

very remarkable. When the King was apparently returning, Harrington,¹ with a few associates as fanatical as himself, used to meet, with all the gravity of political importance, to settle an equal government by rotation; and Milton, kicking when he could strike no longer, was foolish enough to publish, a few weeks before the Restoration, *Notes* upon a sermon preached by one Griffiths,² intituled, "The Fear of God and the King." To these notes an answer was written by L'Estrange,⁴ in a pamphlet petulantly called "No blind Guides."³

But whatever Milton could write, or men of greater activity could do, the King was now about to be restored with the irresistible approbation of the people. He was therefore no longer secretary, and was consequently obliged to quit the house which he held by his office;⁴ and proportioning his sense of danger to his opinion of the importance of his writings, thought it convenient to seek some shelter, and hid himself for a time in Bartholomew-Close by West Smithfield.

I cannot but remark a kind of respect, perhaps unconsciously, paid to this great man by his biographers: every house in which he resided is historically mentioned, as if it were an injury to neglect naming any place that he honoured by his presence.⁵

¹ James Harrington (1611-1677), a writer on government, and author of *Oceana*, was for a time Groom of the Bed-chamber to Charles I. and attended him on the scaffold. Matt. Arnold, p. 458.

² Matthew Griffith, D.D. Chaplain to the late King.

³ Roger L'Estrange (1616-1704), was a great pamphleteer. After the Restoration he was chief Censor of the Press for some time, and the official journalist of the reign of Charles II. He published a paper called the *Observer*.

⁴ Milton was not dismissed from the Secretaryship till about April, 1660, but he had long ago, in December, 1651, left his lodgings in Whitehall for the Garden House in Petty France. *M. M.* vol. iv. p. 428.

⁵ Johnson has omitted all mention of Milton's places of residence

The King, with lenity of which the world has had perhaps no other example, declined to be the judge or avenger of his own or his father's wrongs; and promised to admit into the Act of Oblivion all, except those whom the parliament should except; and the parliament doomed none to capital punishment but the wretches who had immediately co-operated in the murder of the King. Milton was certainly not one of them; he had only justified what they had done.

This justification was indeed sufficiently offensive; and (June 16) an order was issued to seize Milton's "Defence," and Goodwin's¹ "Obstructors of Justice," another book of the same tendency, and burn them by the common hangman. The attorney-general was ordered to prosecute the authors;² but Milton was not seized, nor perhaps very diligently pursued.

Not long after (August 19³) the flutter of innumerable bosoms was stilled by an act, which the King, that his mercy might want no recommendation of elegance, rather

during the Commonwealth. Early in 1649 he removed from his house in Holborn to lodgings at Spring Gardens, Charing Cross. In November, 1649, he was given lodgings at Whitehall, at the Scotland Yard end of the old palace. In December, 1651, he removed to "a pretty garden house in Petty France, in Westminster, next door to the lord Scudamore's, and opening into St. James's Park. Here he lived no less than eight years." (*Life of Milton*, E. Philips, 374.) This house (as No. 19, York Street), was in existence up to 1877. It was owned at the beginning of this century by Jeremy Bentham, who put up a tablet on it, with an inscription, "Sacred to Milton, Prince of Poets." *M. M.* vol. iv. p. 419.

¹ Thomas Goodwin (1600-1679), a leading Independent minister and theologian, was made President of Magdalen College, Oxford, by Cromwell, and attended him on his deathbed. *Matt. Arnold*, p. 458.

² The newspapers of the time record the burning of copies of Milton's books at the Session house in the Old Bailey in September. *M. M.* vol. vi. pp. 181, 193.

³ August 29, 1660.

called an *act of oblivion*¹ than of grace. Goodwin was named, with nineteen more, as incapacitated for any public trust; but of Milton there was no exception.

Of this tenderness shewn to Milton, the curiosity of mankind has not forbore to enquire the reason. Burnet thinks he was forgotten; but this is another instance which may confirm Dalrymple's observation, who says, "that whenever Burnet's narrations are examined, he appears to be mistaken."

Forgotten he was not; for his prosecution was ordered; it must be therefore by design that he was included in the general oblivion. He is said to have had friends in the House, such as Marvel,² Morrice, and Sir Thomas Clarges; and undoubtedly a man like him must have had influence. A very particular story of his escape is told by Richardson in his *Memoirs*,³ which he received from Pope, as delivered by Betterton,⁴ who might have heard it from Davenant.⁵

¹ This was called the *Act of Free and General Pardon, Indemnity, and Oblivion*. It was based on a document brought from Charles to Monk, and produced by him in the two Houses with immense effect on May 1st, namely, the Declaration, dated from Breda, April 4th, entitled, *His Majesty's gracious Declaration to all his Loving Subjects*.

² Andrew Marvell (1620-1678), the poet, then Member for Hull, according to Philips, 'acted vigorously in his behalf and made a considerable party for him.' Sir Thomas Clarges was Monk's brother-in-law, and therefore enjoyed considerable influence at this time. Sir William Morrice, another of Monk's friends, was by his influence made Secretary of State, which post he held until 1668. *Firth Milton*, p. 111.

³ *Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Paradise Lost*, by J. Richardson, Father and Son. With a *Life of the Author, and a Discourse on the Poem*, by J. R. Sen. Lond. 1734. 8vo. And a portrait etched by Richardson.

⁴ Thomas Betterton (1635-1710), a celebrated actor when the stage regained popularity after the Restoration.

⁵ Sir William Davenant (1605-1668), Poet laureate in succession to Ben Jonson. His chief poem was *Gondibert*, he was also a writer for the stage, and the manager of a theatre.

In the war between the King and Parliament, Davenant was made prisoner, and condemned to die; but was spared at the request of Milton. When the turn of success brought Milton into the like danger, Davenant repaid the benefit by appearing in his favour. Here is a reciprocation of generosity and gratitude so pleasing, that the tale makes its own way to credit. But if help were wanted, I know not where to find it. The danger of Davenant is certain from his own relation; but of his escape there is no account. Betterton's narration can be traced no higher; it is not known that he had it from Davenant. We are told that the benefit exchanged was life for life; but it seems not certain that Milton's life ever was in danger.¹ Goodwin, who had committed the same kind of crime, escaped with incapacitation; and as exclusion from publick trust is a punishment which the power of government can commonly inflict without the help of a particular law, it required no great interest to exempt Milton from a censure little more than verbal. Something may be reasonably ascribed to veneration and compassion; to veneration of his abilities, and compassion for his distresses, which made it fit to forgive his malice for his learning. He was now poor and blind; and who would pursue with violence an illustrious enemy, depressed by fortune, and disarmed by nature?

The publication of the act of oblivion put him in the same condition with his fellow-subjects. He was, however, upon some pretence not now known, in the custody of the serjeant in December; and, when he was released, upon his refusal of the fees demanded, he and the serjeant were called before the House. He was now safe within the

¹ Dec. 15, 1660, the House of Commons ordered that Milton, then in the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms, should be released on payment of the fees, and the largeness of the sum demanded (£150) makes it probable that he had been some time in prison. See *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 192.

shade of oblivion, and knew himself to be as much out of the power of a griping officer as any other man. How the question was determined is not known. Milton would hardly have contended, but that he knew himself to have right on his side.

He then removed to Jewin-street,¹ near Aldersgate-street; and being blind, and by no means wealthy, wanted a domestick companion and attendant; and therefore, by the recommendation of Dr. Paget, married² Elizabeth Minshul, of a gentleman's family in Cheshire, probably without a fortune. All his wives were virgins; for he has declared that he thought it gross and indelicate to be a second husband: upon what other principles his choice was made, cannot now be known; but marriage afforded not much of his happiness. The first wife left him in disgust, and was brought back only by terror; the second, indeed, seems to have been more a favourite, but her life was short. The third, as Philips relates,³ oppressed his children in his life-time, and cheated them at his death.

Soon after his marriage, according to an obscure story,⁴ he was offered the continuance of his employment; and, being pressed by his wife to accept it, answered, "You, like other women, want to ride in your coach; my wish is to live and die an honest man." If he considered the Latin secretary as exercising any of the powers of government, he that had shared authority either with the parliament or Cromwell, might have forborn to talk very loudly

¹ In 1661.

² Feb. 24th, 1662-3. Milton's third wife was thirty-six years of age when he died, and she survived him about fifty-three years. For an interesting account of her, see *M. M.* vol. vi. pp. 728, 744-749.

³ Mr. Cunningham points out that this must be a slip of memory, for no such assertion is to be found in Philips. For a facsimile of Milton's signature at this marriage, see *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 475.

⁴ Richardson, *Life*, prefixed to *Explanatory Notes on P. L.* p. c.

of his honesty; and if he thought the office purely ministerial, he certainly might have honestly retained it under the king. But this tale has too little evidence to deserve a disquisition; large offers and sturdy rejections are among the most common topicks of falsehood.

He had so much either of prudence or gratitude, that he forbore to disturb the new settlement with any of his political or ecclesiastical opinions, and from this time devoted himself to poetry and literature. Of his zeal for learning, in all its parts, he gave a proof by publishing, the next year (1661), "Accidence commenced Grammar;"¹ a little book which has nothing remarkable, but that its author, who had been lately defending the supreme powers of his country, and was then writing "Paradise Lost," could descend from his elevation to rescue children from the perplexity of grammatical confusion, and the trouble of lessons unnecessarily repeated.

About this time Elwood the quaker,² being recommended to him as one who would read Latin to him, for the advantage of his conversation; attended him every afternoon, except on Sundays. Milton, who, in his letter to Hartlib,³ had declared, that *to read Latin with an English mouth is as ill a hearing as Law French*, required that Elwood should learn and practise the Italian pronunciation, which, he said, was necessary, if he would talk with foreigners. This seems to have been a task troublesome without use. There is little reason for preferring the Italian pronunciation to our own, except that it is more general; and to

¹ No copies of this have been found with an earlier date than 1669, and it is believed that Wood, who is the authority for the earlier date (1661), must have been mistaken. *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 642.

² See the *History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood, written by Himself.* Lond. 1714.

³ *On Education: To Mr. Samuel Hartlib*; published as a thin 4to. tract June 5th, 1644; republished by Milton at the end of the second edition of his *Minor Poems* in 1673.

teach it to an Englishman is only to make him a foreigner at home. He who travels, if he speaks Latin, may so soon learn the sounds which every native gives it, that he need make no provision before his journey; and if strangers visit us, it is their business to practise such conformity to our modes as they expect from us in their own countries. Elwood complied with the directions, and improved himself by his attendance; for he relates,¹ that Milton, having a curious ear,² knew by his voice when he read what he did not understand, and would stop him, and *open the most difficult passages*.

In a short time he took a house in the *Artillery Walk*, leading to *Bunhill Fields*; the mention of which concludes the register of Milton's removals and habitations. He lived longer in this place than in any other.

He was now busied by "Paradise Lost."³ Whence he drew the original design has been variously conjectured, by men who cannot bear to think themselves ignorant of that which, at last, neither diligence nor sagacity can discover. Some find the hint in an Italian tragedy. Voltaire tells a wild and unauthorised story of a farce seen by Milton in Italy,⁴ which opened thus: *Let the Rainbow be*

¹ Life, pp. 131-135.

² Of Milton's "curious ear," Richardson says, "In relation to his love of music, and the effect it had upon his mind, I remember a story from a friend I was happy in many years, who loved to talk of Milton, as he often did. Milton hearing a lady sing finely, 'Now I will swear,' says he, 'this lady is handsome.' His ears were now eyes to him," p. vi.

³ Milton began the dictation of *Paradise Lost* in 1658. He was just about finishing it when the Plague broke out in June, 1665. In 1666, while the Great Fire was still smouldering, he began the printing.

⁴ *L'Adamo, sacra rappresentazione*, by Andreini, an Italian poet and comedian (1578-1650), published, Milan, 1613 and 1617. It contained five Acts, with songs and choruses, and engravings from pictures by Proccacini, after each scene. The *Biog. Generale* states that so many copies of this play came to England that it became very scarce on the

the Fiddlestick of the Fiddle of Heaven. It has been already shewn,¹ that the first conception was a tragedy or mystery, not of a narrative, but a dramattick work, which he is supposed to have begun to reduce to its present form about the time (1655) when he finished his dispute with the defenders of the king.

He long before had promised to adorn his native country by some great performance, while he had yet perhaps no settled design, and was stimulated only by such expectations as naturally arose from the survey of his attainments, and the consciousness of his powers. What he should undertake, it was difficult to determine. He was *long chusing, and began late.*²

While he was obliged to divide his time between his private studies and affairs of state, his poetical labour must have been often interrupted; and perhaps he did little more in that busy time than construct the narrative, adjust the episodes, proportion the parts, accumulate images and sentiments, and treasure in his memory, or preserve in

Continent. Voltaire, *Œuvres*, vol. viii. p. 353, says, "It is not astonishing that, having sought with diligence in England for everything relating to this great man, I have discovered some circumstances not generally known." After describing the fantastic absurdity of the play, at the production of which, at Milan, he was told Milton was present, Voltaire continues, "Milton discovered beside the absurdity of this work, the hidden sublimity of the subject. In things where all seems vulgar and absurd there is often a great side only perceptible to men of genius, the dance of the seven mortal sins with the Devil is assuredly the height of extravagance and folly; but the world made miserable by the weakness of one man, the blessing and punishment of the Creator, the source of our misfortunes and our crimes, are objects worthy of the boldest pencil, and there is in this subject a sad and solemn sublimity not unsuited to the English imagination."

¹ *Vid. supr.* p. 130. The *Jottings of Subjects*, which contain the first hints of *Paradise Lost*, were almost certainly written just after his return from Italy.

² *Paradise Lost*, Book ix. line 26, Ald. *M.* vol. ii. p. 129.

writing, such hints as books or meditation would supply. Nothing particular is known of his intellectual operations while he was a statesman; for, having every help and accommodation at hand, he had no need of uncommon expedients.

Being driven from all publick stations, he is yet too great not to be traced by curiosity to his retirement; where he has been found by Mr. Richardson,¹ the fondest of his admirers, sitting *before his door in a grey coat of coarse cloth, in warm sultry weather, to enjoy the fresh air; and so, as well as in his own room, receiving the visits of people of distinguished parts as well as quality.* His visitors of high quality must now be imagined to be few; but men of parts might reasonably court the conversation of a man so generally illustrious, that foreigners are reported, by Wood, to have visited the house in Bread-street where he was born.²

According to another account,³ he was seen in a small house, *neatly enough dressed in black cloaths, sitting in a room hung with rusty green; pale but not cadaverous, with chalkstones in his hands. He said, that if it were not for the gout, his blindness would be tolerable.*

In the intervals of his pain, being made unable to use the common exercises, he used to swing in a chair, and sometimes played upon an organ.

He was now confessedly and visibly employed upon his poem, of which the progress might be noted by those with whom he was familiar; for he was obliged, when he had composed as many lines as his memory would conveniently retain, to employ some friend in writing them, having, at

¹ Richardson, *Life*, p. iv.

² This was before the publication of *Paradise Lost*, for Milton's house in Bread Street was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666, to Milton's great loss.

³ Richardson, *Life*, p. iv.

least for part of the time, no regular attendant. This gave opportunity to observations and reports.

