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' The Poetical Works
of
John Milton

IN TWO VOLS.—VOL. I

London
Macmillan and Co. Limited

New York : The Macmillan Company

1904

GLASGOW : PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

IN June 1628, while Milton was still an undergraduate, he composed for one of the Senior Fellows of his college, who was the respondent in the Philosophical Act, the Latin verses which it was the Cambridge custom to print for distribution to the Doctors present at the ceremony. Professor Masson has suggested that the lines on the theme, 'Naturam non pati senium' (That Nature is not subject to old age) were written for this occasion. If so, this was, as far as we can guess, the first composition of Milton's to obtain the honour of print. Academical fly-sheets of this kind quickly pass out of existence, and as it was no longer customary at this date to use layers of printers' proofs instead of paste boards, there is little likelihood of this fugitive paper having been preserved even in that last refuge, the inside of an old binding. Should it be extant the fly-sheet ought to bear the imprint, 'Cantabrigiae, ex academiae celeberrimae typographeo,' or (less probably) 'Cantabrigiae, apud Thomam & Ioannem Buck,' and if anyone lights on some Latin verses with either of these imprints, and the date 1628, he will probably have made a very exciting find.

Milton's second published verses, his first in English, were the lines (written in 1630), entitled 'An Epitaph on

the admirable Dramaticke Poet, W. Shakespeare,' printed among the preliminary matter of the second folio edition of the Plays, in 1632. After this, as far as we know, no more of his poems saw the light until 1637, when Henry Lawes, who had written the music for the performance of 'Comus' at Ludlow Castle in 1634, and had himself taken part in it, weary of making copies for his friends, sent it, with the poet's leave, to press, under the title :

A Maske presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634 : on Michaelmasse night, before the Right Honorable Iohn, Earle of Bridgewater, Vicount Brackly, Lord Præsident of Wales, And one of his Maiesties most honorable Privie Counsell.

Eheu quid volui misero mihi ! floribus austrum
Perditus—

London, Printed for Humphrey Robinson, at the signe of the Threë Pidgeons in Pauls Church-yard. 1637.

In addition to this printed edition Milton's autograph draught is preserved at Trinity College, Cambridge, another manuscript copy at Bridgewater House, and the music of five of the six songs in Lawes' autograph at the British Museum.

It was in November of this year 1637 that Milton wrote the draught of 'Lycidas' (the corrections in which so saddened Charles Lamb), which also is preserved at Trinity College. The poem was published in 1638, with the signature J. M., in the memorial volume entitled : 'Justa Edovardo King naufrago ab amicis mœrentibus, amoris & *μνηίας χάρτιν*,' or as the English section of it was called, 'Obsequies to the memorie of Mr. Edward King, Anno Dom. 1638.'

After this no more of Milton's verse was printed till close on the end of 1645, when Humphrey Moseley, a publisher who through all the turmoil of the Civil War steadily fostered good literature, obtained his leave to

print his miscellaneous poems and a new edition of 'Comus.' The title-page to this collection reads :

Poems of Mr. John Milton, both English and Latin, Compos'd at several times. Printed by his true Copies. The Songs were set in Musick by Mr. Henry Lawes, Gentleman of the Kings Chappel, and one of His Maiesties Private Musick.

———— Baccare frontem

Cingite, ne vati noceat mala lingua futuro,

Virgil, Eclog. 7.

Printed and publish'd, according to Order. London, Printed by Ruth Raworth, for Humphrey Moseley, and are to be sold at the signe of the Princes Arms in S. Pauls Church-yard, 1645.

Facing the title-page was the unlucky engraved portrait of Milton in his twenty-first year, which William Marshall, a very unequal artist, here shown at his worst, had apparently copied from a painting of the poet in his Cambridge days. Milton was now 37, but there was some appropriateness in choosing an early portrait. since most of the poems in the volume were early work. Unfortunately Marshall hardened the face till it looked like a grim gentleman of fifty, and Milton, as all the world knows, amused himself by letting the portrait go forth accompanied by a malicious Greek epigram which Marshall must have engraved in happy ignorance of its meaning.

Ἀμαθεὶ γεγράφθαι χειρὶ τήνδε γὰρ εἰκόνα
 Φαίης τάχ' ἂν, πρὸς εἶδος αὐτοφύεσ βλέπων.
 Τὸν δ' ἐκτυπωτῶν οὐκ ἐπιγνόντες, φίλοι,
 Γελάτε φαίλου δυσμίμημα ζωγράφου.

So runs the Greek and, as an epigram in English can hardly dispense with rhyme, we may make shift to translate it :

'Unskilled the hand that such a print could trace
 Quickly you'll say who see the man's true face ;
 Friends, if for whom it stands you ne'er had dreamt,
 Laugh at the wretched artist's poor attempt.'

The engraving is so distinctly below the average of Marshall's work that Milton may perhaps have imagined that the caricature was intentional—that Marshall, in fact, disagreed so much with his recently expressed views on divorce that he was aiding the evil tongues alluded to in the Virgilian quotation of the title-page, by drawing a most unpoetic face. If he entertained such a suspicion Milton's malice, otherwise a little unworthy, would be excusable enough. In any case, however, his wrath can hardly have extended to Humphrey Moseley, the publisher, who sent forth the book with this commendatory letter of his own :

THE STATIONER TO THE READER.

IT is not any private respect of gain, Gentle Reader, for the slightest Pamphlet is nowadays more vendible then the Works of learnedest men ; but it is the love I have to our own Language that hath made me diligent to collect, and set forth such Peeces both in Prose and Vers, as may renew the wonted honour and esteem of our English tongue : and it's the worth of these both English and Latin Poems, not the flourish of any, prefixed encomions that can invite thee to buy them, though these are not without the highest Commendations and Applause of the learnedst Academicks, both domestick and forrein : And amongst those of our own Countrey, the unparallel'd attestation of that renowned Provost of Eaton, SIR HENRY WOOTTON :¹ I know not thy palat how it relishes such dainties, nor how harmonious thy soul is ; perhaps more trivial Airs may please thee better. But howsoever thy opinion is spent upon these, that encouragement I have already received from the most ingenious men in thair clear and courteous entertainment of MR. WALLER'S late choice Peeces, hath once more made me adventure into the World, presenting it with these ever-green, and not to be blasted Laurels. The Authors more peculiar excellency in these studies, was too well known to conceal his Papers, or to keep me from attempting to solicit them from him. Let the event guide itself which way it will, I shall deserve of the age by bringing into the Light as true

¹ Printed in this edition after the dedication of 'Comus,' Vol. II., p. 155.

a Birth, as the Muses have brought forth since our famous SPENCER wrote ; whose Poems in these English ones are as rarely imitated, as sweetly excell'd. Reader, if thou art Eagle-eyed to censure their worth, I am not fearful to expose them to thy exactest perusal.

Thine to command,

HUMPH. MOSELEY.

Soon after 1645 English publishers began to print lists of their books, which they bound up at the end of their new ones as an advertisement. In 1653 Moseley issued a more extensive list than any previously published, and among its 140 entries that of Milton's Poems figures as the sixty-sixth. They were, therefore, still on sale eight years after their publication, though the fact that they come in one of the sections of the list printed only in small type, may show either that the stock at that date was not large enough to tempt the publisher to give them prominence, or else that the active share which Milton, since their first appearance, had taken in politics made Moseley despair of commending them to his patrons, who were probably mostly on the other side. However this may be, the good man deserves our gratitude for having given them to the world. Besides the Latin poems and the reprints of 'Comus' and 'Lycidas,' the volume contained nearly all Milton's minor poems, the exceptions being the 'Elegy on a Fair Infant dying of a Cough,' the eleventh and subsequent sonnets, the translation of Horace's Ode to Pyrrha, 'At a Vacation Exercise,' and the renderings of Psalms i-viii. and lxxx-lxxxviii. Of these the four political sonnets, on Fairfax, Cromwell, and Sir Henry Vane, and the second to Cyriack Skinner, were perforce withheld till 1695, after the Revolution ; all the rest appeared in a second edition of the Poems, published

by Tho. Dring in 1673, together with Milton's 'Small Tractate of Education, to Mr. Hartlib.'

Twenty-two years elapsed after the appearance of the Poems of 1645 before Milton was in need of a publisher for a new volume of his poetry. On April 27th, 1667, he signed an agreement with Samuel Symons or Simmons, conveying to him 'his executors and assignes All that Booke, Copy, or Manuscript of a Poem intituled Paradise Lost,' in consideration of an immediate payment of Five Pounds, and three other payments of the like amount after the sale of a first, second, and third edition of 1300 copies each, 'to particular reading customers,' the printer being allowed to print an extra two hundred copies of each edition, apparently to allow for presentation, spoilt copies, and other wastage. In the agreement the poem is described as 'now lately Licensed to be printed,' and a manuscript copy of the first book, written out fair in a clerk's hand, has been preserved, bearing the 'Imprimatur' of 'Tho. Tomkyns,' domestic chaplain to Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury, who acted as the Archbishop's deputy in licensing books. The preservation of this manuscript is fortunate as proving that, despite his blindness, Milton was able to secure exceptional accuracy in the printing of his poem, the manuscript differing from the printed text in little save a few minute points of spelling. In thus entirely supporting the printer it of course empties itself of much of its interest. Nevertheless, an attempted sale at Sotheby's on January 25th, 1904, showed that its owner valued it at no less than £5000, an estimate which, since no single book has ever fetched more than £10,000, seems to leave insufficient margin for the relative value of the ten times more interesting autograph manuscript at Trinity College,

Cambridge, of 'Comus,' 'Lycidas,' and the minor poems.

Not quite four months after the agreement had been signed, 'Paradise Lost' was registered at Stationers' Hall, on August 20th, 1667. Between registration and publication an indefinite interval might elapse, and we have no strict proof that the poem, though its earliest title-page bears the date 1667, was not actually published in the border months of the two reckonings then in use, since any date before March 25th, 1668, belonged in popular account to 1667. But the practice of post-dating books, so as to make them seem new as long as possible, works in the opposite direction, and it was probably in the autumn of 1667 that the poem appeared, with the following title-page :

Paradise lost. A Poem Written in Ten Books. By John Milton. Licensed and Entred according to Order. London Printed, and are to be sold by Peter Parker under Creed Church neer Aldgate; And by Robert Boulter at the Turks Head in Bishopsgate-street; And Matthias Walker, under St. Dunstons Church in Fleet-street, 1667.

It will be observed that Samuel Symons or Simmons, the real printer and publisher of the book, does not here give his own name on the title-page. In registering the copyright he had indicated the author by initials (a Booke or Copie Intituled Paradise Lost, a Poem in Tenne bookes, by J. M.), and though initials in the seventeenth century were very lightly used, with no idea of concealment, we may fairly imagine that Simmons was alarmed lest Milton's political record should injure both the book and the publisher. It is probably to these fears, and the recovery from them, that we may ascribe the extraordinary succession of title-pages with which the first edition was issued. Before 1667 was out that which

has been quoted above was replaced by another, in which the name John Milton was printed in smaller type, and in 1668 we have a third in which, instead of the name, we have only the initials J. M. When, however, the book had been published for something like a year, and was bringing in, as we have reason to suppose, both praise and money, Simmons seems to have plucked up heart. The author's name was replaced on the title, the words, 'Licensed and Entred according to Order,' previously very conspicuous, were omitted, and the imprint now ran :

London, Printed by S. Simmons, and to be sold by S. Thomson at the Bishops-Head in Duck-lane, H. Mortlack at the White Hart in Westminster Hall, M. Walker under St. Dunstans Church in Fleet-street, and R. Boulter at the Turks-Head in Bishopsgate-street, 1668.

Not only did Simmons put his name to this issue and cause the book now to be sold in Westminster Hall itself, but he went to the expense of printing fourteen pages of new matter, which he prefaced with a three-line advertisement :

The Printer to the Reader.

Courteous Reader, There was no Argument at first intended to the Book, but for the satisfaction of many that have desired it, is procured.
S. Simmons.

As this did not express all his additions, and was, moreover, ungrammatical, this first advertisement was superseded by a longer one :

The Printer to the Reader.

Courteous Reader, There was no Argument at first intended to the Book, but for the satisfaction of many that have desired it, I have procur'd it, and withall a reason of that which stumbled many others, why the Poem Rimes not. S. Simmons.

On this follows the prose Arguments to the several books, Milton's note as to 'The Verse,' and a short list of Errata.

By April 26th, 1669, the stipulated number of 1300 copies had presumably been sold, since Simmons paid Milton the second Five Pounds covenanted for in the agreement. With only a few copies still in hand he apparently did not wish to employ so many agents, and therefore printed yet other title-pages, with the imprint :

London, Printed by S. Simmons, and are to be sold by T. Helder at the Angel in Little Britain. 1669.

These title-pages are found in two forms, in the second of which the letter *d* in 'Paradise' has a stroke across the top, and the word 'London' is in smaller capitals. This final issue was apparently struck off for the last handful of copies, and the address of 'The Printer to the Reader' is said not to be found with it.

It should be stated that other variations in the title-page to 'Paradise Lost' have been described, but they appear to be 'ghosts' for which collectors and bibliographers both in England and America have hunted for many years in vain. While the title-page was so often changed, the text of the book (save for the preliminary matter added in 1668) remained the same, though as in most books of the time numerous minute differences in spelling and punctuation may be found on a careful collation of different copies. The most plausible explanation of these yet suggested is one put forward by Mr. Wynne Baxter in a paper read before the Bibliographical Society, in which he showed that the inking-balls in use down to the beginning of the last century, used to pull the types out of the forme in the

course of printing, and that the pressman in replacing the scattered letters often made slight variations.

From 'Clavel's catalogue of the books issued between 1666 and 1674, we know that 'Paradise Lost' was published at three shillings. The sale, therefore, of at least 1300 copies, subject only to a payment to the author of £10, must have shown a considerable profit. Simmons, however, waited till 1674 before producing a second edition. In this the original ten books were increased to twelve, by dividing books vii. and x. into two books each, three new lines being added at the beginning of Book viii. and five at the beginning of Book xii. The Arguments were similarly changed, and were now placed at the head of the books to which they referred. In 1678 a third edition was printed, and in December 1680 Milton's widow accepted a final sum of eight pounds (making £18 in all) in satisfaction of her 'right title or interest' in the poem.

Milton's last volume of new poetry appeared with the date 1671, and the title:

Paradise Regain'd. A Poem. In IV. Books. To which is added Samson Agonistes. The Author John Milton. London, Printed by J. M. for John Starkey at the Mitre in Fleetstreet, near Temple-Bar. MDCLXXI.

The two poems were separately paged, though the signatures of the sheets run on continuously. 'Samson Agonistes' has a separate title-page, which will be found printed in this edition before the poem, the imprint being the same as on the general title. The date of the licensing of the book was July 2nd, 1670, that of its registration at Stationers' Hall, September 10th, of the same year. Though it is dated 1671 on its title-pages it must have been issued shortly after being registered,

as it is duly entered in the Michaelmas Term Catalogue of November 22nd, 1670. 'Price, bound, 4s.' The publisher's trick of post-dating it has thus caused all literary historians to assign its issue to the wrong year.

For a very full statement of the principles on which Professor Masson formed the text here reprinted the reader must be referred to the elaborate introduction to his library edition in three volumes. All editors of Milton are now agreed with him in upholding absolute fidelity to the original text, and the Professor's retention of a few archaic or distinctive spellings, while modernizing those of no interest, has also been generally followed. In seeing the book through the press I have ventured to make a few changes in the use of capitals, for the sake of greater consistency, and to abandon the occasional use of italics for emphasis, where not sanctioned by Milton himself. In the belief also that Professor Masson, had he been revising the text himself, would have taken the same course, I have printed 'shewn' instead of 'shew' in 'Paradise Regained,' III. 350, the last letter being quite distinct in the British Museum copy, though in some others it is badly printed; I have also, on the authority of the Milton autographs at Cambridge, as reported by Mr. Aldis Wright, adopted the readings 'he well knew' for 'he knew,' in 'Lydia,' line 10, and 'lend' instead of 'send' in Sonnet XIII., line 9. With these exceptions, though I have constantly referred to the original editions I have not been tempted to make any alterations worth noting in a text which has now stood the test of thirty years.

ALFRED W. POLLARD.

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PARADISE LOST

A POEM IN TWELVE BOOKS

THE AUTHOR

JOHN MILTON

COMMENDATORY VERSES

PREFIXED TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN *PARADISUM AMISSAM* SUMMI POETÆ
JOHANNIS MILTONI

QUI legis *Amissam Paradisum*, grandia magni
Carmina Miltoni, quid nisi cuncta legis?
Res cunctas, et cunctarum primordia rerum,
Et fata, et fines, continet iste liber.
Intima panduntur magni penetralia Mundi,
Scribitur et toto quicquid in Orbe latet;
Terræque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum,
Sulphureumque Erebi flammivomumque specus;
Quæque colunt terras, pontumque, et Tartara cæca,
Quæque colunt summi lucida regna poli;
Et quodcunque ullis conclusum est finibus usquam;
Et sine fine Chaos, et sine fine Deus;
Et sine fine magis, si quid magis est sine fine,
In Christo erga homines conciliatus amor.
Hæc qui speraret quis crederet esse futurum?
Et tamen hæc hodie terra Britannia legit.
O quantos in bella duces, quæ protulit arma!
Quæ canit, et quantâ prælia dira tubâ!
Cœlestes acies, atque in certamine Cœlum!
Et quæ cœlestes pugna deceret agros!
Quantus in ætheriis tollit se Lucifer armis,
Atque ipso graditur vix Michaelis minor!
Quantis et quam funestis concurritur iris,
Dum ferus hic stellas protegit, ille rapit!

Dum vulsos montes ceu tela reciproca torquent,
 Et non mortali desuper igne pluunt;
 Stat dubius cui se parti concedat Olympus,
 Et metuit pugnae non superesse suae.
 At simul in caelis Messiae insignia fulgent,
 Et currus animes, armaque digna Deo,
 Horrendumque rotae strident, et saeva rotarum
 Erumpunt torvis fulgura luminibus,
 Et flammæ vibrant, et vera tonitrua rauco
 Admistis flammis insonuere polo,
 Excidit attonitis mens omnis, et impetus omnis,
 Et cassis dextris irrita tela cadunt ;
 Ad poenas fugiunt, et, ceu foret Orcus asylum,
 Infernis certant condere se tenebris.
 Cedite, Romani Scriptorum ; cedite, Graeci ;
 Et quos fama recens vel celebravit anus :
 Haec quicumque leget tantum cecinisse putabit
 Maenidem ranas, Virgilium culices.

S. B., M.D.

ON PARADISE LOST

WHEN I beheld the Poet blind, yet bold,
 In slender book his vast design unfold—
 Messiah crowned, God's reconciled decree,
 Rebelling Angels, the Forbidden Tree,
 Heaven, Hell, Earth, Chaos, All—the argument
 Held me a while misdoubting his intent,
 That he would ruin (for I saw him strong)
 The sacred truths to fable and old song
 (So Samson groped the temple's posts in spite),
 The world o'erwhelming to revenge his sight.

Yet, as I read, soon growing less severe,
 I liked his project, the success did fear—
 Through that wild field how he his way should find
 O'er which lame Faith leads Understanding blind ;
 Lest he perplexed the things he would explain,
 And what was easy he should render vain.

Or, if a work so infinite he spanned,
 Jealous I was that some less skilful hand
 (Such as disquiet always what is well,
 And by ill-imitating would excel,
 Might hence presume the whole Creation's day
 To change in scenes, and show it in a play.

Pardon me, mighty Poet ; nor despise
 My causeless, yet not impious, surmise.
 But I am now convinced, and none will dare
 Within thy labours to pretend a share.
 Thou hast not missed one thought that could be fit,
 And all that was improper dost omit ;
 So that no room is here for writers left,
 But to detect their ignorance or theft.

The majesty which through thy work doth reign
 Draws the devout, deterring the profane.
 And things divine thou treat'st of in such state
 As them preserves, and thee, inviolate.
 At once delight and horror on us seize ;
 Thou sing'st with so much gravity and ease,
 And above human flight dost soar aloft
 With plume so strong, so equal, and so soft.
 The bird named from the Paradise you sing
 So never flags, but always keeps on wing.

Where could'st thou words of such a compass find ?
 Whence furnish such a vast expense of mind ?
 Just Heaven, thee like Tiresias to requite,
 Rewards with prophecy thy loss of sight.

Well might'st thou scorn thy readers to allure
 With tinkling rime, of thy own sense secure ;
 While the Town-Bayes writes all the while and spells,
 And, like a pack-horse, tires without his bells.
 Their fancies like our bushy points appear ;
 The poets tag them, we for fashion wear.
 I too, transported by the mode, offend,
 And, while I meant to *praise* thee, must *commend*.
 Thy verse, created, like thy theme sublime,
 In number, weight, and measure, needs not rime.

THE VERSE

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

PARADISE LOST

BOOK I

THE ARGUMENT

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

• OF Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,

Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
 Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
 That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
 In the beginning how the heavens and earth
 Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill 10
 Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
 Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
 Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
 That with no middle flight intends to soar
 Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
 And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
 Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
 Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
 Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread, 20
 Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,
 And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
 Illumine, what is low raise and support;
 That, to the highth of this great argument,
 I may assert Eternal Providence,
 And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first—for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
 Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first what cause
 Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state,
 Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off 30
 From their Creator, and transgress his will
 For one restraint, lords of the World besides.
 Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

The infernal Serpent; he it was whose guile,
 Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
 The mother of mankind, what time his pride
 Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
 Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring
 To set himself in glory above his peers,
 He trusted to have equalled the Most High, 40
 If he opposed, and, with ambitious aim
 Against the throne and monarchy of God,
 Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
 With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power

Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
 With hideous ruin and combustion, down
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
 In adamantine chains and penal fire,
 Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

Nine times the space that measures day and night 50
 To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,
 Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
 Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
 Reserved him to more wrath ; for now the thought
 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
 Torments him : round he throws his baleful eyes,
 That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
 Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.

At once, as far as Angel's ken, he views
 The dismal situation waste and wild. 60

A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
 As one great furnace flamed ; yet from those flames
 No light ; but rather darkness visible
 Served only to discover sights of woe,
 Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
 And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
 That comes to all, but torture without end
 Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
 With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.

Such place Eternal Justice had prepared 70

For those rebellious ; here their prison ordained
 In utter darkness, and their portion set,
 As far removed from God and light of Heaven
 As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.

Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell !
 There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
 With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,

• He soon discerns ; and, weltering by his side,
 One next himself in power, and next in crime,
 Long after known in Palestine, and named 80

BEËLZEBUB. To whom the Arch-Enemy,
 And thence in Heaven called SATAN, with bold words
 Breaking the horrid silence, thus began :—

“ If thou beest he—but Oh how fallen ! how changed
 From him !—who, in the happy realms of light,
 Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
 Myriads, though bright—if he whom mutual league,
 United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
 And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
 Joined with me once, now misery hath joined 90
 In equal ruin ; into what pit thou seest
 From what highth fallen : so much the stronger proved
 He with his thunder : and till then who knew
 The force of those dire arms ? Yet not for those,
 Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
 Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
 Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind,
 And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
 That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
 And to the fierce contention brought along 100
 Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
 That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
 His utmost power with adverse power opposed
 In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
 And shook his throne. What though the field be lost ?
 All is not lost—the unconquerable will,
 And study of revenge, immortal hate,
 And courage never to submit or yield :
 And what is else not to be overcome.
 That glory never shall his wrath or might 110
 Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
 With suppliant knee, and deify his power
 Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
 Doubted his empire—that were low indeed ;
 That were an ignominy and shame beneath
 This downfall ; since, by fate, the strength of Gods,
 And this empyreal substance, cannot fail ;
 Since, through experience of this great event,
 In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
 We may with more successful hope resolve 120
 To wage by force or guile eternal war,
 Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,

Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven."

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

“ O Prince, O Chief of many thronèd Powers
That led the embattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds 130
Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual King,
And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate !
Too well I see and rue the dire event
That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat,
Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as Gods and Heavenly Essences
Can perish : for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigour soon returns, 140
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.
But what if he our Conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be, 150
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep ?
What can it then avail though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment ? ”

• Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend re-
plied :—

“ Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering : but of this be sure—
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight, 160

As being the contrary to his high will
 Whom we resist. If then his providence
 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
 Our labour must be to pervert that end,
 And out of good still to find means of evil ;
 Which ofttimes may succeed so as perhaps
 Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
 His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
 But see ! the angry Victor hath recalled
 His ministers of vengeance and pursuit 170
 Back to the gates of Heaven : the sulphurous hail,
 Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
 The fiery surge that from the precipice
 Of Heaven received us falling ; and the thunder,
 Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
 Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
 To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.
 Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn
 Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.
 Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild, 180
 The seat of desolation, void of light,
 Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
 Casts pale and dreadful ? Thither let us tend
 From off the tossing of these fiery waves ;
 There rest, if any rest can harbour there ;
 And, re-assembling our afflicted powers,
 Consult how we may henceforth most offend
 Our enemy, our own loss how repair,
 How overcome this dire calamity,
 What reinforcement we may gain from hope, 190
 If not what resolution from despair."

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

By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean-stream. 200
Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind,
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays.
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay,
Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence 210
Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Èvil to others, and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn
On Man by him seduced, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured. 220
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames
Driven backward slope their pointing spires, and, rolled
In billows, leave i' the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,
That felt unusual weight; till on dry land
He lights—if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
And such appeared in hue as when the force 230
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singèd bottom all involved
With stench and smoke. Such resting found the solè
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate;

Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood
 As Gods, and by their own recovered strength, 240
 Not by the sufferance of supernal power.

“Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,”
 Said then the lost Archangel, “this the seat
 That we must change for Heaven?—this mournful
 gloom

For that celestial light? Be it so, since he
 Who now is sovran can dispose and bid
 What shall be right: farthest from him is best,
 Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme
 Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
 Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail, 250
 Infernal World! and thou, profoundest Hell,
 Receive thy new possessor—one who brings
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.
 The mind is its own place, and in itself
 Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
 What matter where, if I be still the same,
 And what I should be, all but less than he
 Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
 We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence: 260
 Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
 To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
 Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.
 But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
 The associates and co-partners of our loss,
 Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool,
 And call them not to share with us their part
 In this unhappy mansion, or once more
 With rallied arms to try what may be yet
 Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?” 270

So Satan spake; and him Beëlzebub
 Thus answered:—“Leader of those armies bright
 Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have foiled!
 If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
 Of hope in fears and dangers—heard so oft
 In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge

Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults
 Their surest signal—they will soon resume
 New courage and revive, though now they lie
 Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire, 280
 As we erewhile, astounded and amazed ;
 No wonder, fallen such a pernicious highth !”

He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend
 Was moving toward the shore ; his ponderous shield,
 Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
 Behind him cast. The broad circumference
 Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
 Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
 At evening, from the top of Fesolè,
 Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands, 290
 Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
 His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
 Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
 Of some great ammiral, were but a wand—
 He walked with, to support uneasy steps
 Over the burning marle, not like those steps
 On Heaven’s azure ; and the torrid clime
 Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.
 Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
 Of that inflamèd sea he stood, and called 300
 His legions—Angel Forms, who lay entranced
 Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
 In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
 High over-arched embower ; or scattered sedge
 Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion’ armed
 Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o’erthrew
 Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
 While with perfidious hatred they pursued
 The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
 From the safe shore their floating carcasses 310
 And broken chariot-wheels. So thick bestrown,
 Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,
 Under amazement of their hideous change.
 He called so loud that all the hollow deep
 Of Hell resounded :—“ Princes, Potentates,

Warriors, the Flower of Heaven—once yours; now
lost,

If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal Spirits! Or have ye chosen this place
After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find 320
To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds
Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern
The advantage, and, descending, tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?—
Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!” 330

They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch,
On duty sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,
Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy cloud 340
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like Night, and darkened all the land of Nile;
So numberless were those bad Angels seen
Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell,
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear
Of their great Sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain: 350
A multitude like which the populous North
Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons

Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
 Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.
 Forthwith, from every squadron and each band,
 The heads and leaders thither haste where stood
 Their great Commander—godlike Shapes, and Forms
 Excelling human ; princely Dignities ;
 And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones, 360
 Though of their names in Heavenly records now
 Be no memorial, blotted out and rased
 By their rebellion from the Books of Life.
 Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
 Got them new names, till, wandering o'er the earth,
 Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,
 By falsities and lies the greatest part
 Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
 God their Creator, and the invisible
 Glory of him that made them to transform 370
 Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
 With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
 And devils to adore for deities :
 Then were they known to men by various names,
 And various idols through the Heathen World.

Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who
 last,

Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch,
 At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth
 Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
 While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof. 380

The chief were those who, from the pit of Hell
 Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst fix
 Their seats, long after, next the seat of God,
 Their altars by his altar, Gods adored
 Among the nations round, and durst abide
 Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned
 Between the Cherubim ; yea, often placed
 Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,
 Abominations ; and with cursèd things
 His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned, 390
 And with their darkness durst affront his light.

First, *Moloch*, horrid king, besmeared with blood
 Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears ;
 Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
 Their children's cries unheard that passed through fire
 To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
 Worshiped in Rabba and her watery plain,
 In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
 Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
 Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart 400
 Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
 His temple right against the temple of God
 On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove
 The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence
 And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.
 Next *Chemos*, the obscene dread of Moab's sons,
 From Aroar to Nebo and the wild
 Of southmost Abarim ; in Hesebon
 And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
 The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines, 410
 And Elealè to the Asphaltic Pool :
 Peor his other name, when he enticed
 Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,
 To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
 Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
 Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove
 Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate,
 Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
 With these came they who, from the bordering flood
 Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts 420
 Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
 Of *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth*—those male,
 These feminine. For Spirits, when they please,
 Can either sex assume, or both ; so soft
 And uncompounded is their essence pure,
 Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
 Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
 Like cumbrous flesh ; but, in what shape they choose,
 Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
 Can execute their aery purposes, 430

And works of love or enmity fulfil.
 For those the race of Israel oft forsook,
 Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
 His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
 To bestial gods ; for which their heads, as low
 Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
 Of despicable foes. With these in troop
 Came *Astoreth*, whom the Phœnicians called
 Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns ;
 To whose bright image nightly by the moon 440
 Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs ;
 In Sion also not unsung, where stood
 Her temple on the offensive mountain, built
 By that uxorious king whose heart, though large,
 Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
 To idols foul. *Thammuz* came next behind,
 Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
 The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
 In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
 While smooth Adonis from his native rock 450
 Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
 Of *Thammuz* yearly wounded : the love-tale
 Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
 Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
 Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
 His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
 Of alienated Judah. Next came one
 Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark
 Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopt off,
 In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge, 460
 Where he fell flat and shamed his worshipers :
Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man
 And downward fish ; yet had his temple high
 Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
 Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,
 And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
 Him followed *Rimmon*, whose delightful seat
 Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
 Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.

He also against the house of God was bold : 470
 A leper once he lost, and gained a king—
 Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
 God's altar to disparage and displace
 For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
 His odious offerings, and adore the Gods
 Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared
 A crew who, under names of old renown—
Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train—
 With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
 Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek 480
 Their wandering Gods disguised in brutish forms
 Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape
 The infection, when their borrowed gold composed
 The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king
 Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
 Likening his Maker to the grazèd ox—
 Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed
 From Egypt marching, equalled with one stroke
 Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
Belial came last; than whom a Spirit more lewd 490
 Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
 Vice for itself. To him no temple stood
 Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
 In temples and at altars, when the priest
 Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled
 With lust and violence the house of God?
 In courts and palaces he also reigns,
 And in luxurious cities, where the noise
 Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
 And injury and outrage; and, when night 500
 Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
 Of *Belial*, flown with insolence and wine.
 Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
 In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
 Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape.
 These were the prime in order and in might :
 The rest were long to tell; though far renowned
 The Ionian Gods—of Javan's issue held

Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth,
 Their boasted parents;—*Titan*, Heaven's first-born, 510
 With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
 By younger *Saturn*: he from mightier Jove,
 His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
 So *Jove* usurping reigned. These, first in Crete
 And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
 Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,
 Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff,
 Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
 Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old
 Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields, 520
 And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost Isles.

All these and more came flocking; but with looks
 Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appeared
 Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their Chief
 Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
 In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
 Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride
 Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
 Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
 Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears: 530
 Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound
 Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
 His mighty standard. That proud honour claimed
 Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:
 Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
 The imperial ensign; which, full high advanced,
 Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
 With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,
 Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
 Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds: 540
 At which the universal host up-sent
 A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond
 Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
 All in a moment through the gloom were seen
 Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
 With orient colours waving: with them rose
 A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms

Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
 Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
 In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood 550
 Of flutes and soft recorders—such as raised
 To highth of noblest temper heroes old
 Arming to battle, and instead of rage
 Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and unmoved
 With dread of death to flight or foul retreat ;
 Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
 With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
 Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
 From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
 Breathing united force with fixèd thought, 560
 Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed
 Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And now
 Advanced in view they stand—a horrid front
 Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
 Of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield,
 Awaiting what command their mighty Chief
 Had to impose. He through the armèd files
 Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
 The whole battalion views—their order due,
 Their visages and stature as of Gods ; 570
 Their number last he sums. And now his heart
 Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,
 Glories: for never, since created Man,
 Met such embodied force as, named with these,
 Could merit more than that small infantry
 Warred on by cranes—though all the giant brood
 Of Phlegra with the heroic race were joined
 That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
 Mixed with auxiliar Gods ; and what resounds
 In fable or romance of Uther's son, 580
 Begirt with British and Armoric knights ;
 And all who since, baptized or infidel,
 Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
 Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,
 Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
 When Charlemain with all his peerage fell

By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
 Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
 Their dread Commander. He, above the rest
 In shape and gesture proudly eminent, 590
 Stood like a tower. His form had yet not lost
 All her original brightness, nor appeared
 Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
 Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen
 Looks through the horizontal misty air
 Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,
 In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
 On half the nations, and with fear of change
 Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone 600
 Above them all the Archangel: but his face
 Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
 Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
 Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
 Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
 Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
 The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
 (Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
 For ever now to have their lot in pain—
 Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
 Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours flung 610
 For his revolt—yet faithful how they stood,
 Their glory withered; as, when heaven's fire
 Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
 With singèd top their stately growth, though bare,
 Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
 To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
 From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
 With all his peers: attention held them mute.
 Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
 Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last 620
 Words interwove with sighs found out their way:—
 “O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers
 Matchless, but with the Almighty!—and that strife
 Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,
 As this place testifies, and this dire change,

Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,
 Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
 Of knowledge past or present, could have feared
 How such united force of Gods, how such
 As stood like these, could ever know repulse? 630
 For who can yet believe, though after loss,
 That all these puissant legions, whose exile
 Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to re-ascend,
 Self-raised, and re-possess their native seat?
 For me, be witness all the host of Heaven,
 If counsels different, or danger shunned
 By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
 Monarch in Heaven till then as one secure
 Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
 Consent or custom, and his regal state 640
 Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed—
 Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
 Henceforth his might we know, and know our own,
 So as not either to provoke, or dread
 New war provoked: our better part remains
 To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
 What force effected not; that he no less
 At length from us may find, who overcomes
 By force hath overcome but half his foe.
 Space may produce new worlds; whereof so rife 650
 There went a fame in Heaven that he ere long
 Intended to create, and therein plant
 A generation whom his choice regard
 Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven.
 Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
 Our first eruption—thither, or elsewhere;
 For this infernal pit shall never hold
 Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor the Abyss
 Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
 Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired; 660
 For who can think submission? War, then, war
 Open or understood, must be resolved.”

He spake; and, to confirm his words, out-flew
 Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs

Of mighty Cherubim ; the sudden blaze
 Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged
 Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
 Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
 Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.

There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top 670
 Belched fire and rolling smoke ; the rest entire
 Shone with a glossy scurf—undoubted sign
 That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
 The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,
 A numerous brigad hastened : as when bands
 Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed,
 Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
 Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on—
 Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
 From Heaven ; for even in Heaven his looks and
 thoughts 680

Were always downward bent, admiring more
 The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
 Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
 In vision beatific. By him first
 Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
 Ransacked the Centre, and with impious hands
 Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth
 For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
 Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
 And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire 690
 That riches grow in Hell ; that soil may best
 Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
 Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
 Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
 Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
 And strength, and art, are easily outdone
 By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
 What in an age they, with incessant toil
 And hands innumerable, scarce perform.
 Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared, 700
 That underneath had veins of liquid fire
 Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude

With wondrous art founded the massy ore,
 Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion-dross.
 A third as soon had formed within the ground
 A various mould, and from the boiling cells
 By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook ;
 As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
 To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
 Anon out of the earth a fabric huge 710
 Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
 Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet—
 Built like a temple, where pilasters round
 Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
 With golden architrave ; nor did there want
 Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven :
 The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon
 Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
 Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
 Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat 720
 Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
 In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
 Stood fixed her stately highth ; and straight the doors,
 Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
 Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth
 And level pavement : from the archèd roof,
 Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
 Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
 With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
 As from a sky. The hasty multitude 730
 Admiring entered ; and the work some praise,
 And some the architect. His hand was known
 In Heaven by many a towered structure high,
 Where sceptred Angels held their residence,
 And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King
 Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
 Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright.
 Nor was his name unheard or unadored
 In ancient Greece ; and in Ausonian land
 Men called him Mulciber ; and how he fell 740
 From Heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove

Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
 To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
 A summer's day, and with the setting sun
 Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star,
 On Lemnos, the Ægæan isle. Thus they relate,
 Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
 Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
 To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he scape
 By all his engines, but was headlong sent,
 With his industrious crew, to build in Hell. 750

Meanwhile the wingèd Heralds, by command
 Of sovran power, with awful ceremony
 And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
 A solemn council forthwith to be held
 At Pandemonium, the high capital
 Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
 From every band and squarèd regiment
 By place or choice the worthiest: they anon
 With hundreds and with thousands trooping came 760
 Attended. All access was thronged; the gates
 And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
 (Though like a covered field, where champions bold
 Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair*
 Defied the best of Panim chivalry
 To mortal combat, or career with lance),
 Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
 Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
 In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus rides,
 Pour forth their populous youth about the hive 770
 In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
 Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank,
 The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
 New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer
 Their state-affairs: so thick the aery crowd
 Swarmed and were straitened; till, the signal given,
 Behold a wonder! They•but now who seemed
 In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
 Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
 Throng numberless—like that pygmean race 780

Beyond the Indian mount ; or faery elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the Moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth
Wheels her pale course : they, on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear ;
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large, 790
Though without number still, amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions like themselves,
The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
In close recess and secret conclave sat,
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then,
And summons read, the great consult began.

THE END OF THE FIRST BOOK

PARADISE LOST

BOOK II

THE ARGUMENT

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

HIGH on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence ; and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven ; and, by success untaught,
His proud imaginations thus displayed :— 10
“ Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven !—
For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen,

I give not Heaven for lost: from this descent
 Celestial Virtues rising will appear
 More glorious and more dread than from no fall, •
 And trust themselves to fear no second fate!—
 Me though just right, and the fixed laws of Heaven,
 Did first create your leader—next, free choice,
 With what besides in council or in fight 20
 Hath been achieved of merit—yet this loss,
 Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
 Established in a safe, unenvied throne,
 Yielded with full consent. The happier state
 In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
 Envy from each inferior; but who here
 Will envy whom the highest place exposes
 Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
 Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
 Of endless pain? Where there is, then, no good 30
 For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
 From faction: for none sure will claim in Hell
 Precedence; none whose portion is so small
 Of present pain that with ambitious mind
 Will covet more! With this advantage, then,
 To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
 More than can be in Heaven, we now return
 To claim our just inheritance of old,
 Surer to prosper than prosperity
 Could have assured us; and by what best way, 40
 Whether of open war or covert guile,
 We now debate. Who can advise may speak.”

He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptred king,
 Stood up—the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
 That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair.
 His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed
 Equal in strength, and rather than be less
 Cared not to be at all; with that care lost
 Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse,
 He recked not, and these words thereafter spake:— 50

“My sentence is for open war. Of wiles,
 More unexpert, I boast not: them let those

Contrive who need, or when they need; not now.
 For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest—
 Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
 The signal to ascend—sit lingering here,
 Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling-place
 Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
 The prison of his tyranny who reigns
 By our delay? No! let us rather choose, 60
 Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once
 O'er Heaven's high towers to force resistless way,
 Turning our tortures into horrid arms
 Against the Torturer; when, to meet the noise
 Of his almighty engine, he shall hear
 Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see
 Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
 Among his Angels, and his throne itself
 Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire,
 His own invented torments. But perhaps 70
 The way seems difficult, and steep to scale
 With upright wing against a higher foe!
 Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
 Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,
 That in our proper motion we ascend
 Up to our native seat; descent and fall
 To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
 When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear
 Insulting, and pursued us through the Deep,
 With what compulsion and laborious flight 80
 We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy, then;
 The event is feared! Should we again provoke
 Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find
 To our destruction, if there be in Hell
 Fear to be worse destroyed! What can be worse
 Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemned
 In this abhorrèd deep to utter woe;
 Where pain of unextinguishable fire
 Must exercise us without hope of end
 The vassals of his angel, when the scourge 90
 Inexorably, and the torturing hour,

Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus,
 We should be quite abolished, and expire.
 What fear we then? what doubt we to incense
 His utmost ire? which, to the highth enraged,
 Will either quite consume us, and reduce
 To nothing this essential—happier far
 Than miserable to have eternal being!—
 Or, if our substance be indeed divine,
 And cannot cease to be, we are at worst 100
 On this side nothing; and by proof we feel
 Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven,
 And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
 Though inaccessible, his fatal throne:
 Which, if not victory, is yet revenge.”

He ended frowning, and his look denounced
 Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
 To less than gods. On the other side up rose
 Belial, in act more graceful and humane.
 A fairer person lost not Heaven; he seemed 110
 For dignity composed, and high exploit.
 But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
 Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
 The better reason, to perplex and dash
 Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low—
 To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
 Timorous and slothful. Yet he pleased the ear,
 And with persuasive accent thus began:—

“I should be much for open war, O Peers,
 As not behind in hate, if what was urged 120
 Main reason to persuade immediate war
 Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
 Ominous conjecture on the whole success;
 When he who most excels in fact of arms,
 In what he counsels and in what excels
 Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
 And utter dissolution, as the scope
 Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
 First, what revenge? The towers of Heaven are filled
 With armed watch, that render all access

Impregnable: oft on the bordering Deep
 Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
 Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,
 Scorning surprise. Or, could we break our way
 By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
 With blackest insurrection to confound
 Heaven's purest light, yet our great Enemy,
 All incorruptible, would on his throne
 Sit unpolluted, and the ethereal mould,
 Incapable of stain, would soon expel 140
 Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
 Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
 Is flat despair: we must exasperate
 The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage;
 And that must end us; that must be our cure—
 To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,
 Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
 Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
 To perish rather, swallowed up and lost 150
 In the wide womb of uncreated Night,
 Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows,
 Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
 Can give it, or will ever? How he can
 Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.
 Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
 Belike through impotence or unaware,
 To give his enemies their wish, and end
 Them in his anger whom his anger saves
 To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we, then?'
 Say they who counsel war; 'we are decreed, 160
 Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;
 Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
 What can we suffer worse?' Is this, then, worst—
 Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
 What when we fled amain, pursued and strook
 With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
 The Deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed
 A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
 Chained on the burning lake? That sure was worse.

What if the breath that kindled those, grim fires, 170
 Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,
 And plunge us in the flames; or from above
 Should intermitted vengeance arm again
 His red right hand to plague us? What if all
 Her stores were opened, and this firmament
 Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
 Impendent horrors, threatening hideous fall
 One day upon our heads; while we perhaps,
 Designing or exhorting glorious war,
 Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled, 180
 Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
 Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
 Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,
 There to converse with everlasting groans,
 Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
 Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.
 War, therefore, open or concealed, alike
 My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile
 With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye
 Views all things at one view? He from Heaven's
 highth 190
 All these our motions vain sees and derides,
 Not more almighty to resist our might
 Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
 Shall we, then, live thus vile—the race of Heaven
 Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here
 Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,
 By my advice; since fate inevitable
 Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
 The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
 Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust 200
 That so ordains. This was at first resolved,
 If we were wise, against so great a foe
 Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
 I laugh when those who at the spear are bold
 And venturous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear
 What yet they know must follow—to endure
 Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,

The sentence of their conqueror. This is now
 Our doom ; which if we can sustain and bear,
 Our Supreme Foe in time may much remit 210
 His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,
 Not mind us not offending, satisfied
 With what is punished ; whence these raging fires
 Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
 Our purer essence then will overcome
 Their noxious vapour ; or, inured, not feel ;
 Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed
 In temper and in nature, will receive
 Familiar the fierce heat ; and, void of pain,
 This horror will grow mild, this darkness light ; 220
 Besides what hope the never-ending flight
 Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
 Worth waiting—since our present lot appears
 For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
 If we procure not to ourselves more woe.”

Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,
 Counsell'd ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
 Not peace ; and after him thus Mammon spake : —
 “ Either to disenthronè the King of Heaven
 We war, if war be best, or to regain 230
 Our own right lost. Him to unthronè we then
 May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
 To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.
 The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
 The latter ; for what place can be for us
 Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's Lord Supreme
 We overpower ? Suppose he should relent,
 And publish grace to all, on promise made
 Of new subjection ; with what eyes could we
 Stand in his presence humble, and receive 240
 Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
 With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
 Forced Halleluiahs, while he lordly sits
 Our envied sovran, and his altar breathes
 Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers,
 Our servile offerings ? This must be our task

In Heaven, this our delight. How wearisome
 Eternity so spent in worship paid
 To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,
 By force impossible, by leave obtained 250
 Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state
 Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek
 Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
 Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
 Free and to none accountable, preferring
 Hard liberty before the easy yoke
 Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
 Then most conspicuous when great things of small,
 Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
 We can create, and in what place so'er 260
 Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
 Through labour and endurance. This deep world
 Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
 Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire
 Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
 And with the majesty of darkness round
 Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar,
 Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell!
 As he our darkness, cannot we his light
 Imitate when we please? This desert soil 270
 Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;
 Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise
 Magnificence; and what can Heaven show more?
 Our torments also may, in length of time,
 Become our elements, these piercing fires
 As soft as now severe, our temper changed
 Into their temper; which must needs remove
 The sensible of pain. All things invite
 To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
 Of order, how in safety best we may 280
 Compose our present evils, with regard
 Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
 All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."
 He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled
 The assembly as when hollow rocks retain

The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
 Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
 Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose bark by chance,
 Or pinnace, anchors in a craggy bay
 After the tempest. Such applause was heard 290
 As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,
 Advising peace: for such another field
 They dreaded worse than Hell; so much the fear
 Of thunder and the sword of Michaël
 Wrought still within them; and no less desire
 To found this nether empire, which might rise,
 By policy and long process of time,
 In emulation opposite to Heaven.
 Which when Beëlzebub perceived—than whom,
 Satan except, none higher sat—with grave 300
 Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
 A pillar of state. Deep on his front engraven
 Deliberation sat, and public care;
 And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
 Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood,
 With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear
 The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look
 Drew audience and attention still as night
 Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake:—
 “Thrones and Imperial Powers, Offspring of Heaven,
 Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now 311
 Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called
 Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote
 Inclines—here to continue, and build up here
 A growing empire; doubtless! while we dream,
 And know not that the King of Heaven hath doomed
 This place our dungeon—not our safe retreat
 Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
 From Heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league
 Banded against his throne, but to remain 320
 In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,
 Under the inevitable curb, reserved
 His captive multitude. For he, be sure,
 In highth or depth, still first and last will reign

Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
 By our revolt, but over Hell extend
 His empire, and with iron sceptre rule
 Us here, as with his golden those in Heaven.
 What sit we then projecting peace and war?
 War hath determined us and foiled with loss 330
 Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
 Voutsafed or sought; for what peace will be given
 To us enslaved, but custody severe,
 And stripes and arbitrary punishment
 Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
 But, to our power, hostility and hate,
 Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,
 Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least
 May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice 340
 In doing what we most in suffering feel?
 Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
 With dangerous expedition to invade
 Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,
 Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find
 Some easier enterprise? There is a place
 (If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven
 Err not)—another World, the happy seat
 Of some new race, called Man, about this time
 To be created like to us, though less
 In power and excellence, but favoured more 350
 Of him who rules above; so was his will
 Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath
 That shook Heaven's whole circumference confirmed.
 Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
 What creatures there inhabit, of what mould
 Or substance, how endued, and what their power
 And where their weakness: how attempted best,
 By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,
 And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure
 In his own strength, this place may lie exposed, 360
 The utmost border of his kingdom, left
 To their defence who hold it: here, perhaps,
 Some advantageous act may be achieved

By sudden onset,—either with Hell-fire
 To waste his whole creation, or possess
 All as our own, and drive, as we are driven,
 The puny habitants; or, if not drive,
 Seduce them to our party, that their God
 May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
 Abolish his own works. This would surpass 370
 Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
 In our confusion, and our joy upraise
 In his disturbance; when his darling sons,
 Hurl'd headlong to partake with us, shall curse
 Their frail original, and faded bliss—
 Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth
 Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
 Hatching vain empires.” Thus Beëlzebub
 Pleaded his devilish counsel—first devised
 By Satan, and in part proposed: for whence, 380
 But from the author of all ill, could spring
 So deep a malice, to confound the race
 Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell
 To mingle and involve, done all to spite
 The great Creator? But their spite still serves
 His glory to augment. The bold design
 Pleas'd highly those Infernal States, and joy
 Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent
 They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews:—
 “ Well have ye judged, well ended long debate, 390
 Synod of Gods, and, like to what ye are,
 Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep
 Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
 Nearer our ancient seat—perhaps in view
 Of those bright confines, whence, with neighbouring
 arms,
 And opportune excursion, we may chance
 Re-enter Heaven; or else in some mild zone
 Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven's fair light,
 Secure, and at the brightening orient beam
 Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious air, 400
 To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,

Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom shall we send
 In search of this new World? whom shall we find
 Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet
 The dark, unbottomed, infinite Abyss,
 And through the palpable obscure find out
 His uncouth way, or spread his aery flight,
 Upborne with indefatigable wings
 Over the vast Abrupt, ere he arrive
 The happy Isle? What strength, what art, can then
 Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe 411
 Through the strict senteries and stations thick
 Of Angels watching round? Here he had need
 All circumspection: and we now no less
 Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send
 The weight of all, and our last hope, relies.”

This said, he sat; and expectation held
 His look suspense, awaiting who appeared
 To second, or oppose, or undertake
 The perilous attempt. But all sat mute, 420
 Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each
 In other's countenance read his own dismay,
 Astonished. None among the choice and prime
 Of those Heaven-warring champions could be found
 So hardy as to proffer or accept,
 Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last,
 Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
 Above his fellows, with monarchal pride
 Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:—

“O Progeny of Heaven! Empyrean Thrones! 430
 With reason hath deep silence and demur
 Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the way
 And hard, that out of Hell leads up to Light.
 Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
 Outrageous to devour, immures us round
 Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant,
 Barred over us, prohibit all egress.
 These passed, if any pass, the void profound
 Of unessential Night receives him next,
 Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being 440

Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.
If thence he scape, into whatever world,
Or unknown region, what remains him less
Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?
But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperial sovranity, adorned
With splendour, armed with power, if aught proposed
And judged of public moment in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume 450
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honour, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more as he above the rest
High honoured sits? Go, therefore, mighty Powers,
Terror of Heaven, though fallen; intend at home,
While here shall be our home, what best may ease
The present misery, and render Hell
More tolerable; if there be cure or charm 460
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion: intermit no watch
Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all. This enterprise
None shall partake with me." Thus saying, rose
The Monarch, and prevented all reply;
Prudent lest, from his resolution raised,
Others among the chief might offer now,
Certain to be refused, what erst they feared, 470
And, so refused, might in opinion stand
His rivals, winning cheap the high repute
Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they
Dreaded not more the adventure than his voice
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose.
Their rising all at once was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone, and as a God
Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven.

Nor failed they to express how much they praised 480
 That for the general safety he despised
 His own: for neither do the Spirits damned
 Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast
 Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
 Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal.

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
 Ended, rejoicing in their matchless Chief:
 As, when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
 Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps, o'erspread
 Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element 490
 Scowls o'er the darkened landskip snow or shower,
 If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
 Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
 The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
 Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
 O shame to men! Devil with devil damned
 Firm concord holds; men only disagree
 Of creatures rational, though under hope
 Of heavenly grace, and, God proclaiming peace,
 Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife 500
 Among themselves, and levy cruel wars
 Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:
 As if (which might induce us to accord)
 Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
 That day and night for his destruction wait!

The Stygian council thus dissolved; and forth
 In order came the grand Infernal Peers:
 Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seemed
 Alone the antagonist of Heaven, nor less
 Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp supreme, 510
 And God-like imitated state: him round
 A globe of fiery Seraphim enclosed
 With bright emblazonry, and horrent arms.
 Then of their session ended they bid cry
 With trumpet's regal sound the great result:
 Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
 Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,
 By harald's voice explained; the hollow Abyss

Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
 With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim. 520
 Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised
 By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd Powers
 Disband; and, wandering, each his several way
 Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
 Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest find
 Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
 The irksome hours, till his great Chief return.
 Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
 Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
 As at the Olympian games or Pythian fields; 530
 Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
 With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form:
 As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
 Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
 To battle in the clouds; before each van
 Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears,
 Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
 From either end of heaven the welkin burns.
 Others, with vast Typhœan rage, more fell,
 Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air 540
 In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar:—
 As when Alcides, from Œchalia crowned
 With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore
 Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
 And Lichas from the top of Œta threw
 Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild,
 Retreated in a silent valley, sing
 With notes angelical to many a harp
 Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
 By doom of battle, and complain that Fate 550
 Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or Chance.
 Their song was partial; but the harmony
 (What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)
 Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
 The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
 (For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense)
 Others apart sat on a hill retired,

In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
 Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate—
 Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute— • 560
 And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
 Of good and evil much they argued then,
 Of happiness and final misery,
 Passion and apathy, and glory and shame :
 Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy !—
 Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
 Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
 Fallacious hope, or arm the obdurèd breast
 With stubborn patience as with triple steel.
 Another part, in squadrons and gross bands, 570
 On bold adventure to discover wide
 That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
 Might yield them easier habitation, bend
 Four ways their flying march, along the banks
 Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
 Into the burning lake their baleful streams—
 Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate ;
 Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep ;
 Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
 Heard on the rueful stream ; fierce Phlegeton, 580
 Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
 Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
 Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
 Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
 Forthwith his former state and being forgets—
 Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
 Beyond this flood a frozen continent
 Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
 Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
 Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems 590
 Of ancient pile ; all else deep snow and ice,
 A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
 Betwixt Damiaata and Mount Casius old,
 Where armies whole have sunk : the parching air
 Burns froze, and cold performs the effect of fire.
 Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,

At certain revolutions all the damned
 Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
 Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
 From beds of raging fire to starve in ice 600
 Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
 Immovable, infixed, and frozen round
 Periods of time,—thence hurried back to fire.
 They ferry over this Lethean sound
 Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
 And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
 The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
 In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
 All in one moment, and so near the brink;
 But Fate withstands, and, to oppose the attempt, 610
 Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards
 The ford, and of itself the water flies
 All taste of living wight, as once it fled
 The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
 In confused march forlorn, the adventurous bands,
 With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast,
 Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
 No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
 They passed, and many a region dolorous,
 O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp, 620
 Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of
 death—

A universe of death, which God by curse
 Created evil, for evil only good;
 Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,
 Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
 Abominable, inutterable, and worse
 Than fables yet have feigned or fear conceived,
 Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire.

