no increase of definiteness is really attained. So, too, with regard to the setting in time. The description of the splendor of Pandemonium is at first effected by means of details which are concrete only in appearance, and is then made impressive by a negative contrast with the grand architecture of far-away ancient peoples.

> "Not Babylon
> Nor grand Alcairo such magnificence
> Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
> Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
> Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
> In wealth and luxury."

The latter quotation naturally leads us to consider Milton's wonderful use of proper names, and so carries us over from the substance of his poetry to its form, to its diction, syntax, and rhythm.

The ability to weave proper names into artistic verse has always been considered a good test of a poet's powers. This is due in considerable part to the fact that we realize how difficult the task is and hence rejoice as much in its successful accomplishment as we do when a poet tri-

umphs over the intricacies of the sonnet construction. Another reason for the pleasure given us by the Miltonic employment of proper names is found in the fact that they are nearly always full of allusive charm or power and thus unlock emotions previously stored up in us. This is perhaps the prime secret of the wonderful effects produced by such a passage as that already quoted from "Paradise Regained" beginning —

> "From Arachosia, from Candaor east,"

unless, indeed, the names are unknown to us and give us a sense of mysterious pleasure on the principle expressed by the adage, *omne ignotum pro magnifico.* There is another charm, too, never absent from the Miltonic roll of names — the charm of subtle harmony, and the difficulty with which this is attained enhances its power over us. It almost seems as if Milton recognized these facts from his youth, for although his ability to use proper names culminated in his mature poems, it is found in his earliest experiments. At least it is evident that it brought his erudition most happily into play,

and that it is one of the most characteristic features of his style.

With regard now to his diction in general there is nothing to say that is not already familiar. His total vocabulary is but little over half that of Shakspere; but this does not mean much when we remember that Milton was the more careful artist and that whole ranges of Shakspere's work, such as the scenes of low comedy, were outside of the later poet's purview. Besides, Shakspere wrote in a period famous for the flexibility of its vocabulary, and the number of words employed by him that have lost currency seems to be greater by a considerable amount than the number of similar words in the case of Milton as a poet. It is more important to observe that if Milton's poetic diction does not, like Shakspere's, suggest the idea of lavish affluence, it never suggests poverty, but rather just proportion. The chances are that Milton's knowledge of words was as large as Shakspere's, but that the nature of his subjects and the purity of his taste limited his use to what is nevertheless a very considerable number. Of the words he does employ quite a large propor-

tion will naturally be found to be of Romance or Latin rather than of Anglo-Saxon origin. With his themes it could not well have been otherwise; besides the longer Latinistic words conduced to the desiderated sonorousness of his verse. Yet, as Masson has well shown, the Saxon words are those most frequently used, amounting in some passages to ninety per cent and rarely falling below seventy. Hence his poetry, for all his erudition, is English in its warp and woof.

With regard to his syntax, the case is somewhat different. The influence of the masses of Latin that he read and wrote is plainly perceptible in the closely knit, involved, and often periodic and lengthy sentences in which his mature works abound. This is not true of many of the earlier poems, such as "L'Allegro," which have a looseness and directness of syntactical arrangement that are both English and Elizabethan. Even in "Comus" and "Lycidas," which are by no means wanting in Latinisms, there are few passages that exhibit the involution characteristic of "Paradise Lost." This involution is, indeed, practically unmatched in

our poetry. It finds little place in the work of Shakspere, who, while capable of every sort of style, and full of syntactical resources, is in the main straightforward, not to say loose, in the construction of his sentences. This very looseness, culminating, as it often does, in an impetuous piling up of ideas or images, frequently renders Shakspere difficult reading, especially to young persons; but his most tangled passages seldom strain the attention and the powers of comprehension of his readers as fairly normal passages of "Paradise Lost" strain Milton's would-be admirers.

There can be little doubt that this fact accounts for much of Milton's comparative unpopularity. But is his syntax at fault? It surely is, if we may apply strictly Mr. Herbert Spencer's principle, that it is necessary to economize the reader's powers of attention. Yet this principle cannot apply to poetry, if it can be shown that the poet's style, while straining the average reader's attention, really assists the capable imagination. And Milton's involved diction does this. His unique themes require a unique style. If he had dealt

with human beings, as Shakspere did, he would doubtless have used a more straightforward style; but he needed to get his readers away from

