ſuppoſe, becauſe it is moſt proper to ſtir up the Paſſions of the Reader, and to ſurprize him with a greater variety of Accidents.

The Implex Fable is therefore of two kinds: In the firſt the chief Actor makes his way through a long Series of Dangers and Difficulties, 'till he arrives at Honour and Proſperity, as we ſee in the Stories [Story] of *Ulyſſes* and **Æneas*.* In the ſecond, the chief Actor in the Poem falls from ſome eminent pitch of Honour and Proſperity, into Miſery and Diſgrace. Thus we ſee *Adam* and *Eve* ſinking from a State of Innocence and Happineſs, into the moſt abject Condition of Sin and Sorrow.

The moſt taking Tragedies among the Ancients were built on this laſt ſort of Implex Fable, particularly the Tragedy of *OEdipus*, which proceeds upon a Story, if we may believe *Ariſtotle*, the moſt proper for Tragedy that could be invented by the Wit of Man. I have taken ſome pains in a former Paper to ſhew, that this kind of Implex Fable, wherein the Event is unhappy, is more apt to affect an Audience than that of the firſt kind; notwithſtanding many excellent Pieces among the Ancients, as well as moſt of thoſe which have been written of late Years in our own Country, are raiſed upon contrary Plans. I muſt however own, that I think this kind of Fable, which is the moſt perfect in Tragedy, is not ſo proper for an Heroic Poem.

Milton ſeems to have been ſenſible of this Imperfection in his Fable, and has therefore endeavoured to cure it by ſeveral Expedients; particularly by the Mortification which the great Adverſary of Mankind meets with upon his return to the Aſſembly of Infernal Spirits, as it is deſcribed in that [a] beautiful Paſſage of the tenth Book; and likewiſe by the Viſion, wherein *Adam* at the cloſe of the Poem ſees his Off-ſpring triumphing over his great Enemy, and himſelf reſtored to a happier *Paradiſe* than that from which he fell.†

There is another Objection againſt *Milton*'s Fable, which is indeed almoſt the ſame with the former, tho' placed in a different Light, namely, That the Hero in the *Paradiſe Loſt* is unſucceſsful, and by no means a Match for his Enemies. This gave occaſion to Mr. *Dryden*'s Reflection, that the Devil was in reality *Milton*'s Hero. I think I have obviated this Objection in my firſt Paper. The *Paradiſe Loſt* is an Epic, [or a] Narrative Poem, he that looks for an Hero in it, ſearches for that which *Milton* never intended; but if he will needs fix the Name of an Hero upon any Perſon in it, 'tis certainly the *Meſſiah* who

† See p. 147.

is the Hero, both in the Principal Action, and in the [chief] Epiſode[s]. Paganiſm could not furniſh out a real Action for a Fable greater than that of the *Iliad* or *Æneid*, and therefore an Heathen could not form a higher Notion of a Poem than one of that kind, which they call an Heroic. Whether *Milton*'s is not of a greater [ſublimer] Nature I will not preſume to determine, it is ſufficient that I ſhew there is in the *Paradiſe Loſt* all the Greatneſs of Plan, Regularity of Deſign, and maſterly Beauties which we diſcover in *Homer* and *Virgil*.

I muſt in the next Place obſerve, that *Milton* has interwoven in the Texture of his Fable ſome Particulars which do not ſeem to have Probability enough for an Epic Poem, particularly in the Actions which he aſcribes to *Sin* and *Death*, and the Picture which he draws of the *Lymbo of Vanity*, with other Paſſages in the ſecond Book. Such Allegories rather ſavour of the Spirit of *Spencer* and *Arioſto*, than of *Homer* and *Virgil*.

In the Structure of his Poem he has likewiſe admitted of too many Digreſſions. It is finely obſerved by *Ariſtotle*, that the Author of an Heroic Poem ſhould ſeldom ſpeak himſelf, but throw as much of his Work as he can into the Mouths of thoſe who are his Principal Actors. *Ariſtotle* has given no Reaſon for this Precept; but I preſume it is becauſe the Mind of the Reader is more awed and elevated when he hears *Æneas* or *Achilles* ſpeak, than when *Virgil* or *Homer* talk in their own Perſons. Beſides that aſſuming the Character of an eminent Man is apt to fire the Imagination, and raiſe the Ideas of the Author. *Tully* tells us, mentioning his Dialogue of Old Age, in which *Cato* is the chief Speaker, that upon a Review of it he was agreeably impoſed upon, and fancied that it was *Cato*, and not he himſelf, who utter'd his Thoughts on that Subject.

If the Reader would be at the pains to ſee how the Story of the *Iliad* and the *Æneid* is delivered by thoſe

Perſons who act in it, he will be ſurprized to find how little in either of theſe Poems proceeds from the Authors. *Milton* has, in the general diſpoſition of his Fable, very finely obſerved this great Rule; inſomuch, that there is ſcarce a third part of it which comes from the Poet; the reſt is ſpoken either by *Adam* and *Eve*, or by ſome Good or Evil Spirit who is engaged either in their Deſtruction or Defence.

From what has been here obſerved it appears, that Digreſſions are by no means to be allowed of in an Epic Poem. If the Poet, even in the ordinary courſe of his Narration, ſhould ſpeak as little as poſſible, he ſhould certainly never let his Narration ſleep for the ſake of any Reflections of his own. I have often obſerved, with a ſecret Admiration, that the longeſt Reflection in the *Æneid* is in that Paſſage of the Tenth Book, where *Turnus* is repreſent[ed] as dreſſing himſelf in the Spoils of *Pallas*, whom he had ſlain. *Virgil* here lets his Fable ſtand ſtill for the ſake of the following Remark. *How is the Mind of Man ignorant of Futurity, and unable to bear proſperous Fortune with Moderation? The time will come when* Turnus *ſhall wiſh that he had left the Body of* Pallas *untouched, and curſe the Day on which he dreſſed himſelf in theſe Spoils.* As the great Event of the *Æneid*, and the Death of *Turnus*, whom *Æneas* ſlew becauſe he ſaw him adorned with the Spoils of *Pallas*, turns upon this Incident, *Virgil* went out of his way to make this Reflection upon it, without which ſo ſmall a Circumſtance might poſſibly have ſlipped out of his Reader's Memory. *Lucan*, who was an Injudicious Poet, lets drop his Story very frequently for the ſake of [his] unneceſſary Digreſſions or his *Diverticula*, as *Scaliger* calls them. If he gives us an Account of the Prodigies which preceded the Civil War, he declaims upon the Occaſion, and ſhews how much happier it would be for Man, if he did not feel his Evil Fortune before it comes to paſs, and ſuffer not only by its real Weight, but by the Apprehenſion of it. *Milton*'s Complaint

of his Blindneſs, his Panegyrick on Marriage, his Reflections on *Adam* and *Eve*'s going naked, of the Angels eating, and ſeveral other Paſſages in his Poem, are liable to the ſame Exception, tho' I muſt confeſs there is ſo great a Beauty in theſe very Digreſſions, that I would not wiſh them out of his Poem.

I have, in a former Paper, ſpoken of the *Characters* of *Milton's Paradiſe Loſt*, and declared my Opinion, as to the Allegorical Perſons who are introduced in it.

If we look into the *Sentiments*, I think they are ſometimes defective under the following Heads; Firſt, as there are ſome [ſeveral] of them too much pointed, and ſome that degenerate even into Punns. Of this laſt kind I am afraid is that in the Firſt Book, where, ſpeaking of the Pigmies, he calls them.

——— *The ſmall* Infantry
Warr'd on by Cranes ———

Another Blemiſh that appears in ſome of his Thoughts, is his frequent Alluſion to Heathen Fables, which are not certainly of a Piece with the Divine Subject, of which he treats. I do not find fault with theſe Alluſions, where the Poet himſelf repreſents them as fabulous, as he does in ſome Places, but where he mentions them as Truths and Matters of Fact. The Limits of my Paper will not give me leave to be particular in Inſtances of this kind: The Reader will eaſily remark them in his Peruſal of the Poem.

A Third Fault in his Sentiments, is an unneceſſary Oſtentation of Learning, which likewiſe occurs very frequently. It is certain that both *Homer* and *Virgil* were Maſters of all the Learning of their Times, but it ſhews it ſelf in their Works after an indirect and concealed manner. *Milton* ſeems ambitious of letting us know, by his Excurſions on Free-will and Predeſtination, and his many Glances upon Hiſtory, Aſtronomy, Geography and the like, as well as by the Terms and Phraſes he ſometimes makes uſe of, that he was acquainted with the whole Circle of Arts and Sciences.

If, in the laſt place, we conſider the *Language* of this great Poet, we muſt allow what I have hinted in a former Paper, that it is [often] too much laboured, and ſometimes obſcured by old Words, Tranſpoſitions, and Foreign Idioms. *Seneca*'s Objection to the Stile of a great Author, *Riget ejus oratio, nihil in eâ placidum, nihil lene*, is what many Criticks make to *Milton*: as I cannot wholly refute it, ſo I have already apologized for it in another Paper; to which I may further add, that *Milton*'s Sentiments and Ideas were ſo wonderfully Sublime, that it would have been impoſſible for him to have repreſented them in their full Strength and Beauty, without having recourſe to theſe Foreign Aſſiſtances. Our Language ſunk under him, and was unequal to that greatneſs of Soul, which furniſhed him with ſuch glorious Conceptions.

A ſecond Fault in his Language is, that he often affects a kind of Jingle in his Words, as in the following Paſſages, and many others:

And brought into the World *a* World *of woe.*
————*Begirt th' Almighty Throne*
Beſeeching *or* beſieging————
This tempted *our* attempt———
At one Slight bound *high overleapt all* bound.

I know there are Figures of this kind of Speech, that ſome of the greateſt Ancients have been guilty of it, and that *Ariſtotle* himſelf has given it a place in his Rhetorick among the Beauties of that Art. But as it is in itſelf poor and trifling, it is I think at preſent univerſally exploded by all the Maſters of polite Writing.

The laſt Fault which I ſhall take notice of in *Milton*'s Stile, is the frequent uſe of what the Learned call *Technical Words*, or Terms of Art. It is one of the great Beauties of Poetry, to make hard things intelligible, and to deliver what is abſtruſe of it ſelf in ſuch eaſy Language as may be underſtood by ordinary Readers: Beſides that the Knowledge of a Poet ſhould rather ſeem born with him, or inſpired, than

drawn from Books and Syſtems. I have often wondered how Mr. *Dryden* could tranſlate a Paſſage of *Virgil* after the following manner.

Tack to the Larboard, and ſtand off to Sea,
Veer Star-board Sea and Land.———

Milton makes uſe of *Larboard* in the ſame manner. When he is upon Building he mentions *Doric Pillars*, *Pilaſters*, *Cornice*, *Freeze*, *Architrave.* When he talks of Heavenly Bodies, you meet with *Eccliptick*, and *Eccentric*, the *trepidation*, *Stars dropping from the Zenith*, *Rays culminating from the Equator.* To which might be added many Inſtances of the like kind in ſeveral other Arts and Sciences.

I ſhall in my next *Saturday*'s* Paper [Papers] give an Account of the many particular Beauties in *Milton*, which would have been too long to inſert under thoſe general Heads I have already treated of, and with which I intend to conclude this Piece of Criticiſm.

NUMB. CCCIII.

The SPECTATOR.

———*volet hæc ſub luce videri,*
Judicis argutum quæ non formidat acumen. Hor.

{——*Some chooſe the cleareſt Light,*
And boldly challenge the moſt piercing Eye. Roſcommon.}

Saturday, February 16. 1712.

I Have ſeen in the Works of a Modern Philoſopher, a Map of the Spots in the Sun. My laſt Paper of the Faults and Blemiſhes in *Milton*'s *Paradiſe Loſt*, may be conſider'd as a Piece of the ſame Nature. To purſue the Alluſion: As it is obſerv'd, that among the bright parts of the Luminous Body above-mentioned, there are ſome which glow more intenſely, and dart a ſtronger Light than others; ſo, notwithſtanding I have already ſhewn *Milton*'s Poem to be very beautiful in general, I ſhall now proceed to take notice of ſuch Beauties as appear to me more exquiſite than the reſt. *Milton* has propoſed the Subject of his Poem in the following Verſes.

Of Mans firſt diſobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whoſe mortal taſte
Brought Death into the World and all our woe,
With loſs of Eden, *'till one greater Man*
Reſtore us, and regain the bliſsful Seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muſe———

Theſe Lines are perhaps as plain, ſimple and unadorned as any of the whole Poem, in which particular the Author has conform'd himſelf to the Example of *Homer*, and the Precept of *Horace*.

His Invocation to a Work which turns in a great

meaſure upon the Creation of the World, is very properly made to the Muſe who inſpired *Moſes* in thoſe Books from whence our Author drew his Subject, and to the Holy Spirit who is therein repreſented as operating after a particular manner in the firſt Production of Nature. This whole Exordium riſes very happily into noble Language and Sentiment, as I think the Tranſition to the Fable is exquiſitely beautiful and natural.

The nine Days Aſtoniſhment, in which the Angels lay entranced after their dreadful Overthrow and Fall from Heaven, before they could recover either the uſe of Thought or Speech, is a noble *Circumſtance*, and very finely imagined. The Diviſion of Hell into Seas of Fire, and into firm Ground impregnated with the ſame furious Element, with that particular Circumſtance of the excluſion of *Hope* from thoſe Infernal Regions, are Inſtances of the ſame great and fruitful Invention.

The Thoughts in the firſt Speech and Deſcription of *Satan*, who is one of the principal Actors in this Poem, are wonderfully proper to give us a full Idea of him. His Pride, Envy and Revenge, Obſtinacy, Deſpair and Impenitence, are all of them very artfully interwoven. In ſhort, his firſt Speech is a Complication of all thoſe Paſſions which diſcover themſelves ſeparately in ſeveral other of his Speeches in the Poem. The whole part of this great Enemy of Mankind is filled with ſuch Incidents as are very apt to raiſe and terrifie the Reader's Imagination. Of this Nature, in the Book now before us, is his being the firſt that awakens out of the general Trance, with his Poſture on the burning Lake, his riſing from it, and the Deſcription of his Shield and Spear.

Thus Satan *talking to his neareſt mate,*
With head up-lift above the wave, and eyes
That ſparkling blazed, his other parts beſide
Prone on the Flood, extended long and large,

Lay floating many a rood———
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty Stature; on each hand the flames
Driv'n backward ſlope their pointing Spires, and row'l'd
In Billows, leave i' th' midſt a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he ſteers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky Air
That felt unuſual weight———
———His pondrous Shield
Ethereal temper, maſſie, large and round
Behind him caſt; the broad circumference
Hung on his Shoulders like the Moon, whoſe orb
Thro' Optick Glaſs the Tuſcan *Artiſts view*
At Ev'ning from the top of Feſole,
Or in Valdarno *to deſcry new Lands,*
Rivers or Mountains on her ſpotty Globe.
His Spear to equal which the talleſt pine
Hewn on Norwegian *Hills to be the Maſt*
Of ſome great Ammiral, were but a wand
He walk'd with to ſupport uneaſie Steps
Over the burning Marl——

To which we may add his Call to the fallen Angels that lay plunged and ſtupified in the Sea of Fire.

He call'd ſo loud, that all the hollow deep
Of Hell reſounded———

But there is no ſingle Paſſage in the whole Poem worked up to a greater Sublimity, than that wherein his Perſon is deſcribed in thoſe celebrated Lines:

——— He, above the reſt
In ſhape and geſture proudly eminent
Stood like a Tower, &c.

His Sentiments are every way anſwerable to his Character, and are* ſuitable to a created Being of the moſt exalted and moſt depraved Nature. Such is that in which he takes Poſſeſſion of his Place of Torments.

———Hail Horrors, hail
Infernal World, and thou profoundeſt Hell
Receive thy new Poſſeſſor, one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.

And afterwards,

———Here at leaſt
We ſhall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign ſecure, and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition, tho' in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell, than ſerve in Heaven.

Amidſt thoſe Impieties which this Enraged Spirit utters in other Places of the Poem, the Author has taken care to introduce none that is not big with abſurdity, and incapable of ſhocking a Religious Reader; his Words, as the Poet himſelf deſcribes them, bearing only a *ſemblance of Worth, not Subſtance.* He is likewiſe with great Art deſcribed as owning his Adverſary to be Almighty. Whatever perverſe Interpretation he puts on the Juſtice, Mercy, and other Attributes of the Supreme Being, he frequently confeſſes his Omnipotence, that being the Perfection he was forced to allow him, and the only Conſideration which could ſupport his Pride under the Shame of his Defeat.

Nor muſt I here omit that beautiful Circumſtance of his burſting out in Tears, upon his Survey of thoſe innumerable Spirits whom he had involved in the ſame Guilt and Ruin with himſelf.

———He now prepared
To ſpeak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half encloſe him round
With all his Peers: Attention held them mute.
Thrice he aſſay'd, and thrice in ſpite of Scorn
Tears ſuch as Angels weep, burſt forth———

The Catalogue of Evil Spirits has a great deal [Abundance] of Learning in it, and a very agreeable turn of

Poetry, which riſes in a great meaſure from his deſcribing the Places where they were worſhipped, by thoſe beautiful marks of Rivers ſo frequent among the Ancient Poets. The Author had doubtleſs in this place *Homer*'s Catalogue of Ships, and *Virgil*'s Liſt of Warriors in his view. The Characters of *Moloch* and *Belial* prepare the Reader's Mind for their reſpective Speeches and Behaviour in the ſecond and ſixth Book. The Account of *Thammuz* is finely Romantick, and ſuitable to what we read among the Ancients of the Worſhip which was paid to that Idol.

†———Thammuz *came next behind,*
Whoſe annual Wound in Lebanon *allur'd*
The Syrian *Damſels to lament his fate,*
In am'rous Ditties all a Summer's day,
While ſmooth Adonis *from his native Rock*
Ran purple to the Sea, ſuppos'd with Blood
Of Thammuz *yearly wounded: the Love-tale*
Infected Sion's *Daughters with like Heat,*
Whoſe wanton Paſſions in the ſacred Porch
Ezekiel *ſaw, when by the Viſion led*
His Eye ſurvey'd the dark Idolatries
Of alienated Judah.———

The Reader will pardon me if I inſert as a Note on this beautiful Paſſage, the Account given us by the late ingenious Mr. *Maundrell* of this Antient Piece of Worſhip, and probably the firſt Occaſion of ſuch a Superſtition. 'We came to a fair large River . . . . 'doubtleſs the Antient River *Adonis*, ſo famous for the 'Idolatrous Rites perform'd here in Lamentation of '*Adonis*. We had the Fortune to ſee what may be 'ſuppoſed to be the Occaſion of that Opinion which '*Lucian* relates, concerning this River, *viz.* That this 'Stream, at certain Seaſons of the Year, eſpecially about

† This passage was added in the author's life-time, but subsequent to the second edition. The earliest issue with it in that I have seen, is *Notes upon the Twelve Books of 'Paradise Lost.'* London 1719. p. 43.

'the Feaſt of *Adonis*, is of a bloody Colour; which the 'Heathens looked upon as proceeding from a kind of 'Sympathy in the River for the Death of *Adonis*, who 'was killed by a wild Boar in the Mountains, out of 'which this Stream riſes. Something like this we ſaw 'actually come to paſs; for the Water was ſtain'd to 'a ſurpriſing redneſs; and, as we obſerved in Travelling, 'had diſcolour'd the Sea a great way into a reddiſh 'Hue, occaſion'd doubtleſs by a ſort of Minium, or 'red Earth, waſhed into the River by the violence of 'the Rain, and not by any ſtain from *Adonis*'s Blood.'}

The Paſſage in the Catalogue, explaining the manner how Spirits transform themſelves by Contraction, or Enlargement of their Dimenſions, is introduced with great Judgement, to make way for ſeveral ſurprizing Accidents in the Sequel of the Poem. There follows one, at the very End of the Firſt Book, which is what the *French* Critics call *Marvellous*, but at the ſame time *probable* by reaſon of the Paſſage laſt mentioned. As ſoon as the Infernal Palace is finiſhed, we are told the Multitude and Rabble of Spirits immediately ſhrunk themſelves into a ſmall Compaſs, that there might be Room for ſuch a numberleſs Aſſembly in this capacious Hall. But it is the Poet's Refinement upon this Thought, which I moſt admire, and which is indeed very noble in its ſelf. For he tells us, that notwithſtanding the vulgar, among the fallen Spirits, contracted their Forms, thoſe of the firſt Rank and Dignity ſtill preſerved their natural Dimenſions.

Thus incorporeal Spirits to ſmalleſt Forms
Reduc'd their Shapes immenſe, and were at large,
Though without Number ſtill amidſt the Hall
Of that infernal Court. But far within,
And in their own Dimenſions like themſelves,
The Great Seraphick Lords and Cherubim,
In cloſe receſs and Secret conclave ſate,
A thouſand Demy Gods on Golden Seats,
Frequent and full———

The Character of *Mammon*, and the Deſcription of the *Pandæmonium*, are full of Beauties.

There are ſeveral other Strokes in the Firſt Book wonderfully poetical, and Inſtances of that Sublime Genius ſo peculiar to the Author. Such is the Deſcription of *Azazel*'s Stature, and of the Infernal Standard, which he unfurls; and [as alſo] of that ghaſtly Light, by which the Fiends appear to one another in their Place of Torments.

The Seat of Deſolation, void of Light,
Save what the glimmering of thoſe livid Flames
Caſts pale and dreadful——

The Shout of the whole Hoſt of fallen Angels when drawn up in Battle Array:

——The Univerſal Hoſt up ſent
A Shout that tore Hells Concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos *and old Night.*

The Review, which the Leader makes of his Infernal Army:

———He thro' the armed files
Darts his experienc'd eye, and ſoon traverſe
The whole Battalion views, their order due,
Their Vizages and Stature as of Gods,
Their number laſt he ſums. And now his Heart
Diſtends with Pride, and hard'ning in his ſtrength
Glories———

The Flaſh of Light, which appeared upon the drawing of their Swords;

He ſpake: and to confirm his words outflew
Millions of flaming Swords, drawn from the Thighs
Of mighty Cherubim*; the ſudden blaze*
Far round illumin'd Hell———

The ſudden Production of the *Pandæmonium*;

Anon out of the Earth a Fabrick huge
Roſe like an Exhalation, with the Sound
Of dulcet Symphonies and Voices ſweet.