Mr. Philips observes,¹ that there was a very remarkable circumstance in the composure of "Paradise Lost," "which I have a particular reason," says he, "to remember; for whereas I had the perusal of it from the very beginning, for some years, as I went from time to time to visit him, in parcels of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time (which, being written by whatever hand came next, might possibly want correction as to the orthography and pointing), having, as the summer came on, not been shewed any for a considerable while, and desiring the reason thereof, was answered, that his vein never happily flowed but from the Autumnal Equinox to the Vernal; and that whatever he attempted at other times was never to his satisfaction, though he courted his fancy never so much; so that, in all the years he was about this poem, he may be said to have spent half his time therein."

Upon this relation Toland remarks,² that in his opinion Philips has mistaken the time of the year; for Milton, in his Elegies,³ declares that with the advance of the Spring he feels the increase of his poetical force, *redeunt in carmina vires*. To this it is answered, that Philips could hardly mistake time so well marked; and it may be added, that Milton might find different times of the year favourable to different parts of life. Mr. Richardson⁴ conceives it impossible that *such a work should be suspended for six months, or for one. It may go on faster or slower, but it must go on.* By what necessity it must continually go on, or why it might not be laid aside and resumed, it is not easy to discover.

This dependance of the soul upon the seasons, those temporary and periodical ebbs and flows of intellect, may,

¹ Godwin, *Life*, p. 376.

² *Life of Milton*, p. 127.

³ *Elegia Quinta*, line 5.

⁴ *Exp. Notes*, p. cxiii.

I suppose, justly be derided as the fumes of vain imagination. *Sapiens dominabitur astris.* The author that thinks himself weather-bound will find, with a little help from hellebore,¹ that he is only idle or exhausted. But while this notion has possession of the head, it produces the inability which it supposes. Our powers owe much of their energy to our hopes; *possunt quia posse videntur.* When success seems attainable, diligence is enforced; but when it is admitted that the faculties are suppressed by a cross wind, or a cloudy sky, the day is given up without resistance; for who can contend with the course of Nature?

From such prepossessions Milton seems not to have been free. There prevailed in his time an opinion that the world was in its decay,² and that we have had the misfortune to be produced in the decrepitude of Nature. It was suspected that the whole creation languished, that neither trees nor animals had the height or bulk of their predecessors, and that every thing was daily sinking by gradual diminution. Milton appears to suspect that souls partake of the general degeneracy, and is not without some fear that his book is to be written in *an age too late*³ for heroick poesy.

Another opinion wanders about the world, and sometimes finds reception among wise men; an opinion that

¹ The rhizome of *Veratrum Album*, the White Hellebore of the Greeks is an irritant narcotic poison. It was much used by the ancients in mental diseases. Mr. Firth notes that it is mentioned in Horace (Sat. ii. 382; Juvenal, xiii. 97); and Drayton, (*Polyolbion*, xiii. "and melancholy cures by sovereign Hellebore.")

² Mr. Cunningham here remarks that the first person who printed such an opinion in England was Dr. Godfrey Goodman, in his *Fall of Man, or the Corruption of Nature proved by the light of our Natural Reason.* Lond. 1616. A glance at this sorrowful performance should convince the pessimists of our day of a lack of originality in their lamentations over the hardness of the times, the decay of the nation, and the universal degeneracy of the age.

³ From Milton's Tract, *The reason of Church government urged against Prelaty.*

restrains the operations of the mind to particular regions, and supposes that a luckless mortal may be born in a degree of latitude too high or too low for wisdom or for wit. From this fancy, wild as it is, he had not wholly cleared his head, when he feared lest the *climate* of his country might be *too cold* for flights of imagination.

Into a mind already occupied by such fancies, another not more reasonable might easily find its way. He that could fear lest his genius had fallen upon too old a world, or too chill a climate, might consistently magnify to himself the influence of the seasons, and believe his faculties to be vigorous only half the year.

His submission to the seasons was at least more reasonable than his dread of decaying Nature, or a frigid zone; for general causes must operate uniformly in a general abatement of mental power; if less could be performed by the writer, less likewise would content the judges of his work. Among this lagging race of frosty grovellers he might still have risen into eminence by producing something which *they should not willingly let die*. However inferior to the heroes who were born in better ages, he might still be great among his contemporaries, with the hope of growing every day greater in the dwindle of posterity. He might still be the giant of the pygmies, the one-eyed monarch of the blind.

Of his artifices of study, or particular hours of composition, we have little account, and there was perhaps little to be told. Richardson, who seems to have been very diligent in his enquiries, but discovers always a wish to find Milton discriminated from other men, relates,¹ that "he would sometimes lie awake whole nights, but not a verse could he make; and on a sudden his poetical faculty would rush upon him with an *impetus* or *æstrum*, and his daughter was immediately called to secure what came. At

¹ *Exp. Notes*, p. cxiv.

other times he would dictate perhaps forty lines in a breath, and then reduce them to half the number."

These bursts of lights, and involutions of darkness; these transient and involuntary excursions and retrocessions of invention, having some appearance of deviation from the common train of Nature, are eagerly caught by the lovers of a wonder. Yet something of this inequality happens to every man in every mode of exertion, manual or mental. The mechanick cannot handle his hammer and his file at all times with equal dexterity; there are hours, he knows not why, when *his hand is out*. By Mr. Richardson's relation, casually conveyed, much regard cannot be claimed. That, in his intellectual hour, Milton called for his daughter *to secure what came*, may be questioned; for unluckily it happens to be known that his daughters were never taught to write; nor would he have been obliged, as is universally confessed, to have employed any casual visiter in disburthening his memory, if his daughter could have performed the office.

The story of reducing his exuberance has been told of other authors, and, though doubtless true of every fertile and copious mind, seems to have been gratuitously transferred to Milton.

What he has told us, and we cannot now know more, is, that he composed much of his poem in the night and morning, I suppose before his mind was disturbed with common business; and that he poured out with great fluency his *unpremeditated verse*. Versification, free, like his, from the distresses of rhyme, must, by a work so long, be made prompt and habitual; and, when his thoughts were once adjusted, the words would come at his command.

At what particular times of his life the parts of his work were written, cannot often be known. The beginning of the third book shews that he had lost his sight; and the Introduction to the seventh, that the return of the

King had clouded him with discountenance; and that he was offended by the licentious festivity of the Restoration. There are no other internal notes of time. Milton, being now cleared from all effects of his disloyalty, had nothing required from him but the common duty of living in quiet, to be rewarded with the common right of protection: but this, which, when he sculked from the approach of his King, was perhaps more than he hoped, seems not to have satisfied him; for no sooner is he safe, than he finds himself in danger, *fallen on evil days and evil tongues, and with darkness and with danger compass'd round.*¹ This darkness, had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deserved compassion: but to add the mention of danger was ungrateful and unjust. He was fallen indeed on *evil days*; the time was come in which regicides could no longer boast their wickedness. But of *evil tongues* for Milton to complain, required impudence at least equal to his other powers; Milton, whose warmest advocates must allow, that he never spared any asperity of reproach or brutality of insolence.

But the charge itself seems to be false; for it would be hard to recollect any reproach cast upon him, either serious or ludicrous, through the whole remaining part of his life. He pursued his studies, or his amusements, without persecution, molestation, or insult. Such is the reverence paid to great abilities, however misused: they who contemplated in Milton the scholar and the wit, were contented to forget the reviler of his King.

When the plague (1665) raged in London, Milton took refuge at Chalfont in Bucks; where Elwood,² who had taken the house for him, first saw a complete copy of "Paradise Lost," and, having perused it, said to him, "Thou hast said a great deal upon 'Paradise Lost;' what hast thou to say upon 'Paradise Found?'"

¹ *Par. Lost*, vii. lines 27.

² *Life of Ellwood*, p. 233.

Next year, when the danger of infection had ceased, he returned to Bunhill-fields, and designed the publication of his poem. A license was necessary, and he could expect no great kindness from a chaplain of the archbishop of Canterbury. He seems, however, to have been treated with tenderness; for though objections were made to particular passages, and among them to the simile of the sun eclipsed in the first book, yet the license was granted; and he sold his copy, April 27, 1667, to Samuel Simmons,¹ for an immediate payment of five pounds, with a stipulation to receive five pounds more when thirteen hundred should be sold of the first edition: and again, five pounds after the sale of the same number of the second edition: and another five pounds after the same sale of the third. None of the three editions were to be extended beyond fifteen hundred copies.

The first edition was ten books, in a small quarto. The titles were varied from year to year; and an advertisement and the arguments of the books were omitted in some copies, and inserted in others.²

The sale gave him in two years a right to his second payment, for which the receipt was signed April 26, 1669. The second edition was not given till 1674; it was printed in small octavo; and the number of books was increased to twelve, by a division of the seventh and twelfth;³ and some other small improvements were made. The third

¹ The original of this famous agreement is in the British Museum, having been presented to that institution in 1852 by Samuel Rogers, the poet, who had purchased it in 1831 for a hundred guineas from Mr. Pickering the publisher. It had come down in the possession of the famous publishing family of the Tonsons. The signature, however, is not actually in Milton's own handwriting. See *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 511, for facsimile, &c.

² For a full account of the first edition of *Paradise Lost*, with its curious trade history, see *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 621.

³ A slip, or printer's error, for "tenth."

edition was published in 1678; and the widow, to whom the copy was then to devolve, sold all her claims to Simmons for eight pounds, according to her receipt given Dec. 21, 1680. Simmons had already agreed to transfer the whole right to Brabazon Aylmer for twenty-five pounds; and Aylmer sold to Jacob Tonson half, August 17, 1683, and half, March 24, 1690, at a price considerably enlarged. In the history of "Paradise Lost" a deduction thus minute will rather gratify than fatigue.

The slow sale and tardy reputation of this poem have been always mentioned as evidences of neglected merit, and of the uncertainty of literary fame; and enquiries have been made, and conjectures offered, about the causes of its long obscurity and late reception. But has the case been truly stated? Have not lamentation and wonder been lavished on an evil that was never felt?

That in the reigns of Charles and James the "Paradise Lost" received no publick acclamations, is readily confessed. Wit and literature were on the side of the Court: and who that solicited favour or fashion would venture to praise the defender of the regicides? All that he himself could think his due, from *evil tongues in evil days*, was that reverential silence which was generously preserved. But it cannot be inferred that his poem was not read, or not, however unwillingly, admired.¹

The sale, if it be considered, will justify the publick. Those who have no power to judge of past times but by their own, should always doubt their conclusions. The call for books was not in Milton's age what it is in the present. To read was not then a general amusement; neither traders, nor often gentlemen, thought themselves disgraced by ignorance. The women had not then aspired to literature, nor

¹ Dryden's lines on Milton ("Three poets in three distant ages born"), were written for the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost*, to be placed beneath Milton's portrait.

was every house supplied with a closet of knowledge. Those, indeed, who professed learning, were not less learned than at any other time; but of that middle race of students who read for pleasure or accomplishment, and who buy the numerous products of modern typography, the number was then comparatively small. To prove the paucity of readers, it may be sufficient to remark, that the nation had been satisfied, from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the works of Shakspeare, which probably did not together make one thousand copies.

The sale of thirteen hundred copies in two years, in opposition to so much recent enmity, and to a style of versification new to all and disgusting to many, was an uncommon example of the prevalence of genius. The demand did not immediately increase; for many more readers than were supplied at first the nation did not afford. Only three thousand were sold in eleven years; for it forced its way without assistance: its admirers did not dare to publish their opinion; and the opportunities now given of attracting notice by advertisements were then very few; the means of proclaiming the publication of new books have been produced by that general literature which now pervades the nation through all its ranks.

But the reputation and price of the copy still advanced, till the Revolution put an end to the secrecy of love, and "Paradise Lost" broke into open view with sufficient security of kind reception.¹

Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked

¹ A German translation of *Paradise Lost* was published in 1682; a Latin translation of the first book in 1686; and in 1688 came Tonson's sumptuous subscription folio. A sixth edition of *Paradise Lost*, with an elaborate commentary, was published in 1695. Addison's criticisms in the *Spectator* began in 1712, when nine editions of *Paradise Lost* had been published. Firth, p. 119.

his reputation stealing its way in a kind of subterraneous current through fear and silence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting, without impatience, the vicissitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation.

In the mean time he continued his studies, and supplied the want of sight by a very odd expedient, of which Philips gives the following account:

Mr. Philips tells us,¹ "that though our author had daily about him one or other to read, some persons of man's estate, who, of their own accord, greedily caught at the opportunity of being his readers, that they might as well reap the benefit of what they read to him, as oblige him by the benefit of their reading; and others of younger years were sent by their parents to the same end: yet excusing only the eldest daughter, by reason of her bodily infirmity, and difficult utterance of speech, (which, to say truth, I doubt was the principal cause of excusing her), the other two were condemned to the performance of reading, and exactly pronouncing of all the languages of whatever book he should, at one time or other, think fit to peruse, viz. the Hebrew (and I think the Syriac), the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, Spanish, and French. All which sorts of books to be confined to read, without understanding one word, must needs be a trial of patience almost beyond endurance. Yet it was endured by both for a long time, though the irksomeness of this employment could not be always concealed, but broke out more and more into expressions of uneasiness; so that at length they were all, even the eldest also, sent out to learn some curious and ingenious sorts of manufacture, that are proper for women to learn; particularly embroideries in gold or silver."

In the scene of misery which this mode of intellectual

¹ *Life of Milton.* Godwin's *Lives*, p. 380.

labour sets before our eyes, it is hard to determine whether the daughters or the father are most to be lamented. A language not understood can never be so read as to give pleasure, and very seldom so as to convey meaning. If few men would have had resolution to write books with such embarrassments, few likewise would have wanted ability to find some better expedient.

Three years after his "Paradise Lost" (1667), he published his "History of England,"¹ comprising the whole fable of Geoffry of Monmouth, and continued to the Norman invasion. Why he should have given the first part, which he seems not to believe, and which is universally rejected, it is difficult to conjecture. The style is harsh; but it has something of rough vigour, which perhaps may often strike, though it cannot please.

On this history the licenser again fixed his claws, and before he would transmit it to the press tore out several parts. Some censures of the Saxon monks were taken away, lest they should be applied to the modern clergy; and a character of the Long Parliament, and Assembly of Divines, was excluded; of which the author gave a copy to the earl of Anglesea, and which, being afterwards published, has since been inserted in its proper place.

The same year were printed² "Paradise Regained,"³ and "Sampson Agonistes,"⁴ a tragedy written in imitation of the Ancients, and never designed by the author for the stage. As these poems were published by another bookseller, it has been asked, whether Simmons was discouraged from receiving them by the slow sale of the former. Why

¹ This history was chiefly written in 1648, though not published till 1670. It is adorned with the fine portrait of Milton, by Faithorne, the most authentic and impressive portrait of the poet in his later life.

² The volume containing these poems was dated 1671, but it was licensed July 2nd, 1670, and may probably have appeared late in 1670.

³ Ald. *M.* vol. ii. p. 285.

⁴ *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 1.

a writer changed his bookseller a hundred years ago, I am far from hoping to discover. Certainly, he who in two years sells thirteen hundred copies of a volume in quarto, bought for two payments of five pounds each, has no reason to repent his purchase.