Meanwhile the Adversary of God and Man,
 Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design, 630
 Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell
 Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
 He scours the right hand coast, sometimes the left;
 Now shaves with level wing the deep, then soars

Up to the fiery concave towering high.
 As when far off at sea a fleet descried
 Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
 Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
 Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
 Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood, 640
 Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,
 Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seemed
 Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear
 Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
 And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,
 Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
 Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
 Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
 On either side a formidable Shape.
 The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair, 650
 But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
 Voluminous and vast—a serpent armed
 With mortal sting. About her middle round
 A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked
 With wide Cerberian mouths full loud, and rung
 A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep,
 If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,
 And kennel there; yet there still barked and howled
 Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these
 Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts 660
 Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;
 Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called
 In secret, riding through the air she comes,
 Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
 With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon
 Eclipses at their charms. The other Shape—
 If shape it might be called that shape had none
 Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
 Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
 For each seemed either—black it stood as Night, 670
 Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
 And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head
 The likeness of a kingly crown had on.

Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
 The monster moving onward came as fast
 With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode.
 The undaunted Fiend what this might be admired—
 Admired, not feared (God and his Son except,
 Created thing naught valued he nor shunned),
 And with disdainful look thus first began:— 680

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

To whom the Goblin, full of wrath, replied:—
 “Art thou that Traitor-Angel, art thou he,
 Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith, till then
 Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms 691
 Drew after him the third part of Heaven’s sons,
 Conjured against the Highest—for which both thou
 And they, outcast from God, are here condemned
 To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
 And reckon’st thou thyself with Spirits of Heaven,
 Hell-doomed, and breath’st defiance here and scorn,
 Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
 Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,
 False fugitive; and to thy speed add wings, 700
 Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
 Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart
 Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before.”

So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,
 So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold
 More dreadful and deform. On the other side,
 Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
 Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
 That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
 In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair 710
 Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
 Levelled his deadly aim; their fatal hands

No second stroke intend ; and such a frown
 Each cast at the other as when two black clouds,
 With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
 Over the Caspian,—then stand front to front
 Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
 To join their dark encounter in mid-air.
 So frowned the mighty combatants that Hell
 Grew darker at their frown ; so matched they stood ;
 For never but once more was either like 721
 To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds
 Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
 Had not the snaky Sorceress, that sat
 Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key,
 Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.

“ O father, what intends thy hand,” she cried,
 “ Against thy only son ? What fury, O son,
 Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
 Against thy father's head ? And know'st for whom ?
 For him who sits above, and laughs the while 731
 At thee, ordained his drudge to execute
 Whate'er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids—
 His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both !”

She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest
 Forbore : then these to her Satan returned :—

“ So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
 Thou interposest, that my sudden hand,
 Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds
 What it intends, till first I know of thee 740
 What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why,
 In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st
 Me father, and that phantasm call'st my son.
 I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
 Sight more detestable than him and thee.”

To whom thus the Portress of Hell-gate replied :—
 “ Hast thou forgot me, then ; and do I seem
 Now in thine eye so foul ?—once deemed so fair
 In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight
 Of all the Seraphim with thee combined 750
 In bold conspiracy against Heaven's King,

All on a sudden miserable pain
 Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
 In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
 Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,
 Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
 Then shining heavenly fair, a Goddess armed,
 Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized
 All the host of Heaven; back they recoiled afraid
 At first, and called me *Sin*, and for a sign 760
 Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,
 I pleased, and with attractive graces won
 The most averse—thee chiefly, who, full oft
 Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,
 Becam'st enamoured; and such joy thou took'st
 With me in secret that my womb conceived
 A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,
 And fields were fought in Heaven: wherein remained
 (For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe
 Clear victory; to our part loss and rout 770
 Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell,
 Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down
 Into this Deep; and in the general fall
 I also: at which time this powerful key
 Into my hands was given, with charge to keep
 These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
 Without my opening. Pensive here I sat
 Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb,
 Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
 Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes. 780
 At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
 Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
 Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
 Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
 Transformed: but he my inbred enemy
 Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
 Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out *Death!*
 Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed
 From all her caves, and back resounded *Death!*
 I fled; but he pursued (though more, it seems, 790

Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter far,
 Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,
 And, in embraces forcible and foul
 Engendering with me, of that rape begot
 These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
 Surround me, as thou saw'st—hourly conceived
 And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
 To me: for, when they list, into the womb
 That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw
 My bowels, their repast; then, bursting forth 800
 Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round,
 That rest or intermission none I find.
 Before mine eyes in opposition sits
 Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,
 And me, his parent, would full soon devour
 For want of other prey, but that he knows
 His end with mine involved, and knows that I
 Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
 Whenever that shall be: so Fate pronounced.
 But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun 810
 His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
 To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
 Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint,
 Save he who reigns above, none can resist.”

She finished; and the subtle Fiend his lore
 Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered smooth:—
 “Dear daughter—since thou claim'st me for thy sire,
 And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge
 Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and joys
 Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change 820
 Befallen us unforeseen, unthought-of—know,
 I come no enemy, but to set free
 From out this dark and dismal house of pain
 Both him and thee, and all the Heavenly host
 Of Spirits that, in our just pretences armed,
 Fell with us from on high. From them I go
 This uncouth errand sole, and one for all
 Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread
 The unfounded Deep, and through the void immense

To search, with wandering quest, a place foretold 830
 Should be—and, by concurring signs, ere now
 Created vast and round—a place of bliss
 In the purlieus of Heaven; and therein placed
 A race of upstart creatures, to supply
 Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed,
 Lest Heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,
 Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
 Than this more secret, now designed, I haste
 To know; and, this once known, shall soon return,
 And bring ye to the place where thou and Death 840
 Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
 Wing silently the buxom air, embalmed
 With odours. There ye shall be fed and filled
 Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey.”

He ceased; for both seemed highly pleased, and
 Death

Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
 His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw
 Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced
 His mother bad, and thus bespake her sire:—

“The key of this infernal Pit, by due 850
 And by command of Heaven’s all-powerful King,
 I keep, by him forbidden to unlock
 These adamantine gates; against all force
 Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
 Fearless to be o’ermatched by living might.
 But what owe I to his commands above,
 Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
 Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
 To sit in hateful office here confined,
 Inhabitant of Heaven and heavenly-born— 860
 Here in perpetual agony and pain,
 With terrors and with clamours compassed round
 Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
 Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
 My being gav’st me; whom should I obey
 But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring me soon .
 To that new world of light and bliss, among

The Gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
 At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
 Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.” 870

Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
 Sad instrument of all our woe, she took ;
 And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train,
 Forthwith the huge portcullis high up-drew, :
 Which, but herself, not all the Stygian Powers
 Could once have moved ; then in the key-hole turns
 The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
 Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
 Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,

With impetuous recoil and jarring sound, 880
 The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
 Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
 Of Erebus. She opened ; but to shut

Exceeded her power : the gates wide open stood,
 That with extended wings a bannered host,
 Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through
 With horse and chariots ranked in loose array ;
 So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth
 Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.

Before their eyes in sudden view appear 890
 The secrets of the hoary Deep—a dark
 Illimitable ocean, without bound,

Without dimension ; where length, breadth, and highth,
 And time, and place, are lost ; where eldest Night
 And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
 Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
 Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.

For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
 Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring
 Their embryon atoms : they around the flag 900
 Of each his faction, in their several clans,
 Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
 Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands
 Of Barca or Cyrene’s torrid soil,

Levied to side with warring winds, and poise
 Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere

He rules a moment : Chaos umpire sits,
 And by decision more embroils the fray
 By which he reigns : next him, high arbiter,
 Chance governs all. Into this wild Abyss, 910
 The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,
 Of neither Sea, nor Shore, nor Air, nor Fire,
 But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
 Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
 Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
 His dark materials to create more worlds—
 Into this wild Abyss the wary Fiend
 Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,
 Pondering his voyage ; for no narrow frith
 He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed 920
 With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
 Great things with small) than when Bellona storms
 With all her battering engines, bent to rase
 Some capital city ; or less than if this frame
 Of heaven were falling, and these elements
 In mutiny had from her axle torn
 The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad vans
 He spreads for flight, and, in the surging smoke
 Uplifted, spurns the ground ; thence many a league,
 As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides 930
 Audacious ; but, that seat soon failing, meets
 A vast vacuity. All unawares,
 Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb-down he drops
 Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour
 Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,
 The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
 Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
 As many miles aloft. That fury stayed—
 Quenched in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,
 Nor good dry land—nigh foundered, on he fares, 940
 Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
 Half flying ; behoves him now both oar and sail.
 As when a gryphon through the wilderness
 With wingèd course, o'er hill or moory dale,
 Pursues the Arimaspan, who by stealth

Had from his wakeful custody purloined
 The guarded gold ; so eagerly the Fiend
 O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
 With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
 And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies. 950
 At length a universal hubbub wild
 Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused,
 Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
 With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies
 Undaunted, to meet there whatever Power
 Or Spirit of the nethermost Abyss
 Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
 Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
 Bordering on light ; when straight behold the throne
 Of *Chaos*, and his dark pavilion spread 960
 Wide on the wasteful Deep ! With him enthroned
 Sat sable-vested *Night*, eldest of things,
 The consort of his reign ; and by them stood
 Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
 Of Demogorgon ; Rumour next, and Chance,
 And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,
 And Discord with a thousand various mouths.

To 'whom Satan, turning boldly, thus :—" Ye Powers
 And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss.

Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy 970

With purpose to explore or to disturb

The secrets of your realm ; but, by constraint

Wandering this darksome desert, as my way

Lies through your spacious empire up to light,

Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek,

What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds

Confine with Heaven ; or, if some other place,

From your dominion won, the Ethereal King

Possesses lately, thither to arrive

I travel this profound. Direct my course : 980

Directed, no mean recompense it brings

To your behoof, if I that region lost,

All usurpation thence expelled, reduce

To her original darkness and your sway

(Which is my present journey), and once more
Erect the standard there of ancient Night.
Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge!”

Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,
With faltering speech and visage incomposed,
Answered:—“I know thee, stranger, who thou art—
That mighty leading Angel, who of late 991
Made head against Heaven’s King, though overthrown.
I saw and heard; for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frightened Deep,
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded; and Heaven-gates
Poured out by millions her victorious bands,
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve
That little which is left so to defend, 1000
Encroached on still through our intestine broils
Weakening the sceptre of old Night: first, Hell,
Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
Now lately Heaven and Earth, another world
Hung o’er my realm, linked in a golden chain
To that side Heaven from whence your legions fell!
If that way be your walk, you have not far;
So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed;
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain.”

He ceased; and Satan staid not to reply, 1010
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity and force renewed
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,
Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environed, wins his way; harder beset
And more endangered than when Argo passed
Through Bosphorus betwixt the justling rocks,
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
Charybdis, and by the other Whirlpool steered. 1020
So he with difficulty and labour hard
Moved on. With difficulty and labour he;
But, he once passed, soon after, when Man fell,

Strange alteration! Sin and Death again,
 Following his track (such was the will of Heaven),
 Paved after him a broad and beaten way
 Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling gulf
 Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,
 From Hell continued, reaching the utmost Orb
 Of this frail World; by which the Spirits perverse 1030
 With easy intercourse pass to and fro
 To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
 God and good Angels guard by special grace.

But now at last the sacred influence
 Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven
 Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
 A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins
 Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire,
 As from her outmost works, a broken foe,
 With tumult less and with less hostile din; 1040
 That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,
 Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,
 And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds
 Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;
 Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
 Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
 Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide
 In circuit, undetermined square or round,
 With opal towers and battlements adorned
 Of living sapphire, once his native seat, 1050
 And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
 This pendent World, in bigness as a star
 Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
 Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
 Accurst, and in a cursèd hour, he hies.

PARADISE LOST

BOOK III

THE ARGUMENT

God, sitting on his throne, sees Satan flying towards this World, then newly created; shows him to the Son, who sat at his right hand; foretells the success of Satan in perverting mankind; clears his own justice and wisdom from all imputation, having created Man free, and able enough to have withstood his Tempter; yet declares his purpose of grace towards him, in regard he fell not of his own malice, as did Satan, but by him seduced. The Son of God renders praises to his Father for the manifestation of his gracious purpose towards Man: but God again declares that grace cannot be extended towards Man without the satisfaction of Divine Justice; Man hath offended the majesty of God by aspiring to Godhead, and therefore, with all his progeny, devoted to death, must die, unless some one can be found sufficient to answer for his offence, and undergo his punishment. The Son of God freely offers himself a ransom for Man: the Father accepts him, ordains his incarnation, pronounces his exaltation above all names in Heaven and Earth; commands all the Angels to adore him. They obey, and, hymning to their harps in full quire, celebrate the Father and the Son. Meanwhile Satan alights upon the bare convex of this World's outermost orb; where wandering he first finds a place since called the Limbo of Vanity; what persons and things fly up thither: thence comes to the gate of Heaven, described ascending by stairs, and the waters above the firmament that flow about it. His passage thence to the orb of the Sun: he finds there Uriel, the regent of that orb, but first changes himself into the shape of a meaner Angel, and, pretending a zealous desire to behold the new Creation, and Man whom God had placed here, inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed: Alights first on Mount Niphates.

HAIL, holy Light, offspring of Heaven first-born!
Or of the Eternal coeternal beam
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,

And never but in unapproachèd light
 Dwelt from eternity—dwelt then in thee,
 Bright effluence of bright essence increate!
 Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal stream,
 Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the Sun,
 Before the Heavens, thou wert, and at the voice
 Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest 10
 The rising World of waters dark and deep,
 Won from the void and formless Infinite!
 Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
 Escaped the Stygian Pool, though long detained
 In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight,
 Through utter and through middle Darkness borne,
 With other notes than to the Orphean lyre
 I sung of Chaos and eternal Night,
 Taught by the Heavenly Muse to venture down
 The dark descent, and up to re-ascend, 20
 Though hard and rare. Thee I revisit safe,
 And feel thy sovran vital lamp; but thou
 Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
 To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
 So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,
 Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more
 Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
 Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
 Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
 Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath, 30
 That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
 Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
 Those other two equalled with me in fate,
 So were I equalled with them in renown,
 Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,
 And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old:
 Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
 Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
 Sings darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,
 Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year 40
 Seasons return; but not to me returns
 Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn

Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
 But cloud instead and ever-during dark
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
 Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,
 Presented with a universal blank
 Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out. 50
 So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
 Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
 Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
 Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
 Of things invisible to mortal sight.

Now had the Almighty Father from above,
 From the pure Empyrean where he sits
 High throned above all highth, bent down his eye,
 His own works and their works at once to view:
 About him all the Sanctities of Heaven 60
 Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received
 Beatitude past utterance; on his right
 The radiant image of his glory sat,
 His only Son. On Earth he first beheld
 Our two first parents, yet the only two
 Of mankind, in the Happy Garden placed,
 Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,
 Uninterrupted joy, unrivalled love,
 In blissful solitude. He then surveyed
 Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there 70
 Coasting the wall of Heaven on this side Night,
 In the dun air sublime, and ready now
 To stoop, with wearied wings and willing feet,
 On the bare outside of this World, that seemed
 Firm land imbosomed without firmament,
 Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.

Him God beholding from his prospect high,
 Wherein past, present, future, he beholds,
 Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake:—
 “Only-begotten Son, seest thou what rage 80.
 Transports our Adversary? whom no bounds

Prescribed, no bars of Hell, nor all, the chains
 Heaped on him there, nor yet the main Abyss
 Wide interrupt, can hold; so bent he seems
 On desperate revenge, that shall redound
 Upon his own rebellious head. And now,
 Through all restraint broke loose, he wings his way
 Not far off Heaven, in the precincts of light,
 Directly towards the new-created World,
 And Man there placed, with purpose to assay 90
 If him by force he can destroy, or, worse,
 By some false guile pervert: And shall pervert;
 For Man will hearken to his glozing lies,
 And easily transgress the sole command,
 Sole pledge of his obedience: so will fall
 He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault?
 Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me
 All he could have; I made him just and right,
 Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
 Such I created all the Ethereal Powers 100
 And Spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;
 Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
 Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
 Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love,
 Where only what they needs must do appeared,
 Not what they would? What praise could they receive,
 What pleasure I, from such obedience paid,
 When Will and Reason (Reason also is Choice),
 Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
 Made passive both, had served Necessity, 110
 Not me? They, therefore, as to right belonged
 So were created, nor can justly accuse
 Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,
 As if Predestination overruled
 Their will, disposed by absolute decree
 Or high foreknowledge. They themselves decreed
 Their own revolt, not I. If I foreknew,
 Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
 Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
 So without least impulse or shadow of fate, 120

Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
 They trespass, authors to themselves in all,
 Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
 I formed them free, and free they must remain
 Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change
 Their nature, and revoke the high decree
 Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
 Their freedom; they themselves ordained their fall.
 The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
 Self-tempted, self-depraved; Man falls, deceived 130
 By the other first: Man, therefore, shall find grace;
 The other, none. In mercy and justice both,
 Through Heaven and Earth, so shall my glory excel;
 But mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine."

Thus while God spake ambrosial fragrance filled
 All Heaven, and in the blessed Spirits elect
 Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.
 Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
 Most glorious; in him all his Father shone
 Substantially expressed; and in his face 140
 Divine compassion visibly appeared,
 Love without end, and without measure grace;
 Which uttering, thus he to his Father spake:—

“O Father, gracious was that word which closed
 Thy sovran sentence, that Man should find grace;
 For which both Heaven and Earth shall high extol
 Thy praises, with the innumerable sound
 Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne
 Encompassed shall resound thee ever blest.
 For, should Man finally be lost—should Man, 150
 Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son,
 Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined
 With his own folly——! That be from thee far,
 That far be from thee, Father, who art judge
 Of all things made, and judgest only right!
 Or shall the Adversary thus obtain
 His end, and frustrate thine? shall he fulfil
 His malice, and thy goodness bring to naught
 Or proud return, though to his heavier doom

Yet with revenge accomplished, and to Hell 160
 Draw after him the whole race of mankind,
 By him corrupted? Or wilt thou thyself
 Abolish thy creation, and unmake,
 For him, what for thy glory thou hast made?—
 So should thy goodness and thy greatness both
 Be questioned and blasphemed without defence.”

To whom the great Creator thus replied:—

“O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,
 Son of my bosom, Son who art alone 170
 My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,
 All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all
 As my eternal purpose hath decreed.

Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will ;
 Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
 Freely voutsafed. Once more I will renew
 His lapsèd powers, though forfeit, and enthralled
 By sin to foul exorbitant desires :

Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
 On even ground against his mortal foe—
 By me upheld, that he may know how frail 180
 His fallen condition is, and to me owe
 All his deliverance, and to none but me.

Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,
 Elect above the rest ; so is my will :
 The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warned
 Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
 The incensèd Deity, while offered grace
 Invites ; for I will clear their senses dark
 What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
 To pray, repent, and bring obedience due. 190

To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
 Though but endeavoured with sincere intent,
 Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.
 And I will place within them as a guide
 My umpire Conscience ; whom if they will hear,
 Light after light well used they shall attain,
 And to the end persisting safe arrive.
 This my long sufferance, and my day of grace,

They who neglect and scorn shall never taste ;
 But hard be hardened, blind be blinded more, 200
 That they may stumble on, and deeper fall ;
 And none but such from mercy I exclude.—

But yet all is not done. Man disobeying,
 Disloyal, breaks his fealty, and sins
 Against the high supremacy of Heaven,
 Affecting Godhead, and, so losing all,
 To expiate his treason hath naught left,
 But, to destruction sacred and devote,
 He with his whole posterity must die ;—
 Die he or Justice must ; unless for him 210
 Some other, able, and as willing, pay
 The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
 Say, Heavenly Powers, where shall we find such love ?
 Which of ye will be mortal, to redeem
 Man's mortal crime, and just, the unjust to save ?
 Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear ?”

He asked, but all the Heavenly Quire stood mute,
 And silence was in Heaven : on Man's behalf
 Patron or intercessor none appeared—
 Much less that durst upon his own head draw 220
 The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.
 And now without redemption all mankind
 Must have been lost, adjudged to Death and Hell
 By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
 In whom the fulness dwells of love divine,
 His dearest mediation thus renewed :—

“ Father, thy word is passed, Man shall find grace ;
 And shall Grace not find means, that finds her way,
 The speediest of thy wingèd messengers,
 To visit all thy creatures, and to all 230
 Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought ?
 Happy for Man, so coming ! He her aid
 Can never seek, once dead in sins and lost—
 Atonement for himself, or offering meet,
 Indebted and undone, hath none to bring.
 Behold *me*, then : me for him, life for life,
 I offer ; on me let thine anger fall ;

Account me Man : I for his sake will leave
 Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
 Freely put off, and for him lastly die 240
 Well pleased ; on me let Death wreak all his rage.
 Under his gloomy power I shall not long
 Lie vanquished. Thou hast given me to possess
 Life in myself for ever ; by thee I live ;
 Though now to Death I yield, and am his due,
 All that of me can die, yet, that debt paid,
 Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave
 His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul
 For ever with corruption there to dwell ;
 But I shall rise victorious, and subdue 250
 My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted spoil.
 Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop
 Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarmed ;
 I through the ample air in triumph high
 Shall lead Hell captive maugre Hell, and show
 The powers of Darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
 Pleased, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile,
 While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes—
 Death last, and with his carcase glut the grave ;
 Then, with the multitude of my redeemed, 260
 Shall enter Heaven, long absent, and return,
 Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud
 Of anger shall remain, but peace assured
 And reconcilment : wrath shall be no more
 Thenceforth, but in thy presence joy entire.”

His words here ended ; but his meek aspect
 Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love
 To mortal men, above which only shone
 Filial obedience : as a sacrifice 270
 Glad to be offered, he attends the will
 Of his great Father. Admiration seized
 All Heaven, what this might mean, and whither tend,
 Wondering ; but soon the Almighty thus replied :—
 “ O thou in Heaven and Earth the only peace
 Found out for mankind under wrath, O thou
 My sole complacence ! well thou know'st how dear

To me are all my works ; nor Man the least,
 Though last created, that for him I spare
 Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save,
 By losing thee a while, the whole race lost ! 280
 Thou, therefore, whom thou only canst redeem,
 Their nature also to thy nature join ;
 And be thyself Man among men on Earth,
 Made flesh, when time shall be, of virgin seed,
 By wondrous birth ; be thou in Adam's room
 The head of all mankind, though Adam's son.
 As in him perish all men, so in thee,
 As from a second root, shall be restored
 As many as are restored ; without thee, none.
 His crime makes guilty all his sons ; thy merit, 290
 Imputed, shall absolve them who renounce
 Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
 And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
 Receive new life. So Man, as is most just,
 Shall satisfy for Man, be judged and die,
 And dying rise, and, rising, with him raise
 His brethren, ransomed with his own dear life.
 So Heavenly love shall outdo Hellish hate,
 Giving to death, and dying to redeem,
 So dearly to redeem what Hellish hate 300
 So easily destroyed, and still destroys
 In those who, when they may, accept not grace.
 Nor shalt thou, by descending to assume
 Man's nature, lessen or degrade thine own.
 Because thou hast, though throned in highest bliss
 Equal to God, and equally enjoying
 God-like fruition, quitted all to save
 A world from utter loss, and hast been found
 By merit more than birthright Son of God,—
 Found worthiest to be so by being good, 310
 Far more than great or high ; because in thee
 Love hath abounded more than glory abounds ;
 Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt
 With thee thy manhood also to this throne :
 Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt reign

Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
 Anointed universal King. All power
 I give thee; reign for ever, and assume
 Thy merits; under thee, as Head Supreme,
 Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions, I reduce :
 All knees to thee shall bow of them that bide 321
 In Heaven, or Earth, or, under Earth, in Hell.
 When thou, attended gloriously from Heaven,
 Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send
 The summoning Archangels to proclaim
 Thy dread tribunal, forthwith from all winds
 The living, and forthwith the cited dead
 Of all past ages, to the general doom
 Shall hasten; such a peal shall rouse their sleep.
 Then, all thy Saints assembled, thou shalt judge 330
 Bad men and Angels; they arraigned shall sink
 Beneath thy sentence; Hell, her numbers full,
 Thenceforth shall be for ever shut. Meanwhile
 The World shall burn, and from her ashes spring
 New Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell,
 And, after all their tribulations long,
 See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
 With Joy and Love triumphing, and fair Truth.
 Then thou thy regal sceptre shalt lay by;
 For regal sceptre then no more shall need; 340
 God shall be all in all. But all ye Gods,
 Adore him who, to compass all this, dies;
 Adore the Son, and honour him as me."

No sooner had the Almighty ceased but—all
 The multitude of Angels, with a shout
 Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
 As from blest voices, uttering joy—Heaven rung
 With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
 The eternal regions. Lowly reverent
 Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground 350
 With solemn adoration down they cast
 Their crowns, inwove with amarant and gold,—
 Immortal amarant, a flower which once
 In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life,

Began to bloom, but, soon for Man's offence
 To Heaven removed where first it grew, there grows
 And flowers aloft, shading the Fount of Life,
 And where the River of Bliss through midst of Heaven
 Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream!

With these, that never fade, the Spirits elect 360
 Bind their resplendent locks, inwreathed with beams.

Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
 Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,
 Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.

Then, crowned again, their golden harps they took—

Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side

Like quivers hung; and with preamble sweet

Of charming symphony they introduce

Their sacred song, and waken raptures high:

No voice exempt, no voice but well could join 370

Melodious part; such concord is in Heaven.

Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent,

Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,

Eternal King; thee, Author of all being,

Fountain of light, thyself invisible

Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt'st

Throned inaccessible, but when thou shad'st

The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud

Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine

Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear, 380

Yet dazzle Heaven, that brightest Seraphim

Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.

Thee next they sang, of all creation first,

Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,

In whose conspicuous countenance, without cloud

Made visible, the Almighty Father shines,

Whom else no creature can behold: on thee

Impressed the effulgence of his glory abides;

Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests.

He Heaven of Heavens, and all the Powers therein,

By thee created; and by thee threw down 391

The aspiring Dominations. Thou that day

The Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare,

Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook
 Heaven's everlasting frame, while o'er the necks
 Thou drov'st of warring Angels disarrayed.
 Back from pursuit, thy Powers with loud acclaim
 Thee only extolled, Son of thy Father's might,
 To execute fierce vengeance on his foes.
 Not so on Man: him, through their malice fallen, 400
 Father of mercy and grace, thou didst not doom
 So strictly, but much more to pity incline.
 No sooner did thy dear and only Son
 Perceive thee purposed not to doom frail Man
 So strictly, but much more to pity inclined,
 He, to appease thy wrath, and end the strife
 Of mercy and justice in thy face discerned,
 Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat
 Second to thee, offered himself to die
 For Man's offence. O unexampled love! 410
 Love nowhere to be found less than Divine!
 Hail, Son of God, Saviour of men! Thy name
 Shall be the copious matter of my song
 Henceforth, and never shall my harp thy praise
 Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin!