The Artificial Illuminations made in it,

———From the arched Roof
Pendent by ſubtle Magick, many a Row
Of Starry Lamps and blazing Creſcets, fed
With Naptha *and* Aſphaltus *yielded Light*
As from a Sky——

There are alſo ſeveral noble Similes and Alluſions in the firſt Book of *Paradiſe Loſt.* And here I muſt obſerve, that when *Milton* alludes either to Things or Perſons, he never quits his Simile till it riſes to ſome very great Idea, which is often foreign to the Occaſion which [that] gave Birth to it. The Reſemblance does not, perhaps, laſt above a Line or two, but the Poet runs on with the Hint, till he has raiſed out of it ſome glorious Image or Sentiment, proper to inflame the Mind of the Reader, and to give it that ſublime kind of Entertainment, which is ſuitable to the Nature of an Heroic Poem. Thoſe, who are acquainted with *Homer*'s and *Virgil*'s way of Writing, cannot but be pleaſed with this kind of Structure in *Milton*'s Similitudes. I am the more particular on this Head, becauſe ignorant Readers, who have formed their Taſte upon the quaint Similes, and little Turns of Wit, which are ſo much in Vogue among Modern Poets, cannot reliſh theſe Beauties which are of a much higher nature, and are therefore apt to cenſure *Milton*'s Compariſons, in which they do not ſee any ſurprizing Points of Likeneſs. Monſieur *Perrault* was a Man of this viciated Reliſh, and for that very Reaſon has endeavoured to turn into Ridicule ſeveral of *Homer's* Similitudes, which he calls *Comparaiſons à longue queue, Long-tail'd Compariſons.* I ſhall conclude this Paper on the Firſt Book of *Milton* with the Anſwer which Monſieur *Boileau* makes to *Perrault* on this Occaſion; 'Com-'pariſons, ſays he, in Odes and Epic Poems are not 'introduced only to illuſtrate and embelliſh the Diſ-'courſe, but to amuſe and relax the Mind of the 'Reader, by frequently diſengaging him from too 'painful an Attention to the Principal Subject, and

'by leading him into other agreeable Images. *Ho-*
'*mer*, ſays he, excelled in this Particular, whoſe Com-
'pariſons abound with ſuch Images of Nature as are
'proper to relieve and diverſifie his Subjects. He
'continually inſtructs the Reader, and makes him
'take notice, even in Objects which are every Day
'before our Eyes, of ſuch Circumſtances as we ſhould
'not otherwiſe have obſerved. To this he adds, as a
'Maxim univerſally acknowledged, that it is not neceſ-
'ſary in Poetry for the Points of the Compariſon to
'correſpond with one another exactly, but that a
'general Reſemblance is ſufficient, and that too much
'nicety in this Particular favours of the Rhetorician
'and Epigrammatiſt.'

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

NUMB. CCCIX.

The SPECTATOR.

Di, quibus imperium eſt animarum, umbræque ſilentes,
Et Chaos, & Phlegethon, loca nocte ſilentia late;
Sit mihi fas audita loqui: ſit numine veſtro
Pandere res alta terra & caligine merſas. Virg.

{ *Ye Realms, yet unreveal'd to human Sight,*
Ye Gods who rule the Regions of the Night,
Ye gliding Ghoſts, permit me to relate
The myſtic Wonders of your ſilent State. Dryden. }

Saturday, February 23. 1712.

I Have before obſerved in general, that the Perſons whom *Milton* introduces into his Poem always diſcover ſuch Sentiments and Behaviour, as are in a peculiar manner conformable to their reſpective Characters. Every Circumſtance in their Speeches and Actions, is with great juſtneſs and delicacy adapted to the Perſons who ſpeak and act. As the Poet very much excels in this Conſiſtency of his Characters, I ſhall beg leave to conſider ſeveral Paſſages of the Second Book in this Light. That ſuperior Greatneſs and Mock-Majeſty, which is aſcribed to the Prince of the fallen Angels, is admirably preſerved in the beginning of this Book. His opening and cloſing the Debate; his taking on himſelf that great Enterprize at the Thought of which the whole Infernal Aſſembly trembled; his encountring the hideous Phantom who guarded the Gates of Hell, and appeared to him in all his Terrors, are Inſtances of that proud and daring Mind which could not brook Submiſſion even to Omnipotence.

Satan *was now at hand, and from his Seat*
The Monſter moving onward came as faſt

With horrid ſtrides, Hell trembled as he ſtrode,
Th' undaunted Fiend what this might be admir'd,
Admir'd, not fear'd———

The ſame Boldneſs and Intrepidity of Behaviour diſcovers it ſelf in the ſeveral Adventures which he meets with during his Paſſage through the Regions of unform'd Matter, and particularly in his Addreſs to thoſe tremendous Powers who are deſcribed as preſiding over it.

The Part of *Moloch* is likewiſe in all its Circumſtances full of that Fire and Fury, which diſtinguiſh this Spirit from the reſt of the fallen Angels. He is deſcribed in the firſt Book as beſmear'd with the Blood of Human Sacrifices, and delighted with the Tears of Parents, and the Cries of Children. In the ſecond Book he is marked out as the fierceſt Spirit that fought in Heaven; and if we conſider the Figure which he makes in the Sixth Book, where the Battel of the Angels is deſcribed, we find it every way anſwerable to the ſame furious enraged Character.

——Where the might of Gabriel *fought,*
And with fierce Enſigns pierc'd the deep array
Of Moloc, *furious King, who him defy'd,*
And at his chariot wheels to drag him bound
Threaten'd, nor from the Holy one of Heav'n
Refrain'd his tongue blaſphemous; but anon
Down cloven to the waſte, with ſhatter'd arms
And uncouth pain fled bellowing.———

It may be worth while to obſerve, that *Milton* has repreſented this violent impetuous Spirit, who is hurried on by ſuch precipitate Paſſions, as the *firſt* that riſes in the Aſſembly, to give his Opinion upon their preſent Poſture of Affairs. Accordingly he declares himſelf abruptly for War. and appears incenſed at his Companions, for loſing ſo much time as even to deliberate upon it. All his Sentiments are Raſh, Audacious and Deſperate. Such is that of arming themſelves with their Tortures, and turning their Puniſhments upon him who inflicted them.

——————No, let us rather chuſe,
Arm'd with Hell flames and fury, all at once
O'er Heavens high tow'rs to force reſiſtleſs way,
Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Againſt the Torturer; when to meet the Noiſe
Of his almighty Engine he ſhall hear
Infernal Thunder, and for Lightning ſee
Black fire and horror ſhot with equal rage
Among his Angels; and his throne it ſelf
Mixt with Tartarean *Sulphur, and ſtrange fire,*
His own invented Torments——

His preferring Annihilation to Shame or Miſery, is alſo highly ſuitable to his Character, as the Comfort he draws from their diſturbing the Peace of Heaven, namely, that if it be not Victory it is Revenge, is a Sentiment truly Diabolical, and becoming the Bitterneſs of this implacable Spirit.

Belial is deſcribed, in the Firſt Book, as the Idol of the Lewd and Luxurious. He is in the Second Book, purſuant to that Deſcription, characterized as timorous and ſlothful; and if we look into the Sixth Book, we find him celebrated in the Battel of Angels for nothing but that Scoffing Speech which he makes to *Satan*, on their ſuppoſed Advantage over the Enemy. As his Appearance is uniform, and of a Piece, in theſe three ſeveral Views, we find his Sentiments in the Infernal Aſſembly every way conformable to his Character. Such are his Apprehenſions of a ſecond Battel, his Horrors of Annihilation, his preferring to be miſerable rather than *not to be.* I need not obſerve, that the Contraſt of Thought in this Speech, and that which precedes it, gives an agreeable Variety to the Debate.

Mammon's Character is ſo fully drawn in the Firſt Book, that the Poet adds nothing to it in the Second. We were before told, that he was the firſt who taught Mankind to ranſack the Earth for Gold and Silver, and that he was the Architect of *Pandæmonium*, or the Infernal Palace, where the Evil Spirits were to

meet in Council. His Speech in this Book is every way [where] ſuitable to ſo depraved a Character. How proper is that Reflection, of their being unable to taſte the Happineſs of Heaven were they actually there, in the Mouth of one, who while he was in Heaven, is ſaid to have had his Mind dazled with the outward Pomps and Glories of the Place, and to have been more intent on the Riches of the Pavement, than on the Beatifick Viſion. I ſhall alſo leave the Reader to judge how agreeable the following Sentiments are to the ſame Character.

———This deep world
Of Darkneſs do we dread? How oft amidſt
Thick cloud and dark doth Heav'ns all-ruling Sire
Chuſe to reſide, his Glory unobſcured,
And with the Majeſty of darkneſs round
Covers his Throne; from whence deep thunders roar
Muſtring their rage, and Heav'n reſembles Hell?
As he our darkneſs, cannot we his light
Imitate when we pleaſe? This deſart Soil
Wants not her hidden luſtre, Gems and Gold;
Nor want we Skill or Art, from whence to raiſe
Magnificence; and what can Heav'n ſhew more?

Beëlzebub, who is reckon'd the ſecond in Dignity that fell, and is in the Firſt Book, the ſecond that awakens out of the Trance, and confers with *Satan* upon the ſituation of their Affairs, maintains his Rank in the Book now before us. There is a wonderful Majeſty deſcribed in his riſing up to ſpeak. He acts as a kind of Moderator between the two oppoſite Parties, and propoſes a third Undertaking, which the whole Aſſembly gives into. The Motion he makes of detaching one of their Body in ſearch of a new World is grounded upon a Project deviſed by *Satan,* and curſorily propoſed by him in the following Lines of the firſt Book.

Space may produce new Worlds, whereof ſo rife
There went a fame in Heav'n, that he e'er long

Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation, whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven:
Thither, if but to pry, ſhall be perhaps
Our firſt eruption, thither or elſewhere:
For this infernal Pit ſhall never hold
Celeſtial Spirits in bondage, nor th' Abyſs
Long under Darkneſs cover. But theſe thoughts
Full Counſel muſt mature:———

It is on this Project that *Beëlzebub* grounds his Propoſal.

———— What if we find
Some eaſier enterprize? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heav'n
Err not) another World, the happy Seat
Of ſome new Race call'd MAN, *about this time*
To be created like to us, though leſs
In power and excellence, but favoured more
Of him who rules above; ſo was his Will
Pronounc'd among the Gods, and by an oath,
That ſhook Heav'ns whole circumference, confirm'd.

The Reader may obſerve how juſt it was, not to omit in the Firſt Book the Project upon which the whole Poem turns: As alſo that the Prince of the fall'n Angels was the only proper Perſon to give it Birth, and that the next to him in Dignity was the fitteſt to ſecond and ſupport it.

There is beſides, I think, ſomething wonderfully beautiful, and very apt to affect the Reader's Imagination, in this ancient Prophecy or Report in Heaven, concerning the Creation of Man. Nothing could ſhew more the Dignity of the Species, than this Tradition which ran of them before their Exiſtence. They are repreſented to have been the Talk of Heaven, before they were created. *Virgil*, in compliment to the *Roman* Common-Wealth, makes the Heroes of it appear in their State of Pre-exiſtence; But *Milton* does a far greater Honour to Mankind in general, as he gives us a Glimpſe of them even before they are in Being.

The riſing of this great Aſſembly is deſcribed in a very Sublime and Poetical manner.

Their riſing all at once was as the ſound
Of Thunder heard remote———

The Diverſions of the fallen Angels, with the particular Account of their Place of Habitation, are deſcribed with great Pregnancy of Thought, and Copiouſneſs of Invention. The Diverſions are every way ſuitable to Beings who had nothing left them but Strength and Knowledge miſapplied. Such are their Contentions at the Race, and in Feats of Arms, with their Entertainment in the following Lines.

Others with vaſt Typhæan *rage more fell*
Rend up both Rocks and Hills, and ride the Air
In Whirlwind; Hell ſcarce holds the wild uproar.

Their Muſick is employed in celebrating their own criminal Exploits, and their Diſcourſe in ſounding the unfathomable Depths of Fate, Free-will, and Foreknowledge.

The ſeveral Circumſtances in the Deſcription of Hell are very finely imagined; as the four Rivers which diſgorge themſelves into the Sea of Fire, the Extreams of Cold and Heat, and the River of Oblivion. The monſtrous Animals produced in that infernal World are repreſented by a ſingle Line, which gives us a more horrid Idea of them, than a much longer Deſcription would have done.

———Nature breeds,
Perverſe, all monſtrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worſe
Than Fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceiv'd,
Gorgons, and Hydra's, and Chimera's dire.

This Epiſode of the fallen Spirits, and their Place of Habitation, comes in very happily to unbend the Mind of the Reader from its Attention to the Debate. An ordinary Poet would indeed have ſpun out ſo many

Circumſtances to a great Length, and by that means have weakned, inſtead of illuſtrated, the principal Fable.

The Flight of Satan to the Gates of Hell is finely imaged.

I have already declared my Opinion of the Allegory concerning *Sin* and *Death*, which is however a very finiſhed Piece in its kind, when it is not conſidered as a Part of an Epic Poem. The Genealogy of the ſeveral Perſons is contrived with great Delicacy. *Sin* is the Daughter of *Satan*, and *Death* the Offspring of *Sin*. The inceſtuous Mixture between *Sin* and *Death* produces thoſe Monſters and Hell-hounds which from time to time enter into their Mother, and tear the Bowels of her who gave them Birth. Theſe are the Terrors of an evil Conſcience, and the proper Fruits of *Sin*, which naturally riſe from the Apprehenſions of *Death*. This laſt beautiful Moral is, I think, clearly intimated in the Speech of *Sin*, where complaining of this her dreadful Iſſue, ſhe adds,

Before mine eyes in oppoſition ſits,
Grim Death thy Son and foe, who ſets them on.
And me his Parent would full ſoon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involv'd———

I need not mention to the Reader the beautiful Circumſtance in the laſt Part of this Quotation. He will likewiſe obſerve how naturally the three Perſons concerned in this Allegory are tempted by one common Intereſt to enter into a Confederacy together, and how properly *Sin* is made the Portreſs of Hell, and the only Being that can open the Gates to that World of Tortures.

The deſcriptive Part of this Allegory is likewiſe very ſtrong, and full of Sublime Ideas. The Figure of Death, [the Regal Crown upon his Head,] his Menace to Satan, his advancing to the Combat, the Outcry at his Birth, are Circumſtances too noble to be paſt over in Silence, and extreamly ſuitable to this *King of Terrors*. I need not mention the Juſtneſs of Thought which is obſerved in the Generation of theſe

ſeveral Symbolical Perſons; that *Sin* was produced upon the firſt Revolt of *Satan*, that *Death* appeared ſoon after he was caſt into Hell, and that the Terrors of Conſcience were conceived at the Gate of this Place of Torments. The Deſcription of the Gates is very poetical, as the opening of them is full of *Milton*'s Spirit.

———On a ſudden open fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring ſound
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harſh Thunder, that the loweſt bottom ſhook
Of Erebus. *She open'd, but to ſhut*
Excell'd her Power; the Gates wide open ſtood,
That with extended wings a banner'd Hoſt
Under ſpread Enſigns marching might paſs through
With Horſe and Chariots rank'd in looſe array;
So wide they ſtood, and like a furnace mouth
Caſt forth redounding ſmoak and ruddy flame.

In *Satan*'s Voyage through the *Chaos* there are ſeveral Imaginary Perſons deſcribed, as reſiding in that immenſe Waſte of Matter. This may perhaps be conformable to the Taſte of thoſe Criticks who are pleaſed with nothing in a Poet which has not Life and Manners aſcribed to it; but for my own part, I am pleaſed moſt with thoſe Paſſages in this Deſcription which carry in them a greater Meaſure of Probability, and are ſuch as might poſſibly have happened. Of this kind is his firſt mounting in the Smoak that riſes from the infernal Pit: his falling into a Cloud of Nitre, and the like combuſtible Materials, that by their Exploſion ſtill hurried him forward in his Voyage; his ſpringing upward like a Pyramid of Fire, with his laborious Paſſage through that Confuſion of Elements, which the Poet calls

The Womb of Nature and perhaps her Grave.

The Glimmering Light which ſhot into the *Chaos* from the utmoſt Verge of the Creation, with the diſtant Diſcovery of the Earth that hung cloſe by the Moon, are wonderfully beautiful and poetical.

NUMB. CCCXV.

The SPECTATOR.

Nec deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit——— Hor.

{*Never preſume to make a God appear,*
But for a Buſineſs worthy of a God. Roſcommon.}

Saturday, March 1, 1712.

HORACE adviſes a Poet to conſider thoroughly the Nature and Force of his Genius. *Milton* ſeems to have known, perfectly well, wherein his Strength lay, and has therefore choſen a Subject entirely conformable to thoſe Talents, of which he was Maſter. As his Genius was wonderfully turned to the Sublime, his Subject is the nobleſt that could have entered into the Thoughts of Man. Every thing that is truly great and aſtoniſhing, has a place in it. The whole Syſtem of the intellectual World; the *Chaos*, and the Creation; Heaven, Earth and Hell; enter into the Conſtitution of his Poem.

Having in the Firſt and Second Book repreſented the Infernal World with all its Horrours, the Thread of his Fable naturally leads him into the oppoſite Regions of Bliſs and Glory.

If *Milton*'s Majeſty forſakes him any where, it is in thoſe Parts of his Poem, where the Divine Perſons are introduced as Speakers. One may, I think, obſerve that the Author proceeds with a kind of Fear and Trembling, whilſt he deſcribes the Sentiments of the Almighty. He dares not give his Imagination its full Play, but chuſes to confine himſelf to ſuch Thoughts as are drawn from the Books of the moſt Orthodox Divines, and to ſuch Expreſſions as may be met with

in Scripture. The Beauties, therefore, which we are to look for in theſe Speeches, are not of a Poetical nature, or ſo proper to fill the mind with Sentiments of Grandeur, as with Thoughts of Devotion. The Paſſions, which they are deſigned to raiſe, are a Divine Love and Religious Fear. The particular Beauty of the Speeches in the Third Book, conſiſts in that Shortneſs and Perſpicuity of Stile, in which the Poet has couched the greateſt Myſteries of Chriſtianity, and drawn together, in a regular Scheme, the whole Diſpenſation of Providence, with reſpect to Man. He has repreſented all the abſtruſe Doctrines of Predeſtination, Free-will and Grace, as alſo the great Points of Incarnation and Redemption, (which naturally grow up in a Poem that treats of the Fall of Man,) with great Energy of Expreſſion, and in a clearer and ſtronger Light than I ever met with in any other Writer. As theſe Points are dry in themſelves to the generality of Readers, the conciſe and clear manner in which he has treated them, is very much to be admired, as is likewiſe that particular Art which he has made uſe of in the interſperſing of all thoſe Graces of Poetry, which the Subject was capable of receiving.

The Survey of the whole Creation, and of every thing that is tranſacted in it, is a Proſpect worthy of Omniſcience; and as much above that, in which *Virgil* has drawn his *Jupiter*, as the Chriſtian Idea of the Supream Being is more rational and Sublime than that of the Heathens. The particular Objects on which he is deſcribed to have caſt his Eye, are repreſented in the moſt beautiful and lively manner.

Now had th' Almighty Father from above,
From the pure Empyrean where he ſits
High thron'd above all height, bent down his Eye,
His own Works and their Works at once to view.
About him all the Sanctities of Heav'n
Stood thick as Stars, and from his Sight receiv'd

Beatitude paſt utterance: On his right
The radiant image of his Glory ſat,
His only Son; On earth he firſt beheld
Our two firſt Parents, yet the only two
Of Mankind, in the happy garden plac'd,
Reaping immortal fruits of Joy and Love,
Uninterrupted joy, unrival'd love,
In bliſsful Solitude; he then ſurvey'd
Hell and the Gulf between, and Satan *there*
Coaſting the Wall of Heav'n on this ſide night
In the dun air ſublime, and ready now
To ſtoop with wearied wings, and willing feet
On the bare outſide of this world, that ſeem'd
Firm land imboſom'd without firmament,
Uncertain which, in Ocean or in Air.
Him God beholding from his proſpect high,
Wherein paſt, preſent, future he beholds,
Thus to his only Son foreſeeing ſpake.

Satan's Approach to the Confines of the Creation, is finely imaged in the beginning of the Speech, which immediately follows. The Effects of this Speech in the bleſſed Spirits, and in the Divine Perſon, to whom it was addreſſed, cannot but fill the Mind of the Reader with a ſecret Pleaſure and Complacency.

Thus while God ſpake, ambroſial fragrance fill'd
All Heav'n, and in the bleſſed Spirits elect
Senſe of new Joy ineffable diffus'd:
Beyond compare the Son of God was ſeen
Moſt glorious, in him all his Father ſhone
Subſtantially expreſs'd; and in his face
Divine Compaſſion viſibly appear'd,
Love without end, and without meaſure Grace.

I need not point out the Beauty of that Circumſtance, wherein the whole Hoſt of Angels are repreſented as ſtanding Mute; nor ſhew how proper the Occaſion was to produce ſuch a Silence in Heaven. The Cloſe of this Divine Colloquy, with the Hymn of Angels

that follows upon it, are ſo wonderfully beautiful and poetical, that I ſhould not forbear inſerting the whole Paſſage, if the bounds of my Paper would give me leave.

No ſooner had th' Almighty ceas'd, but all
The multitude of Angels with a ſhout
Loud as from num'bers without number, ſweet
As from bleſt Voices, uttering Joy, Heav'n rung
With Jubilee, and loud Hoſanna's fill'd
Th' eternal regions; &c. &c.———

Satan's Walk upon the Outſide of the Univerſe, which, at a Diſtance, appeared to him of a globular Form, but, upon his nearer Approach, looked like an unbounded Plain, is natural and noble: As his roaming upon the Frontiers of the Creation, between that Maſs of Matter, which was wrought into a World, and that ſhapeleſs unform'd Heap of Materials, which ſtill lay in *Chaos* and Confuſion, ſtrikes the Imagination with ſomething aſtoniſhingly great and wild. I have before ſpoken of the Limbo of Vanity, which the Poet places upon this outermoſt Surface of the Univerſe, and ſhall here explain my ſelf more at large on that, and other Parts of the Poem, which are of the ſame Shadowy nature.

Ariſtotle obſerves, that the Fable of an Epic Poem ſhould abound in Circumſtances that are both credible and aſtoniſhing: or as the *French* Critics chuſe to phraſe it, the Fable ſhould be filled with the Probable and the Marvellous. This Rule is as fine and juſt as any in *Ariſtotle*'s whole Art of Poetry.

If the Fable is only probable, it differs nothing from a true Hiſtory; if it is only Marvellous, it is no better than a Romance. The great Secret therefore of Heroic Poetry is to relate ſuch Circumſtances, as may produce in the Reader at the ſame time both Belief and Aſtoniſhment. This often happens [is brought to paſs] in a *well choſen* Fable, by the Account of ſuch things as have really happened, or at leaſt of ſuch things as have

happen'd, according to the received Opinions of Mankind. *Milton*'s Fable is a Maſter-piece of this Nature; as the War in Heaven, the Condition of the fallen Angels, the State of Innocence, the Temptation of the Serpent, and the Fall of Man, though they are very aſtoniſhing in themſelves, are not only credible, but actual Points of Faith.