When Milton shewed "Paradise Regained" to Elwood,¹ "This," said he, "is owing to you; for you put it in my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which otherwise I had not thought of."

His last poetical offspring was his favourite. He could not, as Elwood² relates, endure to hear "Paradise Lost" preferred to "Paradise Regained." Many causes may vitiate a writer's judgement of his own works. On that which has cost him much labour he sets a high value, because he is unwilling to think that he has been diligent in vain; what has been produced without toilsome efforts is considered with delight, as a proof of vigorous faculties and fertile invention; and the last work, whatever it be, has necessarily most of the grace of novelty. Milton, however it happened, had this prejudice, and had it to himself.

To that multiplicity of attainments, and extent of comprehension, that entitle this great author to our veneration, may be added a kind of humble dignity, which did not disdain the meanest services to literature. The epic poet, the controvertist, the politician, having already descended to accommodate children with a book of rudiments, now, in the last years of his life, composed a book of Logick, for the initiation of students in philosophy: and published (1672) "*Artis Logicæ plenior Institutio ad Petri Rami*

¹ *Life of Ellwood*, p. 234.

² This is doubtless a mistake or misprint for "Philips," who says (p. 379), of *Paradise Regained*, "it is generally censured to be much inferior to the other, tho' he could not hear with patience any such thing when related to him."

methodum concinnata;” that is, “A new Scheme of Logick, according to the Method of Ramus.”¹ I know not whether, even in this book, he did not intend an act of hostility against the Universities; for Ramus² was one of the first oppugners of the old philosophy, who disturbed with innovations the quiet of the schools.

His polemical disposition again revived. He had now been safe so long, that he forgot his fears, and published a “Treatise of true Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and the best Means to prevent the Growth of Popery.”³

But this little tract is modestly written, with respectful mention of the Church of England, and an appeal to the thirty-nine articles. His principle of toleration is, agreement in the sufficiency of the Scriptures; and he extends it to all who, whatever their opinions are, profess to derive them from the sacred books. The papists appeal to other testimonies, and are therefore in his opinion not to be permitted the liberty of either publick or private worship; for though they plead conscience, *we have no warrant, he says, to regard conscience which is not grounded in Scripture.*

Those who are not convinced by his reasons, may be perhaps delighted with his wit. The term *Roman catholick*

¹ Prof. Masson is of opinion that this work, like the *Accidence*, was an old MS. written most probably in Milton's Cambridge days. He observes that “the Ramish Logic adopted with such zeal by the Protestant Universities of Europe in the last half of the sixteenth century in opposition to the Aristotelian, with which the cause of Roman Catholicism was thought to be identified, had been taught in Cambridge before Milton was a student there,” and that the controversy probably raged fiercely in the colleges during his time of residence. *M. M.* vol. i. p. 264, and vol. vi. p. 685.

² Peter Ramus (1515-1572), an educational reformer, born in Picardy.

³ A small quarto tract of sixteen pages, the appearance of which, in 1673, with no printer's or publisher's name, suggests that the publication was by Milton himself, in evasion of the press law.

is, he says, *one of the Pope's bulls ; it is particular universal, or catholick schismatick.*

He has, however, something better. As the best preservative against Popery, he recommends the diligent perusal of the Scriptures; a duty, from which he warns the busy part of mankind not to think themselves excused.

He now reprinted his juvenile poems,¹ with some additions.

In the last year of his life he sent to the press,² seeming to take delight in publication, a collection of Familiar Epistles in Latin; to which, being too few to make a volume, he added some academical exercises,³ which perhaps he perused with pleasure, as they recalled to his memory the days of youth; but for which nothing but veneration for his name could now procure a reader.

When he had attained his sixty-sixth year, the gout, with which he had been long tormented, prevailed over the enfeebled powers of nature. He died⁴ by a quiet and silent expiration, about the tenth of November 1674, at his house in Bunhill-fields; and was buried next his father⁵ in the chancel of St. Giles at Cripplegate. His funeral was very splendidly and numerously attended.

¹ *Poems,* &c. "upon several occasions. By Mr. John Milton: Both English and Latin. Composed at several times. With a small *Tractate of Education* to Mr. Hartlib, 1673." Small 8vo. pp. 290.

² In July, 1674. It had been Milton's intention to include his *State Letters*, but this had to be relinquished for political reasons. The volume contained thirty-one letters addressed to seventeen correspondents, a few of whom were still alive. *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 724.

³ *Prousiones Oratoricæ*, or Rhetorical Essays, written at Cambridge. These have been partially translated, and for the first time, thoroughly examined by Prof. Masson, who shows their great Autobiographical value and interest as illustrating Milton's University career. *M. M.* vol. i. pp. 272-306.

⁴ November 8th, 1674, aged sixty-five years and eleven months.

⁵ Buried March 15th, 1646-7. On Milton's relations with him, see Masson's translation of the Poem *Ad Patrem*. *M. M.* vol. i. p. 334.

Upon his grave there is supposed to have been no memorial; but in our time a monument has been erected in Westminster-Abbey *To the Author of Paradise Lost*, by Mr. Benson,¹ who has in the inscription bestowed more words upon himself than upon Milton.

When the inscription for the monument of Philips,² in which he was said to be *soli Miltono secundus*, was exhibited to Dr. Sprat, then dean of Westminster, he refused to admit it; the name of Milton was, in his opinion, too detestable to be read on the wall of a building dedicated to devotion. Atterbury,³ who succeeded him, being author of the inscription, permitted its reception. "And such has been the change of publick opinion," said Dr. Gregory,⁴ from whom I heard this account, "that I have seen erected in the church a statue of that man, whose name I once knew considered as a pollution of its walls."

Milton has the reputation of having been in his youth eminently beautiful, so as to have been called the Lady of his college. His hair, which was of a light brown, parted at the foretop, and hung down upon his shoulders, according to the picture which he has given of Adam.⁵ He was, however, not of the heroick stature, but rather below the middle size, according to Mr. Richardson, who mentions

¹ In 1737. He was Surveyor of Buildings to George I.

² *Vid. infr. Life, John Philips.*

³ Francis Atterbury, D.D. (1661-62—1731-32), Dean of Westminster, and afterwards Bishop of Rochester, was a great champion of the rights of the Clergy in Convocation, the friend of Pope and Swift, and a zealous and eloquent divine. He was banished on suspicion of being concerned in a Plot in favour of the Pretender, and died in Paris.

⁴ This was, no doubt, David Gregory, D.D. (1696-1767), who, when Johnson went up to Oxford, in 1728, was Professor of Modern History and Languages, George I. having founded that Chair in 1723. When Johnson visited Oxford in 1759, Gregory had then been for three years Dean of Christchurch.

⁵ *Par. Lost Ald. M.* vol. iv. p. 301-3.

him as having narrowly escaped from being *short and thick*.¹ He was vigorous and active, and delighted in the exercise of the sword, in which he is related to have been eminently skilful. His weapon was, I believe, not the rapier, but the backsword, of which he recommends the use in his book on Education.

His eyes are said never to have been bright; but, if he was a dexterous fencer, they must have been once quick.

His domestick habits, so far as they are known, were those of a severe student. He drank little strong drink of any kind, and fed without excess in quantity, and in his earlier years without delicacy of choice. In his youth he studied late at night; but afterwards changed his hours, and rested in bed from nine to four in the summer, and five in winter. The course of his day was best known after he was blind. When he first rose, he heard a chapter in the Hebrew Bible, and then studied till twelve; then took some exercise for an hour; then dined; then played on the organ, and sung, or heard another sing; then studied to six; then entertained his visitors till eight; then supped, and, after a pipe of tobacco and a glass of water, went to bed.

So is his life described; but this even tenour appears attainable only in Colleges. He that lives in the world will sometimes have the succession of his practice broken and confused. Visitors, of whom Milton is represented to have had great numbers, will come and stay unseasonably; business, of which every man has some, must be done when others will do it.

When he did not care to rise early, he had something read to him by his bedside; perhaps at this time his daughters were employed. He composed much in the

¹ *Exp. Notes*, p. ii.

morning, and dictated in the day, sitting obliquely in an elbow-chair, with his leg thrown over the arm.

Fortune appears not to have had much of his care. In the civil wars he lent his personal estate to the parliament; but when, after the contest was decided, he solicited repayment, he met not only with neglect, but *sharp rebuke*; and, having tired both himself and his friends, was given up to poverty and hopeless indignation, till he shewed how able he was to do greater service. He was then made Latin secretary, with two hundred pounds a year; and had a thousand pounds¹ for his "Defence of the People." His widow, who, after his death, retired to Namptwich in Cheshire, and died about 1729,² is said to have reported that he lost two thousand pounds by entrusting it to a scrivener; and that, in the general depredation upon the Church, he had grasped an estate of about sixty pounds a year belonging to Westminster-Abbey, which, like other sharers of the plunder of rebellion, he was afterwards obliged to return. Two thousand pounds, which he had placed in the Excise-office, were also lost. There is yet no reason to believe that he was ever reduced to indigence. His wants, being few, were competently supplied. He sold his library before his death, and left his family fifteen hundred pounds, on which his widow laid hold, and only gave one hundred to each of his daughters.³

His literature was unquestionably great. He read all

¹ For confutation of this statement, see *M. M.* vol. iv. p. 321.

² Her Will was dated August 22, 1727, and proved on the 10th October, 1727. She therefore died at the age of eighty-nine, having out-lived her husband fifty-three years. Her goods and chattels were sworn under £40, and the "true and perfect" inventory of them is a touching document. *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 747.

³ Milton's Nuncupative Will was not found till after Johnson's death. *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 736. This document furnishes (Appendix D) a truer estimate of the wife's character than that given in the text. See also *M. M.* vol. vi. pp. 727-728.

the languages which are considered either as learned or polite; Hebrew, with its two dialects, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish. In Latin his skill was such as places him in the first rank of writers and criticks; and he appears to have cultivated Italian with uncommon diligence. The books in which his daughter, who used to read to him, represented him as most delighting, after Homer, which he could almost repeat, were Ovid's "Metamorphoses" and "Euripides." His "Euripides" is, by Mr. Cradock's kindness,¹ now in my hands: the margin is sometimes noted; but I have found nothing remarkable.

Of the English poets he set most value upon Spenser,² Shakspeare, and Cowley. Spenser was apparently his favourite: Shakspeare he may easily be supposed to like, with every other skilful reader; but I should not have expected that Cowley, whose ideas of excellence were different from his own, would have had much of his approbation. His character of Dryden, who sometimes visited him, was, that he was a good rhymist, but no poet.

His theological opinions³ are said to have been first Calvinistical; and afterwards, perhaps when he began to hate the Presbyterians, to have extended towards Arminianism. In the mixed questions of theology and government, he never thinks that he can recede far enough from popery, or prelacy; but what Baudius⁴ says of Eras-

¹ Mr. Cradock bequeathed this volume to Sir Henry Halford. On this and other of Milton's books, see *Ald. M.* vol. i. p. xciv.

² See references given by Prof. Hales, ed. *Areopagitica*, pp. 18, 96.

³ A very important and very curious *Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, or *Systematic Body of Divinity*, was delivered by Milton, with a transcript of his *State Letters*, for publication, to the young scholar Daniel Skinner, B.A. of Trinity College, Cambridge, and his amanuensis. For the remarkable history of the discovery in 1823, and publication and contents of this treatise, see *M. M.* vol. vi. pp. 790-840.

⁴ Dominic Baudius (1561-1613), Professor of History in the University of Leyden. His Latin Poems are considered elegant and harmonious,

mus seems applicable to him, *magis habuit quod fugeret, quam quod sequeretur*. He had determined rather what to condemn, than what to approve. He has not associated himself with any denomination of Protestants: we know rather what he was not, than what he was. He was not of the church of Rome; he was not of the church of England.

To be of no church, is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are distant, and which is animated only by Faith and Hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind, unless it be invigorated and reimpresed by external ordinances, by stated calls to worship, and the salutary influence of example. Milton, who appears to have had full conviction of the truth of Christianity, and to have regarded the Holy Scriptures with the profoundest veneration, to have been untainted by an heretical peculiarity of opinion, and to have lived in a confirmed belief of the immediate and occasional agency of Providence, yet grew old without any visible worship. In the distribution of his hours, there was no hour of prayer, either solitary, or with his household; omitting publick prayers, he omitted all.

Of this omission the reason has been sought, upon a supposition which ought never to be made, that men live with their own approbation, and justify their conduct to themselves. Prayer certainly was not thought superfluous by him, who represents our first parents as praying acceptably in the state of innocence, and efficaciously after their fall. That he lived without prayer can hardly be affirmed; his studies and meditations were an habitual prayer. The neglect of it in his family was probably a fault for which he condemned himself, and which he in-
but wanting in vigour and originality. His well-known *Epistolæ* are most entertaining. This saying of his is quoted by Jortin in his *Life of Erasmus*, vol. ii. p. 7, ed. 1760.

tended to correct, but that death, as too often happens, intercepted his reformation.

His political notions were those of an acrimonious and surly republican, for which it is not known that he gave any better reason than that *a popular government was the most frugal; for the trappings of a monarchy would set up an ordinary commonwealth.*¹ It is surely very shallow policy, that supposes money to be the chief good; and even this, without considering that the support and expence of a Court is, for the most part, only a particular kind of traffick, by which money is circulated, without any national impoverishment.

Milton's republicanism was, I am afraid, founded in an envious hatred of greatness, and a sullen desire of independence; in petulance impatient of controul, and pride disdainful of superiority. He hated monarchs in the state, and prelates in the church; for he hated all whom he was required to obey. It is to be suspected, that his predominant desire was to destroy rather than establish, and that he felt not so much the love of liberty as repugnance to authority.

It has been observed, that they who most loudly clamour for liberty do not most liberally grant it. What we know of Milton's character, in domestick relations, is, that he was severe and arbitrary. His family consisted of women; and there appears in his books something like a Turkish contempt of females, as subordinate and inferior beings. That his own daughters might not break the ranks, he suffered them to be depressed by a mean and penurious education. He thought woman made only for obedience, and man only for rebellion.

Of his family some account may be expected. His sister, first married to Mr. Philips, afterwards married Mr. Agar,

¹ Toland, *Life of Milton*, p. 139.

a friend of her first husband, who succeeded him in the Crown-office.¹ She had by her first husband Edward and John, the two nephews whom Milton educated; and by her second, two daughters.

His brother, Sir Christopher, had two daughters, Mary and Catherine, and a son Thomas, who succeeded Agar in the Crown-office, and left a daughter living in 1749 in Grosvenor-street.

Milton had children only by his first wife; Anne, Mary, and Deborah. Anne, though deformed, married a master-builder, and died of her first child. Mary died single. Deborah married Abraham Clark, a weaver in Spitalfields, and lived seventy-six years, to August, 1727. This is the daughter of whom public mention has been made. She could repeat the first lines of Homer, the "Metamorphoses," and some of "Euripides," by having often read them. Yet here incredulity is ready to make a stand. Many repetitions are necessary to fix in the memory lines not understood; and why should Milton wish or want to hear them so often! These lines were at the beginning of the poems. Of a book written in a language not understood, the beginning raises no more attention than the end; and as those that understand it know commonly the beginning best, its rehearsal will seldom be necessary. It is not likely that Milton required any passage to be so much repeated as that his daughter could learn it; nor likely that he desired the initial lines to be read at all: nor that the daughter, weary of the drudgery of pronouncing unideal sounds, would voluntarily commit them to memory.