Thus they in Heaven, above the Starry Sphere,
 Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.
 Meanwhile, upon the firm opacous globe
 Of this round World, whose first convex divides
 The luminous inferior Orbs, enclosed 420
 From Chaos and the inroad of Darkness old,
 Satan alighted walks. A globe far off
 It seemed; now seems a boundless continent,
 Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night
 Starless exposed, and ever-threatening storms
 Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky,
 Save on that side which from the wall of Heaven,
 Though distant far, some small reflection gains
 Of glimmering air less vexed with tempest loud.
 Here walked the Fiend at large in spacious field. 430
 As when a vulture, on Imaus bred,
 Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,

Dislodging from a region scarce of prey,
 To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling kids
 On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the springs
 Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams,
 But in his way lights on the barren plains
 Of Sericana, where Chinese drive
 With sails and wind their cany waggons light ;
 So, on this windy sea of land, the Fiend 440
 Walked up and down alone, bent on his prey :
 Alone, for other creature in this place,
 Living or lifeless, to be found was none ;—
 None yet ; but store hereafter from the Earth
 Up hither like aerial vapours flew
 Of all things transitory and vain, when sin
 With vanity had filled the works of men—
 Both all things vain, and all who in vain things
 Built their fond hopes of glory or lasting fame,
 Or happiness in this or the other life. 450
 All who have their reward on earth, the fruits
 Of painful superstition and blind zeal,
 Naught seeking but the praise of men, here find
 Fit retribution, empty as their deeds ;
 All the unaccomplished works of Nature's hand,
 Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mixed,
 Dissolved on Earth, fleet hither, and in vain,
 Till final dissolution, wander here—
 Not in the neighbouring Moon, as some have dreamed :
 Those argent fields more likely habitants, 460
 Translated Saints, or middle Spirits hold,
 Betwixt the angelical and human kind.
 Hither, of ill-joined sons and daughters born,
 First from the ancient world those Giants came,
 With many a vain exploit, though then renowned :
 The builders next of Babel on the plain
 Of Sennaar, and still with vain design
 New Babels, had they wherewithal, would build :
 Others came single ; he who, to be deemed
 A god, leaped fondly into Ætna flames, 470
 Empedocles ; and he who, to enjoy

Plato's Elysium, leaped into the sea,
 Cleombrotus; and many more, too long,
 Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars,
 White, black, and grey, with all their trumpery.
 Here pilgrims roam, that strayed so far to seek
 In Golgotha him dead who lives in Heaven;
 And they who, to be sure of Paradise,
 Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,
 Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised. 480
 They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
 And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
 The trepidation talked, and that first moved;
 And now Saint Peter at Heaven's wicket seems
 To wait them with his keys, and now at foot
 Of Heaven's ascent they lift their feet, when, lo!
 A violent cross wind from either coast
 Blows them transverse, ten thousand leagues awry,
 Into the devious air. Then might ye see
 Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tost 490
 And fluttered into rags; then reliques, beads,
 Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
 The sport of winds: all these, upwhirled aloft,
 Fly o'er the backside of the World far off
 Into a Limbo large and broad, since called
 The Paradise of Fools; to few unknown
 Long after, now unpeopled and untrod.
 All this dark globe the Fiend found as he passed;
 And long he wandered, till at last a gleam
 Of dawning light turned thitherward in haste 500
 His travelled steps. Far distant he descries,
 Ascending by degrees magnificent
 Up to the wall of Heaven, a structure high;
 At top whereof, but far more rich, appeared
 The work as of a kingly palace-gate,
 With frontispiece of diamond and gold
 Embellished; thick with sparkling orient gems
 The portal shone, inimitable on Earth
 By model, or by shading pencil drawn.
 The stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw 510

Angels ascending, and descending, bands
Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled
To Padan-Aram, in the field of Luz
Dreaming by night under the open sky,
And waking cried, *This is the gate of Heaven.*
Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to Heaven sometimes
Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flowed
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon
Who after came from Earth sailing arrived 520
Wafted by Angels, or flew o'er the lake
Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.
The stairs were then let down, whether to dare
The Fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate
His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss:
Direct against which opened from beneath,
Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,
A passage down to the Earth—a passage wide;
Wider by far than that of after-times
Over Mount Sion, and, though that were large, 530
Over the Promised Land to God so dear,
By which, to visit oft those happy tribes,
On high behests his Angels to and fro
Passed frequent, and his eye with choice regard
From Paneas, the fount of Jordan's flood,
To Beërsaba, where the Holy Land
Borders on Egypt and the Arabian shore.
So wide the opening seemed, where bounds were set
To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave.
Satan from hence, now on the lower stair, 540
That scaled by steps of gold to Heaven-gate,
Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
Of all this World at once. As when a scout,
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
Which to his eye discovers unaware
The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen, or some renowned metropolis

With glistering spires and pinnacles adorned, 550
 Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams;
 Such wonder seized, though after Heaven seen,
 The Spirit malign, but much more envy seized,
 At sight of all this World beheld so fair.
 Round he surveys (and well might, where he stood
 So high above the circling canopy
 Of Night's extended shade) from eastern point
 Of *Libra* to the fleecy star that bears
Andromeda far off *Atlantic* seas
 Beyond the horizon; then from pole to pole 560
 He views in breadth,—and, without longer pause,
 Down right into the World's first region throws
 His flight precipitant, and winds with ease
 Through the pure marble air his oblique way
 Amongst innumerable stars, that shone
 Stars distant, but nigh-hand seemed other worlds.
 Or other worlds they seemed, or happy isles,
 Like those *Hesperian Gardens* famed of old,
 Fortunate fields, and groves, and flowery vales;
 Thrice happy isles! But who dwelt happy there 570
 He staid not to inquire: above them all
 The golden Sun, in splendour likest Heaven,
 Allured his eye. Thither his course he bends,
 Through the calm firmament (but up or down,
 By centre or eccentric, hard to tell,
 Or longitude) where the great luminary,
 Aloof the vulgar constellations thick,
 That from his lordly eye keep distance due,
 Dispenses light from far. They, as they move
 Their starry dance in numbers that compute 580
 Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering lamp
 Turn swift their various motions, or are turned
 By his magnetic beam, that gently warms
 The Universe, and to each inward part
 With gentle penetration, though unseen,
 Shoots invisible virtue even to the Deep;
 So wondrously was set his station bright.
 There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps

Astronomer in the Sun's lucent orb
 Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw. 590
 The place he found beyond expression bright,
 Compared with aught on Earth, metal or stone---
 Not all parts like, but all alike informed
 With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire.
 If metal, part seemed gold, part silver clear ;
 If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite,
 Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shone
 In Aaron's breast-plate, and a stone besides,
 Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen—
 That stone, or like to that, which here below 600
 Philosophers in vain so long have sought ;
 In vain, though by their powerful art they bind
 Volatile Hermes, and call up unbound
 In various shapes old Proteus from the sea,
 Drained through a limbec to his native form.
 What wonder then if fields and regions here
 Breathe forth elixir pure, and rivers run
 Potable gold, when, with one virtuous touch,
 The arch-chemic Sun, so far from us remote,
 Produces, with terrestrial humour mixed, 610
 Here in the dark so many precious things
 Of colour glorious and effect so rare ?
 Here matter new to gaze the Devil met
 Undazzled. Far and wide his eye commands ;
 For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,
 But all sunshine, as when his beams at noon
 Culminate from the equator, as they now
 Shot upward still direct, whence no way round
 Shadow from body opaque can fall ; and the air,
 Nowhere so clear, sharpened his visual ray 620
 To objects distant far, whereby he soon
 Saw within ken a glorious Angel stand,
 The same whom John saw also in the Sun.
 His back was turned, but not his brightness hid ;
 Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar
 Circled his head, nor less his locks behind
 Illustrious on his shoulders fledge with wings

Lay waving round : on some great charge employed
He seemed, or fixed in cogitation deep.

Glad was the Spirit impure, as now in hope 630

To find who might direct his wandering flight

To Paradise, the happy seat of Man,

His journey's end, and our beginning woe.

But first he casts to change his proper shape,

Which else might work him danger or delay :

And now a stripling Cherub he appears,

Not of the prime, yet such as in his face

Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb

Suitable grace diffused ; so well he feigned.

Under a coronet his flowing hair 640

In curls on either cheek played ; wings he wore

Of many a coloured plume sprinkled with gold,

His habit fit for speed succinct, and held

Before his decent steps a silver wand.

He drew not nigh unheard ; the Angel bright,

Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turned,

Admonished by his ear, and straight was known

The Archangel Uriel—one of the seven

Who in God's presence, nearest to his throne,

Stand ready at command, and are his eyes 650

That run through all the Heavens, or down to the Earth

Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,

O'er sea and land. Him Satan thus accosts :—

“ Uriel ! for thou of those seven Spirits that stand

In sight of God's high throne, gloriously bright,

The first art wont his great authentic will

Interpreter through highest Heaven to bring,

Where all his Sons thy embassy attend,

And here art likeliest by supreme decree

Like honour to obtain, and as his Eye 660

To visit oft this new Creation round—

Unspeakable desire to see and know

All these his wondrous works, but chiefly Man,

His chief delight and favour, him for whom

All these his works so wondrous he ordained,

Hath brought me from the quires of Cherubim

Alone thus wand'ring. Brightest Seraph, tell
 In which of all these shining orbs hath Man
 His fixèd seat—or fixèd seat hath none,
 But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell— 670
 That I may find him, and with secret gaze
 Or open admiration him behold
 On whom the great Creator hath bestowed
 Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces poured ;
 That both in him and all things, as is meet,
 The Universal Maker we may praise ;
 Who justly hath driven out his rebel foes
 To deepest Hell, and, to repair that loss,
 Created this new happy race of Men
 To serve him better : Wise are all his ways !” 680
 So spake the false dissembler unperceived ;
 For neither man nor angel can discern
 Hypocrisy—the only evil that walks
 Invisible, except to God alone,
 By his permissive will, through Heaven and Earth ;
 And oft, though Wisdom wake, Suspicion sleeps
 At Wisdom's gate, and to Simplicity
 Resigns her charge, while Goodness thinks no ill
 Where no ill seems : which now for once beguiled
 Uriel, though Regent of the Sun, and held 690
 The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heaven ;
 Who to the fraudulent impostor foul,
 In his uprightness, answer thus returned :—
 “ Fair Angel, thy desire, which tends to know
 The works of God, thereby to glorify
 The great Work-master, leads to no excess
 That reaches blame, but rather merits praise
 The more it seems excess, that led thee hither
 From thy empyreal mansion thus alone,
 To witness with thine eyes what some perhaps, 700
 Contented with report, hear only in Heaven :
 For wonderful indeed are all his works,
 Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all
 Had in remembrance always with delight !
 But what created mind can comprehend

Their number, or the wisdom infinite
 That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?
 I saw when, at his word, the formless mass,
 This World's material mould, came to a heap :
 Confusion heard his voice, and wild Uproar 710
 Stood ruled, stood vast Infinitude confined ;
 Till, at his second bidding, Darkness fled,
 Light shone, and order from disorder sprung.
 Swift to their several quarters hasted then
 The cumbrous elements—Earth, Flood, Air, Fire ;
 And this ethereal quintessence of Heaven
 Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
 That rolled orbicular, and turned to stars
 Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move :
 Each had his place appointed, each his course ; 720
 The rest in circuit walls this Universe.
 Look downward on that globe, whose hither side
 With light from hence, though but reflected, shines :
 That place is Earth, the seat of Man ; that light
 His day, which else, as the other hemisphere,
 Night would invade ; but there the neighbouring Moon
 (So call that opposite fair star) her aid
 Timely interposes, and, her monthly round
 Still ending, still renewing, through mid-heaven,
 With borrowed light her countenance triform 730
 Hence fills and empties, to enlighten the Earth,
 And in her pale dominion checks the night.
 That spot to which I point is Paradise,
 Adam's abode ; those lofty shades his bower.
 Thy way thou canst not miss ; me mine requires.”
 Thus said, he turned ; and Satan, bowing low,
 As to superior Spirits is wont in Heaven,
 Where honour due and reverence none neglects,
 Took leave, and toward the coast of Earth beneath,
 Down from the ecliptic, sped with hoped success, 740
 Throws his steep flight in many an airy wheel,
 Nor staid till on Niphates' top he lights.

PARADISE LOST

BOOK IV

THE ARGUMENT

Satan, now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and Man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions—fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil; journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described; overleaps the bounds; sits, in the shape of a cormorant, on the Tree of Life, as highest in the Garden, to look about him. The Garden described; Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall; overhears their discourse; thence gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat of under penalty of death, and thereon intends to found his temptation by seducing them to transgress; then leaves them a while, to know further of their state by some other means. Meanwhile Uriel, descending on a sunbeam, warns Gabriel, who had in charge the gate of Paradise, that some evil Spirit had escaped the Deep, and passed at noon by his Sphere, in the shape of a good Angel, down to Paradise, discovered after by his furious gestures in the mount. Gabriel promises to find him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest: their bower described; their evening worship. Gabriel, drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the rounds of Paradise, appoints two strong Angels to Adam's bower, lest the evil Spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping: there they find him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel; by whom questioned, he scornfully answers; prepares resistance; but, hindered by a sign from Heaven, flies out of Paradise.

O FOR that warning voice, which he who saw
The Apocalypse heard cry in Heaven aloud,
Then when the Dragon, put to second rout,
Came furious down to be revenged on men,

Woe to the inhabitants on Earth! that now,
 While time was, our first parents had been warned,
 The coming of their secret foe, and scaped,
 Haply so scaped, his mortal snare! For now
 Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came down,
 The tempter, ere the accuser, of mankind, 10
 To wreak on innocent frail Man his loss
 Of that first battle, and his flight to Hell.
 Yet not rejoicing in his speed, though bold
 Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,
 Begins his dire attempt; which, nigh the birth
 Now rolling, boils in his tumultuous breast,
 And like a devilish engine back recoils
 Upon himself. Horror and doubt distract
 His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
 The hell within him; for within him Hell 20
 He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
 One step, no more than from himself, can fly
 By change of place. Now conscience wakes despair
 That slumbered; wakes the bitter memory
 Of what he was, what is, and what must be
 Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue!
 Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view
 Lay pleasant, his griev'd look he fixes sad;
 Sometimes towards Heaven and the full-blazing Sun,
 Which now sat high in his meridian tower: 30
 Then, much revolving, thus in sighs began:—
 “O thou that, with surpassing glory crowned,
 Look'st from thy sole dominion like the god
 Of this new World—at whose sight all the stars
 Hide their diminished heads—to thee I call,
 But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
 O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
 That bring to my remembrance from what state
 I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere,
 Till pride and worse ambition threw me down, 40
 Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King!
 Ah, wherefore? He deserved no such return
 From me, whom he created what I was

In that bright eminence, and with his good
 Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.
 What could be less than to afford him praise,
 The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,
 How due? Yet all his good proved ill in me,
 And wrought but malice. Lifted up so high,
 I sdained subjection, and thought one step higher 50
 Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
 The debt immense of endless gratitude,
 So burdensome, still paying, still to owe;
 Forgetful what from him I still received;
 And understood not that a grateful mind
 By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
 Indebted and discharged—what burden then?
 Oh, had his powerful destiny ordained
 Me some inferior Angel, I had stood
 Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised 60
 Ambition. Yet why not? Some other Power
 As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,
 Drawn to his part. But other Powers as great
 Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
 Or from without to all temptations armed!
 Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
 Thou hadst. Whom hast thou then, or what, to accuse,
 But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?
 Be then his love accursed, since, love or hate,
 To me alike it deals eternal woe. 70
 Nay, cursed be thou; since against his thy will
 Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
 Me miserable! which way shall I fly
 Infinite wrath and infinite despair?
 Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
 And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
 Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
 To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.
 O, then, at last relent! Is there no place
 Left for repentance, none for pardon left? 80
 None left but by submission; and that word
 Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame

Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduced
 With other promises and other vaunts
 Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
 The Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know
 How dearly I abide that boast so vain,
 Under what torments inwardly I groan.
 While they adore me on the throne of Hell,
 With diadem and sceptre high advanced, 90
 The lower still I fall, only supreme
 In misery: such joy ambition finds!
 But say I could repent, and could obtain,
 By act of grace, my former state; how soon
 Would highth recal high thoughts, how soon unsay
 What feigned submission swore! Ease would recant
 Vows made in pain, as violent and void
 (For never can true reconcilment grow
 Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep);
 Which would but lead me to a worse relapse 100
 And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear
 Short intermission, bought with double smart.
 This knows my Punisher; therefore as far
 From granting he, as I from begging, peace.
 All hope excluded thus, behold, instead
 Of us, outcast, exiled, his new delight,
 Mankind, created, and for him this World!
 So farewell hope, and, with hope, farewell fear,
 Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost;
 Evil, be thou my Good: by thee at least 110
 Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold,
 By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;
 As Man ere long, and this new World, shall know."

Thus while he spake, each passion dimmed his face,
 Thrice changed with pale—ire, envy, and despair;
 Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed
 Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld:
 For Heavenly minds from such distempers foul
 Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware
 Each perturbation smoothed with outward calm, 120
 Artificer of fraud; and was the first

That practised falsehood under saintly show,
Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge:
Yet not enough had practised to deceive
Uriel, once warned; whose eye pursued him down
The way he went and on the Assyrian mount
Saw him disfigured, more than could befall
Spirit of happy sort: his gestures fierce
He marked and mad demeanour, then alone,
As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen. 130

So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound, the champain head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied; and overhead up-grew
Insuperable highth of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A sylvan scene, and, as the ranks ascend 140
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise up-sprung;
Which to our general sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighbouring round.
And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,
Appeared, with gay enamelled colours mixed;
On which the sun more glad impressed his beams 150
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath showered the earth: so lovely seemed
That landskip. And of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair. Now gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils. As, when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past 160

Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
 Sabean odours from the spicy shore
 Of Araby the Blest, with such delay
 Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league
 Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles ;
 So entertained those odorous sweets the Fiend
 Who came their bane, though with them better pleased
 Than Asmodæus with the fishy fume
 That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse
 Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent 170
 From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.

Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill
 Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow ;
 But further way found none ; so thick entwined,
 As one continued brake, the undergrowth
 Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed
 All path of man or beast that passed that way.
 One gate there only was, and that looked east
 On the other side. Which when the Arch-Felon saw,
 Due entrance he disdained, and, in contempt, 180
 At one slight bound high overleaped all bound
 Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within
 Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,
 Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
 Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve,
 In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,
 Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold ;
 Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash
 Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,
 Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault, 190
 In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles ;
 So clomb this first grand Thief into God's fold :
 So since into his Church lewd hirelings climb.
 Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,
 The middle tree and highest there that grew,
 Sat like a cormorant ; yet not true life
 Thereby regained, but sat devising death
 To them who lived ; nor on the virtue thought
 Of that life-giving plant, but only used

For prospect what, well used, had been the pledge 200
Of immortality. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him, but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
Beneath him, with new wonder, now he views,
To all delight of human sense exposed,
In narrow room Nature's whole wealth; yea, more!—
A Heaven on Earth: for blissful Paradise
Of God the garden was, by him in the east
Of Eden planted. Eden stretched her line 210
From Auran eastward to the royal towers
Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,
Or where the sons of Eden long before
Dwelt in Telasar. In this pleasant soil
His far more pleasant garden God ordained.
Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold; and next to life, 220
Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by—
Knowledge of good, bought dear by knowing ill.
Southward through Eden went a river large,
Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
Passed underneath ingulfed; for God had thrown
That mountain, as his garden-mould, high raised
Upon the rapid current, which, through veins
Of porous earth with kindly thirst up-drawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Watered the garden; thence united fell 230
Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
Which from his darksome passage now appears,
And now, divided into four main streams,
Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
And country whereof here needs no account;
But rather to tell how, if Art could tell
How, from that sapphire fount the crispèd brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,

With mazy error under pendent shades
 Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed 240
 Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art
 In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
 Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
 Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
 The open field, and where the unpierced shade
 Imbrowned the noontide bowers. Thus was this place,
 A happy rural seat of various view :
 Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm ;
 Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
 Hung amiable—Hesperian fables true, 250
 If true, here only—and of delicious taste.
 Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
 Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
 Or palmy hillock ; or the flowery lap
 Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
 Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.
 Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
 Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
 Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
 Luxuriant ; meanwhile murmuring waters fall 260
 Down the slope hills dispersed, or in a lake,
 That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned
 Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.
 The birds their quire apply ; airs, vernal airs,
 Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
 The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
 Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
 Led on the eternal Spring. Not that fair field
 Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers,
 Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis 270
 Was gathered—which cost Ceres all that pain
 To seek her through the world—nor that sweet grove
 Of Daphne, by Orontes and the inspired
 Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
 Of Eden strive ; nor that Nyseian isle,
 Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
 Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,

Hid Amalthea, and her florid son,
Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye ;
Nor, where Abassin kings their issue guard, 280
Mount Amara (though this by some supposed
True Paradise) under the Ethiop line
By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock,
A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
From this Assyrian garden, where the Fiend
Saw undelighted all delight, all kind
Of living creatures, new to sight and strange.
Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
God-like erect, with native honour clad
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all, 290
And worthy seemed ; for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure—
Severe, but in true filial freedom placed,
Whence true authority in men : though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed ;
For contemplation he and valour formed,
For softness she and sweet attractive grace :
He for God only, she for God in him.
His fair large front and eye sublime declared • 300
Absolute rule ; and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad :
She, as a veil down to the slender waist,
Her unadornèd golden tresses wore
Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved
As the vine curls her tendrils—which implied
Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best received
Yielded, with coy submission, modest pride, 310
And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.
Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed ;
Then was not guilty shame. Dishonest shame
Of Nature's works, honour dishonourable,
Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind
With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,

And banished from man's life his happiest life,
 Simplicity and spotless innocence!
 So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight
 Of God or Angel; for they thought no ill: 320
 So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair
 That ever since in love's embraces met—
 Adam the goodliest man of men since born
 His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve.
 Under a tuft of shade that on a green
 Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain-side,
 They sat them down; and, after no more toil
 Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed
 To recommend cool Zephyr, and make ease
 More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite 330
 More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell—
 Nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs
 Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline
 On the soft downy bank damasked with flowers.
 The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind,
 Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream;
 Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
 Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
 Fair couple linked in happy nuptial league,
 Alone as they. About them frisking played 340
 All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
 In wood or wilderness, forest or den.
 Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
 Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
 Gambolled before them; the unwieldy elephant,
 To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
 His lithe proboscis; close the serpent sly,
 Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
 His braided train, and of his fatal guile
 Gave proof unheeded. Others on the grass 350
 Couched, and, now filled with pasture, gazing sat,
 Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,
 Declined, was hastening now with prone career
 To the Ocean Isles, and in the ascending scale
 Of Heaven the stars that usher evening rose:

When Satan, still in gaze as first he stood,
 Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad :—
 • “O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold?
 Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
 Creatures of other mould—Earth-born perhaps, 360
 Not Spirits, yet to Heavenly Spirits bright
 Little inferior—whom my thoughts pursue
 With wonder, and could love; so lively shines
 In them divine resemblance, and such grace
 The hand that formed them on their shape hath poured.
 Ah! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
 Your change approaches, when all these delights
 Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe—
 More woe, the more your taste is now of joy:
 Happy, but for so happy ill secured 370
 Long to continue, and this high seat, your Heaven,
 Ill fenced for Heaven to keep out such a foe
 As now is entered; yet no purposed foe
 To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
 Though I unpitied. League with you I seek,
 And mutual amity, so strait, so close,
 That I with you must dwell, or you with me,
 Henceforth. My dwelling, haply, may not please,
 Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such
 Accept your Maker’s work; he gave it me, 380
 Which I as freely give. Hell shall unfold,
 To entertain you two, her widest gates,
 And send forth all her kings; there will be room,
 Not like these narrow limits, to receive
 Your numerous offspring; if no better place,
 Thank him who puts me, loath, to this revenge
 On you, who wrong me not, for him who wronged.
 And, should I at your harmless innocence
 Melt, as I do, yet public reason just—
 Honour and empire with revenge enlarged 390
 By conquering this new World—compels me now
 To do what else, though damned, I should abhor.”

So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,
 The tyrant’s plea, excused his devilish deeds.

Then from his lofty stand on that high tree
 Down he alights among the sportful herd
 Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,
 Now other, as their shape served best his end
 Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied,
 To mark what of their state he more might learn 400
 By word or action marked. About them round
 A lion now he stalks with fiery glare;
 Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
 In some purlieu two gentle fawns at play,
 Straight crouches close; then, rising, changes oft
 His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
 Whence rushing he might surest seize them both
 Griped in each paw: when Adam, first of men,
 To first of women, Eve, thus moving speech,
 Turned him all ear to hear new utterance flow:— 410
 “Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,
 Dearer thyself than all, needs must the Power
 That made us, and for us this ample World,
 Be infinitely good, and of his good
 As liberal and free as infinite;
 That raised us from the dust, and placed us here
 In all this happiness, who at his hand
 Have nothing merited, nor can perform
 Aught whereof he hath need; he who requires
 From us no other service than to keep 420
 This one, this easy charge—of all the trees
 In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
 So various, not to taste that only Tree
 Of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life;
 So near grows Death to Life, whate’er Death is—
 Some dreadful thing no doubt; for well thou know’st
 God hath pronounced it Death to taste that Tree:
 The only sign of our obedience left
 Among so many signs of power and rule
 Conferred upon us, and dominion given 430
 Over all other creatures that possess
 Earth, Air, and Sea. Then let us not think hard
 One easy prohibition, who enjoy

Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
 Unlimited of manifold delights;
 But let us ever praise him, and extol
 His bounty, following our delightful task,
 To prune these growing plants, and tend these flowers;
 Which, were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet."

To whom thus Eve replied:—"O thou for whom
 And from whom I was formed flesh of thy flesh, 441
 And without whom am to no end, my Guide
 And Head! what thou hast said is just and right.
 For we to him, indeed, all praises owe,
 And daily thanks—I chiefly, who enjoy
 So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
 Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
 Like consort to thyself canst nowhere find.
 That day I oft remember, when from sleep
 I first awaked, and found myself reposed, 450
 Under a shade, on flowers, much wondering where
 And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
 Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
 Of waters issued from a cave, and spread
 Into a liquid plain; then stood unmoved,
 Pure as the expanse of Heaven. I thither went,
 With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
 On the green bank, to look into the clear
 Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.
 As I bent down to look, just opposite 460
 A shape within the watery gleam appeared,
 Bending to look on me. I started back,
 It started back; but pleased I soon returned,
 Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
 Of sympathy and love. There I had fixed
 Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
 Had not a voice thus warned me: 'What thou seest,
 What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;
 With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
 And I will bring thee where no shadow stays 470
 Thy coming, and thy soft embraces—he
 Whose image thou art; him thou shalt enjoy

Inseparably thine; to him shalt bear
 Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
 Mother of human race.' What could I do,
 But follow straight, invisibly thus led?
 Till I espied thee, fair, indeed, and tall,
 Under a platane; yet methought less fair,
 Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
 Than that smooth watery image. Back I turned; 480
 Thou, following, cried'st aloud, 'Return, fair Eve;
 Whom fliest thou? Whom thou fliest, of him thou art,
 His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
 Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
 Substantial life, to have thee by my side
 Henceforth an individual solace dear:
 Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim
 My other half.' With that thy gentle hand
 Seized mine: I yielded, and from that time see
 How beauty is excelled by manly grace 490
 And wisdom, which alone is truly fair."

So spake our general mother, and, with eyes
 Of conjugal attraction unreprieved,
 And meek surrender, half-embracing leaned
 On our first father; half her swelling breast
 Naked met his, under the flowing gold
 Of her loose tresses hid. He, in delight
 Both of her beauty and submissive charms,
 Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
 On Juno smiles when he impregns the clouds 500
 That shed May flowers, and pressed her matron lip
 With kisses pure. Aside the Devil turned
 For envy; yet with jealous leer malign
 Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained:—

"Sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two,
 Imparadised in one another's arms,
 The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
 Of bliss on bliss; while I to Hell am thrust,
 Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
 Among our other torments not the least, 510
 Still unfulfilled, with pain of longing pines!