The next Method of reconciling Miracles with Credibility, is by a happy Invention of the Poet; as in particular, when he introduces Agents of a ſuperior Nature, who are capable of effecting what is wonderful, and what is not to be met with in the ordinary courſe of things. *Ulyſſes*'s Ship being turned into a Rock, and *Æneas*'s Fleet into a Shoal of Water Nymphs, though they are very ſurprizing Accidents, are nevertheleſs probable, when we are told that they were the Gods who thus transformed them. It is this kind of Machinery which fills the Poems both of *Homer* and *Virgil* with ſuch Circumſtances as are wonderful, but not impoſſible, and ſo frequently produce in the Reader the moſt pleaſing Paſſion that can riſe in the Mind of Man, which is Admiration. If there be any Inſtance in the *Æneid* liable to Exception upon this Account, it is in the beginning of the third Book, where *Æneas* is repreſented as tearing up the Myrtle that dropped Blood. To qualifie this wonderful Circumſtance, *Polydorus* tells a Story from the Root of the Myrtle, that the barbarous inhabitants of the Country having pierced him with Spears and Arrows, the Wood which was left in his Body took Root in his Wounds, and gave birth to that bleeding Tree. This Circumſtance ſeems to have the Marvellous without the Probable, becauſe it is repreſented as proceeding from Natural Cauſes, without the Interpoſition of any God, or rather Supernatural Power capable of producing it. The Spears and Arrows grow of themſelves, without ſo much as the Modern help of an Enchantment. If we look into the Fiction of *Milton*'s Fable, though we find it full of ſurprizing Incidents,

they are generally ſuited to our Notions of the Things and Perſons deſcribed, and temper'd with a due meaſure of Probability. I muſt only make an Exception to the Lymbo of Vanity, with his Epiſode of Sin and Death, and ſome of the imaginary Perſons in his *Chaos*. Theſe Paſſages are aſtoniſhing, but not credible; the Reader cannot ſo far impoſe upon himſelf as to ſee a Poſſibility in them; they are the Deſcription of Dreams and Shadows, not of Things or Perſons. I know that many Critics look upon the Stories of *Circe*, *Polypheme*, the *Sirens*, nay the whole *Odyſſey* and *Iliad*, to be Allegories; but allowing this to be true, they are Fables, which conſidering the Opinions of Mankind that prevailed in the Age of the Poet, might poſſibly have been according to the Letter. The Perſons are ſuch as might have acted what is aſcribed to them, as the Circumſtances in which they are repreſented, might poſſibly have been Truths and Realities. This appearance of Probability is ſo abſolutely requiſite in the greater kinds of Poetry, that *Ariſtotle* obſerves the Ancient Tragick Writers made uſe of the Names of ſuch great Men as had actually lived in the World, tho' the Tragedy proceeded upon ſuch Adventures they were never engaged in, on purpoſe to make the Subject more Credible. In a Word, beſides the hidden Meaning of an Epic Allegory, the plain literal Senſe ought to appear probable. The Story ſhould be ſuch as an ordinary Reader may acquieſce in, whatever Natural Moral or Political Truth may be diſcovered in it by Men of greater Penetration.

Satan, after having long wandered upon the Surface, or outmoſt Wall of the Univerſe, diſcovers at laſt a wide Gap in it, which led into the Creation, and which* is deſcribed as the Opening through which the Angels paſs to and fro into the lower World, upon their Errands to Mankind. His Sitting upon the brink of this Paſſage, and taking a Survey of the whole Face of Nature that appeared to him new and freſh in all its

Beauties, with the Simile illuſtrating this Circumſtance, fills the Mind of the Reader with as ſurpriſing and glorious an Idea as any that ariſes in the whole Poem. He looks down into that vaſt hollow of the Univerſe with the Eye, or (as *Milton* calls it in his firſt Book) with the Kenn of an Angel. He ſurveys all the Wonders in this immenſe Amphitheatre that lie between both the Poles of Heaven, and takes in at one View the whole Round of the Creation.

His Flight between the ſeveral Worlds that ſhined on every ſide of him, with the particular Deſcription of the Sun, are ſet forth in all the wantonneſs of a luxuriant Imagination. His Shape, Speech and Behaviour upon his transforming himſelf into an Angel of Light, are touched with exquiſite Beauty. The Poet's Thought of directing *Satan* to the Sun, which in the Vulgar Opinion of Mankind is the moſt conſpicuous Part of the Creation, and the placing in it an Angel, is a Circumſtance very finely contriv'd, and the more adjuſted to a Poetical Probability, as it was a receiv'd Doctrine among the moſt famous Philoſophers, that every Orb had its *Intelligence*; and as an Apoſtle in Sacred Writ is ſaid to have ſeen ſuch an Angel in the Sun. In the Anſwer which this Angel returns to the diſguiſed Evil Spirit, there is ſuch a becoming Majeſty as is altogether ſuitable to a Superior Being. The part of it in which he repreſents himſelf as preſent at the Creation, is very noble in it ſelf, and not only proper where it is introduced, but requiſite to prepare the Reader for what follows in the Seventh Book.

I ſaw when at his word the formleſs Maſs,
This worlds material mould, came to a heap:
Confuſion heard his voice, and wild uproar
Stood rul'd, ſtood vaſt infinitude confin'd;
Till at his ſecond bidding darkneſs fled,
Light ſhon, &c.

In the following part of the Speech he points out the Earth with ſuch Circumſtances, that the Reader

can ſcarce forbear fancying himſelf employ'd on the ſame diſtant view of it.

Look downward on that Globe, whoſe hither ſide
With light from hence, tho' but reflected, ſhines;
That place is Earth, the Seat of man, that light
His day, &c.

I muſt not conclude my Reflections upon this Third Book of *Paradiſe Loſt*, without taking notice of that celebrated Complaint of *Milton* with which it opens, and which certainly deſerves all the Praiſes that have been given it; tho' as I have before hinted, it may rather be looked upon as an Excreſcence, than as an eſſential Part of the Poem. The ſame Obſervation might be applied to that beautiful Digreſſion upon Hypocriſie, in the ſame Book.

NUMB. CCCXXI.

The SPECTATOR.

Nec ſatis eſt pulchra eſſe poemata, dulcia ſunto. Hor.

{*'Tis not enough a Poem's finely writ;*
It muſt affect and captivate the Soul.}

Saturday, March 8. 1712.

THOSE, who know how many Volumes have been written on the Poems of *Homer* and *Virgil*, will eaſily pardon the Length of my Diſcourſe upon *Milton*. The *Paradiſe Loſt* is look'd upon, by the beſt Judges, as the greateſt Production, or at leaſt the nobleſt Work of Genius, in our Language, and therefore deſerves to be ſet before an *Engliſh* Reader in its full Beauty. For this Reaſon, tho' I have endeavoured to give a general Idea of its Graces and Imperfections in my Six Firſt Papers, I thought my ſelf obliged to beſtow one upon every Book in particular. The Three Firſt Books I have already diſpatched, and am now entring upon the Fourth. I need not acquaint my Reader, that there are Multitudes of Beauties in this great Author, eſpecially in the Deſcriptive Parts of his Poem, which I have not touched upon, it being my Intention to point out thoſe only, which appear to me the moſt exquiſite, or thoſe which are not ſo obvious to ordinary Readers. Every one that has read the Criticks, who have written upon the *Odyſſey*, the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*, knows very well, that though they agree in their Opinions of the great Beauties in thoſe Poems, they have nevertheleſs each of them diſcovered ſeveral Maſter-Stroaks, which have eſcaped the Obſervation of the reſt. In the ſame manner, I queſtion not, but any Writer, who ſhall treat of this Subject after me, may find ſeveral Beauties in *Milton*,

which I have not taken notice of. I muſt likewiſe obſerve, that as the greateſt Maſters of Critical Learning differ from one another, as to ſome particular Points in an Epic Poem, I have not bound my ſelf ſcrupulouſly to the Rules, which any one of them has laid down upon that Art, but have taken the Liberty ſometimes to join with one, and ſometimes with another, and ſometimes to differ from all of them, when I have thought that the Reaſon of the thing was on my ſide.

We may conſider the Beauties of the Fourth Book under three Heads. In the Firſt are thoſe Pictures of Still-Life, which we meet with in the Deſcriptions of *Eden*, *Paradiſe*, *Adam*'s Bower, *&c.* In the next are the Machines, which comprehend the Speeches and Behaviour of the good and bad Angels. In the laſt is the Conduct of *Adam* and *Eve*, who are the principal Actors in the Poem.

In the Deſcription of *Paradiſe*, the Poet has obſerved *Ariſtotle*'s Rule of laviſhing all the Ornaments of Diction on the weak unactive Parts of the Fable, which are not ſupported by the Beauty of Sentiments and Characters. Accordingly the Reader may obſerve, that the Expreſſions are more florid and elaborate in theſe Deſcriptions, than in moſt other Parts of the Poem. I muſt further add, that tho' the Drawings of Gardens, Rivers, Rainbows, and the like dead Pieces of Nature, are juſtly cenſured in an Heroic Poem, when they run out into an unneceſſary length; the Deſcription of *Paradiſe* would have been faulty, had not the Poet been very particular in it, not only as it is the Scene of the principal Action, but as it is requiſite to give us an Idea of that Happineſs from which our firſt Parents fell. The Plan of it is wonderfully beautiful, and formed upon the ſhort Sketch which we have of it, in Holy Writ. *Milton*'s Exuberance of Imagination, has pour'd forth ſuch a redundancy of Ornaments on this Seat of Happineſs and Innocence, that it would be endleſs to point out each Particular.

I muſt not quit this Head, without further obſerving,

that there is ſcarce a Speech of *Adam* or *Eve* in the whole Poem, wherein the Sentiments and Alluſions are not taken from this their delightful Habitation. The Reader, during their whole Courſe of Action, always finds himſelf in the Walks of *Paradiſe*. In ſhort, as the Criticks have remarked, that in thoſe Poems, wherein Shepherds are Actors, the Thoughts ought always to take a Tincture from the Woods, Fields, and Rivers; ſo we may obſerve, that our firſt Parents ſeldom loſe Sight of their happy Station in any thing they ſpeak or do; and, if the Reader will give me leave to uſe the Expreſſion, that their Thoughts are always *Paradiſiacal.*

We are in the next place to conſider the Machines of the Fourth Book. *Satan* being now within Proſpect of *Eden*, and looking round upon the Glories of the Creation, is filled with Sentiments different from thoſe which he diſcovered whilſt he was in Hell. The Place inſpires him with Thoughts more adapted to it: He reflects upon the happy Condition from whence he fell, and breaks forth into a Speech that is ſoftned with ſeveral tranſient Touches of Remorſe and Self-accuſation: But at length he confirms himſelf in Impenitence, and in his deſign of drawing Man into his own State of Guilt and Miſery. This Conflict of Paſſions is raiſed with a great deal of Art, as the opening of his Speech to the Sun is very bold and noble.

O thou that with ſurpaſſing Glory crown'd
Look'ſt from thy Sole Dominion like the God
Of this new World, at whoſe Sight all the Stars
Hide their diminiſh'd heads, to thee I call
But with no Friendly Voice, and add thy name,
O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams
That bring to my remembrance from what State
I fell, how glorious once above thy Sphere.

This Speech is, I think, the fineſt that is aſcribed to *Satan* in the whole Poem. The Evil Spirit afterwards proceeds to make his Diſcoveries concerning

our firſt Parents, and to learn after what manner they may be beſt attacked. His bounding over the Walls of *Paradiſe*; his ſitting in the Shape of a Cormorant upon the Tree of Life, which ſtood in the Center of it, and over-topp'd all the other Trees of the Garden; his alighting among the Herd of Animals, which are ſo beautifully repreſented as playing about *Adam* and *Eve*, together with his transforming himſelf into different Shapes, in order to hear their Converſation; are Circumſtances that give an agreeable Surprize to the Reader, and are deviſed with great Art, to connect that Series of Adventures in which the Poet has engaged this great Artificer of Fraud.

[The Thought of *Satan*'s Transformation into a Cormorant, and placing himſelf on the Tree of Life, ſeems raiſed upon that Paſſage in the *Iliad*, where two Deities are deſcribed, as perching on the Top of an Oak in the Shape of Vulturs.]

His planting himſelf at the Ear of *Eve* in the ſhape [under the Form] of a Toad, in order to produce vain Dreams and Imaginations, is a Circumſtance of the ſame Nature; as his ſtarting up in his own Form is wonderfully fine, both in the Literal Deſcription, and in the Moral which is concealed under it. His Anſwer upon his being diſcovered, and demanded to give an Account of himſelf, are [is] conformable to the Pride and Intrepidity of his Character.

Know ye not then, ſaid Satan, *fill'd with Scorn,*
Know ye not me? ye knew me once no mate
For you, ſitting where you durſt not ſoare:
Not to know me argues your-ſelves unknown,
The loweſt of your throng;——

Zephon's Rebuke, with the Influence it had on *Satan*, is exquiſitely Graceful and Moral. *Satan* is afterwards led away to *Gabriel*, the chief of the Guardian Angels, who kept watch in *Paradiſe*. His diſdainful Behaviour on this occaſion is ſo remarkable a Beauty, that the moſt ordinary Reader cannot but take notice of it.

Gabriel's diſcovering his approach at a diſtance, is drawn with great ſtrength and livelineſs of Imagination.

O Friends, I hear the tread of nimble Feet
Haſtening this way, and now by glimps diſcern
Ithuriel *and* Zephon *through the ſhade;*
And with them comes a third of Regal Port,
But faded ſplendor wan; who by his gait
And fierce demeanour ſeems the Prince of Hell,
Not likely to part hence without conteſt;
Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours.

The Conference between *Gabriel* and *Satan* abounds with Sentiments proper for the Occaſion, and ſuitable to the Perſons of the two Speakers. *Satan*'s cloathing himſelf with Terror when he prepares for the Combat is truly ſublime, and at leaſt equal to *Homer*'s Deſcription of Diſcord celebrated by *Longinus*, or to that of Fame in *Virgil*, who are both repreſented with their Feet ſtanding upon the Earth, and their Heads reaching above the Clouds.

While thus he ſpake, th' Angelic Squadron bright
Turn'd fiery red, ſharpning in mooned Horns
Their Phalanx, and began to hem him round
With ported Spears, &c.
——— *On th' other Side,* Satan *alarm'd,*
Collecting all his might dilated ſtood
Like Teneriff *or* Atlas *unremov'd.*
His Stature reach'd the Sky, and on his Creſt
Sat horrour plum'd; ———

I muſt here take notice, that *Milton* is every where full of Hints, and ſometimes literal Tranſlations, taken from the greateſt of the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets. But this I ſhall [may] reſerve for a Diſcourſe by it ſelf, becauſe I would not break the Thread of theſe Speculations that are deſigned for *Engliſh* Readers, with such Reflections as would be of no uſe but to the Learned.

I muſt however obſerve in this Place, that the breaking off the Combat between *Gabriel* and *Satan*, by the

hanging out of the Golden Scales in Heaven, is a Refinement upon *Homer*'s Thought, who tells us, that before the Battel between *Hector* and *Achilles*, *Jupiter* weighed the Event of it in a pair of Scales. The Reader may ſee the whole Paſſage in the 22d *Iliad*.

Virgil, before the laſt deciſive Combat, deſcribes *Jupiter* in the ſame manner, as weighing the Fates of *Turnus* and *Æneas*. *Milton*, though he fetched this beautiful Circumſtance from the *Iliad* and *Æneid*, does not only inſert it as a Poetical Embelliſhment, like the Authors above-mentioned; but makes an artful uſe of it for the proper carrying on of his Fable, and for the breaking off the Combat between the two Warriors, who were upon the point of engaging. [To this we may further add, that *Milton* is the more juſtified in this Paſſage, as we find the ſame noble Allegory in Holy Writ, where a wicked Prince, {ſome few Hours before he was aſſaulted and ſlain,} is ſaid to have been *weigh'd in the Scales and to have been found wanting*.]

I muſt here take Notice under the Head of the Machines, that *Uriel*'s gliding down to the Earth upon a Sun-beam, with the Poet's Device to make him *deſcend*, as well in his return to the Sun, as in his coming from it, is a Prettineſs that might have been admired in a little fanciful Poet, but ſeems below the Genius of *Milton*. The Deſcription of the Hoſt of armed Angels walking their nightly Round in *Paradiſe*, is of another Spirit.

So ſaying, on he led his radiant files,
Dazling the Moon;———

As that Account of the Hymns which our firſt Parents uſed to hear them Sing in theſe their Midnight Walks, is altogether Divine, and inexpreſſibly amuſing to the Imagination.

We are, in the laſt place, to conſider the Parts which *Adam* and *Eve* act in the Fourth Book. The Deſcription of them as they firſt appear'd to *Satan*, is

exquiſitely drawn, and ſufficient to make the fallen Angel gaze upon them with all that Aſtoniſhment, and thoſe Emotions of Envy, in which he is repreſented.

Two of far nobler Shape erect and tall
God-like erect, with native honour clad
In naked majeſty ſeem'd lords of all,
And worthy ſeem'd, for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker ſhon,
Truth, Wiſdom, Sanctitude ſevere and pure;
Severe, but in true filial freedom plac'd:
For contemplation he and valour form'd,
For ſoftneſs ſhe and ſweet attractive Grace;
He for God only, ſhe for God in him:
His fair large front, and eye ſublime declar'd
Abſolute rule, and Hyacinthin *Locks*
Round from his parted forelock many hung
Cluſtring, but not beneath his Shoulders broad:
She as a Vail down to her ſlender waſte
Her unadorned golden treſſes wore
Diſ-ſhevel'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd.
So paſs'd they naked on, nor ſhun'd the Sight
Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill:
So hand in hand they paſs'd, the lovelieſt pair
That ever ſince in loves embraces met.

There is a fine Spirit of Poetry in the Lines which follow, wherein they are deſcrib'd as ſitting on a Bed of Flowers by the ſide of a Fountain, amidſt a mixed Aſſembly of Animals.

The Speeches of theſe two firſt Lovers flow equally from Paſſion and Sincerity. The Profeſſions they make to one another are full of Warmth; but at the ſame time founded on Truth. In a Word, they are the Gallantries of *Paradiſe.*

——— *When* Adam *firſt of Men*———
Sole Partner and ſole part of all theſe joys,
Dearer thy ſelf than all;——
But let us ever praiſe him, and extol
His bounty, following our delightful task,

To prune thoſe growing plants, and tend theſe flowers,
Which were it toilſome, yet with thee were ſweet.
To whom thus Eve *repli'd: O thou for whom*
And from whom I was form'd, fleſh of thy fleſh,
And without whom am to no end, my Guide
And head, what thou haſt ſaid is juſt and right.
For we to him indeed all praiſes owe,
And daily thanks, I chiefly who enjoy
So far the happier Lot, enjoying thee
Preeminent by ſo much odds, while thou
Like conſort to thy ſelf canſt no where find, &c.

The remaining part of *Eve*'s Speech, in which ſhe gives an Account of her ſelf upon her firſt Creation, and the manner in which ſhe was brought to *Adam*, is I think as beautiful a Paſſage as any in *Milton*, or perhaps in any other Poet whatſoever. Theſe Paſſages are all work'd off with ſo much Art, that they are capable of pleaſing the moſt delicate Reader, without offending the moſt ſevere.

That day I oft remember, when from Sleep, &c.

A Poet of leſs Judgment and Invention than this great Author, would have found it very difficult to have filled thoſe [theſe] tender parts of the Poem with Sentiments proper for a State of Innocence; to have deſcribed the warmth of Love, and the Profeſſions of it, without Artifice or Hyperbole; to have made the Man ſpeak the moſt endearing things, without deſcending from his natural Dignity, and the Woman receiving them without departing from the Modeſty of her Character; in a word, to adjuſt the Prerogatives of Wiſdom and Beauty, and make each appear to the other in its proper Force and Lovelineſs. This mutual Subordination of the two Sexes is wonderfully kept up in the whole Poem, as particularly in the Speech of *Eve* I have before-mentioned, and upon the Concluſion of it in the following Lines:—

So ſpake our general Mother, and with eyes
Of Conjugal attraction unreprov'd,

And meek ſurrender, half embracing lean'd
On our firſt father, half her ſwelling breaſt
Naked met his under the flowing Gold
Of her looſe treſſes hid; he in delight
Both of her beauty and ſubmiſſive charms
Smil'd with Superiour Love,——

The Poet adds, that the Devil turn'd away with Envy at the ſight of ſo much Happineſs.

We have another View of our Firſt Parents in their Evening Diſcourſes, which is full of pleaſing Images and Sentiments ſuitable to their Condition and Characters. The Speech of *Eve*, in particular, is dreſs'd up in such a ſoft and natural Turn of Words and Sentiments, as cannot be ſufficiently admired.

I ſhall cloſe my Reflections upon this Book, with obſerving the Maſterly Tranſition which the Poet makes to their Evening Worſhip, in the following Lines:—

Thus at their ſhadie lodge arriv'd, both ſtood,
Both turn'd, and under open Sky ador'd
The God that made both Sky, Air, Earth and Heav'n,
Which they beheld, the Moons reſplendent Globe,
And Starry Pole: Thou alſo mad'ſt the night,
Maker omnipotent and thou the Day, *&c.*

Moſt of the Modern Heroic Poets have imitated the Ancients, in beginning a Speech without premiſing, that the Perſon ſaid thus or thus; but as it is eaſie to imitate the Ancients in the Omiſſion of two or three Words, it requires Judgment to do it in ſuch a manner as they ſhall not be miſs'd, and that the Speech may begin naturally without them. There is a fine Inſtance of this Kind out of *Homer*, in the Twenty-Third Chapter of *Longinus*.

NUMB. CCCXXVII.

The SPECTATOR.

———*major rerum mihi naſcitur ordo.* Virg.
{*A larger Scene of Action is diſplay'd.* Dryden.}

Saturday, March 15, 1712.

WE were told in the foregoing Book how the Evil Spirit practiſed upon *Eve* as ſhe lay aſleep, in order to inſpire her with Thoughts of Vanity, Pride and Ambition. The Author, who ſhews a wonderful Art throughout his whole Poem, in preparing the Reader for the ſeveral Occurrences that ariſe in it, founds upon the above-mentioned Circumſtance the firſt part of the Fifth Book. *Adam* upon his awaking, finds *Eve* ſtill aſleep, with an unuſual Diſcompoſure in her Looks. The Poſture in which he regards her, is deſcribed with a wonderful Tenderneſs [not to be expreſſed*]†, as the Whiſper with which he awakens her, is the ſofteſt that ever was conveyed to a Lover's Ears

His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve
With Treſſes diſcompos'd and glowing cheek
As through unquiet reſt: he on his side
Leaning half rais'd, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
Beauty, which whether waking or aſleep,
Shot forth peculiar Graces; then with voice
Mild, as when Zephyrus *on* Flora *breathes,*
Her hand ſoft touching, whiſper'd thus. Awake
My faireſt, my eſpous'd, my lateſt found,
Heav'ns laſt beſt gift, my ever new delight,
Awake, the morning ſhines, and the freſh field

† See *Errata*, at the end of No. 369, in the original issue.