To this gentlewoman Addison made a present, and promised some establishment; but died soon after. Queen Caroline² sent her fifty guineas. She had seven sons and three daughters; but none of them had any children,

¹ In the Court of Chancery.

² Wife of George II.

except her son Caleb and her daughter Elizabeth. Caleb went to Fort St. George in the East Indies, and had two sons, of whom nothing is now known. Elizabeth married Thomas Foster, a weaver in Spitalfields, and had seven children, who all died. She kept a petty grocer's or chandler's shop, first at Holloway, and afterwards in Cock-lane near Shoreditch Church. She knew little of her grandfather, and that little was not good. She told of his harshness to his daughters, and his refusal to have them taught to write; and, in opposition to other accounts, represented him as delicate, though temperate, in his diet.

In 1750, April 5, "Comus" was played¹ for her benefit. She had so little acquaintance with diversion or gaiety, that she did not know what was intended when a benefit was offered her. The profits of the night were only one hundred and thirty pounds, though Dr. Newton² brought a large contribution; and twenty pounds were given by Tonson,³ a man who is to be praised as often as he is named. Of this sum one hundred pounds was placed in the stocks, after some debate between her and her husband in whose name it should be entered; and the rest augmented their little stock, with which they removed to Islington.⁴ This was the greatest benefaction that "Paradise Lost" ever procured the author's descendents; and

¹ Before the performance, Johnson published a letter in the *General Advertiser*, calling attention to its object. Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. i. p. 173.

² Bishop of Bristol, who in 1749 published an edition of Milton's Works. Boswell quotes, from Newton's *Account of his own Life* (1782), some very severe strictures on the *Lives of the Poets*, which Johnson declared "he durst not have printed while he was alive." Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iv. p. 210.

³ This was not the great Jacob, who died 18th March, 1735-36, aged eighty, nor Jacob, his nephew and partner, who died before him, Nov. 25th, 1735, but Jacob, old Jacob's great nephew, who died 31st March, 1767. P. Cunningham, *Lives of the Poets*, vol. i. p. 138.

⁴ Here she died May 9th, 1754.

to this he who has now attempted to relate his Life, had the honour of contributing a Prologue.

In the examination of Milton's poetical works, I shall pay so much regard to time as to begin with his juvenile productions. For his early pieces he seems to have had a degree of fondness not very laudable: what he has once written he resolves to preserve, and gives to the publick an unfinished poem,¹ which he broke off because he was *nothing satisfied with what he had done*, supposing his readers less nice than himself. These preludes to his future labours are in Italian, Latin, and English. Of the Italian I cannot pretend to speak as a critick; but I have heard them commended by a man² well qualified to decide their merit. The Latin pieces are lusciously elegant; but the delight which they afford is rather by the exquisite imitation of the ancient writers, by the purity of the diction, and the harmony of the numbers, than by any power of invention, or vigour of sentiment. They are not all of equal value; the elegies excell the odes; and some of the exercises on Gunpowder Treason might have been spared.

The English poems, though they make no promises of "Paradise Lost," have this evidence of genius, that they have a cast original and unborrowed. But their peculiarity is not excellence: if they differ from verses of others, they differ for the worse; for they are too often distinguished by repulsive harshness; the combinations of words are new, but they are not pleasing; the rhymes and epithets seem to be laboriously sought, and violently applied.

That in the early parts of his life he wrote with much care appears from his manuscripts, happily preserved at

¹ *The Passion*. Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 176.

² Mr. Cunningham suggests Baretti, Johnson's Italian friend. See Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. i. pp. 237, 286 n.

Cambridge, in which many of his smaller works are found as they were first written, with the subsequent corrections. Such reliques shew how excellence is required; what we hope ever to do with ease, we may learn first to do with diligence.

Those who admire the beauties of this great poet, sometimes force their own judgment into false approbation of his little pieces, and prevail upon themselves to think that admirable which is only singular. All that short compositions can commonly attain is neatness and elegance. Milton never learned the art of doing little things with grace; he overlooked the milder excellence of suavity and softness; he was a *Lion* that had no skill *in dandling the Kid*.

One of the poems on which much praise has been bestowed is "Lycidas;"¹ of which the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing. What beauty there is, we must therefore seek in the sentiments and images. It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion; for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of rough *satyrs* and *fauns with cloven heel*. Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief.

In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting: whatever images it can supply, are long ago exhausted; and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey² that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must

¹ Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 123. For a charming criticism of Lycidas, "the touchstone of taste," see Mark Pattison on Milton in Ward's *English Poets*, vol. ii. p. 298.

² *On the death of Mr. William Hervey*. Cowley's Poems, p. 13.

miss the companion of his labours, and the partner of his discoveries; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines!

We drove a field, and both together heard
 What time the grey fly winds her sultry horn,
 Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

We know that they never drove a field, and that they had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote, that it is never sought because it cannot be known when it is found.

Among the flocks, and copses, and flowers, appear the heathen deities; Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, such as a College easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge, or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping; and how one god asks another god what is become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no sympathy; he who thus praises will confer no honour.

This poem has yet a grosser fault. With these trifling fictions are mingled the most awful and sacred truths, such as ought never to be polluted with such irreverend combinations. The shepherd likewise is now a feeder of sheep, and afterwards an ecclesiastical pastor, a superintendent of a Christian flock. Such equivocations are always unskilful; but here they are indecent, and at least approach to impiety, of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conscious.

Such is the power of reputation justly acquired, that its blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read "Lycidas" with pleasure, had he not known its author.

Of the two pieces, "L'Allegro"¹ and "Il Penseroso,"² I believe opinion is uniform; every man that reads them, reads them with pleasure. The author's design is not, what Theobald has remarked, merely to shew how objects derive their colours from the mind, by representing the operation of the same things upon the gay and the melancholy temper, or upon the same man as he is differently disposed; but rather how, among the successive variety of appearances, every disposition of mind takes hold on those by which it may be gratified.

The *cheerful* man hears the lark in the morning; the *pensive* man hears the nightingale in the evening. The *cheerful* man sees the cock strut, and hears the horn and hounds echo in the wood; then walks *not unseen* to observe the glory of the rising sun, or listen to the singing milk-maid, and view the labours of the plowman and the mower; then casts his eyes about him over scenes of smiling plenty, and looks up to the distant tower, the residence of some fair inhabitant; thus he pursues rural gaiety through a day of labour or of play, and delights himself at night with the fanciful narratives of superstitious ignorance.

The *pensive* man, at one time, walks *unseen* to muse at midnight; and at another hears the sullen curfew. If the weather drives him home, he sits in a room lighted only by *glowing embers*; or by a lonely lamp outwatches the North Star, to discover the habitation of separate souls, and varies the shades of meditation, by contemplating the magnificent or pathetick scenes of tragick and epic poetry. When the morning comes, a morning gloomy with rain and wind, he walks into the dark trackless woods, falls asleep by some murmuring water, and with melancholy enthusiasm expects some dream of prognostication, or some musick played by aerial performers.

¹ Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 141.

² *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 134.

Both Mirth and Melancholy are solitary, silent inhabitants of the breast that neither receive nor transmit communication; no mention is therefore made of a philosophical friend, or a pleasant companion. The seriousness does not arise from any participation of calamity, nor the gaiety from the pleasures of the bottle.

The man of *cheerfulness*, having exhausted the country, tries what *towered cities*¹ will afford, and mingles with scenes of splendor, gay assemblies, and nuptial festivities; but he mingles a mere spectator, as, when the learned comedies of Jonson, or the wild dramas of Shakspeare, are exhibited, he attends the theatre.

The *pensive*² man never loses himself in crowds, but walks the cloister, or frequents the cathedral. Milton probably had not yet forsaken the Church.

Both his characters delight in musick; but he seems to think that cheerful notes would have obtained from Pluto a compleat dismissal of Eurydice, of whom solemn sounds only procured a conditional release.³

For the old age of *Cheerfulness* he makes no provision; but *Melancholy* he conducts with great dignity to the close of life. His *Cheerfulness* is without levity, and his *Pensiveness* without asperity.

Through these two poems the images are properly selected, and nicely distinguished; but the colours of the diction seem not sufficiently discriminated. I know not whether the characters are kept sufficiently apart. No mirth can, indeed, be found in his melancholy; but I am afraid that I always meet some melancholy in his mirth. They are two noble efforts of imagination.

The greatest of his juvenile performances is the "Mask

¹ *L'Allegro*, Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 146.

² *Il Penseroso*, *ibid.* p. 140.

³ *L'Allegro*, *ibid.* p. 147. *Il Penseroso*, *ibid.* p. 138.

of Comus ;”¹ in which may very plainly be discovered the dawn or twilight of “Paradise Lost.” Milton appears to have formed very early that system of diction, and mode of verse, which his maturer judgement approved, and from which he never endeavoured nor desired to deviate.

Nor does “Comus” afford only a specimen of his language ; it exhibits likewise his power of description and his vigour of sentiment, employed in the praise and defence of virtue. A work more truly poetical is rarely found ; allusions, images, and descriptive epithets, embellish almost every period with lavish decoration. As a series of lines, therefore, it may be considered as worthy of all the admiration with which the votaries have received it.

As a drama it is deficient. The action is not probable. A Masque, in those parts where supernatural intervention is admitted, must indeed be given up to all the freaks of imagination ; but, so far as the action is merely human, it ought to be reasonable, which can hardly be said of the conduct of the two brothers ; who, when their sister sinks with fatigue in a pathless wilderness, wander both away together in search of berries too far to find their way back, and leave a helpless Lady to all the sadness and danger of solitude. This however is a defect overbalanced by its convenience.

What deserves more reprehension is, that the prologue spoken in the wild wood by the attendant Spirit is addressed to the audience ; a mode of communication so contrary to nature of dramattick representation, that no precedents can support it.

The discourse of the Spirit is too long ;² an objection that may be made to almost all the following speeches : they have not the spriteliness of a dialogue animated by reciprocal contention, but seem rather declamations deliberately composed, and formally repeated, on a moral question.

¹ Ald. *M.* vol. iii. p. 77.

² *Ibid.* p. 99.

The auditor therefore listens as to a lecture, without passion, without anxiety.

The song of Comus¹ has airiness and jollity; but, what may recommend Milton's morals as well as his poetry, the invitations to pleasure are so general, that they excite no distinct images of corrupt enjoyment, and take no dangerous hold on the fancy.

The following soliloquies of Comus and the Lady are elegant, but tedious. The song must owe much to the voice, if it ever can delight. At last the Brothers enter, with too much tranquillity; and when they have feared lest their sister should be in danger, and hoped that she is not in danger, the Elder makes a speech in praise of chastity, and the Younger finds how fine it is to be a philosopher.

Then descends the Spirit in form of a shepherd; and the Brother, instead of being in haste to ask his help, praises his singing, and enquires his business in that place. It is remarkable, that at this interview the Brother is taken with a short fit of rhyming. The Spirit relates² that the Lady is in the power of Comus; the Brother moralises again; and the Spirit makes a long narration, of no use because it is false, and therefore unsuitable to a good Being.

In all these parts the language is poetical, and the sentiments are generous; but there is something wanting to allure attention.

The dispute between the Lady and Comus³ is the most animated and affecting scene of the drama, and wants nothing but a brisker reciprocation of objections and replies, to invite attention, and detain it.

The songs are vigorous, and full of imagery; but they are harsh in their diction, and not very musical in their numbers.

¹ Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 81. ² *Ibid.* pp. 99-102. ³ *Ibid.* pp. 105-113.

Throughout the whole, the figures are too bold, and the language too luxuriant for dialogue. It is a drama in the epic style, inelegantly splendid, and tediously instructive.

The "Sonnets" were written in different parts of Milton's life, upon different occasions. They deserve not any particular criticism; for of the best it can only be said, that they are not bad; and perhaps only the eighth¹ and the twenty-first² are truly entitled to this slender commendation. The fabrick of a sonnet, however adapted to the Italian language, has ever succeeded in ours, which, having greater variety of termination, requires the rhymes to be often changed,

Those little pieces may be dispatched without much anxiety; a greater work calls for greater care. I am now to examine "Paradise Lost;"³ a poem, which, considered with respect to design, may claim the first place, and with respect to performance the second, among the productions of the human mind.

By the general consent of criticks, the first praise of genius is due to the writer of an epick poem, as it requires an assemblage of all the powers which are singly sufficient for other compositions. Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason. Epick poetry undertakes to teach the most important truths by the most pleasing precepts, and therefore relates some great event in the most affecting manner. History must supply the writer with the rudiments of narration, which he must improve and exalt by a nobler art, must animate by dramattick energy, and diversify by retrospection and anticipation; morality must teach him the exact bounds, and different shades, of vice and virtue;

¹ Son. VIII. *When the Assault was intended to the City.* Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 203.

² Son. XXI. *To Cyriac Skinner.* Ibid. p. 213.

³ Ibid. vol. i. p. i.

from policy, and the practice of life, he has to learn the discriminations of character, and the tendency of the passions, either single or combined; and physiology must supply him with illustrations and images. To put these materials to poetical use, is required an imagination capable of painting nature, and realizing fiction. Nor is he yet a poet till he has attained the whole extension of his language, distinguished all the delicacies of phrase, and all the colours of words, and learned to adjust their different sounds to all the varieties of metrical moderation.

Bossu¹ is of opinion that the poet's first work is to find a *moral*, which his fable is afterwards to illustrate and establish. This seems to have been the process only of Milton; the moral of other poems is incidental and consequent; in Milton's only it is essential and intrinsic. His purpose was the most useful and the most arduous; *to vindicate the ways of God to man*; to shew the reasonableness of religion, and the necessity of obedience to the Divine Law.

To convey this moral, there must be a *fable*, a narration artfully constructed, so as to excite curiosity, and surprise expectation. In this part of his work, Milton must be confessed to have equalled every other poet. He has involved in his account of the Fall of Man the events which preceded, and those that were to follow it: he has interwoven the whole system of theology with such propriety, that every part appears to be necessary; and scarcely any recital is wished shorter for the sake of quickening the progress of the main action.

The subject of an epic poem is naturally an event of great importance. That of Milton is not the destruction of a city, the conduct of a colony, or the foundation of an empire. His subject is the fate of worlds, the revolutions

¹ A French critic of the seventeenth century, whose dissertation on the laws of epic poetry was famous in its day, and was translated into English.—M. ARNOLD.

of heaven and of earth; rebellion against the Supreme King, raised by the highest order of created beings; the overthrow of their host, and the punishment of their crime; the creation of a new race of reasonable creatures; their original happiness and innocence, their forfeiture of immortality, and their restoration to hope and peace.

Great events can be hastened or retarded only by persons of elevated dignity. Before the greatness displayed in Milton's poem, all other greatness shrinks away. The weakest of his agents are the highest and noblest of human beings, the original parents of mankind; with whose actions the elements consented; on whose rectitude, or deviation of will, depended the state of terrestrial nature, and the condition of all the future inhabitants of the globe.