> "the smoke and stir of this dim spot
> Which men call Earth,"

and therefore he required a style not natural or familiar to them. Their mental energies once engaged, he could count the more surely upon stimulating their imaginations, and could then lift them up on the wings of his supreme genius into the heaven of heavens. Long, involved, periodic sentences also helped him to obtain sonorousness, and, as we shall soon see, were essential to the full success of his blank verse. Besides, his Latinistic syntax removed his style still further from that of prose, thus making it essentially poetic, and better capable of bearing the weight imposed upon it by the sublime structure he was intent upon rearing. That Milton, in particular passages, pushed the principle of involution too far, has, indeed, been admitted by his greatest admirers; but against such admissions we must always set his own almost flawless taste. The "grand

style" Mr. Arnold was so fond of praising, would not have wholly disappeared from "Paradise Lost" had that poem been written in a straightforward, uninvolved manner, but its occurrence would have been much rarer; it certainly would not have been found on every page.

But an example will prove more than several pages of critical exposition. Let the reader imagine the following passage, or any similar one, stripped of its involution, and divided up into comparatively short, straightforward sentences!

"Not that fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
Was gathered — which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world — nor that sweet grove
Of Daphne, by Orontes and the inspired
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,
Hid Amalthea, and her florid Son,
Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye;
Nor, where Abassin kings their issue guard,

> Mount Amara (though this by some supposed
> True Paradise) under the Ethiop line
> By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock,
> A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
> From this Assyrian garden, where the Fiend
> Saw undelighted all delight, all kind
> Of living creatures new to sight and strange."

It will be observed that this sentence, while lengthy and marked by involution and strict syntax, is periodic only in its first section. The addition of the two other sections, each beginning with "nor," makes it, in the technical sense, "loose," and this is the case with many of the longer sentences. But Milton, who was as careful of his punctuation as of his spelling, must have had some reason for making such sentences trail, and it may be presumed that this reason is to be found in a metrical consideration. He did not wish the reader to pause any longer than was necessary for the purpose of breathing, but to go straight on and thus allow the passage to produce the effects of metrical unity. For as Wordsworth perceived long ago, the Miltonic blank verse does not move by lines but by passages of varying

lengths. In the manipulation of such passages Milton is unique and supreme. They are long, short, and of medium length, and are infinitely varied in their succession; and in their management, if anywhere, the secret of Milton's organ music is to be found. Not that individual lines and small groups of lines are not harmonious and sonorous — for they plainly are. But the rhythmic and harmonic effects of these parts of the whole rhythmic period blend into the grander rhythmic and harmonic effect of the period itself, and our reading is faulty if it does not bring out this fuller and final effect. When we compare Milton's blank verse with that of most other English poets except Shakspere, we find either that the period hardly exists for us or that it exists on a much less varied and noble scale. For example, in Thomson the periods constantly include but three or four verses, and end at the close of a verse with a uniformity that Milton avoids.

But we are now fairly upon one of the most fascinating and intricate problems connected with Milton's art, and the limits of our space warn us that we must be careful as to the ques-

tions we open up. Quite an essay might be written upon Milton's rhythmical periods whether in "Paradise Lost" or in "Lycidas." So, too, much may be said about his use of rhyme in his youthful poems as well as about his experiments with stanzas and with unstanzaic rhymeless lyrics — points that have been already dealt with briefly elsewhere. But here only a few somewhat desultory remarks will be possible.

Readers of Milton's blank verse, just as readers of Chaucer's couplets, must beware of thinking that either poet counted his syllables or used a metronome. Milton's normal blank verse line consists, it is true, of ten syllables, accented alternately from the second; but he sometimes admits a redundant eleventh syllable in his epics and frequently does it in "Comus" and "Samson" where the verse naturally takes on the freedom allowed it in the drama. He also permits himself redundant syllables in the body of a verse, because his ear was satisfied if it got a sufficient number of stresses in a line — normally five — to make it fairly uniform with its fellows and at the same time secure the charm of play and variety. The verses that

make modern readers halt are generally those in which an accent has been shifted since Milton's day, or in which a tendency to count syllables rather than be satisfied with an approximate rhythm, has baffled the inexpert reader.

For example, the verse:

> "And sat as Princes whom the supreme King"

seems prosaic until we learn that Milton intended "supreme" to be stressed on the penult. The verse describing Leviathan, which God

> "Created hugest that swim the ocean stream,"

confuses us until we learn that Milton meant us to read straight along just as if we were reading prose, in which case we should pass rapidly over the two offending syllables in the third foot.