Calls us, we loſe the prime, to mark how ſpring
Our tended plants, how blows the Citron Grove,
What drops the Myrrhe, and what the balmie Reed,
How Nature paints her colours, how the Bee
Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid ſweet.
Such whiſpring wak'd her, but with ſtartled Eye,
On Adam, *whom embracing thus ſhe ſpake.*
O Sole in whom my thoughts find all repoſe,
My Glory, my perfection, glad I ſee
Thy face, and morn return'd——

I cannot but take notice that *Milton*, in his Conferences between *Adam* and *Eve*, had his Eye very frequently upon the Book of *Canticles*, in which there is a noble Spirit of Eaſtern Poetry, and very often not unlike what we meet with in *Homer*, who is generally placed near the Age of *Solomon*. I think there is no queſtion but the Poet in the preceding Speech remembred thoſe two Paſſages which are ſpoken on the like occaſion, and fill'd with the ſame pleaſing Images of Nature.

My beloved ſpake, and ſaid unto me, Riſe up, my love, my fair one, and come away; For lo, the winter is paſt, the rain is over and gone; the Flowers appear on the earth; the time of the ſinging of birds is come, and the Voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land. The Fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the Vines with the tender grape give a good ſmell. Ariſe, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the Field; let us get up early to the Vineyards, let us ſee if the Vine flouriſh, whether the tender Grape appear, and the Pomegranates bud forth.

His preferring the Garden of *Eden* to that

——*Where the* Sapient *King*
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian *Spouſe*,

ſhews that the Poet had this delightful Scene in his Mind.

Eve's Dream is full of thoſe *high Conceits engendring Pride*, which we are told the Devil endeavoured to inſtil into her. Of this kind is that part of it where ſhe fancies her ſelf awaken'd by *Adam* in the following beautiful Lines.

Why ſleep'ſt thou, Eve? *now is the pleaſant time,*
The cool, the ſilent, ſave where ſilence yields
To the night-warbling bird, that now awake
Tunes ſweeteſt his Love-labour'd song; now reigns
Full orb'd the moon, and with more pleaſing light
Shadowy ſets off the face of things; in vain
If none regard; Heav'n wakes with all his eyes,
Whom to behold but thee, Natures deſire,
In whoſe ſight all things joy, with raviſhment
Attracted by thy beauty ſtill to gaze.

An injudicious Poet would have made *Adam* talk through the whole Work, in ſuch Sentiments as this [theſe]. But Flattery and Falſhood are not the Courtſhip of *Milton*'s *Adam*, and cou'd not be heard by *Eve* in her State of Innocence, excepting only in a Dream produced on purpoſe to taint her Imagination. Other vain Sentiments of the ſame kind in this relation of her Dream, will be obvious to every Reader. Tho' the Cataſtrophe of the Poem is finely preſaged on this occaſion, the Particulars of it are ſo artfully ſhadow'd, that they do not anticipate the Story which follows in the Ninth Book. I ſhall only add, that tho' the Viſion it ſelf is founded upon Truth, the Circumſtances of it are full of that Wildneſs and Inconſiſtency which are natural to a Dream. *Adam*, conformable to his ſuperior Character for Wiſdom, inſtructs and comforts *Eve* upon this occaſion.

So chear'd he his fair Spouſe, and ſhe was chear'd,
But ſilently a gentle tear let fall
From either eye, and wiped them with her hair;
Two other precious drops that ready ſtood,
Each in their chryſtal ſluice, he e'er they fell

Kiſs'd as the gracious Signs of ſweet remorſe
And pious awe, that fear'd to have offended.

The Morning Hymn is written in Imitation of one of thoſe Pſalms, where, in the Overflowings of his Gratitude and Praiſe, the Pſalmiſt calls not only upon the Angels, but upon the moſt conſpicuous parts of the inanimate Creation, to join with him in extolling their Common Maker. Invocations of this Nature fill the Mind with glorious Ideas of God's Works, and awaken that Divine Enthuſiaſm, which is ſo natural to Devotion. But if this calling upon the dead parts of Nature, is at all times a proper kind of Worſhip, it was in a particular manner ſuitable to our firſt Parents, who had the Creation freſh upon their Minds, and had not ſeen the various Diſpenſations of Providence, nor conſequently could be acquainted with thoſe many Topicks of Praiſe which might afford matter to the Devotions of their Poſterity. I need not remark that* [the] beautiful Spirit of Poetry which runs through this whole Hymn, nor the Holineſs of that Reſolution with which it concludes.

Having already mentioned thoſe Speeches which are aſſigned to the Perſons in this Poem, I proceed to the Deſcription which the Poet gives us* of *Raphael.* His Departure from before the Throne, and his Flight thro' the Quires [Choirs] of Angels, is finely imaged. As *Milton* every where fills his Poem with Circumſtances that are marvellous and aſtoniſhing, he deſcribes the Gate of Heaven as framed after ſuch a manner, that it open'd of it ſelf upon the approach of the Angel who was to paſs through it.

——'till at the gate
Of Heav'n arriv'd, the gate ſelf-open'd wide,
On golden Hinges turning, as by work
Divine the Sovereign Architect had fram'd.

The Poet here ſeems to have regarded two or three Paſſages in the eighteenth *Iliad*, as that in particu-

lar where, ſpeaking of *Vulcan*, *Homer* ſays, that he had made Twenty *Tripodes*, running on Golden Wheels, which, upon Occaſion, might go of themſelves to the Aſſembly of the Gods, and, when there was no more uſe for them, return again after the ſame manner. *Scaliger* has rallied *Homer* very ſeverely upon this Point, as Monſ. *Dacier* has endeavoured to defend it. I will not pretend to determine, whether in this Particular of *Homer*, the Marvellous does not loſe ſight of the Probable. As the miraculous Workmanſhip of *Milton*'s Gates is not ſo extraordinary as this of the *Tripodes*, ſo I am perſwaded he would not have mentioned it, had not he been ſupported in it by a Paſſage in the Scripture, which ſpeaks of Wheels in Heaven that had Life in them, and moved of themſelves, or ſtood ſtill, in Conformity with the Cherubims, whom they accompanied.

There is no queſtion but *Milton* had this Circumſtance in his Thoughts, becauſe in the following Book he deſcribes the Chariot of the *Meſſiah* with *living* Wheels, according to the Plan in *Ezekiel*'s Viſion.

————Forth ruſh'd with whirlwind ſound
The Chariot of Paternal Deity,
Flaſhing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
It ſelf inſtinct with Spirit———————

I queſtion not but *Boſſu*, and the two *Daciers*, who are for vindicating every thing that is cenſured in *Homer*, by ſomething Parallel in Holy Writ, would have been very well pleaſed had they thought of confronting *Vulcan*'s *Tripodes* with *Ezekiel*'s Wheels.

Raphael's Deſcent to the Earth, with the Figure of his Perſon, is repreſented in very lively Colours. Several of the *French*, *Italian*, and *Engliſh* Poets have given a looſe to their Imaginations in the Deſcription of Angels: But I do not remember to have met with any, ſo finely drawn and ſo conformable to the Notions which are given of them in Scripture, as this in *Milton*. After having ſet him forth in all his Heavenly Plumage,

and repreſented him as alighting upon the Earth, the Poet concludes his Deſcription with a Circumſtance, which is altogether new, and imagined with the greateſt Strength of Fancy.

——*Like* Maia's *Son he ſtood,*
And ſhook his plumes, that Heav'nly fragrance fill'd
The Circuit wide———

Raphael's Reception by the Guardian Angels; his paſſing through the Wilderneſs of Sweets; his diſtant Appearance to *Adam*, have all the Graces that Poetry is capable of beſtowing. The Author afterwards gives us a particular Deſcription of *Eve* in her Domeſtick Employments.

So ſaying, with diſpatchful looks in haſte
She turns, on hoſpitable thoughts intent,
What choice to chuſe for delicacy beſt,
What order, ſo contriv'd as not to mix
Taſtes, not well joyn'd, inelegant, but bring
Taſte after Taſte, upheld with kindlieſt change;
Beſtirs her then &c.———

Though in this, and other Parts of the ſame Book, the Subject is only the Houſewifry of our Firſt Parent, it is ſet off with ſo many pleaſing Images and ſtrong Expreſſions, as make it none of the leaſt agreeable Parts in this Divine Work.

The natural Majeſty of *Adam*, and at the ſame time his ſubmiſſive Behaviour to the Superiour Being, who had vouchſafed to be his Gueſt; the ſolemn Hail which the Angel beſtows on the Mother of Mankind, with the Figure of *Eve* miniſtring at the Table, are Circumſtances which deſerve to be admir'd.

Raphael's Behaviour is every way ſuitable to the dignity of his Nature, and to that Character of a ſociable Spirit, with which the Author has ſo judiciouſly introduced him. He had received Inſtructions to converſe with *Adam*, as one Friend converſes with another, and to warn him of the Enemy, who was contriving his Deſtruction: Accordingly he is repre-

ſented as ſitting down at Table with *Adam*, and eating of the Fruits of *Paradiſe*. The Occaſion naturally leads him to his Diſcourſe on the Food of Angels. After having thus entered into Converſation with Man upon more indifferent Subjects, he warns him of his Obedience, and makes a natural Tranſition to the Hiſtory of that fallen Angel, who was employed in the Circumvention of our Firſt Parents.

Had I followed Monſieur *Boſſu*'s Method in my Firſt Paper on *Milton*, I ſhould have dated the Action of *Paradiſe Loſt* from the Beginning of *Raphael*'s Speech in this Book, as he ſuppoſes the Action of the *Æneid* to begin in the ſecond Book of that Poem. I could alledge many Reaſons for my drawing the Action of the *Æneid*, rather from its immediate Beginning in the firſt Book, than from its remote Beginning in the Second, and ſhew why I have conſidered the Sacking of *Troy* as an *Epiſode*, according to the common Acceptation of that Word. But as this would be a dry un-entertaining Piece of Criticiſm, and perhaps unneceſſary to thoſe who have read my Firſt Paper, I ſhall not enlarge upon it. Which-ever of the Notions be true, the Unity of *Milton*'s Action is preſerved according to either of them; whether we conſider the Fall of Man in its immediate Beginning, as proceeding from the Reſolutions taken in the Infernal Council, or in its more remote Beginning, as proceeding from the Firſt Revolt of the Angels in Heaven. The Occaſion which *Milton* aſſigns for this Revolt, as it is founded on Hints in Holy Writ, and on the Opinion of ſome great Writers, ſo it was the moſt proper that the Poet could have made uſe of.

The Revolt in Heaven is deſcribed with great Force of Imagination [Indignation], and a fine Variety of Circumſtances. The Learned Reader cannot but be pleaſed with the Poet's Imitation of *Homer* in the laſt of the following Lines.

At length into the limits of the North
They came, and Satan took his Royal Seat

High on a hill, far blazing, as a mount
Rais'd on a Mount, with Pyramids and tow'rs
From Diamond quarries hewn, and rocks of Gold
The palace of great Lucifer *(ſo call*
That ſtructure in the Dialect of men
Interpreted)——————

Homer mentions Perſons and Things, which he tells us in the Language of the Gods are call'd by different Names from thoſe they go by in the Language of Men. *Milton* has imitated him with his uſual Judgment in this particular place, wherein he has likewiſe the Authority of Scripture to juſtify him. The part of *Abdiel*, who was the only Spirit that in this Infinite Hoſt of Angels preſerved his Allegiance to his Maker, exhibits to us a noble Moral of religious Singularity. The Zeal of the Seraphim breaks forth in a becoming Warmth of Sentiments and Expreſſions, as the Character which is given us of him denotes that generous Scorn and Intrepidity which attends Heroic Virtue. The Author, doubtleſs, deſigned it as a Pattern to thoſe who live among Mankind in their preſent State of Degeneracy and Corruption.

So ſpake the Seraph Abdiel *faithful found,*
Among the faithleſs, faithful only he;
Among innumerable falſe, unmov'd,
Unſhaken, unſeduc'd, unterrify'd;
His Loyalty he kept, his Love, his Zeal:
Nor Number, nor example with him wrought
To ſwerve from truth, or change his conſtant mind
Though Single. From amidſt them forth he paſs'd,
Long way through hoſtile Scorn, which he ſuſtain'd
Superior, nor of violence fear'd ought;
And with retorted Scorn his back he turn'd
On thoſe proud Tow'rs to ſwift Deſtruction doom'd.

NUMB. CCCXXXIII.

The SPECTATOR.

———*vocat in Certamina Divos.* Virg.
{*He calls embattled Deities to Arms.*}

Saturday, March 22, 1712.

WE are now entering upon the Sixth Book of *Paradiſe Loſt*, in which the Poet deſcribes the Battel of Angels; having raiſed his Reader's Expectation, and prepared him for it by ſeveral Paſſages in the preceding Books. I omitted quoting theſe Paſſages in my Obſervations on the former Books, having purpoſely reſerved them for the opening of this, the Subject of which gave occaſion to them. The Author's Imagination was ſo inflamed with this great Scene of Action, that wher-ever he ſpeaks of it, he riſes, if poſſible, above himſelf. Thus where he mentions Satan in the beginning of his Poem.

———*Him the Almighty Power*
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie,
With hideous ruin and combuſtion down
To bottomleſs perdition, there to dwell
In Adamantine Chains and penal fire,
Who durſt defie th' Omnipotent to Arms.

We have likewiſe ſeveral noble Hints of it in the Infernal Conference.

O Prince, O Chief of many throned Powers
That led th' imbattel'd Seraphim to War,
Too well I ſee and rue the dire event,
That with ſad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath loſt us Heav'n, and all this mighty hoſt

In horrible deſtruction laid thus low.
But ſee the angry victor hath recall'd
His Miniſters of Vengeance and purſuit
Back to the Gates of Heav'n: The Sulphurous hail,
Shot after us in Storm, o'erblown hath laid
The fiery Surge, that from the precipice
Of Heav'n receiv'd us falling, and the thunder
Wing'd with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath ſpent his Shafts, and ceaſes now
To bellow through the vaſt and boundleſs deep.

There are ſeveral other very Sublime Images on the ſame Subject in the Firſt Book, as alſo in the Second.

What when we fled amain, purſu'd and ſtrook
With Heav'ns afflicting Thunder, and beſought
The deep to ſhelter us; this Hell then ſeem'd
A refuge from thoſe wounds————

In ſhort, the Poet never mentions any thing of this Battel but in ſuch Images of Greatneſs and Terrour, as are ſuitable to the Subject. Among ſeveral others, I cannot forbear quoting that Paſſage where the Power, who is deſcrib'd as preſiding over the Chaos, ſpeaks in the Third Book.

Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old
With faultring ſpeech and viſage incompos'd,
Anſwer'd, I know thee, ſtranger, who thou art,
That mighty leading Angel, who of late
Made head againſt Heav'ns King, though overthrown.
I ſaw and heard, for ſuch a numerous hoſt
Fled not in Silence through the frighted deep
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confuſion worſe confounded; and Heav'ns Gates
Pour'd out by Millions her victorious bands
Purſuing————————

It required great Pregnancy of Invention, and Strength of Imagination, to fill this Battel with ſuch Circumſtances as ſhould raiſe and aſtoniſh the Mind of the Reader; and, at the ſame time, an exactneſs

of Judgment to avoid every thing that might appear light or trivial. Thoſe, who look into *Homer*, are ſurpriſed to find his Battels ſtill riſing one above another, and improving in Horrour, to the Concluſion of the *Iliad*. *Milton*'s Fight of Angels is wrought up with the ſame Beauty. It is uſhered in with ſuch Signs of Wrath as are ſuitable to Omnipotence incenſed. The Firſt Engagement is carried on under a Cope of Fire, occaſion'd by the Flights of innumerable burning Darts and Arrows, which are diſcharged from either Hoſt. The ſecond Onſet is ſtill more terrible, as it is filled with thoſe artificial Thunders, which ſeem to make the Victory doubtful, and produce a kind of Conſternation, even in the Good Angels. This is followed by the tearing up of Mountains and Promontories; till, in the laſt place, the Meſſiah comes forth in the fulneſs of Majeſty and Terrour. The Pomp of his Appearance, amidſt the Roarings of his Thunders, the Flaſhes of his Lightnings, and the Noiſe of his Chariot Wheels, is deſcribed with the utmoſt Flights of Human Imagination.

There is nothing in the firſt and laſt Days Engagement, which does not appear natural and agreeable enough to the Ideas moſt Readers would conceive of a Fight between two Armies of Angels.

The Second Day's Engagement is apt to ſtartle an Imagination, which has not been raiſed and qualified for ſuch a Deſcription, by the reading of the Ancient Poets, and of *Homer* in particular. It was certainly a very bold Thought in our Author, to aſcribe the firſt uſe of Artillery to the Rebel Angels. But as ſuch a pernicious Invention may be well ſuppoſed to have proceeded from ſuch Authors, ſo it entered very properly into the Thoughts of that Being, who is all along deſcribed as aſpiring to the Majeſty of his Maker. Such Engines were the only Inſtruments he could have made uſe of to imitate thoſe Thunders, that in all Poetry, both Sacred and Prophane, are repreſented as the Arms of the Almighty. The tearing up

the Hills was not altogether ſo daring a Thought as the former. We are, in ſome meaſure, prepared for ſuch an Incident by the Deſcription of the Gyants War, which we meet with among the Ancient Poets. What ſtill made this Circumſtance the more proper for the Poets uſe, is the Opinion of many learned Men, that the Fable of the Gyants War, which makes ſo great a Noiſe in Antiquity, [and gave Birth to the ſublimeſt Deſcription in *Heſiod*'s Works,] was an Allegory founded upon this very Tradition of a Fight between the good and bad Angels.

It may, perhaps, be worth while to conſider with what Judgment *Milton*, in this Narration, has avoided every thing that is mean and trivial in the Deſcriptions of the *Latin* and *Greek* Poets; and, at the ſame time, improved every great Hint which he met with in their Works upon this Subject. *Homer* in that Paſſage, which *Longinus* has celebrated for its Sublimeneſs, and which *Virgil* and *Ovid* have copied after him, tells us, that the Gyants threw *Oſſa* upon *Olympus*, and *Pelion* upon *Oſſa*. He adds an Epithet to *Pelion* (εἰνοσίφυλλον) which very much ſwells the Idea, by bringing up to the Reader's Imagination all the Woods that grew upon it. There is further a great Beauty in his ſingling out by Name theſe three remarkable Mountains ſo well known to the *Greeks*. This laſt is ſuch a Beauty as the Scene of *Milton*'s War could not poſſibly furniſh him with. *Claudian* in his Fragment upon the Gyants War, has given full Scope to that wildneſs of Imagination which was natural to him. He tells us, that the Gyants tore up whole Iſlands by the Roots, and threw them at the Gods. He deſcribes one of them in particular taking up *Lemnos* in his Arms, and whirling it to the Skies, with all *Vulcan*'s Shop in the midſt of it. Another tears up Mount *Ida*, with the River *Enipeus* which ran down the ſides of it; but the Poet, not content to deſcribe him with this Mountain upon his Shoulders, tells us that the River flowed down his Back, as he held it up in that

Poſture. It is viſible to every judicious Reader, that ſuch Ideas ſavour more of Burleſque than of the Sublime. They proceed from a Wantonneſs of Imagination, and rather divert the Mind than aſtoniſh it. *Milton* has taken every thing that is Sublime in theſe ſeveral Paſſages, and compoſes out of them the following great Image.

From their Foundations looſning to and fro
They pluck'd the ſeated Hills with all their load,
Rocks, Waters, Woods, and by the ſhaggy tops
Up-lifting bore them in their Hands:——

We have the full Majeſty of *Homer* in this ſhort Deſcription, improved by the Imagination of *Claudian*, without its Puerilities.

I need not point out the Deſcription of the fallen Angels, ſeeing the Promontories hanging over their Heads in ſuch a dreadful manner, with the other numberleſs Beauties in this Book, which are ſo conſpicuous, that they cannot eſcape the Notice of the moſt ordinary Reader.

There are indeed ſo many wonderful ſtroaks of Poetry in this Book, and ſuch a variety of Sublime Ideas, that it would have been impoſſible to have given them a place within the bounds of this Paper. Beſides that, I find it in a great meaſure done to my Hand, at the end of my Lord *Roſcommon*'s Eſſay on Tranſlated Poetry. I ſhall refer my Reader thither for ſome of the Maſter-Stroaks in the Sixth Book of *Paradiſe Loſt*, tho' at the ſame time there are many others which that noble Author has not taken notice of.

Milton, notwithſtanding the Sublime Genius he was Maſter of, has in this Book drawn to his Aſſiſtance all the helps he could meet with among the Ancient Poets. The Sword of *Michael*, which makes ſo great an havock among the bad Angels, was given him, we are told, out of the Armory of God.

———*But the Sword*
Of Michael *from the Armory of God*

Was giv'n him temper'd ſo, that neither keen
Nor ſolid might reſiſt that edge: it met
The Sword of Satan *with ſteep force to ſmite*
Deſcending, and in half cut ſheere,———

This Paſſage is a Copy of that in *Virgil*, wherein the Poet tells us, that the Sword of *Æneas*, which was given him by a Deity, broke into pieces the Sword of *Turnus*, which came from a Mortal Forge: As the Moral in this place is Divine, ſo by the way we may obſerve, that the beſtowing on a Man who is favour'd by Heaven ſuch an Allegorical Weapon, is very conformable to the old Eaſtern way of Thinking. Not only *Homer* has made uſe of it, but we find the *Jewiſh* Hero in the Book of *Maccabees*, who had fought the Battels of the choſen People with ſo much Glory and Succeſs, receiving in his Dream a Sword from the hand of the Prophet *Jeremy* [*Jeremiah*]. The following Paſſage, wherein *Satan* is deſcribed as wounded by the Sword of *Michael*, is in imitation of *Homer*.

The girding Sword with diſcontinuous wound
Paſs'd through him, but th' Ethereal ſubſtance cloſed
Not long diviſible, and from the gaſh
A ſtream of Nectarous humour iſſuing flow'd
Sanguin, ſuch as celeſtial Spirits may bleed,
And all his Armour ſtain'd———

Homer tells us in the ſame manner, that upon *Diomedes* wounding the Gods, there flow'd from the Wound an *Ichor*, or pure kind of Blood, which was not bred from Mortal Viands; and that tho' the Pain was exquiſitely great, the Wound ſoon cloſed up and healed in thoſe Beings who are veſted with Immortality.

I queſtion not but *Milton* in his Deſcription of his furious *Moloch* flying from the Battel, and bellowing with the Wound he had receiv'd, had his Eye upon *Mars* in the *Iliad*, who upon his being wounded, is repreſented as retiring out of the Fight, and making an Outcry louder than that of a whole Army when it

begins the Charge. *Homer* adds, that the *Greeks* and *Trojans*, who were engaged in a general Battel, were terrified on each ſide with the bellowing of this wounded Deity. The Reader will eaſily obſerve how *Milton* has kept all the horrour of this Image without running into the Ridicule of it.

——*Where the might of* Gabriel *fought,*
And with fierce Enſigns pierc'd the deep array
Of Moloc *furious King, who him defy'd,*
And at his Chariot wheels to drag him bound
Threaten'd, nor from the Holy One of Heav'n
Refrain'd his tongue blaſphemous; but anon
Down clov'n to the waſte, with ſhatter'd Arms
And uncouth pain fled bellowing.——

Milton has likewiſe rais'd his Deſcription in this Book with many Images taken out of the Poetical Parts of Scripture. The Meſſiah's Chariot, as I have before taken notice, is form'd upon a Viſion of *Ezekiel*, who, as *Grotius* obſerves, has very much in him of *Homer*'s Spirit in the Poetical Parts of his Prophecy.