Yet let me not forget what I have gained
 From their own mouths. All is not theirs, it seems ;
 One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge called,
 Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge forbidden ?
 Suspicious, reasonless ! Why should their Lord
 Envy them that ? Can it be sin to know ?
 Can it be death ? And do they only stand
 By ignorance ? Is that their happy state,
 The proof of their obedience and their faith ? 520
 O fair foundation laid whereon to build
 Their ruin ! Hence I will excite their minds
 With more desire to know, and to reject
 Envious commands, invented with design
 To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt
 Equal with Gods. Aspiring to be such,
 They taste and die : what likelier can ensue ?
 But first with narrow search I must walk round
 This garden, and no corner leave unspied ;
 A chance but chance may lead where I may meet 530
 Some wandering Spirit of Heaven, by fountain-side,
 Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw
 What further would be learned. Live while ye may,
 Yet happy pair ; enjoy, till I return,
 Short pleasures ; for long woes are to succeed ! ”

So saying, his proud step he scornful turned,
 But with sly circumspection, and began
 Through wood, through waste, o'er hill, o'er dale, his
 roam.

Meanwhile in utmost longitude, where Heaven
 With Earth and Ocean meets, the setting Sun 540
 Slowly descended, and with right aspect
 Against the eastern gate of Paradise
 Levelled his evening rays. It was a rock
 Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds,
 Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
 Accessible from Earth, one entrance high ;
 The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
 Still as it rose, impossible to climb.
 Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel sat,

Chief of the angelic guards, awaiting night ; 550
 About him exercised heroic games
 The unarmed youth of Heaven ; but nigh at hand
 Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears,
 Hung high, with diamond flaming and with gold.
 Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even
 On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star
 In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fired
 Impress the air, and shows the mariner
 From what point of his compass to beware
 Impetuous winds. He thus began in haste :— 560

“ Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath given
 Charge and strict watch that to this happy place
 No evil thing approach or enter in.
 This day at highth of noon came to my sphere
 A Spirit, zealous, as he seemed, to know
 More of the Almighty's works, and chiefly Man,
 God's latest image. I described his way
 Bent all on speed, and marked his aery gait,
 But in the mount that lies from Eden north,
 Where he first lighted, soon discerned his looks 570
 Alien from Heaven, with passions foul obscured.
 Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade
 Lost sight of him. One of the banished crew,
 I fear, hath ventured from the Deep, to raise
 New troubles ; him thy care must be to find.”

To whom the winged Warrior thus returned :—
 “ Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight,
 Amid the Sun's bright circle where thou sitt'st,
 See far and wide. In at this gate none pass
 The vigilance here placed, but such as come 580
 Well known from Heaven ; and since meridian hour
 No creature thence. If Spirit of other sort,
 So minded, have o'erleaped these earthy bounds
 On purpose, hard thou know'st it to exclude
 Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.
 But, if within the circuit of these walks,
 In whatsoever shape, he lurk of whom
 Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know.”

So promised he; and Uriel to his charge
 Returned on that bright beam, whose point now raised
 Bore him slope downward to the Sun, now fallen 591
 Beneath the Azores; whether the Prime Orb,
 Incredible how swift, had thither rolled
 Diurnal, or this less volúbil Earth,
 By shorter flight to the east, had left him there
 Arraying with reflected purple and gold
 The clouds that on his western throne attend.

Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray
 Had in her sober livery all things clad;
 Silence accompanied; for beast and bird, 600
 They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
 Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale.
 She all night long her amorous descant sung:
 Silence was pleased. Now glowed the firmament
 With living sapphires; Hesperus, that led
 The starry host, rode brightest, till the Moon,
 Rising in clouded majesty, at length
 Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
 And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw;
 When Adam thus to Eve:—"Fair consort, the hour
 Of night, and all things now retired to rest, 611
 Mind us of like repose; since God hath set
 Labour and rest, as day and night, to men
 Successive, and the timely dew of sleep,
 Now falling with soft slumberous weight, inclines
 Our eye-lids. Other creatures all day long
 Rove idle, unemployed, and less need rest;
 Man hath his daily work of body or mind
 Appointed, which declares his dignity,
 And the regard of Heaven on all his ways; 620
 While other animals unactive range,
 And of their doings God takes no account.
 To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east
 With first approach of light, we must be risen,
 And at our pleasant labour, to reform
 Yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green,
 Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,

That mock our scant manuring, and require
 More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth,
 Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums, 630
 That lie bestrewn, unsightly and unsmooth,
 Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease.
 Meanwhile, as Nature wills, Night bids us rest."

To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned:—
 "My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st
 Unargued I obey. So God ordains:
 God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
 Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her praise.
 With thee conversing, I forget all time,
 All seasons, and their change; all please alike. 640
 Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet,
 With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the Sun,
 When first on this delightful land he spreads
 His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
 Glistening with dew; fragrant the fertile Earth
 After soft showers; and sweet the coming-on
 Of grateful Evening mild; then silent Night,
 With this her solemn bird, and this fair Moon,
 And these the gems of Heaven, her starry train:
 But neither breath of Morn, when she ascends 650
 With charm of earliest birds; nor rising Sun
 On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
 Glistening with dew; nor fragrance after showers;
 Nor grateful Evening mild; nor silent Night,
 With this her solemn bird; nor walk by moon,
 Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet.
 But wherefore all night long shine these? for whom
 This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?"

To whom our general ancestor replied:—
 "Daughter of God and Man, accomplished Eve, 660
 Those have their course to finish round the Earth
 By morrow evening, and from land to land
 In order, though to nations yet unborn,
 Ministering light prepared, they set and rise;
 Lest total Darkness should by night regain
 Her old possession, and extinguish life

In nature and all things; which these soft fires
 Not only enlighten, but with kindly heat
 Of various influence foment and warm,
 Temper or nourish, or in part shed down 670
 Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow
 On Earth, made hereby apter to receive
 Perfection from the Sun's more potent ray.
 These, then, though unbeheld in deep of night,
 Shine not in vain. Nor think, though men were none,
 That Heaven would want spectators, God want praise.
 Millions of spiritual creatures walk the Earth
 Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep :
 All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
 Both day and night. How often, from the steep 680
 Of echoing hill or thicket, have we heard
 Celestial voices to the midnight air,
 Sole, or responsive each to other's note,
 Singing their great Creator! Oft in bands
 While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
 With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds
 In full harmonic number joined, their songs
 Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven."

Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed
 On to their blissful bower. It was a place 690
 Chosen by the sovran Planter, when he framed
 All things to Man's delightful use. The roof
 Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
 Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
 Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side
 Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
 Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
 Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,
 Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
 Mosaic; under foot the violet, 700
 Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
 Broïdered the ground, more coloured than with stone
 Of costliest emblem. Other creature here,
 Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none;
 Such was their awe of Man. In shadier bower

More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned,
 Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph
 Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,
 With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
 Espoused Eve decked first her nuptial bed, 710
 And heavenly choirs the hymenæan sung,
 What day the genial Angel to our sire
 Brought her, in naked beauty more adorned,
 More lovely, than Pandora, whom the Gods
 Endowed with all their gifts; and, O! too like
 In sad event, when, to the unwiser son
 Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared
 Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
 On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.

Thus at their shady lodge arrived, both stood, 720
 Both turned, and under open sky adored
 The God that made both Sky, Air, Earth, and Heaven,
 Which they beheld, the Moon's resplendent globe,
 And starry Pole:—"Thou also madest the Night,
 Maker Omnipotent; and thou the Day,
 Which we, in our appointed work employed,
 Have finished, happy in our mutual help
 And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
 Ordained by thee; and this delicious place,
 For us too large, where thy abundance wants 730
 Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.
 But thou hast promised from us two a race
 To fill the Earth, who shall with us extol
 Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
 And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep."

This said unanimous, and other rites
 Observing none, but adoration pure,
 Which God likes best, into their inmost bower
 Handed they went; and, eased the putting-off
 These troublesome disguises which we wear, 740
 Straight side by side were laid; nor turned, I ween,
 Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
 Mysterious of connubial love refused:
 Whatever hypocrites austerely talk

Of purity, and place, and innocence,
 Defaming as impure what God declares
 Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
 Our Maker bids increase; who bids abstain
 But our destroyer, foe to God and Man?
 Hail, wedded Love, mysterious law, true source 750
 Of human offspring, sole propriety
 In Paradise of all things common else!
 By thee adulterous lust was driven from men
 Among the bestial herds to range; by thee,
 Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
 Relations dear, and all the charities
 Of father, son, and brother, first were known.
 Far be it that I should write thee sin or blame,
 Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
 Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets, 760
 Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,
 Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used.
 Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights
 His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
 Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
 Of harlots—loveless, joyless, unendeared,
 Casual fruition; nor in court amours,
 Mixed dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,
 Or serenate, which the starved lover sings
 To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain. 770
 These, lulled by nightingales, embracing slept,
 And on their naked limbs the flowery roof
 Showered roses, which the morn repaired. Sleep on,
 Blest pair! and, O! yet happiest, if ye seek
 No happier state, and know to know no more!

Now had Night measured with her shadowy cone
 Half-way up-hill this vast sublunar vault,
 And from their ivory port the Cherubim
 Forth issuing, at the accustomed hour, stood armed
 To their night-watches in warlike parade; 780
 When Gabriel to his next in power thus spake:—

“Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the south
 With strictest watch; these other wheel the north:

Our circuit meets full west." As flame they part,
 Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.
 From these, two strong and subtle Spirits he called
 That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge:—

“ Ithuriel and Zephon, with winged speed
 Search through this Garden ; leave unsearched no nook ;
 But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge, 790
 Now laid perhaps asleep, secure of harm.
 This evening from the Sun’s decline arrived
 Who tells of some infernal Spirit seen
 Hitherward bent (who could have thought ?), escaped
 The bars of Hell, on errand bad, no doubt :
 Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring.”

So saying, on he led his radiant files,
 Dazzling the moon ; these to the bower direct
 In search of whom they sought. Him there they found
 Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve, 800
 Assaying by his devilish art to reach
 The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
 Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams ;
 Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
 The animal spirits, that from pure blood arise
 Like gentle breaths from rivers pure, thence raise,
 At least distempered, discontented thoughts,
 Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,
 Blown up with high conceits engendering pride.
 Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear 810
 Touched lightly ; for no falsehood can endure
 Touch of celestial temper, but returns
 Of force to its own likeness. Up he starts,
 Discovered and surprised. As, when a spark
 Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid
 Fit for the tun, some magazine to store
 Against a rumoured war, the smutty grain,
 With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air ;
 So started up, in his own shape, the Fiend.
 Back stept those two fair Angels, half amazed 820
 So sudden to behold the grisly King ;
 Yet thus, unmoved with fear, accost him soon :—

“Which of those rebel Spirits adjudged to Hell
Com'st thou, escaped thy prison? and, transformed,
Why satt'st thou like an enemy in wait,
Here watching at the head of these that sleep?”

“Know ye not, then,” said Satan, filled with scorn,
“Know ye not me? Ye knew me once no mate
For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar!
Not to know me argues yourselves unknown, 830
The lowest of your throng; or, if ye know,
Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
Your message, like to end as much in vain?”

To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with scorn:—
“Think not, revolted Spirit, thy shape the same,
Or undiminished brightness, to be known
As when thou stood'st in Heaven upright and pure.
That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
Departed from thee; and thou resemblest now
Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul. 840
But come; for thou, be sure, shalt give account
To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep
This place inviolable, and these from harm.”

So spake the Cherub; and his grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible. Abashed the Devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely—saw, and pined
His loss; but chiefly to find here observed
His lustre visibly impaired; yet seemed 850
Undaunted. “If I must contend,” said he,
“Best with the best—the sender, not the sent;
Or all at once: more glory will be won,
Or less be lost.” “Thy fear,” said Zephon bold,
“Will save us trial what the least can do
Single against thee wicked, and thence weak.”

The Fiend replied not, overcome with rage;
But, like a proud steed reined, went haughty on,
Champing his iron curb. To strive or fly
He held it vain; awe from above had quelled 860
His heart, not else dismayed. Now drew they nigh

The western point, where those half-rounding guards
 Just met, and, closing, stood in squadron joined,
 Awaiting next command. To whom their chief,
 Gabriel, from the front thus called aloud :—

“ O friends, I hear the tread of nimble feet
 Hastening this way, and now by glimpse discern
 Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade ;
 And with them comes a third, of regal port,
 But faded splendour wan, who by his gait 870
 And fierce demeanour seems the Prince of Hell—
 Not likely to part hence without contest.
 Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours.”

He scarce had ended, when those two approached,
 And brief related whom they brought, where found,
 How busied, in what form and posture couched.

To whom, with stern regard, thus Gabriel spake :—
 “ Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescribed
 To thy transgressions, and disturbed the charge
 Of others, who approve not to transgress 880
 By thy example, but have power and right
 To question thy bold entrance on this place ;
 Employed, it seems, to violate sleep, and those
 Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss ?”

To whom thus Satan, with contemptuous brow :—
 “ Gabriel, thou hadst in Heaven the esteem of wise ;
 And such I held thee ; but this question asked
 Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain ?
 Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell,
 Though thither doomed ? Thou wouldst thyself, no doubt,
 And boldly venture to whatever place 891
 Farthest from pain, where thou mightst hope to change
 Torment with ease, and soonest recompense
 Dole with delight ; which in this place I sought :
 To thee no reason, who know'st only good,
 But evil hast not tried. And wilt object
 His will who bound us ? Let him surer bar
 His iron gates, if he intends our stay
 In that dark durance. Thus much what was asked :
 The rest is true ; they found me where they say ; 900

But that implies not violence or harm."

Thus he in scorn. The warlike Angel moved,
Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied:—

"O loss of one in Heaven to judge of wise,
Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew,
And now returns him from his prison scaped,
Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise
Or not who ask what boldness brought him hither
Unlicensed from his bounds in Hell prescribed!

So wise he judges it to fly from pain 910

However, and to scape his punishment!

So judge thou still, presumptuous, till the wrath,
Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight
Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell,
Which taught thee yet no better that no pain
Can equal anger infinite provoked.

But wherefore thou alone? Wherefore with thee
Came not all Hell broke loose? Is pain to them
Less pain, less to be fled? or thou than they
Less hardy to endure? Courageous chief, 920
The first in flight from pain, hadst thou alleged
To thy deserted host this cause of flight,
Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive."

To which the Fiend thus answered, frowning stern:—

"Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,
Insulting Angel! well thou know'st I stood
Thy fiercest, when in battle to thy aid
The blasting volleyed thunder made all speed
And seconded thy else not dreaded spear."

But still thy words at random, as before, 930

Argue thy inexperience what behoves,
From hard assays and ill successes past,
A faithful leader—not to hazard all
Through ways of danger by himself untried.

I, therefore, I alone, first undertook
To wing the desolate Abyss, and spy
This new-created World, whereof in Hell
Fame is not silent, here in hope to find
Better abode, and my afflicted Powers

To settle here on Earth, or in mid Air; 940
 Though for possession put to try once more
 What thou and thy gay legions dare against;
 Whose easier business were to serve their Lord
 High up in Heaven, with songs to hymn his throne,
 And practised distances to cringe, not fight."

To whom the Warrior-Angel soon replied:—

"To say and straight unsay, pretending first
 Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy,
 Argues no leader, but a liar traced,
 Satan; and couldst thou 'faithful' add? O name, 950
 O sacred name of faithfulness profaned!
 Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew?
 Army of fiends, fit body to fit head!
 Was this your discipline and faith engaged,
 Your military obedience, to dissolve
 Allegiance to the acknowledged Power Supreme!
 And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem
 Patron of liberty, who more than thou
 Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored
 Heaven's awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope 960
 To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?
 But mark what I areed thee now: Avaunt!
 Fly thither whence thou fledd'st. If from this hour
 Within these hallowed limits thou appear,
 Back to the Infernal Pit I drag thee chained,
 And seal thee so as henceforth not to scorn
 The facile gates of Hell too slightly barred."

So threatened he; but Satan to no threats
 Gave heed, but waxing more in rage, replied:—

"Then, when I am thy captive, talk of chains, 970
 Proud liminary Cherub! but ere then
 Far heavier load thyself expect to feel
 From my prevailing arm, though Heaven's King
 Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compeers,
 Used to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels
 In progress through the road of Heaven star-paved."

While thus he spake, the angelic squadron bright
 Turned fiery red, sharpening in moonèd horns

Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
 With ported spears, as thick as when a field 980
 Of Ceres ripe for harvest waving bends
 Her bearded grove of ears which way the wind
 Sways them; the careful ploughman doubting stands
 Lest on the threshing-floor his hopeful sheaves
 Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarmed,
 Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
 Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved:
 His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
 Sat Horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp
 What seemed both spear and shield. Now dreadful deeds
 Might have ensued; nor only Paradise, 991
 In this commotion, but the starry cope
 Of Heaven perhaps, or all the Elements
 At least, had gone to wrack, disturbed and torn
 With violence of this conflict, had not soon
 The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,
 Hung forth in Heaven his golden scales, yet seen
 Betwixt Astræa and the Scorpion sign,
 Wherein all things created first he weighed,
 The pendulous round Earth with balanced air 1000
 In counterpoise, now ponders all events,
 Battles and realms. In these he put two weights,
 The sequel each of parting and of fight:
 The latter quick up flew, and kicked the beam;
 Which Gabriel spying thus bespake the Fiend:—
 “Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know’st mine,
 Neither our own, but given; what folly then
 To boast what arms can do! since thine no more
 Than Heaven permits, nor mine, though doubled now
 To trample thee as mire. For proof look up, 1010
 And read thy lot in yon celestial sign,
 Where thou art weighed, and shown how light, how weak
 If thou resist.” The Fiend looked up, and knew
 His mounted scale aloft: nor more; but fled
 Murmuring; and with him fled the shades of Night.

PARADISE LOST

BOOK V

THE ARGUMENT

Morning approached, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream; he likes it not, yet comforts her: they come forth to their day labours: their morning hymn at the door of their bower. God, to render man inexcusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand, who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise; his appearance described; his coming discerned by Adam afar off, sitting at the door of his bower; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choicest fruits of Paradise, got together by Eve; their discourse at table. Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy; relates, at Adam's request, who that enemy is, and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in Heaven, and the occasion thereof; how he drew his legions after him to the parts of the North, and there incited them to rebel with him, persuading all but only Abdiel, a seraph, who in argument dissuades and opposes him, then forsakes him.

Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam waked, so custom'd; for his sleep
Was aery light, from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapours bland, which the only sound
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough. So much the more
His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve,
With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek,
As through unquiet rest. He, on his side
Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld

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Beauty which, whether waking or asleep,
 Shot forth peculiar graces; then, with voice
 Mild as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
 Her hand soft touching, whispered thus:—"Awake,
 My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
 Heaven's last, best gift, my ever-new delight!
 Awake! the morning shines, and the fresh field 20
 Calls us; we lose the prime to mark how spring
 Our tended plants, how blows the citron grove,
 What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
 How Nature paints her colours, how the bee
 Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet."

Such whispering waked her, but with startled eye
 On Adam; whom embracing, thus she spake:—

"O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
 My glory, my perfection! glad I see
 Thy face, and morn returned; for I this night 30
 (Such night till this I never passed) have dreamed,
 If dreamed, not, as I oft am wont, of thee,
 Works of day past, or morrow's next design;
 But of offence and trouble, which my mind
 Knew never till this irksome night. Methought,
 Close at mine ear one called me forth to walk
 With gentle voice; I thought it thine. It said,
 'Why sleep'st thou, Eve? now is the pleasant time,
 The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
 To the night-warbling bird, that now awake 40
 Tunes sweetest his love-laboured song; now reigns
 Full-orbed the moon, and, with more pleasing light,
 Shadowy sets off the face of things—in vain,
 If none regard. Heaven wakes with all his eyes;
 Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire,
 In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
 Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze?'
 I rose as at thy call, but found thee not:
 To find thee I directed then my walk;
 And on, methought, alone I passed through ways 50
 That brought me on a sudden to the tree
 Of interdicted knowledge. Fair it seemed,

Much fairer to my fancy than by day ;
 And, as I wondering looked, beside it stood
 One shaped and winged like one of those from Heaven
 By us oft seen : his dewy locks distilled
 Ambrosia. On that tree he also gazed ;
 And, ' O fair plant,' said he, ' with fruit surcharged,
 Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,
 Nor God nor Man ? Is knowledge so despised ? 60
 Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste ?
 Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
 Longer thy offered good, why else set here ?'
 This said, he paused not, but with venturous arm
 He plucked, he tasted. Me damp horror chilled
 At such bold words vouched with a deed so bold ;
 But he thus, overjoyed : ' O fruit divine,
 Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropt,
 Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit
 For Gods, yet able to make Gods of men ! 70
 And why not Gods of men, since good, the more
 Communicated, more abundant grows,
 The author not impaired, but honoured more ?
 Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve !
 Partake thou also : happy though thou art,
 Happier thou may'st be, worthier canst not be.
 Taste this, and be henceforth among the Gods
 Thyself a Goddess ; not to Earth confined,
 But sometimes in the Air, as we ; sometimes
 Ascend to Heaven, by merit thine, and see 80
 What life the Gods live there, and such live thou.'
 So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,
 Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part
 Which he had plucked : the pleasant savoury smell
 So quickened appetite that I, methought,
 Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
 With him I flew, and underneath beheld
 The Earth outstretched immense, a prospect wide
 And various. Wondering at my flight and change
 To this high exaltation, suddenly 90
 My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,

And fell asleep; but, O, how glad I waked
 To find this but a dream!" Thus Eve her night
 Related, and thus Adam answered sad:—

“Best image of myself, and dearer half,
 The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
 Affects me equally; nor can I like
 This uncouth dream—of evil sprung, I fear;
 Yet evil whence? In thee can harbour none,
 Created pure. But know that in the soul 100
 Are many lesser faculties, that serve
 Reason as chief. Among these Fancy next
 Her office holds; of all external things,
 Which the five watchful senses represent,
 She forms imaginations, aery shapes,
 Which Reason, joining or disjoining, frames
 All what we affirm or what deny, and call
 Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
 Into her private cell when Nature rests.
 Oft, in her absence, mimic Fancy wakes 110
 To imitate her; but, misjoining shapes,
 Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams,
 Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
 Some such resemblances, methinks, I find
 Of our last evening's talk in this thy dream,
 But with addition strange. Yet be not sad:
 Evil into the mind of God or Man
 May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
 No spot or blame behind; which gives me hope
 That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream 120
 Waking thou never wilt consent to do.
 Be not disheartened, then, nor cloud those looks,
 That wont to be more cheerful and serene
 Than when fair Morning first smiles on the world;
 And let us to our fresh employments rise
 Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers,
 That open now their choicest bosomed smells,
 Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store.”

So cheered he his fair spouse; and she was cheered,
 But silently a gentle tear let fall

From either eye, and wiped them with her hair :
 Two other precious drops that ready stood,
 Each in their crystal sluice, he, ere they fell,
 Kissed as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
 And pious awe, that feared to have offended.

So all was cleared, and to the field they haste.
 But first, from under shady arborous roof
 Soon as they forth were come to open sight
 Of day-spring, and the Sun—who, scarce uprisen,
 With wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean-brim, 140
 Shot parallel to the Earth his dewy ray,
 Discovering in wide landskip all the east
 Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains—
 Lowly they bowed, adoring, and began
 Their orisons, each morning duly paid
 In various style ; for neither various style
 Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
 Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung
 Unmeditated ; such prompt eloquence
 Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse, 150
 More tuneable than needed lute or harp
 To add more sweetness : And they thus began :—

“These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
 Almighty! thine this universal frame,
 Thus wondrous fair : Thyself how wondrous then!
 Unspeakable! who sitt'st above these heavens
 To us invisible, or dimly seen
 In these thy lowest works ; yet these declare
 Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
 Speak, ye who best can tell, ye Sons of Light, 160
 Angels—for ye behold him, and with songs
 And choral symphonies, day without night,
 Circle his throne rejoicing—ye in Heaven ;
 On Earth join, all ye creatures, to extol
 Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.
 Fairest of Stars, last in the train of Night,
 If better thou belong not to the Dawn,
 Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
 With thy bright cirlet, praise him in thy sphere

While day arises, that sweet hour of prime. 170
 Thou Sun, of this great World both eye and soul,
 Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise
 In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
 And when high noon has gained, and when thou fall'st.
 Moon, that now meet'st the orient Sun, now fliest,
 With the fixed Stars, fixed in their orb that flies;
 And ye five other wandering Fires, that move
 In mystic dance, not without song, resound
 His praise who out of Darkness called up Light.
 Air, and ye Elements, the eldest birth 180
 Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run
 Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix
 And nourish all things, let your ceaseless change
 Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
 Ye Mists and Exhalations, that now rise
 From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,
 Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
 In honour to the World's great Author rise;
 Whether to deck with clouds the uncoloured sky,
 Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers, 190
 Rising or falling, still advance his praise.
 His praise, ye Winds, that from four quarters blôw,
 Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye Pines,
 With every Plant, in sign of worship wave.
 Fountains, and ye, that warble, as ye flow,
 Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
 Join voices, all ye living Souls. Ye Birds,
 That, singing, up to Heaven-gate ascend,
 Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
 Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk 200
 The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,
 Witness if I be silent, morn or even,
 To hill or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,
 Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
 Hail, universal Lord! Be bounteous still
 To give us only good; and, if the night
 Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,
 Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark."

So prayed they innocent, and to their thoughts
 Firm peace recovered soon, and wonted calm. // 210
 On to their morning's rural work they haste,
 Among sweet dews and flowers, where any row
 Of fruit-trees, over-woody, reached too far
 Their pampered boughs, and needed hands to check
 Fruitless embraces: or they led the vine
 To wed her elm; she, spoused, about him twines
 Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
 Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn
 His barren leaves. Them thus employed beheld
 With pity Heaven's high King, and to him called 220
 Raphael, the sociable Spirit, that deigned
 To travel with Tobias, and secured
 His marriage with the seven-times-wedded maid.

"Raphael," said he, "thou hear'st what stir on Earth
 Satan, from Hell scaped through the darksome Gulf,
 Hath raised in Paradise, and how disturbed
 This night the human pair; how he designs
 In them at once to ruin all mankind.
 Go, therefore; half this day, as friend with friend,
 Converse with Adam, in what bower or shade 230
 Thou find'st him from the heat of noon retired
 To respite his day-labour with repast
 Or with repose; and such discourse bring on
 As may advise him of his happy state—
 Happiness in his power left free to will,
 Left to his own free will, his will though free
 Yet mutable. Whence warn him to beware
 He swerve not, too secure: tell him withal
 His danger, and from whom; what enemy,
 Late fallen himself from Heaven, is plotting now 240
 The fall of others from like state of bliss.
 By violence? no, for that shall be withstood;
 But by deceit and lies. This let him know,
 Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend
 Surprisal, unadmonished, unforwarned."