Of the other agents in the poem, the chief are such as it is irreverence to name on slight occasions. The rest were lower powers;

“—of which the least could wield
Those elements, and arm him with the force
Of all their regions;”¹

powers, which only the controul of Omnipotence restrains from laying creation waste, and filling the vast expanse of space with ruin and confusion. To display the motives and actions of beings thus superiour, so far as human reason can examine them, or human imagination represent them, is the task which this mighty poet has undertaken and performed.

In the examination of epick poems much speculation is commonly employed upon the *characters*. The characters in the “Paradise Lost,” which admit of examination, are those of angels and of man; of angels good and evil; of man in his innocent and sinful state.

Among the angels, the virtue of Raphael is mild and placid, of easy condescension and free communication; that of Michael is regal and lofty, and, as may seem, atten-

¹ *Paradise Lost*. Ald. M. vol. ii. p. 46.

tive to the dignity of his own nature. Abdiel and Gabriel appear occasionally, and act as every incident requires; the solitary fidelity of Abdiel is very amiably painted.

Of the evil angels the characters are more diversified. To Satan, as Addison observes,¹ such sentiments are given as suit *the most exalted and most depraved being*. Milton has been censured, by Clarke,² for the impiety which sometimes breaks from Satan's mouth. For there are thoughts, as he justly remarks, which no observation of character can justify, because no good man would willingly permit them to pass, however transiently, through his own mind. To make Satan speak as a rebel, without any such expressions as might taint the reader's imagination, was indeed one of the great difficulties in Milton's undertaking, and I cannot but think that he has extricated himself with great happiness. There is in Satan's speeches little that can give pain to a pious ear. The language of rebellion cannot be the same with that of obedience. The malignity of Satan foams in haughtiness and obstinacy; but his expressions are commonly general, and no otherwise offensive than as they are wicked.³

The other chiefs of the celestial rebellion are very judiciously discriminated in the first and second books; and the ferocious character of Moloch appears, both in the battle and the council, with exact consistency.

To Adam and to Eve are given, during their innocence, such sentiments as innocence can generate and utter. Their love is pure benevolence and mutual veneration;

¹ *Spectator*, No. 303, seventh paper.

² *Essay on Study*.—JOHNSON. "Wherein Directions are given for the Due Conduct thereof, and the Collection of a Library proper for the Purpose, consisting of the choicest Books in all the several parts of Learning, by John Clarke, Master of the Public Grammar School in Hull." London, 1731, p. 206.

³ Coleridge has a fine passage on the character of Satan. Coleridge's *Remains*, vol. i. p. 176.

their repasts are without luxury, and their diligence without toil. Their addresses to their Maker have little more than the voice of admiration and gratitude. Fruition left them nothing to ask, and Innocence left them nothing to fear.

But with guilt enter distrust and discord, mutual accusation, and stubborn self-defence; they regard each other with alienated minds, and dread their Creator as the avenger of their transgression. At last they seek shelter in his mercy, soften to repentance, and melt in supplication. Both before and after the Fall, the superiority of Adam is diligently sustained.

Of the *probable* and the *marvellous*, two parts of a vulgar epic poem, which immerse the critick in deep consideration, the "Paradise Lost" requires little to be said. It contains the history of a miracle, of Creation and Redemption; it displays the power and the mercy of the Supreme Being; the probable therefore is marvellous, and the marvellous is probable. The substance of the narrative is truth; and as truth allows no choice, it is, like necessity, superior to rule. To the accidental or adventitious parts, as to every thing human, some slight exceptions may be made. But the main fabrick is immovably supported.

It is justly remarked by Addison,¹ that this poem has, by the nature of its subject, the advantage above all others, that it is universally and perpetually interesting. All mankind will, through all ages, bear the same relation to Adam and to Eve, and must partake of that good and evil which extend to themselves.

Of the *machinery*, so called from Θεός ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, by which is meant the occasional interposition of super-

¹ *Spectator*, No. 273, second paper. Hallam has some fine remarks on the vast improvement of the highest criticism, the philosophy of æsthetics, since the days of Addison. See *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 464 n.

natural power, another fertile topic of critical remarks, here is no room to speak, because every thing is done under the immediate and visible direction of Heaven; but the rule is so far observed, that no part of the action could have been accomplished by any other means.

Of *episodes*, I think there are only two, contained in Raphael's relation of the war in heaven, and Michael's prophetick account of the changes to happen in this world. Both are closely connected with the great action; one was necessary to Adam as a warning, the other as a consolation.

To the compleatness or *integrity* of the design nothing can be objected; it has distinctly and clearly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end. There is perhaps no poem, of the same length, from which so little can be taken without apparent mutilation. Here are no funeral games, nor is there any long description of a shield. The short digressions at the beginning of the third, seventh, and ninth books, might doubtless be spared; but superfluities so beautiful, who would take away? or who does not wish that the author of the "Iliad" had gratified succeeding ages with a little knowledge of himself? Perhaps no passages are more frequently or more attentively read than those extrinsick paragraphs; and, since the end of poetry is pleasure, that cannot be unpoetical with which all are pleased.

The questions, whether the action of the poem be strictly *one*, whether the poem can be properly termed *heroick*, and who is the hero, are raised by such readers as draw their principles of judgement rather from books than from reason. Milton, though he intituled "Paradise Lost" only a *poem*, yet calls it himself *heroick song*. Dryden, petulantly and indecently, denies the heroism of Adam, because he was overcome; but there is no reason why the hero should not be unfortunate, except established

practice, since success and virtue do not go necessarily together. Cato is the hero of Lucan; but Lucan's authority will not be suffered by Quintilian to decide. However, if success be necessary, Adam's deceiver was at last crushed; Adam was restored to his Maker's favour, and therefore may securely resume his human rank.¹

After the scheme and fabrick of the poem, must be considered its component parts, the sentiments and the diction.

The *sentiments*, as expressive of manners, or appropriated to characters, are, for the greater part, unexceptionably just.

Splendid passages, containing lessons of morality, or precepts of prudence, occur seldom. Such is the original formation of this poem, that as it admits no human manners till the Fall, it can give little assistance to human conduct. Its end is to raise the thoughts above sublunary cares or pleasures. Yet the praise of that fortitude, with which Abdiel maintained his singularity of virtue against the scorn of multitudes, may be accommodated to all times; and Raphael's reproof of Adam's curiosity after the planetary motions, with the answer returned by Adam, may be confidently opposed to any rule of life which any poet has delivered.

The thoughts which are occasionally called forth in the progress, are such as could only be produced by an imagination in the highest degree fervid and active, to which materials were supplied by incessant study and unlimited curiosity. The heat of Milton's mind might be said to sublimate his learning, to throw off into his work the spirit of science, unmingled with its grosser parts.

¹ See Dryden in his *Essay on Satire*, S. S. D. vol. xiii. p. 18 n, and Addison in his first paper on *Paradise Lost*. *Spectator*, No. 267. Dryden observed that the Devil, not Adam, was the hero. Pref. to *Virgil*, vol. xiv. p. 143.

He had considered creation in its whole extent, and his descriptions are therefore learned. He had accustomed his imagination to unrestrained indulgence, and his conceptions therefore were extensive. The characteristic quality of his poem is sublimity. He sometimes descends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occasionally invest himself with grace; but his natural port is gigantick loftiness.¹ He can please when pleasure is required; but it is his peculiar power to astonish.

He seems to have been well acquainted with his own genius, and to know what it was that Nature had bestowed upon him more bountifully than upon others; the power of displaying the vast, illuminating the splendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful: he therefore chose a subject on which too much could not be said, on which he might tire his fancy without the censure of extravagance.

The appearances of nature, and the occurrences of life, did not satiate his appetite of greatness. To paint things as they are, requires a minute attention, and employs the memory rather than the fancy.² Milton's delight was to sport in the wide regions of possibility; reality was a scene too narrow for his mind. He sent his faculties out upon discovery, into worlds where only imagination can travel, and delighted to form new modes of existence, and furnish sentiment and action to superior beings, to trace the counsels of hell, or accompany the choirs of heaven.

But he could not be always in other worlds: he must sometimes revisit earth, and tell of things visible and

¹ Algarotti terms it *gigantesca sublimità Miltoniana*.—JOHNSON.

² Coleridge calls Milton "not a picturesque, but a musical poet" (*Remains*, vol. i. p. 177), and Hallam ascribes this characteristic chiefly to his blindness. Milton "describes visible things . . . but he feels music." *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 469.

known. When he cannot raise wonder by the sublimity of his mind, he gives delight by its fertility.

Whatever be his subject, he never fails to fill the imagination. But his images and descriptions of the scenes or operations of Nature do not seem to be always copied from original form, nor to have the freshness, raciness, and energy of immediate observation. He saw Nature, as Dryden expresses it, *through the spectacles of books*; ¹ and on most occasions calls learning to his assistance. The garden of Eden brings to his mind the vale of "Enna," where Proserpine was gathering flowers.² Satan makes his way through fighting elements, like *Argo* between the *Cyanean* rocks, or *Ulysses* between the two *Sicilian* whirlpools,³ when he shunned *Charybdis* on the *larboard*. The mythological allusions have been justly censured, as not being always used with notice of their vanity; but they contribute variety to the narration, and produce an alternate exercise of the memory and the fancy.

His similies are less numerous, and more various, than those of his predecessors.⁴ But he does not confine himself within the limits of rigorous comparison: his great excellence is amplitude, and he expands the adventitious image beyond the dimensions which the occasion required. Thus, comparing the shield of Satan to the orb of the Moon, he crowds the imagination with the discovery of the telescope, and all the wonders which the telescope discovers.⁵

Of his moral sentiments it is hardly praise to affirm that they excel those of all other poets; for this superiority he was indebted to his acquaintance with the sacred writings.

¹ Dryden, *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, &c.

² *Paradise Lost*, book iv. line 268. Ald. M. vol. i. p. 123.

³ *Paradise Lost*, book ii. line 1,017. Ald. M. vol. i. p. 78.

⁴ See Addison's seventh paper. *Spectator*, No. 303.

⁵ *Paradise Lost*, book i. line 284. Ald. M. vol. i. p. 13.

The ancient epick poets, wanting the light of Revelation, were very unskilful teachers of virtue: their principal characters may be great, but they are not amiable. The reader may rise from their works with a greater degree of active or passive fortitude, and sometimes of prudence; but he will be able to carry away few precepts of justice, and none of mercy.

From the Italian writers it appears, that the advantages of even Christian knowledge may be supposed in vain. Ariosto's pravity is generally known; and though the "Deliverance of Jerusalem" may be considered as a sacred subject, the poet has been very sparing of moral instruction.

In Milton every line breathes sanctity of thought, and purity of manners, except when the train of the narration requires the introduction of the rebellious spirits; and even they are compelled to acknowledge their subjection to God, in such a manner as excites reverence, and confirms piety.

Of human beings there are but two; but those two are the parents of mankind, venerable before their fall for dignity and innocence, and amiable after it for repentance and submission. In their first state their affection is tender without weakness, and their piety sublime without presumption. When they have sinned, they shew how discord begins in mutual frailty, and how it ought to cease in mutual forbearance; how confidence of the divine favour is forfeited by sin, and how hope of pardon may be obtained by penitence and prayer. A state of innocence we can only conceive, if indeed, in our present misery, it be possible to conceive it; but the sentiments and worship proper to a fallen and offending being, we have all to learn, as we have all to practise.

The poet, whatever be done, is always great. Our progenitors, in their first state, conversed with angels; even when folly and sin had degraded them, they had not in

their humiliation *the port of mean suitors*; ¹ and they rise again to reverential regard, when we find that their prayers were heard.

As human passions did not enter the world before the Fall, there is in the "Paradise Lost" little opportunity for the pathetick; but what little there is has not been lost. That passion which is peculiar to rational nature, the anguish arising from the consciousness of transgression, and the horrors attending the sense of the Divine Displeasure, are very justly described and forcibly impressed. But the passions are moved only on one occasion; sublimity is the general and prevailing quality in this poem; sublimity variously modified, sometimes descriptive, sometimes argumentative.

The defects and faults of "Paradise Lost," for faults and defects every work of man must have, it is the business of impartial criticism to discover. As, in displaying the excellence of Milton, I have not made long quotations, because of selecting beauties there had been no end, I shall in the same general manner mention that which seems to deserve censure; for what Englishman can take delight in transcribing passages, which, if they lessen the reputation of Milton, diminish in some degree the honour of our country?

The generality of my scheme does not admit the frequent notice of verbal inaccuracies; which Bentley,² perhaps better skilled in grammar than in poetry, has often found, though he sometimes made them, and which he imputed to the obtrusions of a reviser whom the author's blindness obliged him to employ. A supposition rash and groundless, if he thought it true; and vile and pernicious, if, as is said, he in private allowed it to be false.

The plan of "Paradise Lost" has this inconvenience, that

¹ *Paradise Lost*, book xi. line 8. Ald. M. vol. ii. p. 223.

² Dr. Richard Bentley published, in 1732, an edition of *Paradise Lost*, with notes.

it comprises neither human actions nor human manners. The man and woman who act and suffer, are in a state which no other man or woman can ever know. The reader finds no transaction in which he can be engaged; beholds no condition in which he can by any effort of imagination place himself; he has, therefore, little natural curiosity or sympathy.

We all, indeed, feel the effects of Adam's disobedience; we all sin like Adam, and like him must all bewail our offences; we have restless and insidious enemies in the fallen angels, and in the blessed spirits we have guardians and friends; in the Redemption of mankind we hope to be included: in the description of heaven and hell we are surely interested, as we are all to reside hereafter either in the regions of horror or bliss.

But these truths are too important to be new; they have been taught to our infancy; they have mingled with our solitary thoughts and familiar conversation, and are habitually interwoven with the whole texture of life. Being therefore not new, they raise no unaccustomed emotion in the mind; what we knew before, we cannot learn; what is not unexpected, cannot surprise.

Of the ideas suggested by these awful scenes, from some we recede with reverence, except when stated hours require their association; and from others we shrink with horror, or admit them only as salutary inflictions, as counterpoises to our interests and passions. Such images rather obstruct the career of fancy than incite it.

Pleasure and terroure are indeed the genuine sources of poetry; but poetical pleasure must be such as human strength and fortitude may combat. The good and evil of Eternity are too ponderous for the wings of wit; the mind sinks under them in passive helplessness, content with calm belief and humble adoration.

Known truths, however, may take a different appear-

ance, and be conveyed to the mind by a new train of intermediate images. This Milton has undertaken, and performed with pregnancy and vigour of mind peculiar to himself. Whoever considers the few radical positions which the Scriptures afforded him, will wonder by what energetick operation he expanded them to such extent, and ramified them to so much variety, restrained as he was by religious reverence from licentiousness of fiction.

Here is a full display of the united force of study and genius; of a great accumulation of materials, with judgement to digest, and fancy to combine them: Milton was able to select from nature, or from story, from ancient fable, or from modern science, whatever could illustrate or adorn his thoughts. An accumulation of knowledge impregnated his mind, fermented by study, and exalted by imagination.

It has been therefore said, without an indecent hyperbole, by one of his encomiasts, that in reading "Paradise Lost," we read a book of universal knowledge.