The following Lines in that glorious Commiſſion which is given the Meſſiah to extirpate the Hoſt of Rebel Angels, is drawn from a Sublime Paſſage in the Pſalms.

Go then thou mightieſt in thy Father's might
Aſcend my Chariot, guide the rapid wheels
That ſhake Heav'ns baſis, bring forth all my War
My Bow, my thunder, my almighty arms,
Gird on thy ſword on thy puiſſant thigh.

The Reader will eaſily diſcover many other Stroaks of the ſame nature.

There is no queſtion but *Milton* had heated his Imagination with the Fight of the Gods in *Homer*, before he entered upon this Engagement of the Angels. *Homer* there gives us a Scene of Men, Heroes and Gods mixed together in Battel. *Mars* animates

the contending Armies, and lifts up his Voice in ſuch a manner, that it is heard diſtinctly amidſt all the Shouts and Confuſion of the Fight. *Jupiter* at the ſame time Thunders over their Heads; while *Neptune* raiſes ſuch a Tempeſt, that the whole Field of Battel. and all the tops of the Mountains ſhake about them, The Poet tells us, that *Pluto* himſelf, whoſe Habitation was in the very Center of the Earth, was ſo a[f]frighted at the ſhock, that he leapt from his Throne. *Homer* afterwards deſcribes *Vulcan* as pouring down a Storm of Fire upon the River *Xanthus*, and *Minerva* as throwing a Rock at *Mars*; who, he tells us, covered ſeven Acres in his Fall.

As *Homer* has introduced into his Battel of the Gods every thing that is great and terrible in Nature, *Milton* has filled his Fight of Good and Bad Angels with all the like Circumſtances of Horrour. The Shout of Armies, the Rattling of Brazen Chariots, the Hurling of Rocks and Mountains, the Earthquake, the Fire, the Thunder, are all of them employed to lift up the Reader's Imagination, and give him a ſuitable Idea of ſo great an Action. With what Art has the Poet repreſented the whole Body of the Earth trembling, even before it was created.

All Heaven reſounded, and had Earth been then
All Earth had to its Center ſhook——

In how ſublime and juſt a manner does he afterwards deſcribe the whole Heaven ſhaking under the Wheels of the Meſſiah's Chariot, with that Exception to the Throne of God?

————*Under his burning Wheels*
The ſteadfaſt Empyrean *ſhook throughout,*
All but the Throne it ſelf of God————

Notwithſtanding the Meſſiah appears cloathed with ſo much Terrour and Majeſty, the Poet has ſtill found means to make his Readers conceive an Idea of him, beyond what he himſelf was able to deſcribe.

Yet half his ſtrength he put not forth, but checkt
His thunder in mid volley, for he meant
Not to deſtroy, but root them out of Heaven.

In a word, *Milton*'s Genius which was ſo great in it ſelf, and ſo ſtrengthened by all the helps of Learning, appears in this Book every way Equal to his Subject[s], which was the moſt Sublime that could enter into the Thoughts of a Poet. As he knew all the Arts of affecting the Mind, had he not given [he knew it was neceſſary to give] it certain reſting places and Opportunities of recovering it ſelf from time to time: He has [therefore] with great Addreſs interſperſed ſeveral Speeches, Reflections, Similitudes, and the like Reliefs to diverſifie his Narration, and eaſe the Attention of his [the] Reader, that he might come freſh to his great Action, and by ſuch a Contraſt of Ideas, have a more lively taſte of the nobler parts of his Deſcription.

Addison corrected and re-corrected this last sentence. The first and last readings, as in the original and second editions, are as above. The intermediate reading, according to the *Errata* in No. 369, of the original issue, is as follows:

As he knew all the Arts of affecting the Mind, he has given it certain reſting places and Opportunities of recovering it ſelf from time to time: ſeveral Speeches, Reflections, Similitudes, and the like Reliefs being interſperſed, to diversifie his Narration, and eaſe the attention of his Reader.

NUMB. CCCXXXIX.

The SPECTATOR.

——— Vt his exordia primis
Omnia, & ipſe tener Mundi concreverit orbis.
Tum durare ſolum, & diſcludere Nerea ponto
Cæperit, & rerum paullatim ſumere formas. Virg.

{*He ſung the ſecret Seeds of Nature's Frame;*
How Seas, and Earth, and Air, and active Flame,
Fell thro' the mighty Void, and in their Fall
Were blindly gather'd in this goodly Ball.
The tender Soil then ſtiff'ning by degrees
Shut from the bounded Earth the bounding Seas.
Then Earth and Ocean various Forms diſcloſe,
And a new Sun to the new World aroſe. Dryden.}

Saturday, March 29. 1712.

LONGINUS has obſerved, that there may be a Loftineſs in Sentiments, where there is no Paſſion, and brings Inſtances out of Ancient Authors to ſupport this his Opinion. The Pathetick, as that great Critick obſerves, may animate and inflame the Sublime, but is not eſſential to it. Accordingly, as he further remarks, we very often find that thoſe, who excell moſt in ſtirring up the Paſſions, very often want the Talent of Writing in the Great and Sublime manner; and ſo on the contrary. *Milton* has ſhewn himſelf a Maſter in both theſe ways of Writing. The Seventh Book, which we are now entering upon, is an Inſtance of that Sublime, which is not mixt and work'd up with Paſſion. The Author appears in a kind of compoſed and ſedate Majeſty; and tho' the Sentiments do not give ſo great [an] Emotion as thoſe in the former Book, they abound with as magnificent Ideas.

The Sixth Book, like a troubled Ocean, repreſents Greatneſs in Confuſion; the Seventh affects the Imagination like the Ocean in a Calm, and fills the Mind of the Reader without producing in it any thing like Tumult or Agitation.

The Critick abovementioned, among the Rules which he lays down for ſucceeding in the Sublime way of Writing, propoſes to his Reader, that he ſhould imitate the moſt celebrated Authors who have gone before him, and have been engaged in Works of the ſame nature; as in particular that if he writes on a Poetical Subject, he ſhould conſider how *Homer* would have ſpoken on ſuch an Occaſion. By this means one great Genius often catches the Flame from another, and writes in his Spirit, without copying ſervilely after him. There are a thouſand Shining Paſſages in *Virgil*, which have been lighted up by *Homer*.

Milton, though his own natural Strength of Genius was capable of furniſhing out a perfect Work, has doubtleſs very much raiſed and ennobled his Conceptions, by ſuch an Imitation as that which *Longinus* has recommended.

In this Book, which gives us an Account of the Six Days Works, the Poet received but very few Aſſiſtances from Heathen Writers, who were Strangers to the Wonders of Creation. But as there are many Glorious Stroaks of Poetry upon this Subject in Holy Writ, the Author has numberleſs Alluſions to them through the whole Courſe of this Book. The great Critick, I have before mentioned, tho' an Heathen, has taken notice of the Sublime manner in which the Law-giver of the *Jews* has deſcribed the Creation in the firſt Chapter of *Geneſis*; and there are many other Paſſages in Scripture, which riſe up to the ſame Majeſty, where this Subject is toucht upon. *Milton* has ſhewn his Judgment very remarkably, in making uſe of ſuch of theſe as were proper for his Poem, and in duly qualifying thoſe high Strains of Eaſtern Poetry,

which were ſuited to Readers whoſe Imaginations were ſet to an higher pitch than thoſe of colder Climates.

Adam's Speech to the Angel, wherein he deſires an Account of what had paſſed within the Regions of Nature before his [the] Creation, is very great and ſolemn. The following Lines, in which he tells him that the Day is not too far ſpent for him to enter upon ſuch a Subject, are exquiſite in their kind.

And the Great light of day yet wants to run
Much of his race through ſleep, ſuſpens in Heav'n
Held by thy voice, thy potent voice he hears,
And longer will delay to hear thee tell
His Generation, &c.———

The Angel's encouraging our firſt Parent[s] in a modeſt purſuit after Knowledge, with the Cauſes which he aſſigns for the Creation of the World, are very juſt and beautiful. The Meſſiah, by whom, as we are told in Scripture, the Heavens were made, goes [comes*] forth in the Power of his Father, ſurrounded with an Hoſt of Angels. and cloathed with ſuch a Majeſty as becomes his entering upon a Work, which, according to our Conceptions, looks like [appears] the utmoſt exertion of Omnipotence. What a beautiful Deſcription has our Author raiſed upon that Hint in one of the Prophets. *And behold there came four Chariots out from between two Mountains, and the Mountains were Mountains of Braſs.*

About his Chariot numberleſs were pour'd
Cherub *and* Seraph, *Potentates and Thrones,*
And virtues, winged Spirits, and Chariots wing'd,
From the Armoury of God, where ſtand of old
Myriads between two brazen mountains lodg'd
Againſt a ſolemn day, harneſt at hand;
Celeſtial Equipage; and now came forth
Spontaneous, for within them ſpirit liv'd
Attendant on their lord: Heav'n open'd wide
Her ever-during Gates, Harmonious ſound
On golden Hinges moving——

I have before taken notice of theſe Chariots of

God, and of theſe Gates of Heaven, and ſhall here only add, that *Homer* gives us the ſame Idea of the latter as opening of themſelves, tho' he afterwards takes off from it, by telling us, that the Hours firſt of all removed thoſe prodigious heaps of Clouds which lay as a Barrier before them.

I do not know any thing in the whole Poem more Sublime than the Deſcription which follows, where the Meſſiah is repreſented at the head of his Angels, as looking down into the *Chaos*, calming its Confuſion, riding into the midſt of it, and drawing the firſt Outline of the Creation.

On Heav'nly ground they ſtood, and from the ſhore
They view'd the vaſt immeaſurable Abyſs
Outragious as a Sea, dark, waſteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds
And ſurging waves, as Mountains to aſſault
Heav'n's height, and with the Center mix the Pole.
Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou Deep, Peace,
Said then th' Omnific word, your Diſcord end:
Nor ſtaid, but on the wings of Cherubim
Up-lifted, in Paternal Glory rode
Far into Chaos, *and the world unborn;*
For Chaos *heard his voice: him all his train*
Follow'd in bright Proceſſion to behold
Creation, and the wonders of his might.
Then ſtaid the fervid wheels, and in his hand
He took the golden Compaſſes, prepared
In Gods eternal Store, to circumſcribe
This Univerſe, and all created things:
One foot he Center'd, and the other turn'd,
Round through the vaſt profundity obſcure,
And ſaid, thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,
This be thy juſt Circumference, O World.

The Thought of the Golden Compaſſes is conceiv'd altogether in *Homer*'s Spirit, and is a very noble Incident in this wonderful Deſcription. *Homer*, when he ſpeaks of the Gods, aſcribes to them ſeveral Arms and

Inſtruments with the ſame greatneſs of Imagination. Let the Reader only peruſe the Deſcription of *Minerva*'s *Ægis*, or Buckler, in the Fifth Book, with her Spear, which could [would] overturn whole Squadrons, and her Helmet, that was ſufficient to cover an Army, drawn out of an hundred Cities: The Golden Compaſſes, in the above-mentioned Paſſage appear a very natural Inſtrument in the Hand of him, whom *Plato* ſomewhere calls the Divine Geometrician. As Poetry delights in cloathing abſtracted Ideas in Allegories and ſenſible Images, we find a magnificent Deſcription of the Creation form'd after the ſame manner in one of the Prophets, wherein he deſcribes the Almighty Architect as meaſuring the Waters in the hollow of his Hand, meting out the Heavens with his Span, comprehending the Duſt of the Earth in a Meaſure, weighing the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance. Another of them deſcribing the Supreme Being in this great Work of Creation, repreſents him as laying the Foundations of the Earth, and ſtretching a Line upon it. And in another place as garniſhing the Heavens, ſtretching out the North over the empty place, and hanging the Earth upon nothing. This laſt noble Thought *Milton* has expreſs'd in the following Verſe:

And Earth ſelf-balanc'd on her Center hung.

The Beauties of Deſcription in this Book lie ſo very thick, that it is impoſſible to enumerate them in this Paper. The Poet has employed on them the whole Energy of our Tongue. The ſeveral great Scenes of the Creation riſe up to view one after another, in ſuch a manner that the Reader ſeems preſent at this wonderful Work, and to aſſiſt among the Quires [Choirs] of Angels, who are the Spectators of it. How glorious is the Concluſion of the firſt Day.

———Thus was the firſt day Ev'n and Morn.
Nor paſt uncelebrated, nor unſung
By the Celeſtial Quires, when Orient light

Exhaling firſt from Darkneſs they beheld;
Birth-day of Heav'n and Earth; with joy and ſhout
The hollow univerſal Orb they fill'd.

We have the ſame elevation of Thought in the third Day; when the Mountains were brought forth, and the Deep was made.

Immediately the mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs up heave
Into the Clouds, their tops aſcend the Sky.
So high as heav'd the tumid hills, ſo low
Down ſunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
Capacious bed of Waters——

We have alſo the riſing of the whole vegetable World deſcribed in this Day's Work, which is filled with all the Graces that other Poets have laviſhed on their Deſcriptions of the Spring, and leads the Reader's Imagination into a Theatre equally ſurprizing and beautiful.

The ſeveral Glories of the Heav'ns make their appearance on the Fourth Day.

Firſt in his Eaſt the glorious lamp was ſeen
Regent of day, and all th' Horizon round
Inveſted with bright rays, jocond to run
His Longitude through Heav'ns high rode: the Gray
Dawn, and the Pleiades *before him danced*
Shedding ſweet influence: leſs bright the moon,
But oppoſite in level'd Weſt was ſet,
His Mirror, with full face borrowing her light
From him, for other light ſhe needed none
In that aſpect, and ſtill that diſtance keeps
Till night; then in the Eaſt her turn ſhe ſhines
Revolv'd on Heav'ns great Axle, and her reign
With thouſand leſſer lights dividual holds,
With thouſand thouſand ſtars, that then appear'd
Spangling the Hemiſphere————

One would wonder how the Poet could be ſo conciſe in his Deſcription of the Six Days Works, as to

comprehend them within the bounds of an Epiſode, and at the ſame time ſo particular, as to give us a lively Idea of them. This is ſtill more remarkable in his Account of the Fifth and Sixth Day[s], in which he has drawn out to our view the whole Animal Creation, from the Reptil to the Behemoth. As the Lion and the Leviathan are two of the nobleſt Productions in this World of living Creatures, the Reader will find a moſt exquiſite Spirit of Poetry, in the Account which our Author gives us of them. The Sixth Day concludes with the Formation of Man, upon which the Angel takes occaſion, as he did after the Battel in Heaven, to remind *Adam* of his Obedience, which was the principal Deſign of this his Viſit.

The Poet afterwards repreſents the Meſſiah returning into Heaven, and taking a Survey of his great Work. There is ſomething inexpreſſibly Sublime in this Part of the Poem, where the Author deſcribes that great Period of Time, fill'd with ſo many Glorious Circumſtances; when the Heavens and the Earth were finiſhed; when the Meſſiah aſcended up in Triumph through the Everlaſting Gates; when he look'd down with pleaſure upon his new Creation; when every Part of Nature ſeemed to rejoice in its Exiſtence; when the Morning Stars ſang together, and all the Sons of God ſhouted for Joy.

So Ev'n and Morn accompliſh'd the Sixth day:
Yet not till the Creator from his Work
Deſiſting, tho' unwearied, up return'd,
Up to the Heav'n of Heav'ns his high abode,
Thence to behold this new created world
Th' addition of his empire; how it ſhew'd
In proſpect from his throne, how good, how fair
Anſwering his great Idea. Up he rode
Follow'd with acclamation and the Sound
Symphonious of ten thouſand harps that tun'd
Angelic Harmonies: the earth, the air
Reſounded, (thou remember'ſt, for thou heard'ſt)

The Heavens and all the Conſtellations rung,
The Planets in their Station liſt'ning ſtood,
While the bright pomp aſcended jubilant.
Open, ye everlaſting gates, they ſung,
Open, ye Heav'ns, your living doors, let in
The great Creator from his work return'd
Magnificent, his ſix days work, a World.

I cannot conclude this Book upon the Creation, without mentioning a Poem which has lately appeared under that Title. The Work was undertaken with ſo good an Intention, and is executed with ſo great a Maſtery, that it deſerves to be looked upon as one of the moſt uſeful and noble Productions in our *Engliſh* Verſe. The Reader cannot but be pleaſed to find the Depths of Philoſophy enlivened with all the Charms of Poetry, and to ſee ſo great a Strength of Reaſon, amidſt ſo beautiful a Redundancy of [the] Imagination. The Author has ſhewn us that Deſign in all the Works of Nature, which neceſſarily leads us to the Knowledge of its firſt Cauſe. In ſhort, he has illuſtrated, by numberleſs and inconteſtable Inſtances, that Divine Wiſdom, which the Son of *Sirach* has ſo nobly aſcribed to the Supreme Being in his Formation of the World, when he tells us, that *He created her, and ſaw her, and numbered her, and poured her out upon all his Works.*†

† In the advertisements immediately under this paragraph in the Original issue is the following :—

Lately Publish'd,

Creation. A Philosophical Poem. Demonstrating the Existence and Providence of a God. In Seven Books. By Sir Richard Blackmore, Knt., M.D., and Fellow of the College of Physicians in London, &c. &c.

NUMB. CCCXLV.

The SPECTATOR.

Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius altæ
Deerat adhuc, et quod dominari in cætera posset.
Natus homo est——— Ov. Met.

{*A Creature of a more exalted kind*
Was wanting yet, and then was Man design'd;
Conscious of Thought, of more capacious Breast,
For Empire form'd, and fit to rule the rest. Dryden.}

Saturday, April 5, 1712.

THE Accounts which *Raphael* gives of the Battel of Angels, and the Creation of the World, have in them those Qualifications which the Criticks judge requisite to an Episode. They are nearly related to the principal Action, and have a just Connection with the Fable.

The Eighth Book opens with a beautiful Description of the Impression which this Discourse of the Archangel made on our first Parent. *Adam* afterwards, by a very natural Curiosity, enquires concerning the Motions of those Celestial Bodies which make the most glorious Appearance among the six Days Works. The Poet here, with a great deal of Art, represents *Eve* as withdrawing from this part of their Conversation to Amusements that seem more suitable to her Sex. He well knew, that the Episode in this Book, which is filled with *Adam*'s Account of his Passion and Esteem for *Eve*, would have been improper for her hearing, and has therefore devised very just and beautiful Reasons for her Retiring.

So spake our Sire, and by his Countenance seem'd
Entring on studious thoughts abstruse: which Eve
Perceiving where she sat retired in sight,
With lowliness Majestick from her Seat

And Grace that won who ſaw to wiſh her ſtay,
Roſe, and went forth among her fruits and flowers
To viſit how they proſper'd, bud and bloom,
Her Nurſery; they at her coming ſprung,
And toucht by her fair tendance gladlier grew.
Yet went ſhe not, as not with ſuch diſcourſe
Delighted, or not capable her ear
Of what was high: Such pleaſure ſhe reſerv'd
Adam *relating, ſhe ſole Auditreſs;*
Her Husband the relater ſhe preferr'd
Before the Angel, and of him to ask
Chooſe rather: he, ſhe knew, would intermix
Grateful digreſſions, and ſolve high diſpute
With conjugal Careſſes: from his Lip
Not words alone pleaſed her. O when meet now
Such pairs in Love, and mutual honour join'd?

The Angel's returning a doubtful Anſwer to *Adam*'s Enquiries, was not only proper for the Moral Reaſon which the Poet aſſigns, but becauſe it would have been highly abſurd to have given the Sanction of an Archangel to any particular Syſtem of Philoſophy. The chief Points in the *Ptolemaic* and *Copernican* Hypotheſis are deſcribed with great Conciſeneſs and Perſpicuity, and at the ſame time dreſſed in very pleaſing and Poetical Images.

Adam, to detain the Angel, enters afterwards upon his own Hiſtory, and relates to him the Circumſtances in which he found himſelf upon his Creation; as alſo his Converſation with his Maker, and his firſt Meeting with *Eve*. There is no part of the Poem more apt to raiſe the attention of the Reader, than this Diſcourſe of our great Anceſtor; as nothing can be more ſurprizing and delightful to us, than to hear the Sentiments that aroſe in the firſt Man while he was yet new and freſh from the hands of his Creator. The Poet has interwoven every thing which is delivered upon this Subject in Holy Writ with ſo many beautiful Imaginations of his own, that nothing can be conceived

more juſt and natural than this whole Epiſode. As our Author knew this Subject could not but be agreeable to his Reader, he would not throw it into the relation of the ſix Days Works, but reſerved it for a diſtinct Epiſode, that he might have an opportunity of expatiating upon it more at large. Before I enter on this part of the Poem, I cannot but take notice of two ſhining Paſſages in the Dialogue between *Adam* and the Angel. The firſt is that wherein our Anceſtor gives an Account of the Pleaſure he took in converſing with him, which contains a very noble Moral.

For while I ſit with thee, I ſeem in Heav'n,
And ſweeter thy diſcourſe is to my ear
Than fruits of Palm-tree pleaſanteſt to thirſt
And hunger both, from labour, at the hour
Of ſweet repaſt; they ſatiate, and ſoon fill,
Tho' pleaſant, but thy words with Grace divine
Imbu'd, bring to their ſweetneſs no ſatiety.

The other I ſhall mention is that in which the Angel gives a reaſon why he ſhould be glad to hear the Story *Adam* was about to relate.

For I that day was abſent, as befell,
Bound on a Voyage uncouth and obſcure,
Far on excurſion towards the Gates of Hell;
Squar'd in full Legion (ſuch command we had)
To ſee that none thence iſſued forth a Spy,
Or enemy, while God was in his work,
Leſt he incenſt at ſuch eruption bold,
Deſtruction with Creation might have mix'd.

There is no queſtion but our Poet drew the Image in what follows from that in *Virgil*'s Sixth Book, where *Æneas* and the Sibyl ſtand before the *Adamantine* Gates which are there deſcrib'd as ſhut upon the place of Torments, and liſten to the Groans, the clank of Chains, and the noiſe of Iron Whips that were heard in thoſe Regions of Pain and Sorrow.

————Faſt we found, faſt ſhut
The diſmal gates, and barricadoed ſtrong;

But long e'er our approaching heard within
Noiſe, other than the ſound of Dance or Song,
Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.

Adam then proceeds to give an Account of his Condition and Sentiments immediately after his Creation. How agreeably does he repreſent the poſture in which he found himſelf, the beautiful Landſkip that ſurrounded him, and the gladneſs of Heart which grew up in him on that occaſion.

——As new waked from ſoundeſt ſleep
Soft on the flowry herb I found me laid
In balmy ſweat, which with his beams the Sun
Soon dried, and on the reeking moiſture fed.
Streight toward Heav'n my wondering eyes I turn'd.
And gaz'd a while the ample Sky, 'till rais'd
By quick inſtinctive motion up I ſprung
As thitherward endeavouring, and upright
Stood on my feet; about me round I ſaw
Hill, Dale, and ſhady woods and ſunny plains,
And liquid lapſe of murmuring ſtreams; by theſe
Creatures that liv'd, and mov'd, and walk'd, or flew,
Birds on the branches warbling; all things ſmil'd:
With fragrance, and with Joy my heart overflow'd.