So spake the Eternal Father, and fulfilled
 All justice. Nor delayed the wingèd Saint

After his charge received; but from among
 Thousand celestial Ardours, where he stood
 Veiled with his gorgeous wings, upspringing light, † † 250
 Flew through the midst of Heaven. The angelic quires,
 On each hand parting, to his speed gave way
 Through all the empyreal road, till, at the gate
 Of Heaven arrived, the gate self-opened wide,
 On golden hinges turning, as by work
 Divine the sovran Architect had framed.
 From hence—no cloud or, to obstruct his sight,
 Star interposed, however small—he sees,
 Not unconform to other shining globes,
 Earth, and the Garden of God, with cedars crowned 260
 Above all hills; as when by night the glass
 Of Galileo, less assured, observes
 Imagined lands and regions in the Moon;
 Or pilot from amidst the Cyclades
 Delos or Samos first appearing kens,
 A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight
 He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky
 Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing
 Now on the polar winds; then with quick fan
 Winnows the buxom air, till, within soar
 Of towering eagles, to all the fowls he seems
 A phœnix, gazed by all, as that sole bird,
 When, to enshrine his relics in the Sun's
 Bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies.
 At once on the eastern cliff of Paradise
 He lights, and to his proper shape returns,
 A Seraph winged. Six wings he wore, to shade
 His lineaments divine: the pair that clad
 Each shoulder broad came mantling o'er his breast
 With regal ornament; the middle pair
 Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
 Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
 And colours dipt in heaven; the third his feet
 Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,
 Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia's son he stood,
 And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled

270

280

The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the bands
 Of Angels under watch, and to his state
 And to his message high in honour rise;
 For on some message high they guessed him bound. 290
 Their glittering tents he passed, and now is come
 Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,
 And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm,
 A wilderness of sweets; for Nature here
 Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will
 Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
 Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss.
 Him, through the spicy forest onward come,
 Adam discerned, as in the door he sat
 Of his cool bower, while now the mounted Sun 300
 Shot down direct his fervid rays, to warm
 Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs;
 And Eve, within, due at her hour, prepared
 For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please
 True appetite, and not disrelish thirst
 Of nectarous draughts between, from milky stream,
 Berry or grape: to whom thus Adam called:—
 “Haste hither, Eve, and, worth thy sight, behold
 Eastward among those trees what glorious Shape
 Comes this way moving; seems another morn 310
 Risen on mid-noon. Some great behest from Heaven
 To us perhaps he brings, and will voutsafe
 This day to be our guest. But go with speed,
 And what thy stores contain bring forth, and pour
 Abundance fit to honour and receive
 Our heavenly stranger; well we may afford
 Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow
 From large bestowed, where Nature multiplies
 Her fertile growth, and by disburdening grows
 More fruitful; which instructs us not to spare.” 320
 To whom thus Eve:—“Adam, Earth's hallowed mould,
 Of God inspired, small store will serve where store,
 All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk;
 Save what, by frugal storing, firmness gains
 To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes.

But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,
Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice
To entertain our Angel-guest as he,
Beholding, shall confess that here on Earth
God hath dispensed his bounties as in Heaven.” 330

So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent
What choice to choose for delicacy best,
What order so contrived as not to mix
Tastes, not well joined, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindest change :
Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk
Whatever Earth, all-bearing mother, yields
In India East or West, or middle shore
In Pontus or the Punic coast, or where 340
Alcinöus reigned, fruit of all kinds, in coat
Rough or smooth rined, or bearded husk, or shell,
She gathers, tribute large, and on the board
Heaps with unsparing hand. For drink the grape
She crushes, inoffensive must, and meaths
From many a berry, and from sweet kernels pressed
She tempers dulcet creams—nor these to hold
Wants her fit vessels pure; then strews the ground
With rose and odours from the shrub unfumed.

Meanwhile our primitive great Sire, to meet 350
His Godlike guest, walks forth, without more train
Accompanied than with his own complete
Perfections; in himself was all his state,
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
On princes, when their rich retinue long
Of horses led and grooms besmeared with gold
Dazzles the crowd and sets them all agape.
Nearer his presence, Adam, though not awed,
Yet with submissive approach and reverence meek,
As to a superior nature, bowing low, 360
Thus said:—“ Native of Heaven (for other place
None can than Heaven such glorious Shape contain),
Since, by descending from the Thrones above,
Those happy places thou hast deigned a while

To want, and honour these, voutsafe with us,
 Two only, who yet by sovran gift possess
 This spacious ground, in yonder shady bower
 To rest, and what the Garden choicest bears
 To sit and taste, till this meridian heat
 Be over, and the sun more cool decline.” 370

Whom thus the angelic Virtue answered mild:—
 “Adam, I therefore came; nor art thou such
 Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
 As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heaven,
 To visit thee. Lead on, then, where thy bower
 O’ershades; for these mid-hours, till evening rise,
 I have at will.” So to the sylvan lodge
 They came, that like Pomona’s arbour smiled,
 With flowerets decked and fragrant smells. But Eve,
 Undecked, save with herself, more lovely fair 380
 Than wood-nymph, or the fairest Goddess feigned
 Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove,
 Stood to entertain her guest from Heaven; no veil
 She needed, virtue-proof; no thought infirm
 Altered her cheek. On whom the Angel “Hail!”
 Bestowed—the holy salutation used
 Long after to blest Mary, second Eve:—

“Hail! Mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb
 Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons
 Than with these various fruits the trees of God 390
 Have heaped this table!” Raised of grassy turf
 Their table was, and mossy seats had round,
 And on her ample square, from side to side,
 All Autumn piled, though Spring and Autumn here
 Danced hand-in-hand. A while discourse they hold—
 No fear lest dinner cool—when thus began
 Our Author:—“Heavenly Stranger, please to taste
 These bounties, which our Nourisher, from whom
 All perfect good, unmeasured-out, descends,
 To us for food and for delight hath caused 400
 The Earth to yield: unsavoury food, perhaps,
 To Spiritual Natures; only this I know,
 That one Celestial Father gives to all.”

To whom the Angel:—"Therefore, what he gives
 (Whose praise be ever sung) to Man, in part
 Spiritual, may of purest Spirits be found
 No ingrateful food: and food alike those pure
 Intelligential substances require
 As doth your Rational; and both contain
 Within them every lower faculty 410
 Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,
 Tasting concoct, digest, assimilate,
 And corporeal to incorporeal turn.
 For know, whatever was created needs
 To be sustained and fed. Of Elements
 The grosser feeds the purer: Earth and Sea;
 Earth and the Sea feed Air; the Air those Fires
 Ethereal, and, as lowest, first the Moon;
 Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged
 Vapours not yet into her substance turned. 420
 Nor doth the Moon no nourishment exhale
 From her moist continent to higher Orbs.
 The Sun, that light imparts to all, receives
 From all his alimantal recompense
 In humid exhalations, and at even
 Sups with the Ocean. Though in Heaven the trees
 Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines
 Yield nectar—though from off the boughs each morn
 We brush mellifluous dews and find the ground
 Covered with pearly grain—yet God hath here 430
 Varied his bounty so with new delights
 As may compare with Heaven; and to taste
 Think not I shall be nice." So down they sat,
 And to their viands fell; nor seemingly
 The Angel, nor in mist—the common gloss
 Of theologians—but with keen dispatch
 Of real hunger, and concoctive heat
 To transubstantiate: what redounds transpires
 Through Spirits with ease; nor wonder, if by fire
 Of sooty coal the empiric alchemist 440
 Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,
 Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold,

As from the mine. Meanwhile at table Eve
 Ministered naked, and their flowing cups
 With pleasant liquors crowned. O innocence
 Deserving Paradise! If ever, then,
 Then had the Sons of God excuse to have been
 Enamoured at that sight. But in those hearts
 Love unlibidinous reigned, nor jealousy
 Was understood, the injured lover's hell. 450

Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed,
 Not burdened nature, sudden mind arose
 In Adam not to let the occasion pass,
 Given him by this great conference, to know
 Of things above his world, and of their being
 Who dwell in Heaven, whose excellence he saw
 Transcend his own so far, whose radiant forms,
 Divine effulgence, whose high power so far
 Exceeded human; and his wary speech
 Thus to the empyreal minister he framed:— 460

“Inhabitant with God, now know I well
 Thy favour, in this honour done to Man;
 Under whose lowly roof thou hast voutsafed
 To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,
 Food not of Angels, yet accepted so
 As that more willingly thou couldst not seem
 At Heaven's high feasts to have fed: yet what compare!”

To whom the wingèd Hierarch replied:—
 “O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom
 All things proceed, and up to him return, 470
 If not depraved from good, created all
 Such to perfection; one first matter all,
 Endued with various forms, various degrees
 Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;
 But more refined, more spiritous and pure,
 As nearer to him placed or nearer tending
 Each in their several active spheres assigned,
 Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
 Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
 Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
 More aery, last the bright consummate flower 481

Spirits odorous breathes : flowers and their fruit,
 Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
 To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
 To intellectual ; give both life and sense,
 Fancy and understanding ; whence the Soul
 Reason receives, and Reason is her being,
 Discursive, or Intuitive : Discourse
 Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,
 Differing but in degree, of kind the same. 490
 Wonder not, then, what God for you saw good
 If I refuse not, but convert, as you,
 To proper substance. Time may come when Men
 With Angels may participate, and find
 No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare ;
 And from these corporal nutriments, perhaps,
 Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
 Improved by tract of time, and wing'd ascend
 Ethereal, as we, or may at choice
 Here or in heavenly paradises dwell, 500
 If ye be found obedient, and retain
 Unalterably firm his love entire
 Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy,
 Your fill, what happiness this happy state
 Can comprehend, incapable of more."

To whom the Patriarch of Mankind replied :—
 “ O favourable Spirit, propitious guest,
 Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
 Our knowledge, and the scale of Nature set
 From centre to circumference, whereon, 510
 In contemplation of created things,
 By steps we may ascend to God. But say,
 What meant that caution joined, *If ye be found
 Obedient?* Can we want obedience, then,
 To him, or possibly his love desert,
 Who formed us from the dust, and placed us here
 Full to the utmost measure of what bliss
 Human desires can seek or apprehend ?”

To whom the Angel :—“ Son of Heaven and Earth,
 Attend! That thou art happy, owe to God ; 520

That thou continuest such, owe to thyself,
 That is, to thy obedience; therein stand.
 This was that caution given thee; be advised.
 God made thee perfect, not immutable;
 And good he made thee; but to persevere
 He left it in thy power—ordained thy will
 By nature free, not over-ruled by fate
 Inextricable, or strict necessity.
 Our voluntary service he requires,
 Not our necessitated. Such with him 530
 Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how
 Can hearts not free be tried whether they serve
 Willing or no, who will but what they must
 By destiny, and can no other choose?
 Myself, and all the Angelic Host, that stand
 In sight of God enthroned, our happy state
 Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds,
 On other surety none: freely we serve,
 Because we freely love, as in our will
 To love or not; in this we stand or fall. 540
 And some are fallen, to disobedience fallen,
 And so from Heaven to deepest Hell. O fall
 From what high state of bliss into what woe!"

To whom our great Progenitor:—"Thy words
 Attentive, and with more delighted ear,
 Divine instructor, I have heard, than when
 Cherubic songs by night from neighbouring hills
 Aërial music send. Nor knew I not
 To be, both will and deed, created free.
 Yet that we never shall forget to love 550
 Our Maker, and obey him whose command
 Single is yet so just, my constant thoughts
 Assured me, and still assure; though what thou tell'st
 Hath passed in Heaven some doubt within me move,
 But more desire to hear, if thou consent,
 The full relation, which must needs be strange,
 Worthy of sacred silence to be heard.
 And we have yet large day, for scarce the Sun
 Hath finished half his journey, and scarce begins

His other half in the great zone of heaven." 560

Thus Adam made request; and Raphael,
After short pause assenting, thus began:—

“High matter thou enjoïn’st me, O prime of Men—
Sad task and hard; for how shall I relate
To human sense the invisible exploits
Of warring Spirits? how, without remorse,
The ruin of so many, glorious once
And perfect while they stood? how, last, unfold
The secrets of another world, perhaps
Not lawful to reveal? Yet for thy good 570

This is dispensed; and what surmounts the reach
Of human sense I shall delineate so,
By likening spiritual to corporal forms,
As may express them best—though what if Earth
Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
Each to other like more than on Earth is thought!

“As yet this World was not, and Chaos wild
Reigned where these heavens now roll, where Earth
now rests

Upon her centre poised, when on a day
(For Time, though in Eternity, applied . 580

To motion, measures all things durable
By present, past, and future), on such day
As Heaven’s great year brings forth, the empyreal host
Of Angels, by imperial summons called,
Innumerable before the Almighty’s throne
Forthwith from all the ends of Heaven appeared
Under their hierarchs in orders bright.

Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,
Standards and gonfalons, ’twixt van and rear
Stream in the air, and for distinction serve 590
Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees;

Or in their glittering tissues bear emblazed
Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love
Recorded eminent. Thus when in orbs
Of circuit inexpressible they stood,
Orb within orb, the Father Infinite,
By whom in bliss embosomed sat the Son,

Amidst, as from a flaming mount, whose top
 Brightness had made invisible, thus spake :—

“ Hear, all ye Angels, Progeny of Light, 600
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
 Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand !
 This day I have begot whom I declare
 My only Son, and on this holy hill
 Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
 At my right hand. Your head I him appoint,
 And by myself have sworn to him shall bow
 All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord.
 Under his great vicegerent reign abide,
 United as one individual soul, 610

For ever happy. Him who disobeys
 Me disobeys, breaks union, and, that day,
 Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
 Into utter darkness, deep engulfed, his place
 Ordained without redemption, without end.’

“ So spake the Omnipotent, and with his words
 All seemed well pleased ; all seemed, but were not all.
 That day, as other solemn days, they spent
 In song and dance about the sacred hill—
 Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere 620
 Of planets and of fixed in all her wheels
 Resembles nearest ; mazes intricate,
 Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular
 Then most when most irregular they seem ;
 And in their motions harmony divine
 So smooths her charming tones that God’s own ear
 Listens delighted. Evening now approached
 (For we have also our evening and our morn—
 We ours for change delectable, not need),
 Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn 630
 Desirous : all in circles as they stood,
 Tables are set, and on a sudden piled
 With Angels’ food ; and rubied nectar flows
 In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold,
 Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of Heaven.
 On flowers reposed, and with fresh flowerets crowned,

They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet
 Quaff immortality and joy, secure
 Of surfeit where full measure only bounds
 Excess, before the all-bounteous King, who showered
 With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy. 641
 Now when ambrosial Night, with clouds exhaled
 From that high mount of God whence light and shade
 Spring both, the face of brightest Heaven had changed
 To grateful twilight (for Night comes not there
 In darker veil), and roseate dews disposed
 All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest,
 Wide over all the plain, and wider far
 Than all this globous Earth in plain outspread
 (Such are the courts of God), the Angelic throng, 650
 Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend
 By living streams among the trees of life—
 Pavilions numberless and sudden reared,
 Celestial tabernacles, where they slept,
 Fanned with cool winds; save those who, in their course,
 Melodious hymns about the sovran throne
 Alternate all night long. But not so waked
 Satan—so call him now; his former name
 Is heard no more in Heaven. He, of the first,
 If not the first Archangel, great in power, 660
 In favour, and pre-eminence, yet fraught
 With envy against the Son of God, that day
 Honoured by his great Father, and proclaimed
 Messiah, King Anointed, could not bear,
 Through pride, that sight, and thought himself impaired.
 Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,
 Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
 Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved
 With all his legions to dislodge, and leave
 Unworshiped, unobeyed, the Throne supreme, 670
 Contemptuous, and, his next subordinate
 Awakening, thus to him in secret spake:—
 “ ‘ Sleep’st thou, companion dear? what sleep can close
 Thy eyelids? and rememberest what decree,
 Of yesterday, so late hath passed the lips

Of Heaven's Almighty? Thou to me thy thoughts
 Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont, to impart;
 Both waking we were one; how, then, can now
 Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou seest imposed;
 New laws from him who reigns new minds may raise
 In us who serve—new counsels, to debate 681
 What doubtful may ensue. More in this place
 To utter is not safe. Assemble thou
 Of all those myriads which we lead the chief;
 Tell them that, by command, ere yet dim Night
 Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,
 And all who under me their banners wave,
 Homeward with flying march where we possess
 The quarters of the North, there to prepare
 Fit entertainment to receive our King, 690
 'The great Messiah, and his new commands,
 Who speedily through all the Hierarchies
 Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.'
 "So spake the false Archangel, and infused
 Bad influence into the unwary breast
 Of his associate. He together calls,
 Or several one by one, the regent Powers,
 Under him regent; tells, as he was taught,
 That, the Most High commanding, now ere Night,
 Now ere dim Night had disencumbered Heaven, 700
 The great hierarchal standard was to move;
 Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
 Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound
 Or taint integrity. But all obeyed
 The wonted signal, and superior voice
 Of their great Potentate; for great indeed
 His name, and high was his degree in Heaven:
 His countenance, as the morning-star that guides
 The starry flock, allured them, and with lies
 Drew after him the third part of Heaven's host. 710
 Meanwhile, the Eternal Eye, whose sight discerns
 Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy mount,
 And from within the golden lamps that burn
 Nightly before him, saw without their light

Rebellion rising—saw in whom, how spread
 Among the Sons of Morn, what multitudes
 Were banded to oppose his high decree ;
 And, smiling, to his only Son thus said :—

“ Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
 In full resplendence, Heir of all my might, 720
 Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
 Of our omnipotence, and with what arms
 We mean to hold what anciently we claim
 Of deity or empire: such a foe
 Is rising, who intends to erect his throne
 Equal to ours, throughout the spacious North ;
 Nor so content, hath in his thought to try
 In battle what our power is or our right.

Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
 With speed what force is left, and all employ 730
 In our defence, lest unawares we lose
 This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.’

“ To whom the Son, with calm aspect and clear
 Lightning divine, ineffable, serene,
 Made answer :—‘ Mighty Father, thou thy foes
 Justly hast in derision, and secure
 Laugh’st at their vain designs and tumults vain—
 Matter to me of glory, whom their hate
 Illustrates, when they see all regal power
 Given me to quell their pride, and in event 740
 Know whether I be dextrous to subdue
 Thy rebels, or be found the worst in Heaven.’

“ So spake the Son ; but Satan with his Powers
 Far was advanced on wingèd speed, an host
 Innumerable as the stars of night,
 Or stars of morning, dew-drops which the sun
 Impearls on every leaf and every flower.
 Regions they passed, the mighty regencies
 Of Seraphim and Potentates and Thrones
 In their triple degrees—regions to which 750
 All thy dominion, Adam, is no more
 Than what this garden is to all the earth
 And all the sea, from one entire globose

Stretched into longitude; which having passed,
 At length into the limits of the North
 They came, and Satan to his royal seat
 High on a hill, far-blazing, as a mount
 Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers
 From diamond quarries hewn and rocks of gold—
 The palace of great Lucifer (so call 760
 That structure, in the dialect of men
 Interpreted) which, not long after, he,
 Affecting all equality with God,
 In imitation of that mount whereon
 Messiah was declared in sight of Heaven,
 The Mountain of the Congregation called;
 For thither he assembled all his train,
 Pretending so commanded to consult
 About the great reception of their King
 Thither to come, and with calumnious art 770
 Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears:—
 “Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers—
 If these magnificent titles yet remain
 Not merely titular, since by decree
 Another now hath to himself engrossed
 All power, and us eclipsed under the name
 Of King Anointed; for whom all this haste
 Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,
 This only to consult, how we may best,
 With what may be devised of honours new, 780
 Receive him coming to receive from us
 Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile!
 Too much to one! but double how endured—
 To one and to his image now proclaimed?
 But what if better counsels might erect
 Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke!
 Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
 The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust
 To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
 Natives and Sons of Heaven possessed before 790
 By none, and, if not equal all, yet free,
 Equally free; for orders and degrees

Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
 Who can in reason, then, or right, assume
 Monarchy over such as live by right
 His equals—if in power and splendour less,
 In freedom equal? or can introduce
 Law and edict on us, who without law
 Err not? much less for this to be our Lord,
 And look for adoration, to the abuse
 Of those imperial titles which assert
 Our being ordained to govern, not to serve!’

800

“Thus far his bold discourse without control
 Had audience, when, among the Seraphim,
 Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored
 The Deity, and divine commands obeyed,
 Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe
 The current of his fury thus opposed:—

“O argument blasphemous, false, and proud—
 Words which no ear ever to hear in Heaven
 Expected; least of all from thee, ingrate,
 In place thyself so high above thy peers!
 Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn
 The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,
 That to his only Son, by right endued
 With regal sceptre, every soul in Heaven
 Shall bend the knee, and in that honour due
 Confess him rightful King? Unjust, thou say’st,
 Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,
 And equal over equals to let reign,

810

820

One over all with unsucceeded power!
 Shalt thou give law to God? shalt thou dispute
 With him the points of liberty, who made
 Thee what thou art, and formed the Powers of Heaven
 Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being?
 Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,
 And of our good and of our dignity
 How provident, he is—how far from thought
 To make us less; bent rather to exalt
 Our happy state, under one head more near
 United. But—to grant it thee unjust

830

That equal over equals monarch reign—
 Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count,
 Or all angelic nature joined in one,
 Equal to him, begotten Son, by whom,
 As by his Word, the mighty Father made
 All things, even thee, and all the Spirits of Heaven
 By him created in their bright degrees,
 Crowned them with glory, and to their glory named
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers?—
 Essential Powers; nor by his reign obscured, 841
 But more illustrious made; since he, the head,
 One of our number thus reduced becomes;
 His laws our laws; all honour to him done
 Returns our own. Cease, then, this impious rage,
 And tempt not these; but hasten to appease
 The incensèd Father and the incensèd Son
 While pardon may be found, in time besought.'

“So spake the fervent Angel; but his zeal
 None seconded, as out of season judged, 850
 Or singular and rash. Whereat rejoiced
 The Apostate, and, more haughty, thus replied:—

“‘That we were formed, then, say'st thou? and the work
 Of secondary hands, by task transferred
 From Father to his Son? Strange point and new!
 Doctrine which we would know whence learned! Who saw
 When this creation was? Remember'st thou
 Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
 We know no time when we were not as now;
 Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised 860
 By our own quickening power when fatal course
 Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
 Of this our native Heaven, Ethereal Sons.
 Our puissance is our own; our own right hand
 Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try
 Who is our equal. Then thou shalt behold
 Whether by supplication we intend
 Address, and to begirt the Almighty Throne
 Beseeching or besieging. This report,
 These tidings, carry to the Anointed King; 870

And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.'

• "He said; and, as the sound of waters deep,
Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause
Through the infinite host. Nor less for that
The flaming Seraph, fearless, though alone,
Encompassed round with foes, thus answered bold:—

"O alienate from God, O Spirit accursed,
Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall
Determined, and thy hapless crew involved
In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread 880
Both of thy crime and punishment. Henceforth
No more be troubled how to quit the yoke
Of God's Messiah. Those indulgent laws
Will not be now voutsafed; other decrees
Against thee are gone forth without recall;
That golden sceptre which thou didst reject
Is now an iron rod to bruise and break
Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise;
Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly
These wicked tents devoted, lest the wrath 890
Impendent, raging into sudden flame,
Distinguish not: for soon expect to feel
His thunder on thy head, devouring fire.
Then who created thee lamenting learn
When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know.'

"So spake the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found;
Among the faithless faithful only he;
Among innumerable false unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal; 900
Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single. From amidst them forth he passed,
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained
Superior, nor of violence feared aught;
And with retorted scorn his back he turned
On those proud towers, to swift destruction doomed."

PARADISE LOST

BOOK VI

THE ARGUMENT

Raphael continues to relate how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his Angels. The first fight described : Satan and his Powers retire under night. He calls a council ; invents devilish engines, which, in the second day's fight, put Michael and his Angels to some disorder ; but they at length, pulling up mountains, overwhelmed both the force and machines of Satan. Yet, the tumult not so ending, God, on the third day, sends Messiah his Son, for whom he had reserved the glory of that victory. He, in the power of his Father, coming to the place, and causing all his legions to stand still on either side, with his chariot and thunder driving into the midst of his enemies, pursues them, unable to resist, towards the wall of Heaven ; which opening, they leap down with horror and confusion into the place of punishment prepared for them in the Deep. Messiah returns with triumph to his Father.

“ALL night the dreadless Angel, unpursued,
Through Heaven's wide champaign held his way, till
Morn,
Waked by the circling Hours, with rosy hand
Unbarred the gates of Light. There is a cave
Within the Mount of God, fast by his throne,
Where Light and Darkness in perpetual round
Lodge and dislodge by turns—which makes through
Heaven
Grateful vicissitude, like day and night ;
Light issues forth, and at the other door
Obsequious Darkness enters, till her hour 10
To veil the heaven, though darkness there might well
Seem twilight here. And now went forth the Morn

Such as in highest heaven, arrayed in gold
 'Empyrean; from before her vanished Night,
 Shot through with orient beams; when all the plain
 Covered with thick embattled squadrons bright,
 Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,
 Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view.
 War he perceived, war in procinct, and found
 Already known what he for news had thought 20
 To have reported. Gladly then he mixed
 Among those friendly Powers, who him received
 With joy and acclamations loud, that one,
 That of so many myriads fallen yet one,
 Returned not lost. On to the sacred hill
 They led him, high applauded, and present
 Before the seat supreme; from whence a voice,
 From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard:—
 “ ‘Servant of God, well done! Well hast thou fought
 The better fight, who single hast maintained 30
 Against revolted multitudes the cause
 Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms,
 And for the testimony of truth hast borne
 Universal reproach, far worse to bear
 Than violence; for this was all thy care—
 To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
 Judged thee perverse. The easier conquest now
 Remains thee—aided by this host of friends,
 Back on thy foes more glorious to return
 Than scorned thou didst depart; and to subdue 40
 By force who reason for their law refuse—
 Right reason for their law, and for their King
 Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.
 Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince,
 And thou, in military prowess next,
 Gabriel; lead forth to battle these my sons
 Invincible; lead forth my armed Saints,
 By thousands and by millions ranged for fight,
 Equal in number to that godless crew
 Rebellious. Them with fire and hostile arms, 50
 Fearless assault; and, to the brow of Heaven

Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss
 Into their place of punishment, the gulf
 Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide
 His fiery chaos to receive their fall.'

“So spake the Sovran Voice; and clouds began
 To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll
 In dusky wreaths reluctant flames, the sign
 Of wrath awaked; nor with less dread the loud
 Ethereal trumpet from on high gan blow. 60
 At which command the Powers Militant
 That stood for Heaven, in mighty quadrate joined
 Of union irresistible, moved on
 In silence their bright legions to the sound
 Of instrumental harmony, that breathed
 Heroic ardour to adventurous deeds
 Under their Godlike leaders, in the cause
 Of God and his Messiah. On they move,
 Indissolubly firm; nor obvious hill,
 Nor straitening vale, nor wood, nor stream, divides 70
 Their perfect ranks; for high above the ground
 Their march was, and the passive air upbore
 Their nimble tread. As when the total kind
 Of birds, in orderly array on wing,
 Came summoned over Eden to receive
 Their names of thee; so over many a tract
 Of Heaven they marched, and many a province wide,
 Tenfold the length of this terrene. At last,
 Far in the horizon, to the north, appeared
 From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretched 80
 In battailous aspect; and, nearer view,
 Bristled with upright beams innumerable
 Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields
 Various, with boastful argument portrayed,
 The banded Powers of Satan hasting on
 With furious expedition: for they weened
 That self-same day, by fight or by surprise,
 To win the Mount of God, and on his throne
 To set the envier of his state, the proud
 Aspirer. But their thoughts proved fond and vain 90

In the mid-way ; though strange to us it seemed
 At first that Angel should with Angel war,
 And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet
 So oft in festivals of joy and love
 Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire,
 Hymning the Eternal Father. But the shout
 Of battle now began, and rushing sound
 Of onset ended soon each milder thought.
 High in the midst, exalted as a God,
 The Apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat, 100
 Idol of majesty divine, enclosed
 With flaming Cherubim and golden shields ;
 Then lighted from his gorgeous throne—for now
 'Twiixt host and host but narrow space was left,
 A dreadful interval, and front to front
 Presented stood, in terrible array
 Of hideous length. Before the cloudy van,
 On the rough edge of battle ere it joined,
 Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,
 Came towering, armed in adamant and gold. 110
 Abdiel that sight endured not, where he stood
 Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds,
 And thus his own undaunted heart explores :—
 “ O Heaven ! that such resemblance of the Highest
 Should yet remain, where faith and realty
 Remain not ! Wherefore should not strength and
 might
 There fail where virtue fails, or weakest prove
 Where boldest, though to sight unconquerable ?
 His puissance, trusting in the Almighty's aid,
 I mean to try, whose reason I have tried 120
 Unsound and false ; nor is it aught but just
 That he who in debate of truth hath won
 Should win in arms, in both disputes alike
 Victor. Though brutish that contést and foul,
 When reason hath to deal with force, yet so
 Most reason is that reason overcome.’
 “ So pondering, and from his armed peers
 Forth-stepping opposite, half-way he met

His daring foe, at this prevention more
Incensed, and thus securely him defied:— 130

“‘Proud, art thou met? Thy hope was to have
reached

The highth of thy aspiring unopposed—
The throne of God unguarded, and his side
Abandoned at the terror of thy power
Or potent tongue. Fool! not to think how vain
Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms;
Who, out of smallest things, could without end
Have raised incessant armies to defeat
Thy folly; or with solitary hand,
Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow, 140
Unaided could have finished thee, and whelmed
Thy legions under darkness! But thou seest
All are not of thy train; there be who faith
Prefer, and piety to God, though then
To thee not visible when I alone
Seemed in thy world erroneous to dissent
From all: my Sect thou seest; now learn too late
How few sometimes may know when thousands err.’