But original deficiency cannot be supplied. The want of human interest is always felt. "Paradise Lost" is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction, retire harrassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation; we desert our master, and seek for companions.

Another inconvenience of Milton's design is, that it requires the description of what cannot be described, the agency of spirits. He saw that immateriality supplied no images, and that he could not show angels acting but by instruments of action; he therefore invested them with form and matter. This, being necessary, was therefore defensible; and he should have secured the consistency of his system, by keeping immateriality out of sight, and

enticing his reader to drop it from his thoughts. But he has unhappily perplexed his poetry with his philosophy. His infernal and celestial powers are sometimes pure spirit, and sometimes animated body. When Satan walks with his lance upon the *burning marle*,¹ he has a body; when, in his passage between hell and the new world, he is in danger of sinking in the vacuity, and is supported by a gust of rising vapours, he has a body; when he animates the toad, he seems to be mere spirit, that can penetrate matter at pleasure; when he *starts up in his own shape*,² he has at least a determined form; and when he is brought before Gabriel, he has *a spear and a shield*,³ which he had the power of hiding in the toad, though the arms of the contending angels are evidently material.

The vulgar inhabitants of Pandæmonium, being *incorporeal spirits*, are *at large, though without number*,⁴ in a limited space; yet in the battle, when they were overwhelmed by mountains, their armour hurt them, *crushed in upon their substance, now grown gross by sinning*.⁵ This likewise happened to the uncorrupted angels, who were overthrown *the sooner for their arms, for unarmed they might easily as spirits have evaded by contradiction or remove*.⁶ Even as spirits they are hardly spiritual; for *contraction* and *remove* are images of matter; but if they could have escaped without their armour, they might have escaped from it, and left only the empty cover to be battered. Uriel,⁷ when he rides on a sun-beam,⁸ is material; Satan is material when he is afraid of the prowess of Adam.

The confusion of spirit and matter which pervades the

¹ *Paradise Lost*, book i. line 296. Ald. M. vol. i. p. 14.

² Bk. iv. l. 819, vol. i. p. 146. ³ Bk. iv. l. 990, vol. i. p. 153.

⁴ Bk. i. l. 789, vol. i. p. 35. ⁵ Bk. vi. ll. 656-661, vol. ii. p. 63.

⁶ Bk. vi. l. 595, vol. ii. p. 61. ⁷ Bk. iv. l. 556, vol. i. p. 135.

⁸ Addison remarks that this "is a prettiness that might have been admired in a little fanciful poet, but seems below the genius of Milton." *Spectator*, No. 321.

whole narration of the war of heaven fills it with incongruity; and the book, in which it is related,¹ is, I believe, the favourite of children, and gradually neglected as knowledge is increased.

After the operation of immaterial agents, which cannot be explained, may be considered that of allegorical persons, which have no real existence. To exalt causes into agents, to invest abstract ideas with form, and animate them with activity, has always been the right of poetry. But such airy beings are, for the most part, suffered only to do their natural office, and retire. Thus Fame tells a tale, and Victory hovers over a general, or perches on a standard; but Fame and Victory can do no more. To give them any real employment, or ascribe to them any material agency, is to make them allegorical no longer, but to shock the mind by ascribing effects to non-entity. In the "Prometheus" of Æschylus, we see *Violence* and *Strength*, and in the "Alcestis" of Euripides, we see *Death*, brought upon the stage, all as active persons of the drama; but no precedents can justify absurdity.

Milton's allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty.² Sin is indeed the mother of Death, and may be allowed to be the portress of hell; but when they stop the journey of Satan, a journey described as real, and when Death offers him battle, the allegory is broken. That Sin and Death should have shewn the way to hell, might have been allowed; but they cannot facilitate the passage by building a bridge, because the difficulty of Satan's passage is described as real and sensible, and the bridge ought to

¹ *Paradise Lost*, book vi. Mr. Firth observes that this book is criticised with unbroken praise by Addison in his twelfth paper, *Spectator*, No. 333, and that Voltaire condemns it as absurd. *Art Épopée, Dictionnaire Philosophique Works*, ed. 1819, vol. xxxv. p. 439. C. H. Firth, *Milton*, p. 138.

² See Addison, *Spectator*, No. 357.

be only figurative. The hell assigned to the rebellious spirits is described as not less local than the residence of man. It is placed in some distant part of space, separated from the regions of harmony and order by a chaotick waste and an unoccupied vacuity; but *Sin* and *Death* worked up a *mole of aggravated soil*,¹ cemented with *asphaltus*; a work too bulky for ideal architects.

This unskilful allegory appears to me one of the greatest faults of the poem; and to this there was no temptation, but the author's opinion of its beauty.

To the conduct of the narrative some objections may be made. Satan is with great expectation² brought before Gabriel in Paradise, and is suffered to go away unmolested.³ The creation of man is represented as the consequence of the vacuity left in heaven by the expulsion of the rebels; yet Satan mentions it as a report *rife in heaven*⁴ before his departure.

To find sentiments for the state of innocence, was very difficult; and something of anticipation perhaps is now and then discovered. Adam's discourse of dreams seems not to be the speculation of a new-created being.⁵ I know not whether his answer to the angel's reproof for curiosity does not want something of propriety: it is the speech of a man acquainted with many other men. Some philosophical notions, especially when the philosophy is false, might have been better omitted. The angel, in a comparison, speaks of *timorous deer*, before deer were yet timorous, and before Adam could understand the comparison.

¹ Misprint for "aggregated." *Par. Lost*, bk. x. l. 293. *Ald. M.* vol. ii. p. 189.

² *Par. Lost*, bk. iv. ll. 865-1,015, vol. i. pp. 148-153.

³ The interruption of the combat by the vision of the golden scales is a refinement upon Homer's thought in the 22nd Iliad, and Virgil's in the *Æneid*, see *Spectator*, No. 321.

⁴ *Par. Lost*, bk. i. l. 650, vol. i. p. 29.

⁵ Bk. v. ll. 95-116, vol. ii. p. 6.

Dryden remarks,¹ that Milton has some flats among his elevations.² This is only to say, that all the parts are not equal. In every work, one part must be for the sake of others; a palace must have passages; a poem must have transitions. It is no more to be required that wit should always be blazing, than that the sun should always stand at noon. In a great work there is a vicissitude of luminous and opaque parts, as there is in the world a succession of day and night. Milton, when he has expatiated in the sky, may be allowed sometimes to revisit earth; for what author ever soared so high, or sustained his flight so long?

Milton, being well versed in the Italian poets, appears to have borrowed often from them; and, as every man catches something from his companions, his desire of imitating Ariosto's levity³ has disgraced his work with the "Paradise of Fools"; a fiction not in itself ill-imagined, but too ludicrous for its place.⁴

His play on words, in which he delights too often;⁵ his equivocations, which Bentley endeavours to defend by the example of the ancients; his unnecessary and ungraceful use of terms of art; it is not necessary to mention, because they are easily remarked, and generally censured, and at last bear so little proportion to the whole, that they scarcely deserve the attention of a critick.

Such are the faults of that wonderful performance "Paradise Lost;" which he who can put in balance with

¹ "It is true, he runs into a flat of thought, sometimes for a hundred lines together, but it is when he is got into a tract of scripture." Dryden, *Essay on Satire*. S. S. D. vol. xii. p. 19.

² Halliam adds the remark that this frequent sinking in a single instant is usual with our old writers. *Lit. Hist. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 150.

³ In *Orlando Furioso*, book xxxiv.

⁴ *Paradise Lost*, book iii. line 496. Ald. M. vol. i. p. 100.

⁵ See *Spectator*, Nos. 279-297, and Bentley's Notes on *Paradise Lost*, vol. i. p. 642; vol. vi. p. 625.

its beauties must be considered not as nice but as dull, but less to be censured for want of candour, than pitied for want of sensibility.

Of "Paradise Regained,"¹ the general judgement seems now to be right, that it is in many parts elegant, and every-where instructive. It was not to be supposed that the writer of "Paradise Lost" could ever write without great effusions of fancy, and exalted precepts of wisdom. The basis of "Paradise Regained" is narrow; a dialogue without action can never please like an union of the narrative and dramatic powers.² Had this poem been written not by Milton, but by some imitator, it would have claimed and received universal praise.

If "Paradise Regained" has been too much depreciated, "Sampson Agonistes"³ has in requital been too much admired.⁴ It could only be by long prejudice, and the bigotry of learning, that Milton could prefer the ancient tragedies, with their encumbrance of a chorus, to the exhibitions of the French and English stages; and it is only by a blind confidence in the reputation of Milton, that a drama can be praised in which the intermediate parts have neither cause nor consequence, neither hasten nor retard the catastrophe.

In this tragedy are however many particular beauties, many just sentiments and striking lines; but it wants that power of attracting the attention which a well-connected plan produces.

Milton would not have excelled in dramattick writing; he knew human nature only in the gross, and had never

¹ Ald. *M.* vol. ii. p. 287.

² For a comparison of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, see Mr. Pattison, in his *Milton*, pp. 191-195, and Landor on the same subject, ed. 1876, vol. iv. pp. 479-489; vol. viii. p. 387.

³ Ald. *M.* vol. iii. p. 1.

⁴ See *Rambler*, Nos. 139, 140.

studied the shades of character, nor the combinations of concurring, or the perplexity of contending passions. He had read much, and knew what books could teach; but had mingled little in the world, and was deficient in the knowledge which experience must confer.

Through all his greater works there prevails an uniform peculiarity of *Diction*, a mode and cast of expression which bears little resemblance to that of any former writer, and which is so far removed from common use, that an unlearned reader, when he first opens his book, finds himself surprised by new language.¹

This novelty has been, by those who can find nothing wrong in Milton, imputed to his laborious endeavours after words suitable to the grandeur of his ideas. *Our language*, says Addison, *sunk under him.*² But the truth is, that, both in prose and verse, he had formed his style by a perverse and pedantick principle. He was desirous to use English words with a foreign idiom. This in all his prose is discovered and condemned; for there judgment operates freely, neither softened by the beauty, nor awed by the dignity of his thoughts; but such is the power of his poetry, that his call is obeyed without resistance, the reader feels himself in captivity to a higher and a nobler mind, and criticism sinks in admiration.

Milton's style was not modified by his subject: what is shown with greater extent in "Paradise Lost," may be found in "Comus." One source of his peculiarity was his familiarity with the Tuscan poets: the disposition of his words is, I think, frequently Italian; perhaps sometimes combined with other tongues. Of him, at last, may be said what Jonson³ says of Spenser, that *he wrote no language*,

¹ See Dryden on this point, *Essay on Satire*. S. D. vol. xiii. p. 19.

² *Spectator*, No. 297.

³ "Spenser in affecting the ancients writ no language." Jonson *Discoveries*. Works, vol. iii. p. 412, ed. Cunningham.

but has formed what Butler¹ calls a *Babylonish Dialect*, in itself harsh and barbarous, but made by exalted genius, and extensive learning, the vehicle of so much instruction and so much pleasure, that, like other lovers, we find grace in its deformity.

Whatever be the faults of his diction, he cannot want the praise of copiousness and variety: he was master of his language in its full extent; and has selected the melodious words² with such diligence, that from his book alone the Art of English Poetry might be learned.

After his diction, something must be said of his *versification*.³ *The measure*, he says, *is the English heroick verse without rhyme*.⁴ Of this mode he had many examples among the Italians, and some in his own country. The Earl of Surrey is said to have translated one of Virgil's books without rhyme;⁵ and, besides our tragedies, a few short poems had appeared in blank verse; particularly one

¹ Butler says of Sir Hudibras (part i. canto i. line 89):—

“When he pleased to shew't, his speech
In loftiness of sound was rich,
A Babylonish dialect,
Which learned pedants much affect,
It was a particoloured dress
Of patch'd and piebald languages,
'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin
Like fustian heretofore on satin.”

² Hallam observes that from Milton's love of melody arose “one of his trifling faults, the excessive passion he displays for stringing together sonorous names, sometimes so obscure that the reader associates nothing with them.” Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 469.

³ On this subject see *Rambler*, Nos. 86, 88, 90, 94.

⁴ Preface to *Paradise Lost*, Ald. M. vol. i. p. 1.

⁵ In the British Museum is a pretty little copy of *Certain Bokes of Virgiles Ænæis*, “turned into English meter by the right honorable lorde Henry Earle of Surrey. Apud Ricardum Tottel, 1557.” This volume contains the second and fourth books in blank verse, and is ornamented with a quaint portrait of Virgil in Indian ink.

tending to reconcile the nation to Raleigh's wild attempt upon Guiana,¹ and probably written by Raleigh himself. These petty performances cannot be supposed to have much influenced Milton, who more probably took his hint from Trisino's² "*Italia Liberata*;" and, finding blank verse easier than rhyme, was desirous of persuading himself that it is better.

Rhyme, he says, and says truly, *is no necessary adjunct of true poetry.*³ But perhaps, of poetry as a mental operation, metre or musick is no necessary adjunct: it is however by the musick of metre that poetry has been discriminated in all languages; and in languages melodiously constructed with a due proportion of long and short syllables, metre is sufficient. But one language cannot communicate its rules to another: where metre is scanty and imperfect, some help is necessary. The musick of the English heroick line strikes the ear so faintly that it is easily lost, unless all the syllables of every line co-operate together: this co-operation can be only obtained by the preservation of every verse unmingled with another, as a distinct system of sounds; and this distinctness is obtained and preserved by the artifice of rhyme.⁴ The variety of pauses, so much boasted by the lovers of blank verse, changes the measures of an English poet to the periods of a declaimer; and there are only a few skilful and happy

¹ *De Guiana Carmen Epicum*. Authore G. C. Printed in Hakluyt, vol. iii. Oldys ascribes it to George Chapman. Sufficient attention has not been paid to this early and thoughtful specimen of blank verse.

P. CUNNINGHAM.

² *Giovanni Trissino* (1478-1550), called by Hallam "the father of blank verse," published his *Italia Liberata* in 1548. Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. i. p. 577. See for further references Firth's *Milton*, p. 142.

³ Preface to *Paradise Lost*, Ald. M. vol. i. p. 1.

⁴ Mr. Firth calls attention to Voltaire's remarks on rhyme in connection with *Paradise Lost* in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, art. *Epopée*, Works, vol. xxxv. p. 435, ed. 1819.

readers of Milton,¹ who enable their audience to perceive where the lines end or begin. *Blank verse*, said an ingenious critick,² *seems to be verse only to the eye.*

Poetry may subsist without rhyme, but English poetry will not often please; nor can rhyme ever be safely spared but where the subject is able to support itself. Blank verse makes some approach to that which is called the *lapidary style*; has neither the easiness of prose, nor the melody of numbers, and therefore tires by long continuance. Of the Italian writers without rhyme, whom Milton alleges as precedents,³ not one is popular; what reason could urge in its defence, has been confuted by the ear.

But, whatever be the advantage of rhyme, I cannot prevail on myself to wish that Milton had been a rhymers; for I cannot wish his work to be other than it is; yet, like other heroes, he is to be admired rather than imitated. He that thinks himself capable of astonishing, may write blank verse; but those that hope only to please, must condescend to rhyme.