Adam is afterwards deſcribed as ſurpriz'd at his own Exiſtence, and taking a Survey of himſelf, and of all the Works of Nature. He likewiſe is repreſented as diſcovering by the Light of Reaſon, that he and every thing about him muſt have been the effect of ſome Being infinitely good and powerful, and that this Being had a Right to his Worſhip and Adoration. His firſt addreſs to the Sun, and to thoſe parts of the Creation which made the moſt diſtinguiſhed Figure, is very natural and amuſing to the Imagination.

——Thou Sun, ſaid I, fair Light,
And thou enlight'ned earth, ſo freſh and gay,
Ye Hills and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods and Plains,
And ye that live and move, fair creatures tell,
Tell if you ſaw, how came I thus, how here?

His next Sentiment, when upon his firſt going to Sleep he fancies himſelf loſing his Exiſtence, and falling away into nothing, can never be ſufficiently admired. His Dream, in which he ſtill preſerves the Conſciouſneſs of his Exiſtence, together with his removal into the Garden which was prepared for his Reception, are alſo Circumſtances finely imagined, and grounded upon what is delivered in Sacred Story.

Theſe and the like wonderful Incidents, in this Part of the Work, have in them all the Beauties of Novelty, at the ſame time that they have all the Graces of Nature. They are ſuch as none but a great Genius could have thought of, though, upon the peruſal of them, they ſeem to riſe of themſelves from the Subject of which he treats. In a Word, though they are natural they are not obvious, which is the true Character of all fine Writing.

The Impreſſion which the Interdiction of the Tree of Life left in the Mind of our firſt Parent, is deſcribed with great Strength and Judgment, as the Image of the ſeveral Beaſts and Birds paſſing in review before him is very beautiful and lively.

———Each Bird and Beaſt behold
Approaching two and two, theſe cowring low
With blandiſhment; each bird ſtoop'd on his Wing:
I nam'd them as they paſs'd———

Adam, in the next place, deſcribes a Conference which he held with his Maker upon the Subject of Solitude. The Poet here repreſents the Supreme Being, as making an Eſſay of his own Work, and putting to the tryal that reaſoning Faculty, with which he had endued his Creature. *Adam* urges, in this divine Colloquy, the Impoſſibility of his being happy, tho' he was the Inhabitant of *Paradiſe*, and Lord of the whole Creation, without the Converſation and Society of ſome rational Creature, who ſhould partake thoſe Bleſſings with him. This Dialogue, which is ſupported chiefly by the Beauty of the Thoughts, without other Poetical

Ornaments, is as fine a part as any in the whole Poem: The more the Reader examines the juſtneſs and delicacy of its Sentiments, the more he will find himſelf pleaſed with it. The Poet has wonderfully preſerved the Character of Majeſty and Condeſcention in the Creator, and at the ſame time that of Humility and Adoration in the Creature, as particularly in thoſe beautiful Lines.

Thus I preſumptuous; and the Viſion bright,
As with a ſmile more brightned, thus reply'd. &c.
——— I with leave of ſpeech implor'd
And humble deprecation thus reply'd,
Let not my Words offend thee, Heav'nly power,
My maker, be propitious while I ſpeak &c.

Adam then proceeds to give an account of his ſecond Sleep, and of the Dream in which he beheld the Formation of *Eve*. The new Paſſion that was awakened in him at the ſight of her is touched very finely.

Under his forming hands a Creature grew,
Manlike, but different Sex; ſo lovely fair,
That what ſeem'd fair in all the World ſeem'd now
Mean, or in her ſumm'd up, in her contain'd,
And in her looks; which from that time infus'd
Sweetneſs into my heart, unfelt before,
And into all things from her air inſpir'd
The ſpirit of Love and amorous delight.

Adam's Diſtreſs upon loſing ſight of this beautiful Phantom, with his Exclamations of Joy and Gratitude at the Diſcovery of a real Creature, who reſembled the Apparition which had been preſented to him in his Dream; the Approaches he makes to her, and his manner of Courtſhip, are all laid together in a moſt exquiſite Propriety of Sentiments.

Tho' this part of the Poem is work'd up with great Warmth and Spirit, the Love, which is deſcribed in it, is every way ſuitable to a State of Innocence. If the Reader compares the Deſcription which *Adam* here gives of his leading *Eve* to the Nuptial Bower, with

that which Mr. *Dryden* has made on the ſame Occaſion in a Scene of his *Fall of Man*, he will be ſenſible of the great Care which *Milton* took to avoid all Thoughts on ſo delicate a Subject, that might be offenſive to Religion or Good-manners. The Sentiments are chaſte, but not cold, and convey to the Mind Ideas of the moſt tranſporting Paſſion, and of the greateſt Purity. What a noble Mixture of Rapture and Innocence has the Author joined together, in the Reflection which *Adam* makes on the Pleaſures of Love, compared to thoſe of Senſe.

Thus have I told thee all my State, and brought
My Story to the Sum of earthly bliſs
Which I enjoy, and muſt confeſs to find
In all things elſe delight indeed, but ſuch
As us'd or not, works in the mind no change,
Nor vehement deſire; theſe delicacies
I mean of taſte, ſight, ſmell, herbs, fruits and flowers.
Walks, and the melody of Birds; but here
Far otherwiſe, tranſported I behold,
Tranſported touch; here paſſion firſt I felt,
Commotion ſtrange, in all enjoyments elſe
Superiour and unmov'd, here only weak
Againſt the Charm of beauties powerfull glance.
Or nature fail'd in me, and left ſome part
Not proof enough ſuch object to ſuſtain,
Or from my ſide ſubducing, took perhaps
More than enough; at leaſt on her beſtow'd
Too much of ornament, in outward ſhew
Elaborate, of inward leſs exact.
——————*When I approach*
Her lovelineſs, ſo abſolute ſhe ſeems
And in herſelf compleat, ſo well to know
Her own, that what ſhe wills to do or ſay,
Seems wiſeſt, virtuouſeſt, diſcreeteſt, beſt:
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 loveliеſt, and create an awe
About her, as a guard Angelick plac'd.

Theſe Sentiments of Love, in our firſt Parent, gave the Angel ſuch an Inſight into Humane Nature, that he ſeems apprehenſive of the Evils which might befall the Species in general, as well as *Adam* in particular, from the Exceſs of this Paſſion. He therefore fortifies him againſt it by timely Admonitions ; which very artfully prepare the Mind of the Reader for the Occurrences of the next Book, where the Weakneſs of which *Adam* here gives ſuch diſtant diſcoveries, brings about that fatal Event which is the Subject of the Poem. His Diſcourſe, which follows the gentle Rebuke he receiv'd from the Angel, ſhews that his Love, however violent it might appear, was ſtill founded in Reaſon, and conſequently not improper for *Paradiſe.*

Neither her outſide form ſo fair, nor ought
In procreation common to all kinds
(*Though higher of the genial bed by far,*
And with myſterious reverence I deem)
So much delights me as thoſe graceful acts,
Thoſe thouſand decencies that daily flow
From all her words and actions mixt with love
And ſweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
Union of mind, or in us both one Soul ;
Harmony to behold in wedded pair.

Adam's Speech, at parting with the Angel, has in it a Deference and Gratitude agreeable to an Inferior Nature, and at the ſame time a certain Dignity and Greatneſs, ſuitable to the Father of Mankind in his State of Innocence.

NUMB. CCCLI.

The SPECTATOR.

———*In te omnis domus inclinata recumbit.* Virg.

{*On thee the Fortunes of our Houſe depend.*}

Saturday, April 12. 1712.

IF we look into the three great Heroic Poems which have appear'd in the World, we may obſerve that they are built upon very ſlight Foundations. *Homer* lived near 300 Years after the *Trojan* War, and, as the Writing of Hiſtory was not then in uſe among the *Greeks*, we may very well ſuppoſe, that the Tradition of *Achilles* and *Ulyſſes* had brought down but very few Particulars to his Knowledge, tho' there is no queſtion but he has wrought into his two Poems ſuch of their remarkable Adventures as were ſtill talked of among his Contemporaries.

The Story of *Æneas*, on which *Virgil* founded his Poem, was likewiſe very bare of Circumſtances, and by that means afforded him an Opportunity of embelliſhing it with Fiction, and giving a full Range to his own Invention. We find, however, that he has interwoven, in the courſe of his Fable, the principal Particulars, which were generally believed among the *Romans*, of *Æneas* his Voyage and Settlement in *Italy*.

The Reader may find an Abridgment of the whole Story, as collected out of the Ancient Hiſtorians, and as it was received among the *Romans*, in *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus*.

Since none of the Criticks have conſidered *Virgil*'s Fable, with relation to this Hiſtory of *Æneas*, it may

not, perhaps, be amiſs to examine it in this Light, ſo far as regards my preſent Purpoſe. Whoever looks into the Abridgment abovementioned, will find that the Character of *Æneas* is filled with Piety to the Gods, and a ſuperſtitious Obſervation of Prodigies, Oracles, and Predictions. *Virgil* has not only preſerved this Character in the Perſon of *Æneas*, but has given a place in his Poem to thoſe particular Prophecies which he found recorded of him in Hiſtory and Tradition. The Poet took the matters of Fact as they came down to him, and circumſtanced them after his own manner, to make them appear the more natural, agreeable or ſurpriſing. I believe very many Readers have been ſhocked at that ludicrous Prophecy, which one of the *Harpyes* pronounces to the *Trojans* in the Third Book, namely, that before they had built their Intended City, they ſhould be reduced by Hunger to eat their very Tables. But, when they heard that this was one of the Circumſtances that had been tranſmitted to the *Romans* in the Hiſtory of *Æneas*, they will think the Poet did very well in taking notice of it. The Hiſtorian abovementioned, acquaints us that a Propheteſs had foretold *Æneas*, that he ſhould take his Voyage Weſtward, till his Companions ſhould eat their Tables, and that accordingly, upon his landing in *Italy*, as they were eating their Fleſh upon Cakes of Bread, for want of other Conveniences, they afterwards fed on the Cakes themſelves, upon which one of the Company ſaid merrily, 'We are eating our Tables.' They immediately took the Hint, ſays the Hiſtorian, and concluded the Prophecy to be fulfilled. As *Virgil* did not think it proper to omit ſo material a Particular in the Hiſtory of *Æneas*, it may be worth while to conſider with how much Judgment he has qualified it, and taken off every thing that might have appeared improper for a Paſſage in an Heroic Poem. The Propheteſs who foretells it is an hungry *Harpy*, as the Perſon who diſcovers it is young *Aſcanius*.

Heus etiam menſas conſumimus inquit Iulius!

Such an Obſervation, which is beautiful in the mouth of a Boy, would have been ridiculous from any other of the Company. I am apt to think that the changing of the *Trojan* Fleet into Water-Nymphs, which is the moſt violent Machine of the whole *Eneid*, and has given Offence to ſeveral Critics, may be accounted for the ſame way. *Virgil* himſelf, before he begins that Relation, premiſes that what he was going to tell appeared incredible, but that it was juſtified by Tradition. What further confirms me that this change of the Fleet was a celebrated Circumſtance in the Hiſtory of *Æneas*, is, that *Ovid* has given a place to the ſame *Metamorphoſis* in his account of the Heathen Mythology.

None of the Criticks, I have met with, having conſidered the Fable of the *Æneid* in this Light, and taken notice how the Tradition, on which it was founded, authorizes thoſe Parts in it which appear the moſt Exceptionable; I hope the Length of this Reflection will not make it unacceptable to the curious Part of my Readers.

The Hiſtory, which was the Baſis of *Milton*'s Poem, is ſtill ſhorter than either that of the *Iliad* or *Æneid*. The Poet has likewiſe taken care to inſert every Circumſtance of it in the Body of his Fable. The Ninth Book, which we are here to conſider, is raiſed upon that brief Account in Scripture, wherein we are told that the Serpent was more ſubtile than any Beaſt of the Field, that he tempted the Woman to eat of the Forbidden Fruit, that ſhe was overcome by this Temptation, and that *Adam* followed her Example. From theſe few Particulars *Milton* has formed one of the moſt Entertaining Fables that Invention ever produced. He has diſpoſed of theſe ſeveral Circumſtances among ſo many beautiful and natural Fictions of his own, that his whole Story looks only like a Comment upon ſacred Writ, or rather ſeems to be a full

and compleat Relation of what the other is only an Epitome. I have inſiſted the longer on this Conſideration, as I look upon the Diſpoſition and Contrivance of the Fable to be the Principal Beauty of the Ninth Book, which has more *Story* in it, and is fuller of Incidents, than any other in the whole Poem. *Satan*'s traverſing the Globe, and ſtill keeping within the Shadow of the Night, as fearing to be diſcovered by the Angel of the Sun, who had before detected him, is one of thoſe beautiful Imaginations [with] which [he] introduces this his ſecond Series of Adventures. Having examined the Nature of every Creature, and found out one which was the moſt proper for his Purpoſe, he again returns to Paradiſe; and, to avoid Diſcovery, ſinks by Night with a River that ran under the Garden, and riſes up again through a Fountain that iſſued from it by the Tree of Life. The Poet, who, as we have before taken notice, ſpeaks as little as poſſible in his own Perſon, and, after the example of *Homer*, fills every Part of his Work with Manners and Characters, introduces a Soliloquy of this Infernal Agent, who was thus reſtleſs in the Deſtruction of Man. He is then deſcrib'd as gliding through the Garden under the reſemblance of a Miſt, in order to find out that Creature in which he deſign'd to tempt our firſt Parents. This Deſcription has ſomething in it very Poetical and Surprizing.

So ſaying, through each thicket Dank or Dry
Like a black Miſt, low creeping, he held on
His Midnight Search, where ſooneſt he might find
The Serpent: him faſt ſleeping ſoon he found
In Labyrinth of many a round ſelf-roll'd,
His head the midſt, well ſtor'd with ſubtle wiles.

The Author afterwards gives us a Deſcription of the Morning, which is wonderfully ſuitable to a Divine Poem, and peculiar to that firſt Seaſon of Nature; he repreſents the Earth before it was curſt, as a great Altar breathing out its Incenſe from all parts, and

ſending up a pleaſant Savour to the Noſtrils of its Creator; to which he adds a noble Idea of *Adam* and *Eve*, as offering their Morning Worſhip, and filling up the univerſal Conſort of Praiſe and Adoration.

Now when as ſacred light began to dawn
In Eden *on the humid flowers, that breathed*
Their morning incenſe, when all things that breath
From th' Earth's great Altar ſend up ſilent praiſe
To the Creatour, and his noſtrils fill
With grateful ſmell, forth came the human pair
And joyn'd their vocal worſhip to the Choir
Of Creatures wanting voice————

The Diſpute which follows between our two firſt Parents is repreſented with great Art: It ariſes [proceeds] from a difference of Judgment, not of Paſſion, and is managed with Reaſon, not with Heat; it is ſuch a Diſpute as we may ſuppoſe might have happened in *Paradiſe*, had Man continued Happy and Innocent. There is a great Delicacy in the Moralities which are interſperſed in *Adam*'s Diſcourſe, and which the moſt ordinary Reader cannot but take notice of. That force of Love which the Father of Mankind ſo finely deſcribes in the Eighth Book, and which I inſerted in my laſt *Saturday*'s Paper, ſhews it ſelf here in many beautiful Inſtances: As in thoſe fond Regards he caſts towards *Eve* at her parting from him.

Her long with ardent look his eye purſued
Delighted but deſiring more her ſtay.
Oft he to her his charge of quick return
Repeated, ſhe to him as oft engaged
To be return'd by noon amid the Bowre.

In his impatience and amuſement during her Abſence.

————Adam *the while*
Waiting deſirous her return, had wove
Of choiceſt flowers a Garland to adorn
Her Treſſes, and her rural labours crown,

As Reapers oft are wont their Harveſt Queen.
Great Joy he promiſed to his thoughts, and new
Solace in her return, ſo long delay'd;

But particularly in that paſſionate Speech, where ſeeing her irrecoverably loſt, he reſolves to periſh with her, rather than to live without her.

——————Some curſed fraud
Or enemy hath beguil'd thee, yet unknown,
And me with thee hath ruin'd; for with thee
Certain my reſolution is to die;
How can I live without thee, how forego
Thy ſweet converſe and love ſo dearly join'd,
To live again in theſe wild woods forlorn?
Should God create another Eve, *and I*
Another rib afford, yet loſs of thee
Would never from my heart; no, no, I feel
The link of nature draw me: Fleſh of Fleſh,
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy State
Mine never ſhall be parted Bliſs or Woe.

The beginning of this Speech, and the Preparation to it, are animated with the ſame Spirit as the Concluſion, which I have here quoted.

The ſeveral Wiles which are put in Practice by the Tempter, when he found *Eve* ſeparated from her Husband, the many pleaſing Images of Nature, which are intermixt in this part of the Story, with its gradual and regular Progreſs to the fatal Cataſtrophe, are ſo very remarkable, that it would be ſuperfluous to point out their ſeveral [reſpective] Beauties.

I have avoided mentioning any particular Similitudes in my Remarks on this great Work, becauſe I have given a general account of them in my Paper on the Firſt Book. There is one, however, in this part of the Poem which I ſhall here quote, as it is not only very beautiful, but the cloſeſt of any in the whole Poem; I mean that where the Serpent is deſcrib'd as rolling forward in all his Pride, animated by the evil

Spirit, and conducting *Eve* to her Deſtruction, while *Adam* was at too great a diſtance from her, to give her his Aſſiſtance. Theſe ſeveral Particulars are all of them wrought into the following Similitude.

——————Hope elevates, and Joy
Brighten's his Creſt, as when a wand'ring fire
Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night
Condenſes, and the cold invirons round,
Kindled through agitation to a flame,
(Which oft, they ſay, ſome evil ſpirit attends)
Hovering and blazing with deluſive light,
Miſleads th' amaz'd Night-wanderer from his way
To boggs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,
There ſwallow'd up and loſt, from ſuccour far:

That ſecret Intoxication of Pleaſure, with all thoſe tranſient fluſhings of Guilt and Joy which the Poet repreſents in our firſt Parents upon their eating the forbidden Fruit, to thoſe flaggings of Spirit, damps of Sorrow and mutual Accuſations which ſucceed it, are conceiv'd with a wonderful Imagination, and deſcribed in very natural Sentiments.

When *Dido* in the Fourth *Æneid* yielded to that fatal Temptation which ruin'd her, *Virgil* tells us, the Earth trembled, the Heavens were filled with flaſhes of Lightning, and the Nymphs howl'd upon the Mountain Tops. *Milton*, in the ſame Poetical Spirit, has deſcrib'd all Nature as diſturbed upon *Eve*'s eating the forbidden Fruit.

So ſaying, her raſh hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the Fruit, ſhe plucked, ſhe eat:
Earth felt the wound, and nature from her Seat
Sighing through all her works gave ſigns of Woe
That all was loſt——————

Upon *Adam's* falling into the ſame Guilt, the whole Creation appears a ſecond time in Convulſions.

——————He ſcrupl'd not to eat
Againſt his better knowledge; not deceiv'd,

But fondly overcome with Female charm.
Earth trembled from her Entrails, as again
In pangs, and nature gave a ſecond groan,
Sky lowred and muttering thunder, ſome ſad drops
Wept at compleating of the mortal Sin———

As all Nature ſuffer'd by the guilt of our firſt Parents, theſe Symptoms of Trouble and Conſternation are wonderfully imagin'd, not only as Prodigies, but as Marks of her Sympathizing in the Fall of Man.

Adam's Converſe with *Eve*, after having eaten the forbidden Fruit, is an exact Copy of that between *Jupiter* and *Juno*, in the Fourteenth *Iliad*. *Juno* there approaches *Jupiter* with the Girdle which ſhe had received from *Venus*, upon which he tells her, that ſhe appeared more charming and deſirable than ſhe ever had done before, even when their Loves were at the higheſt. The Poet afterwards deſcribes them as repoſing on a Summet of Mount *Ida*, which produced under them a Bed of Flowers, the *Lotus*, the *Crocus*, and the *Hyacinth*, and concludes his Deſcription with their falling a-ſleep.

Let the Reader compare this with the following Paſſage in *Milton*, which begins with *Adam's* Speech to *Eve*.

For never did thy Beauty ſince the Day
I ſaw thee firſt and wedded thee, adorn'd
With all Perfections ſo inflame my Senſe
With ardor to enjoy thee, fairer now
Than ever, bounty of this virtuous Tree.
So ſaid he, and forbore not glance or toy
Of amorous intent, well underſtood
Of Eve, *whoſe Eye darted contagious fire.*
Her hand he ſeiſed, and to a ſhady bank
Thick over-head with verdant roof embowr'd
He led her nothing loth: Flow'rs were the Couch,
Panſies, and Violets, and Aſphodel,
And Hyacinth, Earth's freſheſt ſofteſt lap.
There they their fill of Love, and Loves diſport

Took largely, of their mutual guilt the Seal,
The Solace of their Sin, 'till dewy ſleep
Oppreſs'd them————————

As no Poet ſeems ever to have ſtudied *Homer* more, or to have reſembled him in the greatneſs of Genius than *Milton*, I think I ſhou'd have given but a very imperfect Account of his Beauties, if I had not obſerved the moſt remarkable Paſſages which look like Parallels in theſe two great Authors. I might, in the Courſe of theſe Criticiſms, have taken notice of many particular Lines and Expreſſions which are tranſlated from the *Greek* Poet, but as I thought this would have appeared too minute and over-curious, I have purpoſely omitted them. The greater Incidents, however, are not only ſet off by being ſhown in the ſame Light, with ſeveral of the ſame Nature in *Homer*, but by that means may be alſo guarded againſt the Cavils of the Taſteleſs or Ignorant.

NUMB. CCCLVII.

The SPECTATOR.

†*Reddere perſonæ ſcit convenientia cuique.* Hor.
{*He knows what beſt befits each character.*}

[————————*quis talia fando*
Temperet à lachrymis?———— Virg.]
{*Who can relate ſuch Woes without a Tear?*}

Saturday, April 19. 1712.

THE Tenth Book of *Paradiſe Loſt* has a greater variety of Perſons in it than any other in the whole Poem. The Author upon the winding up of his Action introduces all thoſe who had any Concern in it, and ſhews with great Beauty the influence which it had upon each of them. It is like the laſt Act of a well written Tragedy, in which all who had a part in it are generally drawn up before the Audience, and repreſented under thoſe Circumſtances in which the determination of the Action places them.

I ſhall therefore conſider this Book under four Heads, in relation to the Celeſtial, the Infernal, the Human, and the Imaginary Perſons, who have their reſpective Parts allotted in it.