“Whom the grand Foe, with scornful eye askance,
Thus answered:—‘Ill for thee, but in wished hour 150
Of my revenge, first sought for, thou return’st
From flight, seditious Angel, to receive
Thy merited reward, the first assay
Of this right hand provoked, since first that tongue,
Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose
A third part of the Gods, in synod met
Their deities to assert: who, while they feel
Vigour divine within them, can allow
Omnipotence to none. But well thou com’st
Before thy fellows, ambitious to win 160
From me some plume, that thy success may show
Destruction to the rest. This pause between
(Unanswered lest thou boast) to let thee know.—
At first I thought that Liberty and Heaven
To heavenly souls had been all one; but now
I see that most through sloth had rather serve,

Ministering Spirits, trained up in feast and song :
 Such hast thou armed, the minstrelsy of heaven—
 Servility with freedom to contend,
 As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.' 170

“To whom, in brief, thus Abdiel stern replied :—
 ‘Apostate! still thou err’st, nor end wilt find
 Of erring, from the path of truth remote.
 Unjustly thou deprav’st it with the name
 Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,
 Or Nature : God and Nature bid the same,
 When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
 Them whom he governs. This is servitude—
 To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled
 Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee, 180
 Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled ;
 Yet lewdly dar’st our ministering upbraid.
 Reign thou in Hell, thy kingdom ; let me serve
 In Heaven God ever blest, and his divine
 Behests obey, worthiest to be obeyed.
 Yet chains in Hell, not realms, expect : meanwhile,
 From me returned, as erst thou saidst, from flight,
 This greeting on thy impious crest receive.’

“So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
 Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell 190
 On the proud crest of Satan that no sight,
 Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield,
 Such ruin intercept. Ten paces huge
 He back recoiled ; the tenth on bended knee
 His massy spear upstayed : as if, on earth,
 Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,
 Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,
 Half-sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized
 The rebel Thrones, but greater rage, to see
 Thus foiled their mightiest ; ours joy filled, and shout,
 Presage of victory, and fierce desire 201
 Of battle : whereat Michaël bid sound
 The Archangel trumpet. Through the vast of Heaven
 It sounded, and the faithful armies rung
 Hosannah to the Highest ; nor stood at gaze

The adverse legions, nor less hideous joined
 The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,
 And clamour such as heard in Heaven till now
 Was never; arms on armour clashing brayed
 Horrible discord, and the madding wheels 210
 Of brazen chariots raged; dire was the noise
 Of conflict; overhead the dismal hiss
 Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
 And, flying, vaulted either host with fire.
 So under fiery cope together rushed
 Both battles main with ruinous assault
 And inextinguishable rage. All Heaven
 Resounded; and, had Earth been then, all Earth
 Had to her centre shook. What wonder, when
 Millions of fierce encountering Angels fought 220
 On either side, the least of whom could wield
 These elements, and arm him with the force
 Of all their regions? How much more of power
 Army against army numberless to raise
 Dreadful combustion warring, and disturb,
 Though not destroy, their happy native seat;
 Had not the Eternal King Omnipotent
 From his strong hold of Heaven high overruled
 And limited their might, though numbered such
 As each divided legion might have seemed 230
 A numerous host, in strength each armed hand
 A legion! Led in fight, yet leader seemed
 Each warrior single as in chief; expert
 When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
 Of battle, open when, and when to close
 The ridges of grim war. No thought of flight,
 None of retreat, no unbecoming deed
 That argued fear; each on himself relied
 As only in his arm the moment lay
 Of victory. Deeds of eternal fame 240
 Were done, but infinite; for wide was spread
 That war, and various: sometimes on firm ground
 A standing fight; then, soaring on main wing,
 Tormented all the air; all air seemed then

Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale
 The battle hung ; till Satan, who that day
 Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms
 No equal, ranging through the dire attack
 Of fighting Seraphim confused, at length
 Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and felled 250
 Squadrons at once : with huge two-handed sway
 Brandished aloft, the horrid edge came down
 Wide-wasting. Such destruction to withstand
 He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb
 Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,
 A vast circumference. At his approach
 The great Archangel from his warlike toil
 Surceased, and, glad, as hoping here to end
 Intestine war in Heaven, the Arch-foe subdued,
 Or captive dragged in chains, with hostile frown 260
 And visage all inflamed, first thus began :—

““ Author of Evil, unknown till thy revolt,
 Unnamed in Heaven, now plenteous as thou seest
 These acts of hateful strife—hateful to all,
 Though heaviest, by just measure, on thyself
 And thy adherents—how hast thou disturbed
 Heaven’s blessed peace, and into Nature brought
 Misery, uncreated till the crime
 Of thy rebellion ! how hast thou instilled
 Thy malice into thousands, once upright 270
 And faithful, now proved false ! But think not here
 To trouble holy rest ; Heaven casts thee out
 From all her confines ; Heaven, the seat of bliss,
 Brooks not the works of violence and war.
 Hence, then, and Evil go with thee along,
 Thy offspring, to the place of Evil, Hell—
 Thou and thy wicked crew ! there mingle broils !
 Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom,
 Or some more sudden vengeance, winged from God,
 Precipitate thee with augmented pain.’ 280

“ So spake the Prince of Angels ; to whom thus
 The Adversary :—‘ Nor think thou with wind,
 Of airy threats to awe whom yet with deeds

Thou canst not. Hast thou turned the least of these
 To flight—or, if to fall, but that they rise
 Unvanquished—easier to transact with me
 That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats
 To chase me hence? Err not that so shall end
 The strife which thou call'st evil, but we style
 The strife of glory; which we mean to win, 290
 Or turn this Heaven itself into the Hell
 Thou fablest; here, however, to dwell free,
 If not to reign. Meanwhile, thy utmost force—
 And join him named Almighty to thy aid—
 I fly not, but have sought thee far and nigh.'

“ They ended parle, and both addressed for fight
 Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue
 Of Angels, can relate, or to what things
 Liken on Earth conspicuous, that may lift
 Human imagination to such highth 300
 Of Godlike power? for likest Gods they seemed,
 Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms,
 Fit to decide the empire of great Heaven.
 Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air
 Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields
 Blazed opposite, while Expectation stood
 In horror; from each hand with speed retired,
 Where erst was thickest fight, the Angelic throng,
 And left large field, unsafe within the wind
 Of such commotion: such as (to set forth 310
 Great things by small) if, Nature's concord broke,
 Among the constellations war were sprung,
 Two planets, rushing from aspect malign
 Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky
 Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound.
 Together both, with next to almighty arm
 Uplifted imminent, one stroke they aimed
 That might determine, and not need repeat
 As not of power, at once; nor odds appeared
 In might or swift prevention. But the sword 320
 Of Michael from the armoury of God
 Was given him tempered so that neither keen

Nor solid might resist that edge: it met
 The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite
 Descending, and in half cut sheer; nor stayed,
 But, with swift wheel reverse, deep entering, shared
 All his right side. Then Satan first knew pain,
 And writhed him to and fro convolved; so sore
 The griding sword with discontinuous wound
 Passed through him. But the ethereal substance closed,
 Not long divisible; and from the gash 331
 A stream of nectarous humour issuing flowed
 Sanguine, such as celestial Spirits may bleed,
 And all his armour stained, erewhile so bright,
 Forthwith, on all sides, to his aid was run
 By Angels many and strong, who interposed
 Defence, while others bore him on their shields
 Back to his chariot where it stood retired
 From off the files of war: there they him laid
 Gnashing for anguish, and despite, and shame 340
 To find himself not matchless, and his pride
 Humbled by such rebuke, so far beneath
 His confidence to equal God in power.
 Yet soon he healed; for Spirits, that live throughout
 Vital in every part— not, as frail Man,
 In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins—
 Cannot but by annihilating die;
 Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
 Receive, no more than can the fluid air:
 All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear, 350
 All intellect, all sense; and as they please
 They limb themselves, and colour, shape, or size
 Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.
 “Meanwhile, in other parts, like deeds deserved
 Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought,
 And with fierce ensigns pierced the deep array
 Of Moloch, furious king, who him defied,
 And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound
 Threatened, nor from the Holy One of Heaven
 Refrained his tongue blasphemous, but anon, 360
 Down cloven to the waist, with shattered arms

And uncouth pain fled bellowing. On each wing
 Uriel and Raphaël his vaunting foe,
 Though huge and in a rock of diamond armed,
 Vanquished—Adramelech and Asmadai,
 Two potent Thrones, that to be less than Gods
 Disdained, but meaner thoughts learned in their flight,
 Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail.
 Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy
 The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow 370
 Ariel, and Arioch, and the violence
 Of Ramiel, scorched and blasted, overthrew.
 I might relate of thousands, and their names
 Eternize here on Earth; but those elect
 Angels, contented with their fame in Heaven,
 Seek not the praise of men: the other sort,
 In might though wondrous and in acts of war,
 Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom
 Cancelled from Heaven and sacred memory,
 Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell 380
 For strength from truth divided, and from just,
 Illaudable, nought merits but dispraise
 And ignominy, yet to glory aspires,
 Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame:
 Therefore eternal silence be their doom!

“And now, their mightiest quelled, the battle swerved,
 With many an inroad gored; deformed rout
 Entered, and foul disorder; all the ground
 With shivered armour strown, and on a heap
 Chariot and charioteer lay overturned, 390
 And fiery foaming steeds; what stood recoiled,
 O'er-wearied, through the faint Satanic host,
 Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surprised—
 Then first with fear surprised and sense of pain—
 Fled ignominious, to such evil brought
 By sin of disobedience, till that hour
 Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.
 Far otherwise the inviolable Saints
 In cubic phalanx firm advanced entire,
 Invulnerable, impenetrably armed; 400

Such high advantages their innocence
 Gave them above their foes—not to have sinned,
 Not to have disobeyed; in fight they stood
 Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pained
 By wound, though from their place by violence moved.

“ Now Night her course began, and, over Heaven
 Inducing darkness, grateful truce imposed,
 And silence on the odious din of war.
 Under her cloudy covert both retired,
 Victor and vanquished. On the foughten field 410
 Michaël and his Angels, prevalent
 Encamping, placed in guard their watches round,
 Cherubic waving fires: on the other part,
 Satan with his rebellious disappeared,
 Far in the dark dislodged, and, void of rest,
 His potentates to council called by night,
 And in the midst thus undismayed began:—

“ ‘ O now in danger tried, now known in arms
 Not to be overpowered, companions dear,
 Found worthy not of liberty alone— 420
 Too mean pretence—but, what we more affect,
 Honour, dominion, glory, and renown;
 Who have sustained one day in doubtful fight
 (And, if one day, why not eternal days?)
 What Heaven’s Lord had powerfullest to send
 Against us from about his throne, and judged
 Sufficient to subdue us to his will,
 But proves not so: then fallible, it seems,
 Of future we may deem him, though till now
 Omniscient thought! True is, less firmly armed, 430
 Some disadvantage we endured, and pain—
 Till now not known, but, known, as soon contemned;
 Since now we find this our empyreal form
 Incapable of mortal injury,
 Imperishable, and, though pierced with wound,
 Soon closing, and by native vigour healed.
 Of evil, then, so small as easy think
 The remedy: perhaps more valid arms,
 Weapons more violent, when next we meet, •

May serve to better us and worse our foes, 440
 Or equal what between us made the odds,
 In nature none. If other hidden cause
 Left them superior, while we can preserve
 Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,
 Due search and consultation will disclose.'

"He sat; and in the assembly next upstood
 Nisroch, of Principalities the prime.
 As one he stood escaped from cruel fight
 Sore toiled, his riven arms to havoc hewn,
 And, cloudy in aspect, thus answering spake:— 450

"'Deliverer from new Lords, leader to free
 Enjoyment of our right as Gods! yet hard
 For Gods, and too unequal work, we find
 Against unequal arms to fight in pain,
 Against unpained, impassive; from which evil
 Ruin must needs ensue. For what avails
 Valour or strength, though matchless, quelled with pain,
 Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands
 Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well
 Spare out of life perhaps, and not repine, 460
 But live content—which is the calmest life;
 But pain is perfect misery, the worst
 Of evils, and, excessive, overturns
 All patience. He who, therefore, can invent
 With what more forcible we may offend
 Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm
 Ourselves with like defence, to me deserves
 No less than for deliverance what we owe.'

"Where to, with look composed, Satan replied:—
 'Not uninvented that, which thou aright 470
 Believ'st so main to our success, I bring.
 Which of us who beholds the bright surface
 Of this ethereal mould whereon we stand—
 This continent of spacious Heaven, adorned
 With plant, fruit, flower ambrosial, gems and gold—
 Whose eye so superficially surveys
 These things as not to mind from whence they grow
 Deep under ground: materials dark and crude,

Of spiritous and fiery spume, till, touched
 With Heaven's ray, and tempered, they shoot forth 480
 So beauteous, opening to the ambient light?
 These in their dark nativity the Deep
 Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame;
 Which, into hollow engines long and round
 Thick-rammed, at the other bore with touch of fire
 Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth
 From far, with thundering noise, among our foes
 Such implements of mischief as shall dash
 To pieces and o'erwhelm whatever stands
 Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarmed 490
 The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.
 Nor long shall be our labour; yet ere dawn
 Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive;
 Abandon fear; to strength and counsel joined
 Think nothing hard, much less to be despaired.'

“He ended; and his words their drooping cheer
 Enlightened, and their languished hope revived.
 The invention all admired, and each how he
 To be the inventor missed; so easy it seemed
 Once found, which yet unfound most would have
 thought 500

Impossible! Yet, haply, of thy race,
 In future days, if malice should abound,
 Some one, intent on mischief, or inspired
 With devilish machination, might devise
 Like instrument to plague the sons of men
 For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.
 Forthwith from council to the work they flew;
 None arguing stood; innumerable hands
 Were ready; in a moment up they turned
 Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath 510
 The originals of Nature in their crude
 Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam
 They found, they mingled, and, with subtle art
 Concocted and adusted, they reduced
 To blackest grain, and into store conveyed.
 Part hidden veins digged up (nor hath this Earth

Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone,
 Whereof to found their engines and their balls
 Of missive ruin ; part incentive reed
 Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire. 520
 So all ere day-spring, under conscious Night,
 Secret they finished, and in order set,
 With silent circumspection, unespied.

“ Now, when fair Morn orient in Heaven appeared,
 Up rose the victor Angels, and to arms
 The matin trumpet sung. In arms they stood
 Of golden panoply, refulgent host,
 Soon banded ; others from the dawning hills
 Looked round, and scouts each coast light-armèd scour,
 Each quarter, to descry the distant foe, 530
 Where lodged, or whither fled, or if for fight,
 In motion or in halt. Him soon they met
 Under spread ensigns moving nigh, in slow
 But firm battalion : back with speediest sail
 Zophiel, of Cherubim the swiftest wing,
 Came flying, and in mid air aloud thus cried :—

“ ‘ Arm, Warriors, arm for fight! The foe at hand,
 Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit
 This day ; fear not his flight ; so thick a cloud
 He comes, and settled in his face I see 540
 Sad resolution and secure. Let each
 His adamantine coat gird well, and each
 Fit well his helm, gripe fast his orbèd shield,
 Borne even or high ; for this day will pour down,
 If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower,
 But rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire.’

“ So warned he them, aware themselves, and soon
 In order, quit of all impediment.
 Instant, without disturb, they took alarm,
 And onward move embattled : when, behold, 550
 Not distant far, with heavy pace the foe
 Approaching gross and huge, in hollow cube
 Training his devilish enginry, impaled
 On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,
 To hidè the fraud. At interview both stood

A while; but suddenly at head appeared
Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud:—

““ Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold,
That all may see who hate us how we seek
Peace and composure, and with open breast 560
Stand ready to receive them, if they like

Our overture, and turn not back perverse:
But that I doubt. However, witness Heaven!
Heaven, witness thou anon! while we discharge
Freely our part. Ye, who appointed stand,
Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch
What we propound, and loud that all may hear.’

“So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce
Had ended, when to right and left the front
Divided, and to either flank retired; 570

Which to our eyes discovered, new and strange,
A triple mounted row of pillars laid
On wheels (for like to pillars most they seemed,
Or hollowed bodies make of oak or fir,

With branches lopt, in wood or mountain felled),
Brass, iron, stony mould, had not their mouths
With hideous orifice gaped on us wide,
Portending hollow truce. At each, behind,
A Seraph stood, and in his hand a reed
Stood waving tipt with fire; while we, suspense, 580
Collected stood within our thoughts amused.

Not long! for sudden all at once their reeds
Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied
With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,
But soon obscured with smoke, all Heaven appeared,
From those deep-throated engines belched, whose roar
Embowelled with outrageous noise the air,
And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul
Their devilish glut, chained thunderbolts and hail
Of iron globes; which, on the victor host 590
Levelled, with such impetuous fury smote,
That whom they hit none on their feet might stand,
Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell
By thousands, Angel on Archangel rolled,

The sooner for their arms. Unarmed, they might
 Have easily, as Spirits, evaded swift
 By quick contraction or remove; but now
 Foul dissipation followed, and forced rout;
 Nor served it to relax their serried files.
 What should they do? If on they rushed, repulse 600
 Repeated, and indecent overthrow
 Doubled, would render them yet more despised,
 And to their foes a laughter—for in view
 Stood ranked of Seraphim another row,
 In posture to displode their second tire
 Of thunder; back defeated to return
 They worse abhorred. Satan beheld their plight,
 And to his mates thus in derision called:—

“O friends, why come not on these victors proud?
 Erewhile they fierce were coming; and, when we, 610
 To entertain them fair with open front
 And breast (what could we more?), propounded terms
 Of composition, straight they changed their minds,
 Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,
 As they would dance. Yet for a dance they seemed
 Somewhat extravagant and wild; perhaps
 For joy of offered peace. But I suppose,
 If our proposals once again were heard,
 We should compel them to a quick result.’

“To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood:—
 ‘Leader, the terms we sent were terms of weight, 621
 Of hard contents, and full of force urged home,
 Such as we might perceive amused them all,
 And stumbled many. Who receives them right
 Had need from head to foot well understand;
 Not understood, this gift they have besides—
 They show us when our foes walk not upright.’

“So they among themselves in pleasant vein
 Stood scoffing, highthened in their thoughts beyond
 All doubt of victory; Eternal Might 630
 To match with their inventions they presumed
 So easy, and of his thunder made a scorn,
 And all his host derided, while they stood

A while in trouble. But they stood not long ;
 Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms
 Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose.
 Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power,
 Which God hath in his mighty Angels placed !)
 Their arms away they threw, and to the hills
 (For Earth hath this variety from Heaven 640
 Of pleasure situate in hill and dale)
 Light as the lightning-glimpse they ran, they flew ;
 From their foundations, loosening to and fro,
 They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,
 Rocks, waters, woods, and, by the shaggy tops
 Uplifting, bore them in their hands. Amaze,
 Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host,
 When coming towards them so dread they saw
 The bottom of the mountains upward turned,
 Till on those cursed engines' triple row 650
 They saw them whelmed, and all their confidence
 Under the weight of mountains buried deep ;
 Themselves invaded next, and on their heads
 Main promontories flung, which in the air
 Came shadowing, and oppressed whole legions armed.
 Their armour helped their harm, crushed in and bruised,
 Into their substance pent—which wrought them pain
 Implacable, and many a dolorous groan,
 Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind
 Out of such prison, though Spirits of purest light, 660
 Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.
 The rest, in imitation, to like arms
 Betook them, and the neighbouring hills uptore ;
 So hills amid the air encountered hills,
 Hurl'd to and fro with jaculation dire,
 That underground they fought in dismal shade :
 Infernal noise ! war seemed a civil game
 To this uproar ; horrid confusion heaped
 Upon confusion rose. And now all Heaven
 Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread, 670
 Had not the Almighty Father, where he sits,
 Shrined in his sanctuary of Heaven secure,

Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
 This tumult, and permitted all, advised,
 That his great purpose he might so fulfil,
 To honour his Anointed Son, avenged
 Upon his enemies, and to declare
 All power on him transferred. Whence to his Son,
 The assessor of his throne, he thus began :—

“ ‘ Effulgence of my glory, Son beloved, 680
 Son in whose face invisible is beheld •

Visibly, what by Deity I am,
 And in whose hand what by decree I do,
 Second Omnipotence ! two days are passed,
 Two days, as we compute the days of Heaven,
 Since Michael and his Powers went forth to tame
 These disobedient. Sore hath been their fight,
 As likeliest was when two such foes met armed :
 For to themselves I left them ; and thou know’st
 Equal in their creation they were formed, 690
 Save what sin hath impaired—which yet hath wrought
 Insensibly, for I suspend their doom :

Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
 Endless, and no solution will be found.

War wearied hath performed what war can do,
 And to disordered rage let loose the reins,
 With mountains, as with weapons, armed ; which makes
 Wild work in Heaven, and dangerous to the main.

Two days are, therefore, passed ; the third is thine :
 For thee I have ordained it, and thus far 700

Have suffered, that the glory may be thine
 Of ending this great war, since none but thou
 Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace
 Immense I have transfused, that all may know
 In Heaven and Hell thy power above compare,
 And this perverse commotion governed thus,
 To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir
 Of all things—to be Heir, and to be King
 By sacred unction, thy deservèd right.

Go, then, thou Mightiest, in thy Father’s might ; 710
 Ascend my chariot ; guide the rapid wheels

That shake Heaven's basis; bring forth all my war;
 My bow and thunder, my almighty arms,
 Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh;
 Pursue these Sons of Darkness, drive them out
 From all Heaven's bounds into the utter Deep;
 There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
 God, and Messiah his anointed King.'

"He said, and on his Son with rays direct
 Shone full. He all his Father full expressed 720
 Ineffably into his face received;

And thus the Filial Godhead answering spake:—

"O Father, O Supreme of Heavenly Thrones,
 First, Highest, Holiest, Best, thou always seek'st
 To glorify thy Son; I always thee,
 As is most just. This I my glory account,
 My exaltation, and my whole delight,
 That thou in me, well pleased, declar'st thy will
 Fulfilled, which to fulfil is all my bliss.

Sceptre and power, thy giving, I assume, 730
 And gladlier shall resign when in the end
 Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee
 For ever, and in me all whom thou lov'st.

But whom thou hat'st I hate, and can put on
 Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on,
 Image of thee in all things: and shall soon,
 Armed with thy might, rid Heaven of these rebelled,
 To their prepared ill mansion driven down,
 To chains of darkness and the undying worm,
 That from thy just obedience could revolt, 740
 Whom to obey is happiness entire.

Then shall thy Saints, unmixed, and from the impure
 Far separate, circling thy holy Mount,
 Unfeigned halleluiahs to thee sing,
 Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.'

"So said, he, o'er his sceptre bowing, rose
 From the right hand of Glory where he sat;
 And the third sacred morn began to shine,
 Dawning through Heaven. Forth rushed with whirl-
 wind sound

The chariot of Paternal Deity, 750
 Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel; undrawn,
 Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed
 By four cherubic Shapes. Four faces each
 Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all
 And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels
 Of beryl, and careering fires between;
 Over their heads a crystal firmament,
 Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
 Amber and colours of the showery arch. 1
 He, in celestial panoply all armed 760
 Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought,
 Ascended; at his right hand Victory
 Sat eagle-winged; beside him hung his bow,
 And quiver, with three-bolted thunder stored;
 And from about him fierce effusion rolled
 Of smoke and bickering flame and sparkles dire.
 Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,
 He onward came; far off his coming shone;
 And twenty thousand (I their number heard)
 Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen. 770
 He on the wings of Cherub rode sublime
 On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned—
 Illustrious far and wide, but by his own
 First seen. Them unexpected joy surprised
 When the great ensign of Messiah blazed
 Aloft, by Angels borne, his sign in Heaven;
 Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced
 His army, circumfused on either wing,
 Under their Head embodied all in one.
 Before him Power Divine his way prepared; 780
 At his command the uprooted hills retired
 Each to his place; they heard his voice, and went
 Obsequious; Heaven his wonted face renewed,
 And with fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled.
 “This saw his hapless foes, but stood obdured,
 And to rebellious fight rallied their Powers,
 Insatiate, hope conceiving from despair.
 In Heavenly Spirits could such perverseness dwell?

But to convince the proud what signs avail,
 Or wonders move the obdurate to relent? 790
 They, hardened more by what might most reclaim,
 Grieving to see his glory, at the sight
 Took envy, and, aspiring to his highth,
 Stood re-embattled fierce, by force or fraud
 Weening to prosper, and at length prevail
 Against God and Messiah, or to fall
 In universal ruin last; and now
 To final battle drew, disdainng flight,
 Or faint retreat: when the great Son of God
 To all his host on either hand thus spake:— 800
 “Stand still in bright array, ye Saints; here stand,
 Ye Angels armed; this day from battle rest.
 Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God
 Accepted, fearless in his righteous cause;
 And, as ye have received, so have ye done,
 Invincibly. But of this cursed crew
 The punishment to other hand belongs;
 Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints.
 Number to this day’s work is not ordained,
 Nor multitude; stand only and behold 810
 God’s indignation on these godless poured
 By me. Not you, but me, they have despised,
 Yet envied; against me is all their rage,
 Because the Father, to whom in Heaven supreme
 Kingdom and power and glory appertains,
 Hath honoured me, according to his will.
 Therefore to me their doom he hath assigned,
 That they may have their wish, to try with me
 In battle which the stronger proves—they all,
 Or I alone against them; since by strength 820
 They measure all, of other excellence
 Not emulous, nor care who them excels;
 Nor other strife with them do I voutsafe.’
 “So spake the Son, and into terror changed
 His countenance, too severe to be beheld,
 And full of wrath bent on his enemies.
 At once the Four spread out their starry wings

With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs
 Of his fierce chariot rolled, as with the sound
 Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host. 830
 He on his impious foes right onward drove,
 Gloomy as Night. Under his burning wheels
 The steadfast Æmpeyan shook throughout,
 All but the throne itself of God. Full soon
 Among them he arrived, in his right hand
 Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
 Before him, such as in their souls infix'd
 Plagues. They, astonished, all resistance lost,
 All courage; down their idle weapons dropt;
 O'er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he rode 840
 Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate,
 That wish'd the mountains now might be again
 Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.
 Nor less on either side tempestuous fell
 His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged Four,
 Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels,
 Distinct alike with multitude of eyes;
 One spirit in them ruled, and every eye
 Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire
 Among the accursed, that wither'd all their strength,
 And of their wonted vigour left them drained, 851
 Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.
 Yet half his strength he put not forth, but check'd
 His thunder in mid-volley; for he meant
 Not to destroy, but root them out of Heaven.
 The overthrown he rais'd, and, as a herd
 Of goats or timorous flock together throng'd,
 Drove them before him thunderstruck, pursued
 With terrors and with furies to the bounds
 And crystal wall of Heaven; which, opening wide, 860
 Roll'd inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
 Into the wasteful Deep. The monstrous sight
 Strook them with horror backward; but far worse
 Urg'd them behind: headlong themselves they threw
 Down from the verge of Heaven: eternal wrath
 Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.