The highest praise of genius is original invention. Milton cannot be said to have contrived the structure of an epick poem, and therefore owes reverence to that vigour and amplitude of mind to which all generations must be indebted for the art of poetical narration, for the texture of the fable, the variation of incidents, the interposition of

¹ Mr. Cunningham quotes Cowper's comments on this passage. "Was there ever anything so delightful as the music of *Paradise Lost*? It is like that of a fine organ; has the fullest and deepest notes of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute. Variety without end, and never equalled unless perhaps by Virgil." Cowper to Unwin, Oct. 31st, 1779.

² Boswell says, "The gentleman whom he thus characterizes is (as he told Mr. Steward) Mr. Lock, of Norbury Park, in Surrey, whose knowledge and taste in the fine arts is universally celebrated." Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iv. p. 8.

³ See Preface to *Paradise Lost*.

dialogue, and all the stratagems that surprise and enchain attention. But, of all the borrowers from Homer, Milton is perhaps the least indebted. He was naturally a thinker for himself, confident of his own abilities, and disdainful of help or hindrance: he did not refuse admission to the thoughts or images of his predecessors, but he did not seek them. From his contemporaries he neither courted nor received support; there is in his writings nothing by which the pride of other authors might be gratified, or favour gained; no exchange of praise or solicitation of support. His great works were performed under discountenance, and in blindness, but difficulties vanished at his touch;¹ he was born for whatever is arduous; and his work is not the greatest of heroick poems, only because it is not the first.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

1608. Dec. 9. Milton born.
 1624-5. Feb. 12. Adm. Less. Pens. at Christ's Coll., Cambridge.
 1628. Graduates as B.A.
 1632. July 3. Graduates as M.A. His famous *Epitaph on Shakespeare* (written two years previously) is published in the Second Folio Shakespeare. Leaves Cambridge. Writes *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* at Horton.
 1633 *circ.* Writes the *Arcades*, p. 102.
 1634. Sept. 29. His *Masque*, afterwards called *Comus*, performed.

¹ Bentley has many fine passages on *Paradise Lost*; in conclusion he says, "But I wonder not so much at the Poem itself, though worthy of all wonder; as that the author could so abstract his thoughts from his own troubles, as to be able to make it; that confined in a narrow and, to him a dark chamber, surrounded with cares and fears, he could spatiate at large through the compass of the whole universe, and through all heaven beyond it; could survey all periods of time, from before the creation to the consummation of all things. This theory, no doubt, was a great solace to him in his affliction; but it shows in him a greater strength of spirit, that made him capable of such a solace." Bentley, Preface to *Paradise Lost*, ed. 1732.

1635. Is incorporated M.A. at Oxford, p. 101.
1637. Death of his mother, p. 102.
1638. Publishes *Lycidas*, and in April begins his travels, p. 102.
1639. Returns to England in July or August, p. 107.
1641. Publishes *Treatise of Reformation touching Church Discipline, &c.*, in two books, and *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants' Defence against Smectymnuus*, p. 112.
1642. Publishes *The Reason of Church Government against Prelacy and An Apology, &c., for Smectymnuus*, p. 113.
1643. Marries Mary Powell in May or June, publishes *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* in August, pp. 115, 116.
1644. Publishes his tract *Of Education: to Mr. Sam. Hartlib* (p. 98), and the second *Divorce Tract* and the *Areopagitica*, p. 118.
1645. Is reconciled to his Wife, p. 117. Collects and publishes his Latin and English Poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* appearing for the first time, p. 118.
1647. Death of his father and father-in-law.
1649. Publishes *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. Is made Secretary for Foreign Tongues of the Council of State, and publishes *Iconoclastes, or the Image-Breaker*, pp. 120, 121.
1650. Publishes *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio contra Salmasium*.
1652. Becomes totally blind. Death of his first wife, p. 125.
1654. Publishes *Defensio Secunda*, p. 127.
1655. Publishes *Pro se Defensio contra Alexandrum Morum*, p. 128.
1656. Marries Katherine Woodcock, p. 126.
1658. Death of Katherine; Milton commemorates her in Sonnet XXIII. Publishes Raleigh's *Cabinet Council*, p. 135.
1659. Publishes *Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*, p. 135.
1660. Publishes *The Ready and Easy way to establish a free Commonwealth*, p. 135.
1664. Marries for his third wife Elizabeth Minshull, p. 140.
1667. April 27. Publishes *Paradise Lost*, pp. 142-150.
1669. Publishes *Accidence commenced Grammar*.
1670. Publishes *Hist. Britain, Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*.
1672. Publishes *A New Scheme of Logic*, after Ramus, p. 155.
1673. Publishes *Treatise of true Religion, Heresy, &c.*
1674. Reprints Juvenile Poems, and publishes *Epistolarum Familiarum and Prolusiones*. Dies, November 8.

PRELIMINARY NOTE

BUTLER.

PREFATORY NOTE.

[*Hudibras* appeared in three Parts, London, 1663, 1664, and 1678. The best edition, by Zachary Grey, LL.D., 1744, 2 vols. 8vo, was revised and republished, 1819, 3 vols. *The Genuine Poetical Remains*, with Notes by Thyer, was published 1759, 2 vols. 8vo. See Essay by W. E. Henley, with extracts in Ward's *Select Eng. Poets*, vol. i. p. 396.

The edition used for reference is the *Butler* in the Aldine edition of the British Poets, contracted Ald. *Butler*. The Registers at Oxford and Cambridge have been searched in vain for trace of Butler, and it may safely be concluded that he was not resident at either University.]

BUTLER.

OF the great author of *Hudibras* there is a life prefixed to the later editions of his poem, by an unknown writer, and therefore of disputable authority; and some account is incidentally given by Wood,¹ who confesses the uncertainty of his own narrative; more however than they knew cannot now be learned, and nothing remains but to compare and copy them.

Samuel Butler was born in the parish of Strensham in Worcestershire, according to his biographer, in 1612. This account Dr. Nash² finds confirmed by the register. He was christened Feb. 14.

His father's condition is variously represented. Wood mentions him as competently wealthy;³ but Mr. Longueville, the son of Butler's principal friend, says he was an honest farmer with some small estate, who made a shift to educate his son at the grammar school of Worcester, under Mr. Henry Bright, from whose care he removed for a short time to Cambridge; but, for a want of money, was never made a member of any college. Wood leaves us rather doubtful whether he went to Cambridge or Oxford;⁴ but

¹ Wood, *Athen. Oxon.* (ed. Bliss), vol. iii. p. 874.

² Dr. Treadway Russel Nash (1725-1811), known only for his *History of Worcestershire*, 1781, and his edition of *Hudibras*, 1793.

³ Wood, *Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 875.

⁴ It is certain that Butler never graduated at Cambridge, and the matriculation books contain no such name within the time at which the legend places his residence there.

at last makes him pass six or seven years at Cambridge, without knowing what hall or college: yet it can hardly be mentioned that he lived so long at either university, but as belonging to one house or another; and it is still less likely that he could have so long inhabited a place of learning with so little distinction as to leave his residence uncertain. Dr. Nash has discovered that his father was owner of a house and a little land, worth about eight pounds a year, still called *Butler's tenement*.

Wood has his information from his brother, whose narrative placed him at Cambridge, in opposition to that of his neighbours which sent him to Oxford. The brother's seems the best authority, till, by confessing his inability to tell his hall or college, he gives reason to suspect that he was resolved to bestow on him an academical education; but durst not name a college, for fear of detection.

He was for some time, according to the author of his Life, clerk to Mr. Jefferys of Earl's-Croomb¹ in Worcestershire, an eminent justice of the peace. In his service he had not only leisure for study, but for recreation: his amusements were musick and painting; and the reward of his pencil was the friendship of the celebrated Cooper.² Some pictures, said to be his, were shewn to Dr. Nash, at Earl's Croomb; but when he enquired for them some years afterwards, he found them destroyed, to stop windows, and owns that they hardly deserved a better fate.

He was afterwards admitted into the family of the Countess of Kent, where he had the use of a library; and so much recommended himself to Selden.³ that he was often

¹ Or Coombe.

² The most eminent of English miniature painters, he was also an excellent linguist and musician, (1609-1672). His wife's sister was the mother of Alexander Pope. R. E. Graves in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

³ John Selden (1584-1654). Clarendon speaks of his learning as "stupendous, and a person whom no character can flatter." His works,

employed by him in literary business. Selden, as is well known, was steward to the Countess,¹ and is supposed to have gained much of his wealth by managing her estate.

In what character Butler was admitted into that Lady's service, how long he continued in it, and why he left it, is, like the other incidents of his life, utterly unknown.

The vicissitudes of his condition placed him afterwards in the family of Sir Samuel Luke,² one of Cromwell's officers. Here he observed so much of the character of the sectaries, that he is said to have written or begun his poem at this time; and it is likely that such a design would be formed in a place where he saw the principles and practices of the rebels, audacious and undisguised in the confidence of success.

At length the King returned, and the time came in which loyalty hoped for its reward. Butler, however, was only made secretary to the Earl of Carbury, president of the principality of Wales; who conferred on him the stewardship of Ludlow Castle, when the Court of the Marches was revived.

In this part of his life, he married Mrs. Herbert, a gentlewoman of a good family; and lived, says Wood,³

published singly during his lifetime, were collected in the *Opera Omnia*. Lond. 1726, fol. His *Table Talk*, Lond. 1689, has been many times reprinted.

¹ Elizabeth Grey, Countess of Kent, daughter of Gilbert Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. She lived at Wrest in Bedfordshire, died in 1651, and was buried at Flitton. P. CUNNINGHAM.

² It is supposed that Sir Samuel Luke is ridiculed under the character of Hudibras. See Mitford's *Life*, Ald. *Butler*, vol. i. p. viii. The conjecture is founded on—

“’Tis sung, there is a valiant Mamaluke
In foreign land yclep'd—;” *Hud.* I. i. 904.

³ *Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 875.

upon her fortune, having studied the common law, but never practised it. A fortune she had, says his biographer, but it was lost by bad securities.

In 1663 was published the first part, containing three cantos, of the poem of *Hudibras*,¹ which, as Prior relates,² was made known at Court by the taste and influence of the Earl of Dorset. When it was known, it was necessarily admired: the king quoted, the courtiers studied, and the whole party of the royalists applauded it.³ Every eye watched for the golden shower which was to fall upon the author, who certainly was not without his part in the general expectation.⁴

In 1664⁵ the second part appeared; the curiosity of the nation was rekindled, and the writer was again praised and elated. But praise was his whole reward. Clarendon, says Wood,⁶ gave him reason to hope for "places and employments of value and credit;" but no such advantages

¹ Hallam commences his account of *Hudibras* by observing that it was incomparably more popular than *Paradise Lost*. *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 462.

² Prior, *Ded. Poems. Ald. Butler*, vol. i. p. 6.

³ Copies of the first edition of *Hudibras* not very infrequently have inscriptions showing that they were the gift of Charles II. to their first owner. Butler has himself recorded this royal partiality for his book:—

"He never ate, nor drank, nor slept,
But *Hudibras* still near him kept;
Nor would he go to church or so,
But *Hudibras* must with him go."

E. Gosse in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

⁴ See Pepys' *Diary*, Dec. 26th, 1662, Feb. 6th, Nov. 28th, and Dec. 10th, 1663.

⁵ This date must be erroneous for in the *Mercurius Publicus* for Nov. 20th, 1663, appeared this advertisement, "Newly published the Second Part of *Hudibras* by the Author of the former, which (if possible) hath out done the first sold by John Mertin and James Allestry, at the Bell." MS. note in Aberdeen ed. J. L. P. in the British Museum.

⁶ *Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 875.

did he ever obtain. It is reported, that the King once gave him three hundred guineas ; but of this temporary bounty I find no proof.

Wood relates that he was secretary to Villiers Duke of Buckingham, when he was Chancellor of Cambridge: this is doubted by the other writer, who yet allows the Duke to have been his frequent benefactor. That both these accounts are false there is reason to suspect, from a story told by Packe, in his account of the Life of Wycherley, and from some verses which Mr. Thyer has published in the author's remains.¹

“Mr. Wycherley,” says Packe,² “had always laid hold of an opportunity which offered of representing to the Duke of Buckingham how well Mr. Butler had deserved of the royal family, by writing his inimitable Hudibras ; and that it was a reproach to the Court, that a person of his loyalty and wit should suffer in obscurity, and under the wants he did. The Duke always seemed to hearken to him with attention enough ; and, after some time, undertook to recommend his pretensions to his Majesty. Mr. Wycherley, in hopes to keep him steady to his word, obtained of his Grace to name a day, when he might introduce that modest and unfortunate poet to his new patron. At last an appointment was made, and the place of meeting was agreed to be the Roebuck. Mr. Butler and his friend attended accordingly : the Duke joined them ; but, as the d—l would have it, the door of the room where they sat was open, and his Grace, who had seated himself near it, observing a pimp of his acquaintance (the creature too was a knight) trip by with a brace of Ladies, immediately quitted his engagement, to follow another kind of business, at which he was more ready than in doing good offices to men of desert ; though no one was better qualified than he,

¹ *Remains*, p. 204 n.

² Packe's *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose*. 8vo. 1719, p. 183.

both in regard to his fortune and understanding, to protect them; and, from that time to the day of his death, poor Butler never found the least effect of his promise!"

Such is the story. The verses¹ are written with a degree of acrimony, such as neglect and disappointment might naturally excite; and such as it would be hard to imagine Butler capable of expressing against a man who had any claim to his gratitude.

Notwithstanding this discouragement and neglect, he still prosecuted his design; and in 1678 published the third part, which still leaves the poem imperfect and abrupt. How much more he originally intended, or with what events the action was to be concluded, it is vain to conjecture. Nor can it be thought strange that he should stop here, however unexpectedly. To write without reward is sufficiently unpleasing. He had now arrived at an age when he might think it proper to be in jest no longer, and perhaps his health might now begin to fail.

He died in 1680; and Mr. Longueville,² having unsuccessfully solicited a subscription for his interment in Westminster Abbey, buried him at his own cost in the church-yard of Covent Garden. Dr. Simon Patrick³ read the service.

Granger⁴ was informed by Dr. Pearce, who named for his authority Mr. Lowndes of the treasury, that Butler

¹ There are no verses about Buckingham in Thyer's *Genuine Remains*, but in his volume of prose there is a "Character of *A Duke of Bucks*," and to this Johnson no doubt refers, though by mistake, speaking of it as "*verses*." Thyer's *Genuine Remains*, vol. ii. p. 72, ed. 1739.

² Of whom Roger North has given so pleasing an account in his *Life of the Lord Keeper Guildford*. P. CUNNINGHAM.

³ Then Rector of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, afterwards Bishop of Ely. P. CUNNINGHAM.

⁴ James Granger (1716-1776), author of *The Biographical History of England*, including only those persons of whom some engraved portrait is extant.

had an yearly pension of an hundred pounds. This is contradicted by all tradition, by the complaints of Oldham,¹ and by the reproaches of Dryden;² and I am afraid will never be confirmed.