To begin with the Celeſtial Perſons: The Guardian Angels of *Paradiſe* are deſcribed as returning to Heaven upon the Fall of Man, in order to approve their Vigilance; their Arrival, their manner of Reception, with the Sorrow which appeared in themſelves, and in thoſe Spirits who are ſaid to Rejoice at the Converſion of a Sinner, are very finely laid together in the following Lines.

Up into Heav'n from Paradiſe in haſte
Th' angelick guards aſcended, mute and ſad
For man, for of his ſtate by this they knew
Much wond'ring how the ſubtle Fiend had ſtoln

† This motto was changed in second edition for the one below it.

Entrance unſeen. Soon as th' unwelcome news
From earth arriv'd at Heaven Gate, diſpleas'd
All were who heard, dim ſadneſs did not ſpare
That time Celeſtial viſages, yet mixt
With pity, violated not their bliſs.
About the new-arriv'd, in multitudes
Th' Æthereal people ran, to hear and know
How all befell: They tow'rds the throne ſupreame
Accountable made haſte to make appear
With righteous plea, their utmoſt vigilance,
And eaſily approv'd; when the moſt High
Eternal father from his ſecret cloud,
Amidſt in thunder utter'd thus his voice.

The ſame Divine Perſon who in the foregoing parts of this Poem interceded for our firſt Parents before their Fall, overthrew the rebel Angels, and created the World, is now repreſented as deſcending to *Paradiſe*, and pronouncing Sentence upon the three Offenders. The cool of the Evening, being a Circumſtance with which Holy Writ introduces this great Scene, it is Poetically deſcribed by our Author, who has alſo kept religiouſly to the form of Words, in which the three ſeveral Sentences were paſſed upon *Adam*, *Eve*, and the Serpent. He has rather choſen to neglect the numerouſneſs of his Verſe, than to deviate from thoſe Speeches which are recorded on this great occaſion. The Guilt and Confuſion of our firſt Parents ſtanding naked before their Judge, is touch'd with great Beauty. Upon the Arrival of *Sin* and *Death* into the Works of the Creation, the Almighty is again introduced as ſpeaking to his Angels that ſurrounded him.

See with what heat theſe Dogs of Hell advance
To waſte and havock yonder world, which I
So fair and good created, &c.

The following Paſſage is formed upon that glorious Image in Holy Writ which compares the Voice of an innumerable Hoſt of Angels, uttering Hallelujahs, to the Voice of mighty Thunderings, or of many Waters.

He ended, and the Heav'nly Audience loud
Sung Hallelujah, as the ſound of Seas,
Through multitude that ſung: Juſt are thy ways,
Righteous are thy Decrees in all thy Works,
Who can extenuate thee?———

Though the Author in the whole courſe of his Poem, and particularly in the Book we are now examining, has infinite Alluſions to places of Scripture, I have only taken notice in my Remarks of ſuch as are of a Poetical Nature, and which are woven with great Beauty into the Body of his [this] Fable. Of this kind is that Paſſage in the preſent Book, where deſcribing *Sin* [and *Death*] as marching through the Works of Nature, he adds,

———Behind her Death
Cloſe following pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horſe:———————

Which alludes to that Paſſage in Scripture ſo wonderfully Poetical, and terrifying to the Imagination. *And I looked, and behold, a pale Horſe, and his Name that ſat on him was* Death, *and* Hell *followed with him: and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with ſword, and with hunger, and with ſickneſs, and with the beaſts of the earth.* Under this firſt head of Celeſtial Perſons we muſt likewiſe take notice of the Command which the Angels received, to produce [the] ſeveral Changes in Nature, and ſully the Beauty of the Creation. Accordingly they are repreſented as infecting the Stars and Planets with malignant Influences, weakning the Light of the Sun, bringing down the Winter into the milder Regions of Nature, planting Winds and Storms in ſeveral Quarters of the Sky, ſtoring the Clouds with Thunder, and in ſhort, perverting the whole frame of the Univerſe to the condition of its Criminal inhabitants. As this is a noble Incident in the Poem, the following Lines, in which we ſee the Angels heaving up the Earth, and

placing it in a different poſture to the Sun from what it had before the Fall of Man, is conceived with that ſublime Imagination which was ſo peculiar to this great Author.

Some ſay he bid his angels turn aſcanſe
The Poles of earth twice ten degrees and more
From the Sun's Axle; they with labour puſh'd
Oblique the Centrick Globe———

We are in the ſecond place to conſider the Infernal Agents under the View which *Milton* has given us of them in this Book. It is obſerved by thoſe who would ſet forth the Greatneſs of *Virgil*'s Plan, that he conducts his Reader thro' all the Parts of the Earth which were diſcover'd in his time. *Aſia*, *Africk* and *Europe* are the ſeveral Scenes of his Fable. The Plan of *Milton*'s Poem is of an infinitely greater extent, and fills the Mind with many more aſtoniſhing Circumſtances. *Satan*, having ſurrounded the Earth ſeven times, departs at length from *Paradiſe*. We afterwards [then] ſee him ſteering his Courſe among the Conſtellations, and after having traverſed the whole Creation, purſuing his Voyage through the *Chaos*, and entering into his own Infernal Dominions.

His firſt appearance in the Aſſembly of Fallen Angels is work'd up with Circumſtances which give a delightful Surprize to the Reader; but there is no Incident in the whole Poem which does this more than the Transformation of the whole Audience, that follows the account their Leader gives them of his Expedition. The gradual change of *Satan* himſelf is deſcribed after *Ovid*'s manner, and may vie with any of thoſe celebrated Transformations which are looked upon as the moſt beautiful parts in that Poet's Works. *Milton* never fails of improving his own Hints, and beſtowing the laſt finiſhing Touches to every Incident which is admitted into his Poem. The unexpected Hiſs which riſes in this Epiſode, the Dimenſions and Bulk of *Satan* ſo much ſuperior to thoſe of the Infernal Spirits who lay under the ſame Transformation, with the

annual Change which they are ſuppoſed to ſuffer, are Inſtances of this kind. The Beauty of the Diction is very remarkable in this whole Epiſode, as I have obſerved in the Sixth Paper of theſe my Remarks the great Judgment with which it was contrived.

The Parts of *Adam* and *Eve*, or the Humane Perſons, come next under our Conſideration. *Milton*'s Art is no where more ſhewn than in his conducting the parts of theſe our firſt Parents. The Repreſentation he gives of them, without falſifying the Story, is wonderfully contrived to influence the Reader with Pity and Compaſſion towards them. Tho' *Adam* involves the whole Species in Miſery, his Crime proceeds from a Weakneſs which every Man is inclin'd to pardon and commiſerate, as it ſeems rather the frailty of Humane Nature, than of the Perſon who offended. Every one is apt to excuſe a Fault which he himſelf might have fallen into. It was the Exceſs of Love for *Eve* that ruined *Adam* and his Poſterity. I need not add, that the Author is juſtified in this particular by many of the Fathers, and the moſt Orthodox Writers. *Milton* has by this means filled a great part of his Poem with that kind of Writing which the *French* Criticks call the *Tender*, and which is in a particular manner engaging to all ſorts of Readers.

Adam and *Eve*, in the Book we are now conſidering, are likewiſe drawn with ſuch Sentiments as do not only intereſt the Reader in their Afflictions, but raiſe in him the moſt melting Paſſions of Humanity and Commiſeration. When *Adam* ſees the ſeveral Changes in Nature produced about him, he appears in a diſorder of Mind ſuitable to one who had forfeited both his Innocence and his Happineſs. He is filled with Horror, Remorſe, Deſpair; in the anguiſh of his Heart he expoſtulates with his Creator for giving [having given] him an unasked Exiſtence.

Did I requeſt thee, Maker, from my Clay
To mould me Man, did I ſolicit thee
From darkneſs to promote me, or here place

In this delicious Garden? as my will
Concurr'd not to my being, 'twere but right
And equal to reduce me to my duſt,
Deſirous to reſign, and render back
All I receiv'd———

He immediately after recovers from his Preſumption, owns his Doom to be juſt, and begs that the Death which is threaten'd him may be inflicted on him.

——————Why delays
His hand to execute what his decree
Fix'd on this day? Why do I overlive,
Why am I mock'd with Death, and lengthen'd out
To Deathleſs pain? how gladly would I meet
Mortality my Sentence, and be earth
Inſenſible, how glad would lay me down
As in my mothers lap? there ſhould I reſt
And ſleep ſecure; his dreadful voice no more
Would thunder in my ears, no fear of worſe
To me and to my off-ſpring, would torment me
With cruel expectation.————

This whole Speech is full of the like Emotion, and varied with all thoſe Sentiments which we may ſuppoſe natural to a Mind ſo broken and diſturb'd. I muſt not omit that generous Concern which our firſt Father ſhows in it for his Poſterity, and which is ſo proper to affect the Reader.

————Hide me from the face
Of God, whom to behold was then my height
Of Happineſs: yet well, if here would end
The miſery, I deſerv'd it, and would bear
My own deſervings; but this will not ſerve;
All that I eat, or drink, or ſhall beget,
Is propagated Curſe. O voice once heard
Delightfully, encreaſe *and* multiply,
Now Death to hear!————
————————In me all
Poſterity ſtands curſt: Fair Patrimony
That I muſt leave you, Sons; O were I able
To waſte it all my ſelf, and leave you none!

So diſinherited how would you bleſs
Me now your curſe! Ah, why ſhould all Mankind
For one Mans fault thus guiltleſs be conaemn'd
If guiltleſs? But from me what can proceed
But all corrupt————

Who can afterwards behold the Father of Mankind extended upon the Earth, uttering his Midnight Complaints, bewailing his Exiſtence, and wiſhing for Death, without ſympathizing with him in his Diſtreſs?

Thus Adam *to himſelf lamented loud*
Through the ſtill night, not now, as e're man fell
Wholeſome and cool and mild, but with black Air
Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom
Which to his evil Conſcience repreſented
All things with double terrour: on the Ground
Outſtretch'd he lay, on the cold ground, and oft
Curs'd his Creation, Death as oft accus'd
Of tardy execution.————

The Part of *Eve* in this Book is no leſs paſſionate, and apt to ſway the Reader in her Favour. She is repreſented with great Tenderneſs as approaching *Adam*, but is ſpurn'd from him with a Spirit of Upbraiding and Indignation conformable to the Nature of Man, whoſe Paſſions had now gained the Dominion over him. The following Paſſage, wherein ſhe is deſcribed as renewing her Addreſſes to him, with the whole Speech that follows it, have ſomething in them exquiſitely moving and pathetick.

He aaded not, and from her turn'd: but Eve
Not ſo repulſt, with tears that ceas'd not flowing
And treſſes all diſorder'd, at his Feet
Fell humble, and embracing them, beſought
His peace, and thus proceeding in her plaint.
Forſake me not thus Adam, *witneſs Heav'n*
What love ſincere and revrence in my heart
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
Unhappily deceiv'd; thy Suppliant
I beg, and claſp thy knees; bereave me not,
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,

Thy counſel in this uttermoſt diſtreſs,
My only ſtrength and ſtay: Forlorn of thee
Whither ſhall I betake me, where ſubſiſt?
While yet we live ſcarce one ſhort hour perhaps,
Between us two let there be peace, &c.

Adam's Reconcilement to her is worked up in the ſame Spirit of Tenderneſs. *Eve* afterwards propoſes to her Huſband, in the Blindneſs of her Deſpair, that to prevent their Guilt from deſcending upon Poſterity they ſhould reſolve to live Childleſs; or, if that could not be done, that they ſhould ſeek their own Deaths by violent Methods. As thoſe Sentiments naturally engage the Reader to regard the Mother of Mankind with more than ordinary Commiſeration, they likewiſe contain a very fine Moral. The Reſolution of dying to end our Miſeries does not ſhew ſuch a degree of Magnanimity as a Reſolution to bear them, and ſubmit to the Diſpenſations of Providence. Our Author has therefore, with great Delicacy, repreſented *Eve* as entertaining this Thought, and *Adam* as diſapproving it.

We are, in the laſt place, to conſider the Imaginary Perſons, or *Sin* and *Death*, who act a large part in this Book. Such beautiful extended Allegories are certainly ſome of the fineſt Compoſitions of Genius; but, as I have before obſerved, are not agreeable to the Nature of an Heroic Poem. This of *Sin* and *Death* is very exquiſite in its kind, if not conſidered as a Part of ſuch a Work. The Truths contained in it are ſo clear and open that I ſhall not loſe time in explaining them, but ſhall only obſerve, that a Reader who knows the ſtrength of the *Engliſh* Tongue will be amazed to think how the Poet could find ſuch apt Words and Phraſes to deſcribe the Action[s] of theſe [thoſe] two imaginary Perſons, and particularly in that Part where *Death* is exhibited as forming a Bridge over the *Chaos*: a Work ſuitable to the Genius of *Milton*.

Since the Subject I am upon gives me an Opportunity of ſpeaking more at large of ſuch Shadowy and

imaginary Perſons as may be introduced into Heroic Poems, I ſhall beg leave to explain my ſelf on [in] a Matter which is curious in its kind, and which none of the Criticks have treated of. It is certain *Homer* and *Virgil* are full of imaginary Perſons, who are very beautiful in Poetry when they are juſt ſhown, without being engaged in any Series of Action. *Homer* indeed repreſents *Sleep* as a Perſon, and aſcribes a ſhort Part to him in his *Iliad*; but we muſt conſider that tho' we now regard ſuch a Perſon as entirely Shadowy and unſubſtantial, the Heathens made Statues of him, placed him in their Temples, and looked upon him as a real Deity. When *Homer* makes uſe of other ſuch Allegorical Perſons it is only in ſhort Expreſſions, which convey an ordinary Thought to the Mind in the moſt pleaſing manner, and may rather be looked upon as Poetical Phraſes than allegorical Deſcriptions. Inſtead of telling us that Men naturally fly when they are terrified, he introduces the Perſons of *Flight* and *Fear*, who he tells us are inſeparable Companions. Inſtead of ſaying that the Time was come when *Apollo* ought to have received his Recompence, he tells us that the *Hours* brought him his Reward. Inſtead of deſcribing the Effects which *Minerva*'s *Ægis* produced in Battell, he tells us that the Brims of it were encompaſſed by *Terrour*, *Rout*, *Diſcord*, *Fury*, *Purſuit*, *Maſſacre* and *Death*. In the ſame Figure of ſpeaking he repreſents *Victory* as following *Diomedes*; *Diſcord* as the Mother of Funerals and Mourning, *Venus* as drēſſed by the *Graces*, *Bellona* as wearing Terrour and Conſternation like a Garment. I might give ſeveral other Inſtances out of *Homer*, as well as a great many out of *Virgil*. *Milton* has likewiſe very often made uſe of the ſame way of ſpeaking, as where he tells us that *Victory* ſat on the right hand of the Meſſiah, when he march'd forth againſt the Rebel Angels; that at the riſing of the Sun the *Hours* unbarr'd the Gates of Light; that *Diſcord* was the Daughter of *Sin*. Of the ſame nature are thoſe Expreſſions where deſcribing the ſinging of the Nightin-

gale, he adds, *Silence was pleaſed*; and upon the Meſſiah's bidding Peace to the *Chaos*, *Confuſion heard his voice.* I might add innumerable other* Inſtances of our Poet's writing in this beautiful Figure. It is plain that theſe I have mentioned, in which Perſons of an imaginary Nature are introduced, are ſuch ſhort Allegories as are not deſigned to be taken in the literal Senſe, but only to convey particular Circumſtances to the Reader after an unuſual and entertaining Manner. But when ſuch Perſons are introduced as principal Actors, and engaged in a Series of Adventures, they take too much upon them, and are by no means proper for an Heroic Poem, which ought to appear credible in its principal Parts. I cannot forbear therefore thinking that *Sin* and *Death* are as improper Agents in a Work of this Nature, as *Strength* and *Violence* [*Neceſſity*] in one of the Tragedies of *Eſchylus*, who repreſented thoſe two Perſons nailing down *Prometheus* to a Rock, for which he has been juſtly cenſured by the greateſt Criticks. I do not know any imaginary Perſon made uſe of in a more Sublime manner of thinking than that in one of the Prophets, who deſcribing God as deſcending from Heaven, and viſiting the Sins of Mankind, adds that dreadful Circumſtance; *Before him went the Peſtilence.* It is certain this imaginary Perſon might have been deſcribed in all her purple Spots. The *Fever* might have march'd before her, *Pain* might have ſtood at her right Hand, *Phrenzy* on her left, and *Death* in her Rear. She might have been introduced as gliding down from the Tail of a Comet, or darted upon the Earth in a Flaſh of Lightning: She might have tainted the Atmoſphere with her Breath; the very glaring of her Eyes might have ſcattered Infection. But I believe every Reader will think that in ſuch Sublime Writings the mentioning of her as it is done in Scripture has ſomething in it more juſt, as well as great, than all that the moſt fanciful Poet could have beſtowed upon her in the Richneſs of his Imagination.

NUMB. CCCLXIII.

The SPECTATOR.

———*Crudelis ubique*
Luctus, ubique pavor, & plurima Mortis Imago. Virg.

{*All Parts reſound with Tumults, Plaints, and Fears,*
And griſly Death in ſundry Shapes appears.
Dryden.}

Saturday, April 26. 1712.

MILTON has ſhewn a wonderful Art in deſcribing that variety of Paſſions which ariſe in our firſt Parents upon the breach of the Commandment that had been given them. We ſee them gradually paſſing from the triumph of their Guilt thro' Remorſe, Shame, Deſpair, Contrition, Prayer, and Hope, to a perfect and compleat Repentance. At the end of the Tenth Book they are repreſented as proſtrating themſelves upon the Ground, and watering the Earth with their Tears: To which the Poet joins this beautiful Circumſtance, that they offer'd up their Penitential Prayers on the very place where their Judge appeared to them when he pronounced their Sentence.

———*They forthwith to the place*
Repairing, where he judg'd them, proſtrate fell
Before him reverent, and both confeſs'd
Humbly their faults, and pardon begg'd, with tears
Watring the Ground———

[There is a Beauty of the ſame kind in a tragedy of *Sophocles*, where *Oedipus*, after having put out his own Eyes, inſtead of breaking his Neck from the Palace Battlements (which furniſhes ſo elegant an Entertainment for our *Engliſh* Audience) deſires that he may be conducted to Mount *Cithæron*, in order to end his Life in that very Place where he was expoſed in his

Infancy, and where he ſhould then have died, had the Will of his Parents been executed.]

As the Author never fails to give a Poetical turn to his Sentiments, he deſcribes in the beginning of this Book the Acceptance which theſe their Prayers met with, in a ſhort Allegory form'd upon that beautiful Paſſage in Holy Writ. *And another Angel came and ſtood at the Altar, having a golden Cenſer; and there was given unto him much incenſe, that he ſhould offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the Golden Altar, which was before the throne: And the ſmoak of the incenſe which came with the Prayers of the Saints, aſcended up before God.*

————To Heav'n their prayers
Flew up, nor miſs'd the way, by envious winds
Blown vagabond or fruſtrate: in they paſs'd
Dimentionleſs through Heav'nly doors, then clad
With incenſe, where the Golden Altar fumed,
By their great interceſſor, came in ſight
Before the Father's throne————

We have the ſame Thought expreſſed a ſecond time in the Interceſſion of the Meſſiah, which is conceived in very Emphatick Sentiments and Expreſſions.

Among the Poetical parts of Scripture which *Milton* has ſo finely wrought into this part of his Narration, I muſt not omit that wherein *Ezekiel* ſpeaking of the Angels who appeared to him in a Viſion, adds that *every one had four faces*, and that *their whole bodies, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings were full of eyes round about.*

——— The Cohort bright
Of watchful Cherubim; four faces each
Had, like a double Janus, *all their ſhape*
Spangled with eyes————

The aſſembling of all the Angels of Heaven to hear the Solemn Decree paſſed upon Man is repreſented in very lively Ideas. The Almighty is here deſcrib'd as remembring Mercy in the midſt of Judgment, and

commanding *Michael* to deliver his Meſſage in the mildeſt terms, leaſt the Spirit of Man, which was already broken with the Senſe of his Guilt and Miſery, ſhould fail before him.

——— Yet leaſt they faint
At the ſad Sentence rigorouſly urg'd,
For I behold them ſoftned and with tears
Bewailing their exceſs, all terror hide.

The Conference of *Adam* and *Eve* is full of moving Sentiments. Upon their going Abroad after the melancholy Night which they had paſſed together, they diſcover the Lion and the Eagle purſuing each of them their Prey towards the Eaſtern Gates of *Paradiſe.* There is a double Beauty in this Incident, not only as it preſents great and juſt Omens which are always agreeable in Poetry; but as it expreſſes that Enmity which was now produced in the Animal Creation. The Poet, to ſhew the like changes in Nature, as well as to grace his Fable with a noble Prodigy, repreſents the Sun in an Eclipſe. This particular Incident has likewiſe a fine effect upon the Imagination of the Reader, in regard to what follows: For, at the ſame time that the Sun is under an Eclipſe, a bright Cloud deſcends in the Weſtern quarter of the Heavens, filled with an Hoſt of Angels, and more luminous than the Sun it ſelf. The whole Theatre of Nature is darkned, that this glorious Machine may appear in all its luſtre and magnificence.

——— Why in the Eaſt
Darkneſs ere day's mid-courſe, and morning light
More orient in that Weſtern cloud that draws
O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
And ſlow deſcends, with ſomething heav'nly fraught?
He err'd not; for by this the Heav'nly bands
Down from a Sky of Jaſper lighted now
In Paradiſe, and on a Hill made halt;
A glorious apparition———

I need not obſerve how properly this Author, who always ſuits his Parts to the Actors whom he intro-

duces, has employed *Michael* in the Expulſion of our firſt Parents from *Paradiſe*. The Arch-angel on this occaſion neither appears in his proper Shape, nor in that familiar manner with which *Raphael* the ſociable Spirit entertained the Father of Mankind before the Fall. His Perſon, his Port and Behaviour, are ſuitable to a Spirit of the higheſt Rank, and exquiſitely deſcrib'd in the following Paſſage.

——— *Th' Archangel ſoon drew nigh*
Not in his ſhape Celeſtial; but as man
Clad to meet man; over his lucid arms
A military veſt of purple flow'd
Livelier than Melibæan, *or the grain*
Of Sarra, *worn by Kings and Heroes old*
In time of truce; Iris *had dipt the Wooff:*
His ſtarry helm, unbuckled, ſhew'd him prime
In Manhood where Youth ended; by his ſide
As in a gliſtring Zodiack hung the Sword,
Satan's *dire dread, and in his hand the Spear.*
Adam *bow'd low; he kingly from his ſtate*
Inclined not, but his coming thus declar'd.

Eve's Complaint upon hearing that ſhe was to be removed from the Garden of *Paradiſe* is wonderfully beautiful. The Sentiments are not only proper to the Subject, but have ſomething in them particularly ſoft and womaniſh.