Finally, for in this matter we must be brief since Professor Masson and Mr. Bridges have dealt with it at length, the line

> "That invincible Samson, far renowned,"

ought, it would seem, to be read with equal straightforwardness, when it will be at once perceived that although only four stresses are thus obtained, the verse will fit sufficiently well

into its period. We shall probably not attempt, if we are wise, to stress "that," and we shall do well to remember that after all in the reading of blank verse, as well as of prose, not a little depends upon the idiosyncrasies of the reader.

But perhaps the most important point to be observed about Milton's blank verse is his management of the cæsura or pause in the individual line. It is in this particular that he best earns the title of supreme metrical artist of the world. Infinite variety and infinite resulting harmony characterize his manipulation of these pauses, which may fall almost anywhere within the limits of a line. The reader should train himself to observe their effects, and should follow his common sense in finding them. If he read intelligently he will be almost sure to pause where Milton wished him to, and if he have an ear capable of appreciating harmony he will often be tempted to pause longer than is proper, in order that he may admire such splendid rhythmical effects as this: —

> "The Ionian Gods — of Javan's issue held
> Gods |, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth."

With regard, now, to the lyrical verse in general, it must be owned that, although in "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," parts of "Comus," and one or two other early poems, Milton caught the melody and the swing of the Elizabethan octosyllabics, he was not a true singer of songs, but more a lyrist of the elaborate kind. His work is rather harmonious than melodious; it is constructed, but does not flow. Great success has, of course, been had in the elaborate lyric, — which for Anglo-Saxons culminates, perhaps, in "Lycidas," "Alexander's Feast," and the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality," — but it is obviously less true than the simple lyrics, of which one of Shakspere's or Burns's songs may be taken as typical, to the essential function of lyric poetry, which is the singing out of the heart of the poet. Milton was not made to sing out his heart; hence, while he can give us the beautiful "Echo Song" in "Comus," his highest and most characteristic work is to be found elsewhere. Yet one hesitates in pronouncing this judgment, for where in English literature can a more exquisite passage of lyrical poetry be

found, one combining more of the charm of well-chosen rhymes and melodiously flowing verses, than at the close of "Comus"?

Side by side with Milton's inability to sing out his own heart must be set his comparative inability to body forth, in dramatic form, the thoughts and feelings of others. We have already referred to this limitation of his genius in connection with "Comus" and "Samson." Curiously enough, although he is not a simple lyrist, and thus is not able to sing a perfect song, it is to his possession of certain of the characteristics of a true lyrist that his failure as a dramatic poet is due. Milton himself, or some phase of his character, speaks through all his personages, but when one's personality speaks, one is, to a certain extent, a lyrist. Hence it is that Milton belongs to that class of quasi-dramatists of whom Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton treats, in his admirable article on "Poetry" in the "Encyclopædia Britannica." He was greater than the simple lyrists in that he could not help concerning himself with the fortunes of others, but he was still enough of a lyrist always to be mindful,

consciously or unconsciously, of himself whenever he attempted dramatic work. In other words, he could not, any more than Dante, attain the objectiveness of Homer, Shakspere, and Chaucer at his best. But at times he came near doing this, perhaps most conspicuously in the speeches of Satan and Christ in "Paradise Regained," and there is always such tremendous power in his conception and representation of his characters, that his failure on the score of objectivity of treatment is almost overlooked. Indeed, it is not quite certain whether the power of representing characters objectively, *i.e.* dramatically, is *per se* greater than the power of representing them epically, with an infusion of lyrical passion. The main test in such cases must be the rarity of the power, and, on the whole, the thoroughly great quasi-dramatists are not more numerous than the thoroughly great dramatists.

Nor is it absolutely clear that the universality of range and power that we commonly attribute to Homer and Shakspere alone is, from the point of view of art, superior to stupendous power realizing itself in sublime and noble crea-

tions. After all the universality is more apparent than real; and the limitations observable in connection with supreme power of the Miltonic order, are often self-limitations. In other words, it is as true to say that Milton would not have written many of Shakspere's scenes as that he could not have written them. In the preceding pages deference has been paid to current critical opinion by placing Milton below the universal poets; but sometimes this seems to be an injustice to him, since, in Landor's words, it is doubtful whether God "ever created one altogether so great as Milton." Be this as it may, we should remember that in limiting his universality, reference is made chiefly to the range of his work from the point of view of its contents, not from the point of view of its style or form. Neither Homer nor Shakspere is universal from the latter point of view. Homer is epic and dramatic in a supereminent way, but he is not thus great as a lyrist. Shakspere is supreme as a dramatist and lyrist, but his narrative poetry, beautiful as it is, does not place him among the truly great writers of epic.