About sixty years afterwards, Mr. Barber, a printer, Mayor of London,³ and a friend to Butler's principles, bestowed on him a monument in Westminster Abbey, thus inscribed:

M. S.

S A M U E L I S B U T L E R I,

Qui *Strenshamiæ* in agro *Vigorn.* nat. 1612, obiit *Lond.* 1680.

Vir doctus imprimis, acer, integer;

Operibus Ingenii, non item præmiis, fœlix:

Satyrici apud nos Carminis Artifex egregius;

Quo simulatæ Religionis Larvam detraxit,

Et Perduellium scelera liberrime exagitavit:

Scriptorum in suo genere, Primus et Postremus.

¹ John Oldham (1653-1683). His *Domestic Chaplain* (see Ward's *Eng. Poets*, vol. ii. p. 435), was doubtless the original of Macaulay's well-known description (*Hist.* vol. i. pp. 327-329). Although his life was so short he was the first satirist of his day. The lines referred to are in his satire against poetry:—

“On Butler who can think without just rage,
The glory and the scandal of the age.”

Oldham's *Poems*, p. 234, ed. Bell.

² “’Tis enough for one age to have neglected Mr. Cowley and starved Mr. Butler.” See S. S. D. vol. i. p. 247. This letter, from Dryden to Hyde, Earl of Rochester, is displayed in the British Museum.

³ Mr. Alderman Barber (1675-1741), owed his “surprizing Rise in the World more to cunning and servility than to the genius and high-class character so often displayed by the Printers of old.” An amusing Life of him was published by J. Cooper, at the Globe in Paternoster Row, and sold in the pamphlet shops in London and Westminster, 1741, price 1s. John Barber has, however, a still higher claim to grateful remembrance than the erection of Butler's monument. His mayoralty in 1733 was distinguished by the abolition of fees on the release of prisoners from Newgate, “where many Poor Souls perished in Prison for no other crime perhaps but Poverty.”

Ne, cui vivo deerant ferè omnia,
Deeset etiam mortuo Tumulus,
Hoc tandem posito marmore, curavit
JOHANNES BARBER, Civis *Londinensis*, 1721.

After his death were published three small volumes of his posthumous works : I know not by whom collected,¹ or by what authority ascertained ; and, lately, two volumes more have been printed by Mr. Thyer of Manchester,² indubitably genuine. From none of these pieces can his life be traced, or his character discovered. Some verses, in the last collection, shew him to have been among those who ridiculed the institution of the Royal Society, of which the enemies were for some time very numerous and very acrimonious, for what reason it is hard to conceive, since the philosophers professed not to advance doctrines, but to produce facts ; and the most zealous enemy of innovation must admit the gradual progress of experience, however he may oppose hypothetical temerity.

In this mist of obscurity passed the life of Butler, a man whose name can only perish with his language. The mode and place of his education are unknown ; the events of his life are variously related ; and all that can be told with certainty is, that he was poor.

The poem of *Hudibras*³ is one of those compositions of which a nation may justly boast ; as the images which it exhibits are domestick, the sentiments unborrowed and unexpected, and the strain of diction original and peculiar.

¹ *Posthumous Works, in Prose and Verse, with a Key to Hudibras*, by Sir Roger L'Estrange. 6th ed. 1720.

² *Remains in Verse and Prose*, published from the original MSS. with notes by R. Thyer, 1759. 8vo. 2 vols.

³ Ald. *Butler*, vol. i. p. 1. *Hudibras* was in the seventeenth century a well-known name for a swaggering, blustering fellow. Several examples are given in *Notes and Queries*, 3rd series, vol. xii. p. 318. Milton gives Rudhudibrasse as the name of an early king of Britain.

We must not, however, suffer the pride, which we assume as the countrymen of Butler, to make any encroachment upon justice, nor appropriate those honours which others have a right to share. The poem of Hudibras is not wholly English; the original idea is to be found in the "History of Don Quixote;" a book to which a mind of the greatest powers may be indebted without disgrace.

Cervantes shews a man, who having, by the incessant perusal of incredible tales, subjected his understanding to his imagination, and familiarised his mind by pertinacious meditation to trains of incredible events and scenes of impossible existence, goes out in the pride of knighthood, to redress wrongs, and defend virgins, to rescue captive princesses, and tumble usurpers from their thrones; attended by a squire, whose cunning, too low for the suspicion of a generous mind, enables him often to cheat his master.

The hero of Butler is a Presbyterian Justice, who, in the confidence of legal authority, and the rage of zealous ignorance, ranges the country to repress superstition and correct abuses, accompanied by an Independent Clerk, disputatious and obstinate, with whom he often debates, but never conquers him.

Cervantes had so much kindness for Don Quixote, that, however he embarrasses him with absurd distresses, he gives him so much sense and virtue as may preserve our esteem: wherever he is, or whatever he does, he is made by matchless dexterity commonly ridiculous, but never contemptible.

But for poor Hudibras, his poet had no tenderness: he chuses not that any pity should be shewn or respect paid him: he gives him up at once to laughter and contempt, without any quality that can dignify or protect him.

In forming the character of Hudibras, and describing his person and habiliments, the author seems to labour with a tumultuous confusion of dissimilar ideas. He had read the

history of the mock knights-errant; he knew the notions and manners of a presbyterian magistrate, and tried to unite the absurdities of both, however distant, in one personage. Thus he gives him that pedantick ostentation of knowledge which has no relation to chivalry, and loads him with martial encumbrances that can add nothing to his civil dignity. He sends him out *a colonelling*, and yet never brings him within sight of war.

If Hudibras be considered as the representative of the presbyterians, it is not easy to say why his weapons should be represented as ridiculous or useless; for, whatever judgement might be passed upon their knowledge or their arguments, experience had sufficiently shown that their swords were not to be despised.

The hero, thus compounded of swaggerer and pedant, of knight and justice, is led forth to action, with his squire Ralpho, an Independent enthusiast.

Of the contexture of events planned by the author, which is called the action of the poem, since it is left imperfect, no judgement can be made. It is probable, that the hero was to be led through many luckless adventures, which would give occasion, like his attack upon the *bear and fiddle*,¹ to expose the ridiculous rigour of the sectaries; like his encounter with Sidrophel and Whacum,² to make superstition and credulity contemptible; or, like his recourse to the low retailer of the law, discover the fraudulent practices of different professions.

What series of events he would have formed, or in what manner he would have rewarded or punished his hero, it is now vain to conjecture. His work must have had, as it seems, the defect which Dryden imputes to Spenser;³ the

¹ *Hudibras*, i. 2; Ald. *Butler*, vol. i. pp. 70-80.

² *Hudibras*, ii. 3; Ald. *Butler*, vol. i. pp. 188, 195.

³ Dryden observes that "there is no uniformity in the design of Spenser: he aims at the accomplishment of no one action; he raises up

action could not have been one; there could only have been a succession of incidents, each of which might have happened without the rest, and which could not all cooperate to any single conclusion.

The discontinuity of the action might however have been easily forgiven, if there had been action enough; but I believe every reader regrets the paucity of events, and complains that in the poem of *Hudibras*, as in the history of *Thucydides*,¹ there is more said than done. The scenes are too seldom changed, and the attention is tired with long conversation.

It is indeed much more easy to form dialogues than to contrive adventures. Every position makes way for an argument, and every objection dictates an answer. When two disputants are engaged upon a complicated and extensive question, the difficulty is not to continue, but to end the controversy. But whether it be that we comprehend but few of the possibilities of life, or that life itself affords but little variety, every man who has tried knows how much labour it will cost to form such a combination of circumstances, as shall have at once the grace of novelty and credibility, and delight fancy without violence to reason.

Perhaps the Dialogue of this poem is not perfect. Some power of engaging the attention might have been added to it, by quicker reciprocation, by seasonable interruptions, by sudden questions, and by a nearer approach to dramatick spriteliness; without which, fictitious speeches will always tire, however sparkling with sentences, and however variegated with allusions.

The great source of pleasure is variety. Uniformity must tire at last, though it be uniformity of excellence. We love to expect; and, when expectation is disappointed

a hero for every one of his adventures," &c. &c. *Essay on Satire*, S. S. D. vol. xiii. p. 17.

¹ *De Bello Peloponnesiaco*.

or gratified, we want to be again expecting. For this impatience of the present, whoever would please, must make provision. The skilful writer *irritat, mulcet*, makes a due distribution of the still and animated parts. It is for want of this artful intertexture, and those necessary changes, that the whole of a book may be tedious, though all the parts are praised.

If unexhaustible wit could give perpetual pleasure, no eye would ever leave half-read the work of Butler; for what poet has ever brought so many remote images so happily together? It is scarcely possible to peruse a page without finding some association of images that was never found before. By the first paragraph the reader is amused by the next he is delighted, and by a few more strained to astonishment; but astonishment is a toilsome pleasure; he is soon weary of wondering, and longs to be diverted.

“Omnia vult belle Matho dicere, dic aliquando
Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando male.”¹

Imagination is useless without knowledge: nature gives in vain the power of combination, unless study and observation supply materials to be combined. Butler's treasures of knowledge appear proportioned to his expence: whatever topick employs his mind, he shews himself qualified to expand and illustrate it with all the accessories that books can furnish: he is found not only to have travelled the beaten road, but the bye-paths of literature; not only to have taken general surveys, but to have examined particulars with minute inspection.

If the French boast the learning of Rabelais, we need not be afraid of confronting them with Butler.

But the most valuable parts of his performance are

¹ “Omnia vis belle, Matho, dicere; dic aliquando
Et bene; dic neutrum; dic aliquando male.”

Martial, *Epigr.* x. 46.

those which retired study and native wit cannot supply. He that merely makes a book from books may be useful, but can scarcely be great. Butler had not suffered life to glide beside him unseen or unobserved. He had watched with great diligence the operations of human nature, and traced the effects of opinion, humour, interest, and passion. From such remarks proceeded that great number of sententious distichs which have passed into conversation, and are added as proverbial axioms to the general stock of practical knowledge.

When any work has been viewed and admired, the first question of intelligent curiosity is, how was it performed? *Hudibras* was not a hasty effusion; it was not produced by a sudden tumult of imagination, or a short paroxysm of violent labour. To accumulate such a mass of sentiments at the call of accidental desire, or of sudden necessity, is beyond the reach and power of the most active and comprehensive mind. I am informed by Mr. Thyer of Manchester,¹ the excellent editor of this author's reliques, that he could shew something like *Hudibras* in prose.² He has in his possession the common-place book, in which Butler repositied, not such events or precepts as are gathered by reading; but such remarks, similitudes, allusions, assemblages, or inferences, as occasion prompted, or meditation produced; those thoughts that were generated in his own mind, and might be usefully applied to some future purpose. Such is the labour of those who write for immortality.

But human works are not easily found without a perishable part. Of the ancient poets every reader feels the mythology tedious and oppressive. Of *Hudibras*, the manners, being founded on opinions, are temporary and

¹ *Vid. supr.* p. 204.

² This collection of MSS. was bought by the British Museum (*MSS. Addit.* 32625. 6.) in 1885.

local, and therefore become every day less intelligible, and less striking. What Cicero says¹ of philosophy is true likewise of wit and humour, that "time effaces the fictions of opinion, and confirms the determinations of Nature." Such manners as depend upon standing relations and general passions are co-extended with the race of man; but those modifications of life, and peculiarities of practice, which are the progeny of error and perverseness, or at best of some accidental influence or transient persuasion, must perish with their parents.

Much therefore of that humour which transported the last century with merriment is lost to us, who do not know the sour solemnity, the sullen superstition, the gloomy moroseness, and the stubborn scruples of the ancient Puritans; or, if we knew them, derive our information only from books, or from tradition, have never had them before our eyes, and cannot but by recollection and study understand the lines in which they are satirised. Our grandfathers knew the picture from the life; we judge of the life by contemplating the picture.

It is scarcely possible, in the regularity and composure of the present time, to image the tumult of absurdity, and clamour of contradiction, which perplexed doctrine, disordered practice, and disturbed both publick and private quiet, in that age, when subordination was broken, and awe was hissed away; when any unsettled innovator who could hatch a half-formed notion produced it to the publick; when every man might become a preacher, and almost every preacher could collect a congregation.

The wisdom of the nation is very reasonably supposed to reside in the parliament. What can be concluded of the lower classes of the people, when in one of the parliaments summoned by Cromwell it was seriously proposed,

¹ "Opinionum enim commenta delet dies; naturae judicia confirmat."—Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, ii. 2. p. 26, Ald. ed.

that all the records in the Tower should be burnt, that all memory of things past should be effaced, and that the whole system of life should commence anew?

We have never been witnesses of animosities excited by the use of minced pies and plumb porridge; nor seen with what abhorrence those who could eat them at all other times of the year would shrink from them in December. An old Puritan, who was alive in my childhood, being at one of the feasts of the church invited by a neighbour to partake his cheer, told him, that, if he would treat him at an alehouse with beer, brewed for all times and seasons, he should accept his kindness, but would have none of his superstitious meats or drinks.

One of the puritanical tenets was the illegality of all games of chance; and he that reads Gataker¹ upon "Lots," may see how much learning and reason one of the first scholars of his age thought necessary, to prove that it was no crime to throw a die, or play at cards, or to hide a shilling for the reckoning.

Astrology, however, against which so much of the satire is directed, was not more the folly of the Puritans than of others. It had in that time a very extensive dominion. Its predictions raised hopes and fears in minds which ought to have rejected it with contempt. In hazardous undertakings, care was taken to begin under the influence of a propitious planet; and when the king was prisoner in Carisbrook Castle, an astrologer was consulted what hour would be found most favourable to an escape.

What effect this poem had upon the publick, whether it shamed imposture or reclaimed credulity, is not easily determined. Cheats can seldom stand long against

¹ Thomas Gataker (1574-1654), published, in 1619, *A Discourse of the Nature and Use of Lots: a Treatise Historical and Theological*. His notes on *Marcus Antoninus* are a mine of learning, and furnished many quotations to the divines of his own and succeeding generations.

laughter. It is certain that the credit of planetary intelligence wore fast away; though some men of knowledge, and Dryden among them,¹ continued to believe that conjunctions and oppositions had a great part in the distribution of good or evil, and in the government of sublunary things.

Poetical Action ought to be probable upon certain suppositions, and such probability as burlesque requires is here violated only by one incident. Nothing can shew more plainly the necessity of doing something, and the difficulty of finding something to do, than that Butler was reduced to transfer to his hero the flagellation of Sancho, not the most agreeable fiction of Cervantes; very suitable indeed to the manners of that age and nation, which ascribed wonderful efficacy to voluntary penances; but so remote from the practice and opinions of the Hudibrastick time, that judgement and imagination are alike offended.

The diction of this poem is grossly familiar, and the numbers purposely neglected, except in a few places where the thoughts by their native excellence secure themselves from violation, being such as mean language cannot express. The mode of versification has been blamed by Dryden, who regrets that the heroick measure was not rather chosen. To the critical sentence of Dryden the highest reverence would be due, were not his decisions often precipitate, and his opinions immature. When he wished to change the measure, he probably would have been willing to change more. If he intended that, when the numbers were heroick, the diction should still remain vulgar, he planned a very heterogeneous and unnatural composition. If he preferred a general stateliness both of sound and words, he can be only understood to wish that Butler had undertaken a different work.

¹ *Vid. infr. Life of Dryden.*