Muſt I then leave thee, Paradiſe? thus leave
Thee, native Soil, theſe happy walks and ſhades,
Fit haunt of Gods? Where I had hoped to ſpend
Quiet though ſad the reſpite of that day
That muſt be mortal to us both. O flow'rs
That never will in other Climate grow,
My early viſitation, and my laſt
At Even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the firſt opening bud, and gave you names,
Who now ſhall rear you to the Sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from th' ambroſial fount?
Thee laſtly, Nuptial bowre, by me adorn'd

With what to ſight or ſmell was ſweet; from thee
How ſhall I part, and whither wander down
Into a lower world, to this obſcure
And wild, how ſhall we breath in other air
Leſs pure, accuſtom'd to immortal fruits?

Adam's Speech abounds with Thoughts which are equally moving, but of a more Maſculine and elevated Turn. Nothing can be conceived more Sublime and Poetical, than the following Paſſage in it:

This moſt afflicts me, that departing hence
As from his face I ſhall be hid, deprived
His bleſſed Count'nance; here I could frequent.
With worſhip, place by place where he vouchſafed
Preſence divine, and to my Sons relate;
On this mount he appear'd, under this tree
Stood viſible, among theſe Pines his voice
I heard, here with him at this fountain talk'd:
So many grateful Altars I would rear
Of graſſie turf, and pile up every Stone
Of luſtre from the brook, in memory,
Or monument to ages, and thereon
Offer ſweet ſmelling Gums and fruits and flowers:
In yonder nether world where ſhall I ſeek
His bright appearances, or footſteps trace?
For though I fled him angry, yet recall'd
To life prolong'd and promiſed race, I now
Gladly behold though but his utmoſt Skirts
Of Glory, and far off his Steps adore.

The Angel afterwards leads *Adam* to the higheſt Mount of *Paradiſe*, and lays before him a whole Hemiſphere, as a proper Stage for thoſe Viſions which were to be repreſented on it. I have before obſerved how the Plan of *Milton*'s Poem is in many Particulars greater than that of the *Iliad* or *Æneid*. *Virgil*'s Hero, in the laſt of theſe Poems, is entertained with a ſight of all thoſe who are to deſcend from him; but tho' that Epiſode is juſtly admired as one of the nobleſt

Deſigns in the whole *Æneid*, every one muſt allow that this of *Milton* is of a much higher Nature. *Adam*'s Viſion is not confined to any particular Tribe of Mankind, but extends to the whole Species.

In this great Review, which *Adam* takes of all his Sons and Daughters, the firſt Objects he is preſented with exhibit to him the Story of *Cain* and *Abel*, which is drawn together with much Cloſeneſs and Propriety of Expreſſion. That Curioſity and natural Horror which ariſes in *Adam* at the Sight of the firſt dying Man is touched with great beauty.

But have I now ſeen death, is this the way
I muſt return to native duſt? O Sight
Of terrour foul and ugly to behold,
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!

The ſecond Viſion ſets before him the Image of Death in a great Variety of Appearances. The Angel, to give him a General Idea of thoſe Effects, which his Guilt had brought upon his Poſterity, places before him a large Hoſpital, or Lazar-houſe, fill'd with Perſons lying under all kinds of Mortal Diſeaſes. How finely has the Poet told us that the ſick Perſons languiſhed under Lingring and Incurable Diſtempers by an apt and Judicious uſe of ſuch Imaginary Beings, as thoſe I mentioned in my laſt *Saturday*'s Paper.

Dire was the toſſing, deep the Groans, Deſpair
Tended the Sick, buſie from Couch to Couch;
And over them triumphant Death *his dart*
Shook, but delay'd to ſtrike, though oft invoked
With vows as their chief good and final hope.

The Paſſion which likewiſe riſes in *Adam* on this Occaſion is very natural.

Sight ſo deform what Heart of rock could long
Dry-ey'd behold? Adam *could not, but wept,*
Tho' not of Woman born; Compaſſion quell'd
His beſt of Man, and gave him up to tears.

The Diſcourſe between the Angel and *Adam* which follows, abounds with noble Morals.

As there is nothing more delightful in Poetry, than a Contraſt and Oppoſition of Incidents, the Author, after this melancholy proſpect of Death and Sickneſs, raiſes up a Scene of Mirth, Love and Jollity. The ſecret Pleaſure that ſteals into *Adam*'s Heart, as he is intent upon this Viſion, is imagined with great Delicacy. I muſt not omit the Deſcription of the looſe Female troupe, who ſeduced the Sons of God as they are call'd in Scripture.

For that fair female troupe thou ſaw'ſt that ſeem'd
Of Goddeſſes ſo Blithe, ſo Smooth, ſo Gay,
Yet empty of all good wherein conſiſts
Womans domeſtick honour and chief praiſe;
Bred only and compleated to the taſte
Of luſtful appetence, to ſing, to dance,
To dreſs, and troule the tongue, and roul the Eye.
To theſe that ſober race of Men, whoſe lives
Religious titled them the Sons of God,
Shall yield up all their vertue, all their fame
Ignobly, to the trains and to the ſmiles
Of thoſe fair Atheiſts———

The next Viſion is of a quite contrary Nature, and filled with the Horrours of War. *Adam*, at the ſight of it, melts into Tears, and breaks out in that paſſionate Speech;

———O what are theſe
Deaths miniſters not Men, who thus deal death
Inhumanly to Men, and multiply
Ten thouſand fold the Sin of him who ſlew
His Brother: for of whom ſuch Maſſacre
Make they but of their Breth'ren, men of men?

Milton, to keep up an agreeable variety in his Viſions, after having raiſed in the Mind of his Reader the ſeveral Ideas of Terror which are conformable to the Deſcription of War, paſſes on to thoſe ſofter Images of Triumphs and Feſtivals, in that Viſion of Lewdneſs and Luxury, which uſhers in the Flood.

As it is viſible, that the Poet had his Eye upon *Ovid*'s account of the univerſal Deluge, the Reader may obſerve with how much Judgment he has avoided every thing that is redundant or puerile in the *Latin* Poet. We do not here ſee the Wolf ſwimming among the Sheep, nor any of thoſe wanton Imaginations which *Seneca* has found fault with, as unbecoming this great Cataſtrophe of Nature. If our Poet has imitated that Verſe in which *Ovid* tells us, that there was nothing but Sea, and that this Sea had no Shoar to it, he has not ſet the Thought in ſuch a light as to incur the Cenſure which Criticks have paſſed upon it. The latter part of that Verſe in *Ovid* is idle and ſuperfluous; but juſt and beautiful in *Milton*.

Jamque mare & tellus nullum diſcrimen habebant,
Nil niſi pontus erat, deerant quoque littora ponto. Ovid.

———Sea cover'd Sea,
Sea without Shoar——— Milton.

In *Milton* the former part of the Deſcription does not foreſtall the latter. How much more great and ſolemn on this occaſion is that which follows in our *Engliſh* Poet,

———And in their palaces
Where luxury late reign'd, Sea Monſters whelp'd
And Stabl'd———

than that in *Ovid*, where we are told, that the Sea Calfs lay in thoſe places where the Goats were uſed to browze? The Reader may find ſeveral other Parallel Paſſages in the *Latin* and *Engliſh* Deſcription of the Deluge, wherein our Poet has viſibly the Advantage. The Sky's being over-charged with Clouds, the deſcending of the Rains, the riſing of the Seas, and the appearance of the Rainbow, are ſuch Deſcriptions as every one muſt take notice of. The Circumſtance relating to *Paradiſe* is ſo finely imagined and ſuitable to the Opinions of many learned Authors, that I cannot forbear giving it a place in this Paper.

——————— Then ſhall this mount
Of Paradiſe by might of Waves be moved
Out of his place, puſh'd by the horned flood,
With all his verdure ſpoil'd, and trees a drift
Down the great river to the op'ning Gulf,
And there take root an Iſland ſalt and bare,
The haunt of Seals and Orcs, and Sea-Mews clang:

The Tranſition which the Poet makes from the Viſion of the Deluge, to the Concern it occaſioned in *Adam*, is exquiſitely graceful, and copied after *Virgil*, tho' the firſt Thought it introduces is rather in the Spirit of *Ovid*.

How didſt thou grieve, then, Adam, *to behold*
The end of all thy Off-ſpring, end ſo ſad,
Depopulation; thee another flood,
Of tears and ſorrow, a flood thee alſo drown'd,
And ſunk thee as thy Sons: 'till gently rear'd
By th' Angel, on thy feet thou ſtoodſt at laſt,
Though comfortleſs, as when a father mourns
His Children, all in view deſtroy'd at once.

I have been the more particular in my Quotations out of the Eleventh Book of *Paradiſe Loſt*, becauſe it is not generally reckoned among the moſt ſhining Books of this Poem. For which reaſon, the Reader might be apt to overlook thoſe many Paſſages in it, which deſerve our Admiration. The Eleventh and Twelfth are indeed built upon that ſingle Circumſtance of the Removal of our firſt Parents from *Paradiſe*; but tho' this is not in it ſelf ſo great a Subject as that in moſt of the foregoing Books, it is extended and diverſified with ſo many ſurprizing Incidents and pleaſing Epiſodes, that theſe two laſt Books can by no means be looked upon as unequal Parts of this divine Poem. I muſt further add, that had not *Milton* repreſented our firſt Parents as driven out of *Paradiſe*, his Fall of Man would not have been compleat, and conſequently his Action would have been imperfect.

NUMB. CCCLXIX.

THE SPECTATOR.

Segniùs irritant animos demiſſa per aures
Quam quæ ſunt oculis ſubjecta fidelibus—— Hor.
{—— *What we hear moves leſs than what we ſee.*
Roſcommon.}

Saturday, May, 3. 1712.

MILTON, after having repreſented in Viſion the Hiſtory of Mankind to the Firſt great Period of Nature, diſpatches the remaining Part of it in Narration. He has deviſed a very handſome Reaſon for the Angel's proceeding with *Adam* after this manner; tho' doubtleſs, the true Reaſon was the difficulty which the Poet would have found to have ſhadowed out ſo mixt and complicated a Story in viſible Objects. I could wiſh, however, that the Author had done it, whatever Pains it might have coſt him. To give my Opinion freely, I think that the exhibiting Part of the Hiſtory of Mankind in Viſion, and part in Narrative, is as if an Hiſtory Painter ſhould put in Colours one half of his Subject, and write down the remaining part of it. If *Milton*'s Poem flags any where, it is in this Narration, where in ſome places the Author has been ſo attentive to his Divinity, that he has neglected his Poetry. The Narration, however, riſes very happily on ſeveral Occaſions, where the Subject is capable of Poetical Ornaments, as particularly in the Confuſion which he deſcribes among the Builders of *Babel*, and in his ſhort Sketch of the Plagues of *Egypt*. The Storm of Hail and Fire, with the Darkneſs that overſpread the Land for three Days, are deſcribed with great Strength. The beautiful Paſſage, which follows, is raiſed upon noble Hints in Scripture.

——————Thus with ten wounds
The River-Dragon tam'd at length ſubmits
To let his Sojourners depart, and oft
Humbles his ſtubborn heart, but ſtill as Ice
More harden'd after thaw, till in his rage
Purſuing whom he late diſmiſs'd, the Sea
Swallows him with his hoſt, but them lets paſs
As on dry land between two Chryſtal walls,
Aw'd by the rod of Moſes *ſo to ſtand*
Divided——————

The *River-Dragon* is an Alluſion to the Crocodile, which inhabits the *Nile*, from whence *Egypt* derives her Plenty. This Alluſion is taken from that Sublime Paſſage in *Ezekiel. Thus ſaith the Lord God, behold, I am againſt thee* Pharaoh *King of* Egypt, *the great Dragon that lieth in the midſt of his Rivers, which hath ſaid, My River is mine own, and I have made it for my ſelf.* *Milton* has given us another very noble and Poetical Image in the ſame Deſcription, which is copied almoſt Word for Word out of the Hiſtory of *Moſes.*

All night he will purſue, but his approach
Darkneſs defends between till morning watch:
Then through the fiery pillar and the cloud
God looking forth, will trouble all his hoaſt,
And craze their Chariot Wheels: *when by command*
Moſes *once more his potent Rod extends*
Over the Sea; the Sea his Rod obeys;
On their Embatelled ranks the waves return
And overwhelm their War:——————

As the Principal Deſign of this *Epiſode* was to give *Adam* an Idea of the Holy Perſon, who was to reinſtate Human Nature in that Happineſs and Perfection from which it had fallen, the Poet confines himſelf to the Line of *Abraham*, from whence the *Meſſiah* was to Deſcend. The Angel is deſcribed as ſeeing the Patriarch actually travelling towards the Land of *Promiſe*, which gives a particular Livelineſs to this part of the Narration.

I ſee him, but thou canſt not, with what faith

He leaves his Gods, his Friends, and [*his*] *native Soil*
Ur *of* Chaldæa, *paſſing now the Ford*
To Haran, *after him a cumbrous train*
Of Herds and flocks, and numerous ſervitude;
Not wand'ring poor, but truſting all his wealth
With God, who call'd him, in a Land unknown.
Canaan *he now attains; I ſee his tents*
Pitch't about Sechem, *and the neighbouring plain*
Of Moreh, *there by promiſe he receives*
Gift to his Progeny of all that Land;
From Hamath *Northward to the Deſart South;*
(Things by their names I call, though yet unnam'd.)

As *Virgil*'s Viſion in the Sixth *Æneid* probably gave *Milton* the Hint of this whole *Epiſode*, the laſt Line is a Tranſlation of that Verſe, where *Anchiſes* mentions the Names of Places, which they were to bear hereafter.

Hæc tum nomina erunt, nunc ſunt ſine nomine terræ.

The Poet has very finely repreſented the Joy and Gladneſs of Heart, which riſes in *Adam* upon his Diſcovery of the Meſſiah. As he ſees his Day at a diſtance through Types and Shadows, he rejoices in it; but when he finds the Redemption of Man compleated, and *Paradiſe* again renewed, he breaks forth in Rapture and Tranſport,

O goodneſs infinite, goodneſs immenſe!
That all this good of evil ſhall produce. &c.

I have hinted, in my Sixth Paper on *Milton*, that an Heroic Poem, according to the Opinion of the beſt Criticks, ought to end happily, and leave the Mind of the Reader, after having conducted it through many Doubts and Fears, Sorrows and Diſquietudes, in a ſtate of Tranquillity and Satisfaction. *Milton*'s Fable, which had ſo many other Qualifications to recommend it, was deficient in this Particular. It is here therefore, that the Poet has ſhewn a moſt exquiſite Judgment, as well as the fineſt Invention, by finding out a Method to ſupply this Natural Defect in his Subject. Accordingly he leaves the Adverſary of Mankind, in

the laſt View which he gives us of him, under the loweſt State of Mortification and Diſappointment. We ſee him chewing Aſhes, grovelling in the Duſt, and loaden with Supernumerary Pains and Torments. On the contrary, our two firſt Parents are comforted by Dreams and Viſions, cheared with Promiſes of Salvation, and, in a manner, raiſed to a greater Happineſs than that which they had forfeited: In ſhort, *Satan* is repreſented miſerable in the height of his Triumphs, and *Adam* triumphant in the height of Miſery.

Milton's Poem ends very nobly. The laſt Speeches of *Adam* and the Arch-angel are full of Moral and Inſtructive Sentiments. The Sleep that fell upon *Eve*, and the effects it had in quieting the Diſorders of her Mind, produces the ſame kind of Conſolation in the Reader, who cannot peruſe the laſt beautiful Speech which is aſcrib'd to the Mother of Mankind, without a ſecret Pleaſure and Satisfaction.

Whence thou return'ſt, and whither went'ſt, I know;
For God is alſo in Sleep, and dreams adviſe,
Which he hath ſent propitious, ſome great good
Preſaging, ſince with Sorrow and Hearts diſtreſs
Wearied I fell aſleep: but now lead on;
In me is no delay: with thee to go
Is to ſtay here; without thee here to ſtay
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me
Art all things under Heav'n, all places thou
Who for my wilful crime art baniſh'd hence.
This further Conſolation yet ſecure
I carry hence; though all by me is loſt
Such favour, I unworthy, am vouchſaf'd,
By me the promiſ'd Seed ſhall all reſtore.

The following Lines which conclude the Poem riſe in a moſt glorious blaze of Poetical Images and Expreſſions.

Heliodorus in his *Æthiopicks* acquaints us that the Motion of the Gods differs from that of Mortals, as the former do not ſtir their Feet, nor proceed Step by Step, but ſlide o'er the Surface of the Earth by an

uniform Swimming of the whole Body. The Reader may obſerve with how Poetical a Deſcription *Milton* has attributed the ſame kind of Motion to the Angels who were to take Poſſeſſion of *Paradiſe.*

So ſpake our Mother Eve, *and* Adam *heard*
Well pleas'd, but anſwer'd not; for now too nigh
Th' Arch-angel ſtood, and from the other hill
To their fix'd ſtation, all in bright array
The Cherubim deſcended; on the ground
Gliding meteorous, as ev'ning miſt
Ris'n from a River, o'er the mariſh glides,
And gathers ground faſt at the lab'rers heel
Homeward returning. High in Front advanc'd,
The brandiſh'd Sword of God before them blaz'd
Fierce as a Comet ———— ————

The Author helped his Invention in the following Paſſage, by reflecting on the Behaviour of the Angel, who, in Holy Writ, has the Conduct of *Lot* and his Family. The Circumſtances drawn from that Relation are very gracefully made uſe of on this Occaſion.

In either hand the haſtning Angel caught
Our ling'ring Parents, and to the Eaſtern gate
Led them direct; and down the Cliff as faſt
To the ſubjected plain; then diſappear'd.
They looking back &c. ————————

The Proſpect [Scene] which our firſt Parents are ſurpriſed with upon their looking back on *Paradiſe*, wonderfully ſtrikes the Reader's Imagination, as nothing can be more natural than the Tears they ſhed on that Occaſion.

They looking back, all th' Eaſtern ſide beheld
Of Paradiſe, *ſo late their happy Seat,*
Wav'd over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces throng'd and fiery Arms:
Some natural tears they dropp'd, but wiped them ſoon;
The world was all before them, where to chuſe
Their place of reſt, and providence their Guide:

If I might preſume to offer at the ſmalleſt Alteration

in this Divine Work, I ſhould think the Poem would end better with the Paſſage here quoted, than with the two Verſes which follow.

They hand in hand with wandering ſteps and ſlow,
Through Eden *took their ſolitary way.*

Theſe two Verſes, though they have their Beauty, fall very much below the foregoing Paſſage, and renew in the Mind of the Reader that Anguiſh which was pretty well laid by that Conſideration,

The World was all before them, where to chuſe
Their place of reſt, and providence their Guide.

The number of Books in *Paradiſe Loſt* is equal to thoſe of the *Æneid*. Our Author in his Firſt Edition had divided his Poem into ten Books, but afterwards broke the Seventh and the Eleventh each of them into two different Books, by the help of ſome ſmall Additions. This ſecond Diviſion was made with great Judgment, as any one may ſee who will be at the pains of examining it. It was not done for the ſake of ſuch a Chimerical Beauty as that of reſembling *Virgil* in this particular, but for the more juſt and regular Diſpoſition of this great Work.

Thoſe who have read *Boſſu*, and many of the Criticks who have written ſince his time, will not pardon me if I do not find out the particular Moral which is inculcated in *Paradiſe Loſt*. Tho' I can by no means think with the laſt-mentioned *French* Author, that an Epic Writer firſt of all pitches upon a certain Moral, as the Ground-work and Foundation of his Poem, and afterwards finds out a Story to it: I am, however, of Opinion, that no juſt Heroic Poem ever was, or can be made, from whence one great Moral may not be deduced. That which reigns in *Milton* is the moſt univerſal and moſt uſeful that can be imagined: it is in ſhort this, *that Obedience to the Will of God makes Men happy, and that Diſobedience makes them miſerable.* This is viſibly the Moral of the principal Fable which turns upon *Adam* and *Eve*, who

continued in *Paradiſe* while they kept the Command that was given them, and were driven out of it as ſoon as they had tranſgreſſed. This is likewiſe the Moral of the principal Epiſode, which ſhews us how an innumerable multitude of Angels fell from their State of Bliſs, and were caſt into Hell upon their Diſobedience. Beſides this great Moral, which may be looked upon as the Soul of the Fable, there are an infinity of Under-Morals which are to be drawn from the ſeveral parts of the Poem, and which make this Work more uſeful and inſtructive than any other Poem in any Language.

Thoſe who have criticiſed on the *Odyſſey*, the *Iliad*, and *Æneid*, have taken a great deal of pains to fix the number of Months or Days contain'd in the Action of each of thoſe Poems. If any one thinks it worth his while to examine this Particular in *Milton*, he will find that from *Adam*'s firſt Appearance in the Fourth Book, to his Expulſion from *Paradiſe* in the Twelfth, the Author reckons ten Days. As for that part of the Action which is deſcribed in the three firſt Books, as it does not paſs within the Regions of Nature, I have before obſerv'd that it is not ſubject to any Calculations of Time.

I have now finiſh'd my Obſervations on a Work which does an Honour to the *Engliſh* Nation. I have taken a general View of it under thoſe four Heads, the Fable, the Characters, the Sentiments and the Language, and made each of them the Subject of a particular Paper. I have in the next place ſpoken of the Cenſures which our Author may incur under each of theſe Heads, which I have confined to two Papers, tho' I might have enlarged the number, if I had been diſpoſed to dwell on ſo ungrateful a Subject. I believe, however, that the ſevereſt Reader will not find any little fault in Heroic Poetry, which this Author has fallen into, that does not come under one of thoſe Heads among which I have diſtributed his ſeveral Blemiſhes. After having thus treated at large of *Paradiſe Loſt*, I could not think it ſufficient to have celebrated this Poem in the whole, without deſcending to Particulars. I have therefore beſtowed a

Paper upon each Book, and endeavoured not only to ſhew [prove] that the Poem is beautiful in general, but to point out its particular Beauties, and to determine wherein they conſiſt. I have endeavoured to ſhew how ſome Paſſages are beautiful by being Sublime, others by being Soft, others by being Natural; which of them are recommended by the Paſſion, which by the Moral, which by the Sentiment, and which by the Expreſſion. I have [likewiſe] endeavoured to ſhew how the Genius of the Poet ſhines by a happy Invention, a diſtant Alluſion, or a judicious Imitation; how he has copied or improved *Homer* or *Virgil*, and raiſed his own Imaginations by the uſe which he has made of ſeveral Poetical Paſſages in Scripture. I might have inſerted [alſo] ſeveral Paſſages of *Taſſo*, which our Author has likewiſe* imitated; but as I do not look upon *Taſſo* to be a ſufficient Voucher, I would not perplex my Reader with ſuch Quotations, as might do more Honour to the *Italian* than the *Engliſh* Poet. In ſhort, I have endeavoured to particularize thoſe innumerable Kinds of Beauty, which it would be tedious to recapitulate, but which are eſſential to Poetry, and which may be met with in the Works of this great Author. Had I thought, at my firſt engaging in this Deſign, that it would have led me to ſo great a length, I believe I ſhould never have entered upon it; but the kind Reception which it has met with among thoſe whoſe Judgments I have a Value for, as well as the uncommon Demands which my Bookſeller tells me has been made for theſe particular Diſcourſes, give me no Reaſon to repent of the Pains I have been at in compoſing them.

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