Closely connected with this matter of Milton's lack of universality is a quality of his work that demands special mention — his virility. While it is a slander to represent Milton as incapable of appreciating woman, it is quite true to say that she plays no exalted part in his work — for Eve before her fall is practically extra-human — and that the poet himself is above all characterized by virility. The treatment of women in the youthful poems and in some of the sonnets, prevents us from saying broadly that Milton could not successfully introduce the sex into his poetry; but it is obvious that one of the specially charming features of the Shakspe-rian and Homeric creations is wanting to his work. Here, again, fortune has been unkind to Milton, for the world, ever since his day, has been paying more and more honor to women, until it almost looks as if they had ousted, or would soon oust, man from his position as the main subject-matter of literature. As a result women, who seem to be the chief readers to-day, do not as a rule care for Milton — sublimity of character not being one of their virtues any more than it is of the continental

nations. Hence it is almost idle to hope that Milton can ever become truly popular until women are educated up to the conception and realization of sublimity, as they surely will be. Meanwhile it will be perhaps not impertinent to ask whether, from the point of view of art, Milton's superhuman personages may not be put in the scales with Shakspere's men and women and balance them. The one set of characters is as unique as the other, and it is mainly personal preference that makes it so easy for the average reader to decide between them.

But it is time to draw this chapter and this book to a conclusion, and this may be not inappropriately done by proposing and attempting to answer a query with regard to the two supreme poets whom it is England's imperishable glory to have given to the world. The query is — Can an unmistakably Shaksperian passage in the "grand style" be set beside an equally unmistakable Miltonic passage in the "grand style" and the distinguishing notes be concretely and adequately registered? If they can be, the reader will have one of those touch-

stones Matthew Arnold was fond of using, or rather one of those tuning-forks, that will enable him to contrast the two poets when at the highest reaches of their art and to determine when each falls short of his supreme work. Such a practical test thoroughly applied will conduce to more adequate knowledge and more perfect love of the two master-poets than the mere perusal of any number of critical lucubrations. It is, of course, idle to hope that any such unfailing test can be given in these pages, but one can perhaps be adumbrated.

Let us take two Shaksperian passages and two Miltonic ones.

The Prologue to "Troilus and Cressida" opens thus: —

> "In Troy, there lies the scene. From isles of Greece
> The princes orgulous, their high blood chafed,
> Have to the port of Athens sent their ships,
> Fraught with the ministers and instruments
> Of cruel war."

Othello's last speech of consequence runs in the main thus: —

> "I pray you, in your letters,
> When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,

Speak of me as I am ; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice : then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well ;
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought
Perplex'd in the extreme ; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe ; of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this ;
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him, thus."

Against these unmistakably Shaksperian passages let us set these from "Paradise Lost."

"And now his heart
Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,
Glories : for never, since created Man,
Met such embodied force as, named with these,
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes — though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra with the heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixed with auxiliar gods ; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son,

Begirt with British and Armoric Knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
Where Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia."

And again: —

"Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,
That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
Those other two equalled with me in fate,
So were I equalled with them in renown,
Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old:
Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead and ever-during dark

> Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
> Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,
> Presented with a universal blank
> Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
> And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out."

Now what is one to say of these contrasted passages, or rather, what is one not to say of them? How perfectly supreme each is, and yet how different! And how many artistic qualities may be pointed out in each! Is it not idle, then, to attempt to differentiate them? Probably it is; yet are not superb and glorious affluence, and gathered-up human strength, and piercing human sympathy the distinguishing notes of these, and most other great Shaksperian passages; while sublime nobility and godlike poise of reticent power are the distinguishing notes of these and most other great Miltonic passages? Does not Shakspere always address us in the infinitely varied voice of the ideal and perfect man, and Milton in "that large utterance of the early gods"? It is the noontide Renaissance set over against an age that never existed, an age characterized by a blending of the best characteristics of

the Greek and the Hebrew. Shakspere is the full blushing rose of human genius in its totality; Milton is the stately, pure, noble lily of human genius on its spiritual and ideal side. Let us give our best love to the one or the other; but let us reverence both with all our hearts and souls.

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Compromise is the virtue of weakness. The able compromiser may get our applause; he can never have our admiration. The subtlety of weakness may arouse wonder; it cannot arouse admiration. [illegible] weakness cannot be admirable.

Tolerant towards all the ideas that have moved men deeply in the past, but neither acquiescent in their solution nor tolerant of their consequences when the consequences have been malice & tyranny.