“Hell heard the unsufferable noise ; Hell saw
 Heaven ruining from Heaven, and would have fled
 Affrighted ; but strict Fate had cast too deep
 Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound. 870
 Nine days they fell ; confounded Chaos roared,
 And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
 Through his wild Anarchy ; so huge a rout
 Encumbered him with ruin. Hell at last,
 Yawning, received them whole, and on them closed—
 Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire
 Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.
 Disburdened Heaven rejoiced, and soon repaired
 Her mural breach, returning whence it rolled.
 Sole victor, from the expulsion of his foes 880
 Messiah his triumphal chariot turned.
 To meet him all his Saints, who silent stood
 Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
 With jubilee advanced ; and, as they went,
 Shaded with branching palm, each order bright
 Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,
 Son, Heir, and Lord, to him dominion given,
 Worthiest to reign. He celebrated rode,
 Triumphant through mid Heaven, into the courts
 And temple of his mighty Father throned 890
 On high ; who into glory him received,
 Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.

“ Thus, measuring things in Heaven by things on
 Earth,
 At thy request, and that thou may'st beware
 By what is past, to thee I have revealed
 What might have else to human race been hid—
 The discord which befell, and war in Heaven
 Among the Angelic Powers, and the deep fall
 Of those too high aspiring who rebelled
 With Satan : he who envies now thy state, 900
 Who now is plotting how he may seduce
 Thee also from obedience, that, with him
 Bereaved of happiness, thou may'st partake
 His punishment, eternal misery ;

Which would be all his solace and revenge,
As a despite done against the Most High,
Thee once to gain companion of his woe.
But listen not to his temptations; warn
Thy weaker; let it profit thee to have heard,
By terrible example, the reward
Of disobedience. Firm they might have stood,
Yet fell. Remember, and fear to transgress.”

910

THE END OF THE SIXTH BOOK

• PARADISE LOST

BOOK VII

THE ARGUMENT

Raphael, at the request of Adam, relates how and wherefore this World was first created :—that God, after the expelling of Satan and his Angels out of Heaven, declared his pleasure to create another World, and other creatures to dwell therein ; sends his Son with glory, and attendance of Angels, to perform the work of creation in six days : the Angels celebrate with hymns the performance thereof, and his reascension into Heaven.

DESCEND from Heaven, Urania, by that name
If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegasean wing!
The meaning, not the name, I call ; for thou
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st ; but, heavenly-born,
Before the hills appeared or fountain flowed,
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased
With thy celestial song. Up led by thee,
Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
Thy tempering. With like safety guided down,
Return me to my native element ;
Lest, from this flying steed unreined (as once
Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)
Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,

10

Erroneous there to wander and forlorn. 20
 Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
 Within the visible Diurnal Sphere.
 Standing on Earth, not rapt above the pole,
 More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
 To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
 On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues,
 In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
 And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
 Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when Morn
 Purples the East. Still govern thou my song, 30
 Urania, and fit audience find, though few.
 But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
 Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
 Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
 In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
 To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned
 Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend
 Her son. So fail not thou who thee implores;
 For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream.
 Say, Goddess, what ensued when Raphael, 40
 The affable Archangel, had forewarned
 Adam, by dire example, to beware
 Apostasy, by what befell in Heaven
 To those apostates, lest the like befall
 In Paradise to Adam or his race,
 Charged not to touch the interdicted Tree,
 If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
 So easily obeyed amid the choice
 Of all tastes else to please their appetite,
 Though wandering. He, with his consorted Eve, 50
 The story heard attentive, and was filled
 With admiration and deep muse, to hear
 Of things so high and strange—things to their thought
 So unimaginable as hate in Heaven,
 And war so near the peace of God in bliss,
 With such confusion; but the evil, soon
 Driven back, redounded as a flood on those
 From whom it sprung, impossible to mix

With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repealed
 The doubts that in his heart arose ; and, now 60
 Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know
 What nearer might concern him—how this World
 Of heaven and earth conspicuous first began ;
 When, and whereof, created ; for what cause ;
 What within Eden, or without, was done
 Before his memory—as one whose drouth,
 Yet scarce allayed, still eyes the current stream,
 Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites,
 Proceeded thus to ask his Heavenly Guest :—
 “ Great things, and full of wonder in our ears, 70
 Far differing from this World, thou hast revealed,
 Divine Interpreter ! by favour sent
 Down from the Empyrean to forewarn
 Us timely of what might else have been our loss,
 Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach ;
 For which to the infinitely Good we owe
 Immortal thanks, and his admonishment
 Receive with solemn purpose to observe
 Immutably his sovran will, the end
 Of what we are. But, since thou hast voutsafed 80
 Gently, for our instruction, to impart
 Things above Earthly thought, which yet concerned
 Our knowing, as to highest Wisdom seemed,
 Deign to descend now lower, and relate
 What may no less perhaps avail us known—
 How first began this Heaven which we behold
 Distant so high, with moving fires adorned
 Innumerable ; and this which yields or fills
 All space, the ambient Air, wide interfused,
 Embracing round this florid Earth ; what cause 90
 Moved the Creator, in his holy rest
 Through all eternity, so late to build
 In Chaos ; and, the work begun, how soon
 Absolved : if unforbid thou may'st unfold
 What we not to explore the secrets ask
 Of his eternal empire, but the more
 To magnify his works the more we know.

And the great Light of Day yet wants to run
 Much of his race, though steep. Suspense in heaven
 Held by thy voice, thy potent voice he hears, 100
 And longer will delay, to hear thee tell
 His generation, and the rising birth
 Of Nature from the unapparent Deep:
 Or, if the Star of Evening and the Moon
 Haste to thy audience, Night with her will bring
 Silence, and Sleep listening to thee will watch;
 Or we can bid his absence till thy song
 End, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine."

Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought;
 And thus the Godlike Angel answered mild:— 110

"This also thy request, with caution asked,
 Obtain; though to recount almighty works
 What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,
 Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?
 Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve
 To glorify the Maker, and infer
 Thee also happier, shall not be withheld
 Thy hearing. Such commission from above
 I have received, to answer thy desire
 Of knowledge within bounds; beyond abstain 120
 To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope
 Things not revealed, which the invisible King,
 Only omniscient, hath suppressed in night,
 To none communicable in Earth or Heaven.
 Enough is left besides to search and know;
 But Knowledge is as food, and needs no less
 Her temperance over appetite, to know
 In measure what the mind may well contain;
 Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
 Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind. 130

"Know then that, after Lucifer from Heaven
 (So call him, brighter once amidst the host
 Of Angels than that star the stars among)
 Fell with his flaming legions through the Deep
 Into his place, and the great Son returned
 Victorious with his Saints, the Omnipotent

Eternal Father from his throne beheld
 Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake :—
 “At least our envious foe hath failed, who thought
 All like himself rebellious ; by whose aid 140
 This inaccessible high strength, the seat
 Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed,
 He trusted to have seized, and into fraud
 Drew many whom their place knows here no more.
 Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,
 Their station ; Heaven, yet populous, retains
 Number sufficient to possess her realms,
 Though wide, and this high temple to frequent
 With ministeries due and solemn rites.
 But, lest his heart exalt him in the harm 150
 Already done, to have dispeopled Heaven—
 My damage fondly deemed—I can repair
 That detriment, if such it be to lose
 Self-lost, and in a moment will create
 Another world ; out of one man a race
 Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
 Not here, till, by degrees of merit raised,
 They open to themselves at length the way
 Up hither, under long obedience tried,
 And Earth be changed to Heaven, and Heaven to
 Earth, 160
 One kingdom, joy and union without end.
 Meanwhile inhabit lax, ye Powers of Heaven ;
 And thou, my Word, begotten Son, by thee
 This I perform ; speak thou, and be it done !
 My overshadowing Spirit and might with thee
 I send along ; ride forth, and bid the Deep
 Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth.
 Boundless the Deep, because I am who fill
 Infinitude ; nor vacuous the space,
 Though I, uncircumscribed, myself retire, 170
 And put not forth my goodness, which is free
 To act or not. Necessity and Chance
 Approach not me, and what I will is Fate.’
 “So spake the Almighty ; and to what he spake

His Word, the Filial Godhead, gave effect.
 Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
 Than time or motion, but to human ears
 Cannot without process of speech be told,
 So told as earthly notion can receive.

Great triumph and rejoicing was in Heaven 180
 When such was heard declared the Almighty's will.

Glory they sung to the Most High, good-will
 To future men, and in their dwellings peace—
 Glory to him whose just avenging ire
 Had driven out the ungodly from his sight
 And the habitations of the just; to him
 Glory and praise whose wisdom had ordained
 Good out of evil to create—instead
 Of Spirits malign, a better race to bring
 Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse 190
 His good to worlds and ages infinite.

“So sang the Hierarchies. Meanwhile the Son
 On his great expedition now appeared,
 Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crowned
 Of majesty divine, sapience and love
 Immense; and all his Father in him shone.
 About his chariot numberless were poured
 Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones,
 And Virtues, winged Spirits, and chariots winged
 From the armoury of God, where stand of old 200
 Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged
 Against a solemn day, harnessed at hand,
 Celestial equipage; and now came forth
 Spontaneous, for within them Spirit lived,
 Attendant on their Lord. Heaven opened wide
 Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound
 On golden hinges moving, to let forth
 The King of Glory, in his powerful Word
 And Spirit coming to create new worlds.

On Heavenly ground they stood, and from the shore
 They viewed the vast immeasurable Abyss, 211
 Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
 Up from the bottom turned by furious winds

And surging waves, as mountains to assault
Heaven's highth, and with the centre mix the pole.

“Silence, ye troubled waves, and, thou Deep, peace!”
Said then the omnific Word: ‘your discord end!’

Nor stayed; but, on the wings of Cherubim
Uplifted, in paternal glory rode

Far into Chaos and the World unborn; 220

For Chaos heard his voice. Him all his train

Followed in bright procession, to behold

Creation, and the wonders of his might.

Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in his hand

He took the golden compasses, prepared

In God's eternal store, to circumscribe

This Universe, and all created things.

One foot he centred, and the other turned

Round through the vast profundity obscure,

And said, ‘Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds; 230

This be thy just circumference, O World!’

Thus God the Heaven created, thus the Earth,

Matter unformed and void. Darkness profound

Covered the Abyss; but on the watery calm

His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,

And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth,

Throughout the fluid mass, but downward purged

The black, tartarcous, cold, infernal dregs,

Adverse to life; then founded, then conglobed,

Like things to like, the rest to several place 240

Disparted, and between spun out the Air,

And Earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung.

“Let there be Light!” said God; and forthwith Light

Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,

Sprung from the Deep, and from her native East

To journey through the aery gloom began,

Sphered in a radiant cloud—for yet the Sun

Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle

Sojourned the while. God saw the Light was good;

And light from darkness by the hemisphere 250

Divided: Light the Day, and Darkness Night,

He named. Thus was the first Day even and morn;

Nor passed uncelebrated, nor unsung
 By the celestial quires, when orient light
 Exhaling first from darkness they beheld,
 Birth-day of Heaven and Earth. With joy and shout
 The hollow universal orb they filled,
 And touched their golden harps, and hymning praised
 God and his works; Creator him they sung,
 Both when first evening was, and when first morn. 260

“Again God said, ‘Let there be firmament
 Amid the waters, and let it divide
 The waters from the waters!’ And God made
 The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
 Transparent, elemental air, diffused
 In circuit to the uttermost convex
 Of this great round—partition firm and sure,
 The waters underneath from those above
 Dividing; for as Earth, so he the World
 Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide 270
 Crystalline ocean, and the loud misrule
 Of Chaos far removed, lest fierce extremes
 Contiguous might distemper the whole frame:
 And Heaven he named the Firmament. So even
 And morning chorus sung the second Day.

“The Earth was formed, but, in the womb as yet
 Of waters, embryon immature, involved,
 Appeared not; over all the face of Earth
 Main ocean flowed, not idle, but, with warm
 Prolific humour softening all her globe, 280
 Fermented the great mother to conceive,
 Sate with genial moisture; when God said,
 ‘Be gathered now, ye waters under heaven,
 Into one place, and let dry land appear!’
 Immediately the mountains huge appear
 Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
 Into the clouds; their tops ascend the sky.
 So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
 Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
 Capacious bed of waters. Thither they 290
 Hasted with glad precipitance, uprolled,

As drops on dust conglobing, from the dry :
Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,
For haste ; such flight the great command impressed
On the swift floods. As armies at the call
Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)
Troop to the standard, so the watery throng,
Wave rolling after wave, where way they found—
If steep, with torrent rapture, if through plain,
Soft-ebbing ; nor withstood them rock or hill ; 300
But they, or underground, or circuit wide
With serpent error wandering, found their way,
And on the washy ooze deep channels wore :
Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
All but within those banks where rivers now
Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train.
The dry land Earth, and the great receptacle
Of congregated waters he called Seas ;
And saw that it was good, and said, ' Let the Earth
Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed, 310
And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,
Whose seed is in herself upon the Earth !'
He scarce had said when the bare Earth, till then
Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorned,
Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad
Her universal face with pleasant green ;
Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flowered,
Opening their various colours, and made gay
Her bosom, smelling sweet ; and, these scarce blown,
Forth flourished thick the clustering vine, forth crept 320
The smelling gourd, up stood the corny reed
Embattled in her field : add the humble shrub,
And bush with frizzled hair implicit : last
Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread
Their branches hung with copious fruit, or gemmed
Their blossoms. With high woods the hills were crowned,
With tufts the valleys and each fountain-side,
With borders long the rivers, that Earth now
Seemed like to Heaven, a seat where Gods might dwell,
Or wander with delight, and love to haunt 330

Her sacred shades; though God had yet not rained
 Upon the Earth, and man to till the ground
 None was, but from the Earth a dewy mist
 Went up and watered all the ground, and each
 Plant of the field, which ere it was in the Earth
 God made, and every herb before it grew
 On the green stem. God saw that it was good;
 So even and morn recorded the third Day.

“Again the Almighty spake, ‘Let there be Lights
 High in the expanse of Heaven, to divide 340
 The Day from Night; and let them be for signs,
 For seasons, and for days, and circling years;
 And let them be for lights, as I ordain
 Their office in the firmament of heaven,
 To give light on the Earth!’ and it was so.
 And God made two great Lights, great for their use
 To Man, the greater to have rule by day,
 The less by night, altern; and made the Stars,
 And set them in the firmament of heaven
 To illuminate the Earth, and rule the day 350
 In their vicissitude, and rule the night,
 And light from darkness to divide. God saw,
 Surveying his great work, that it was good:
 For, of celestial bodies, first the Sun
 A mighty sphere he framed, unlightsome first,
 Though of ethereal mould; then formed the Moon
 Globose, and every magnitude of Stars,
 And sowed with stars the heaven thick as a field.
 Of light by far the greater part he took,
 Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed 360
 In the Sun’s orb, made porous to receive
 And drink the liquid light, firm to retain
 Her gathered beams, great palace now of Light.
 Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
 Repairing in their golden urns draw light,
 And hence the morning planet gilds her horns;
 By tincture or reflection they augment
 Their small peculiar, though, from human sight
 So far remote, with diminution seen.

First in his east the glorious lamp was seen, 370
 Regent of day, and all the horizon round
 Invested with bright rays, jocund to run
 His longitude through heaven's high road; the grey
 Dawn, and the Pleiades, before him danced,
 Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the Moon,
 But opposite in levelled west, was set,
 His mirror, with full face borrowing her light
 From him; for other light she needed none
 In that aspect, and still that distance keeps
 Till night; then in the east her turn she shines, 380
 Revolved on heaven's great axle, and her reign
 With thousand lesser lights dividual holds,
 With thousand thousand stars, that then appeared
 Spangling the hemisphere. Then first adorned
 With her bright luminaries, that set and rose,
 Glad evening and glad morn crowned the fourth Day.

" And God said, ' Let the waters generate
 Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul;
 And let Fowl fly above the earth, with wings
 Displayed on the open firmament of heaven!' 390
 And God created the great whales, and each
 Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously
 The waters generated by their kinds,
 And every bird of wing after his kind,
 And saw that it was good, and blessed them, saying,
 ' Be fruitful, multiply, and, in the seas,
 And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill;
 And let the fowl be multiplied on the earth!'
 Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
 With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals 400
 Of fish that, with their fins and shining scales,
 Glide under the green wave in sculls that oft
 Bank the mid-sea. Part, single or with mate,
 Graze the sea-weed, their pasture, and through groves
 Of coral stray, or, sporting with quick glance,
 Show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold,
 Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
 Moist nutriment, or under rocks their food •

In jointed armour watch ; on smooth the seal
 And bended dolphins play : part, huge of bulk, 410
 Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,
 Tempest the ocean. There Leviathan,
 Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
 Stretched like a promontory, sleeps or swims,
 And seems a moving land, and at his gills
 Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.
 Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores,
 Their brood as numerous hatch from the egg, that soon,
 Bursting with kindly rupture, forth disclosed
 Their callow young ; but feathered soon and fledge 420
 They summed their pens, and, soaring the air sublime,
 With clang despised the ground, under a cloud
 In prospect. There the eagle and the stork
 On cliffs and cedar-tops their eyries build.
 Part loosely wing the region ; part, more wise,
 In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,
 Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
 Their aery caravan, high over seas
 Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing
 Easing their flight : so steers the prudent crane 430
 Her annual voyage, borne on winds : the air
 Floats as they pass, fanned with unnumbered plumes.
 From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
 Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings,
 Till even ; nor then the solemn nightingale
 Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays.
 Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed
 Their downy breast ; the swan, with arched neck
 Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows
 Her state with oary feet ; yet oft they quit 440
 The dank, and, rising on stiff pennons, tower
 The mid aerial sky. Others on ground
 Walked firm—the crested cock, whose clarion sounds
 The silent hours, and the other, whose gay train
 Adorns him, coloured with the florid hue
 Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus
 With Fish replenished, and the air with Fowl,

Evening and morn solèmnized the fifth Day.

“The sixth, and of Creation last, arose

With evening harps and matin; when God said, 450

‘Let the Earth bring forth soul living in her kind,
Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth,
Each in their kind!’ The Earth obeyed, and, straight
Opening her fertile womb, teemed at a birth

Innumerable living creatures, perfect forms,
Limbed and full-grown. Out of the ground up rose,
As from his lair, the wild beast, where he wons

In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den—

Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walked;
The cattle in the fields and meadows green : 460

Those rare and solitary, these in flocks

Pasturing at once and in broad herds, upsprung.

The grassy clods now calved; now half appeared

The tawny lion, pawing to get free

His hinder parts—then springs, as broke from bonds,

And rampant shakes his brinded mane; the ounce,

The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole

Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw

In hillocks; the swift stag from underground

Bore up his branching head; scarce from his mould 47

Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved

His vastness; fleeced the flocks and bleating rose,

As plants; ambiguous between sea and land,

The river-horse and scaly crocodile.

At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,

Insect or worm. Those waved their limber fans

For wings, and smallest lineaments exact

In all the liveries decked of summer’s pride,

With spots of gold and purple, azure and green;

These as a line their long dimension drew, 480

Streaking the ground with sinuous trace: not all

Minims of nature; some of serpent kind,

Wondrous in length and corpulence, involved

Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept

The parsimonious emmet, provident

Of future, in small room large heart enclosed—

Pattern of just equality perhaps
 Hereafter—joined in her popular tribes
 Of commonalty. Swarming next appeared
 The female bee, that feeds her husband drone 490
 Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells
 With honey stored. The rest are numberless,
 And thou their natures know'st, and gav'st them names,
 Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown
 The serpent, subtlest beast of all the field,
 Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes
 And hairy mane terrific, though to thee
 Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.

“Now Heaven in all her glory shone, and rolled
 Her motions, as the great First Mover's hand 500
 First wheeled their course; Earth, in her rich attire
 Consummate, lovely smiled; Air, Water, Earth,
 By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walked,
 Frequent; and of the sixth Day yet remained.
 There wanted yet the master-work, the end
 Of all yet done—a creature who, not prone
 And brute as other creatures, but endued
 With sanctity of reason, might erect
 His stature, and, upright with front serene
 Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence 510
 Magnanimous to correspond with Heaven,
 But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
 Descends; thither with heart, and voice, and eyes
 Directed in devotion, to adore
 And worship God Supreme, who made him chief
 Of all his works. Therefore the Omnipotent
 Eternal Father (for where is not he
 Present?) thus to his Son audibly spake:—
 ‘Let us make now Man in our image, Man
 In our similitude, and let them rule 520
 Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
 Beast of the field, and over all the earth,
 And every creeping thing that creeps the ground!’
 This said, he formed thee, Adam, thee, O Man,
 Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed

The breath of life ; in his own image he
 Created thee, in the image of God
 Express, and thou becam'st a living soul.
 Male he created thee, but thy consort
 Female, for race ; then blessed mankind, and said, 530
 ' Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth ;
 Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold
 Over fish of the sea, and fowl of the air,
 And every living thing that moves on the Earth !'
 Wherever thus created—for no place
 Is yet distinct by name—thence, as thou know'st,
 He brought thee into this delicious grove,
 This Garden, planted with the trees of God,
 Delectable both to behold and taste,
 And freely all their pleasant fruit for food 540
 Gave thee. All sorts are here that all the earth yields,
 Variety without end ; but of the tree
 Which tasted works knowledge of good and evil
 Thou may'st not ; in the day thou eat'st, thou diest.
 Death is the penalty imposed ; beware,
 And govern well thy appetite, lest Sin
 Surprise thee, and her black attendant, Death.

" Here finished he, and all that he had made
 Viewed, and, behold ! all was entirely good.
 So even and morn accomplished the sixth Day ; 550
 Yet not till the Creator, from his work
 Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,
 Up to the Heaven of Heavens, his high abode,
 Thence to behold this new-created World,
 The addition of his empire, how it showed
 In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,
 Answering his great idea. Up he rode,
 Followed with acclamation, and the sound
 Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned
 Angelic harmonies. The Earth, the Air 560
 Resounded (thou remember'st, for thou heard'st),
 The heavens and all the constellations rung,
 The planets in their stations listening stood,
 While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.

'Open, ye everlasting gates!' they sung;
 'Open, ye Heavens, your living doors! let in
 The great Creator, from his work returned
 Magnificent, his six days' work, a World!
 Open, and henceforth oft; for God will deign
 To visit oft the dwellings of just men 570
 Delighted, and with frequent intercourse
 Thither will send his winged messengers
 On errands of supernal grace.' So sung,
 The glorious train ascending. He through Heaven,
 That opened wide her blazing portals, led
 To God's eternal house direct the way—
 A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold,
 And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear
 Seen in the Galaxy, that milky way
 Which nightly as a circling zone thou seest 580
 Powdered with stars. And now on Earth the seventh
 Evening arose in Eden—for the sun
 Was set, and twilight from the east came on,
 Forerunning night—when at the holy mount
 Of Heaven's high-seated top, the imperial throne
 Of Godhead, fixed for ever firm and sure,
 The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down
 With his great Father; for he also went
 Invisible, yet stayed (such privilege
 Hath Omnipresence) and the work ordained, 590
 Author and end of all things, and, from work
 Now resting, blessed and hallowed the seventh Day,
 As resting on that day from all his work;
 But not in silence holy kept: the harp
 Had work, and rested not; the solemn pipe
 And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,
 All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,
 Tempered soft tunings, intermixed with voice
 Choral or unison; of incense clouds,
 Fuming from golden censers, hid the Mount. 600
 Creation and the Six Days' acts they sung:—
 'Great are thy works, Jehovah! infinite
 Thy power! what thought can measure thee, or tongue

Relate thee—greater now in thy return
 Than from the Giant-angels? Thee that day
 Thy thunders magnified; but to create
 Is greater than created to destroy.
 Who can impair thee, mighty King, or bound
 Thy empire? Easily the proud attempt
 Of Spirits apostate, and their counsels vain, 610
 Thou hast repelled, while impiously they thought
 Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw
 The number of thy worshipers. Who seeks
 To lessen thee, against his purpose, serves
 To manifest the more thy might; his evil
 Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good.
 Witness this new-made World, another Heaven
 From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view
 On the clear hyaline, the glassy sea;
 Of amplitude almost immense, with stars 620
 Numerous, and every star perhaps a world
 Of destined habitation—but thou know'st
 Their seasons; among these the seat of men,
 Earth, with her nether ocean circumfused,
 Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy men,
 And sons of men, whom God hath thus advanced,
 Created in his image, there to dwell
 And worship him, and in reward to rule
 Over his works, on earth, in sea, or air,
 And multiply a race of worshipers 630
 Holy and just! thrice happy, if they know
 Their happiness, and persevere upright!
 “So sung they, and the Empyrean rung
 With halleluiahs. Thus was Sabbath kept.
 And thy request think now fulfilled, that asked
 How first this World and face of things began,
 And what before thy memory was done
 From the beginning, that posterity,
 Informed by thee, might know. If else thou seek'st
 Aught, not surpassing human measure, say.” 640

PARADISE LOST .

BOOK VIII

THE ARGUMENT

Adam inquires concerning celestial motions; is doubtfully answered, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge. Adam assents, and, still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remembered since his own creation—his placing in Paradise; his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society; his first meeting and nuptials with Eve. His discourse with the Angel thereupon; who, after admonitions repeated, departs.

THE Angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice that he a while
Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear;
Then, as new-waked, thus gratefully replied:—
 “What thanks sufficient, or what recompense
Equal, have I to render thee, divine
Historian, who thus largely hast allayed
The thirst I had of knowledge, and voutsafed
This friendly condescension to relate
Things else by me unsearchable—now heard 10
With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,
With glory attributed to the high
Creator? Something yet of doubt remains,
Which only thy solution can resolve.
When I behold this goodly frame, this World,
Of Heaven and Earth consisting, and compute
Their magnitudes—this Earth, a spot, a grain,
An atom, with the Firmament compared
And all her numbered stars, that seem to roll

Spaces incomprehensible (for such
 Their distance argues, and their swift return
 Diurnal) merely to officiate light 20
 Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,
 One day and night, in all their vast survey
 Useless besides—reasoning, I oft admire
 How Nature, wise and frugal, could commit
 Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
 So many nobler bodies to create,
 Greater so manifold, to this one use,
 For aught appears, and on their Orbs impose 30
 Such restless revolution day by day
 Repeated, while the sedentary Earth,
 That better might with far less compass move,
 Served by more noble than herself, attains
 Her end without least motion, and receives,
 As tribute, such a sumless journey brought
 Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light :
 Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails.”

So spake our Sire, and by his countenance seemed
 Entering on studious thoughts abstruse ; which Eve 40
 Perceiving, where she sat retired in sight,
 With lowliness majestic from her seat,
 And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,
 Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,
 To visit how they prospered, bud and bloom,
 Her nursery ; they at her coming sprung,
 And, touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.
 Yet went she not as not with such discourse
 Delighted, or not capable her ear
 Of what was high. Such pleasure she reserved, 50
 Adam relating, she sole auditress ;
 Her husband the relater she preferred
 Before the Angel, and of him to ask
 Chose rather ; he, she knew, would intermix
 Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
 With conjugal caresses : from his lip
 Not words alone pleased her. Oh, when meet now
 Such pairs, in love and mutual honour joined ?

With Goddess-like demeanour forth she went,
 Not unattended; for on her as Queen 60
 A pomp of winning Graces waited still,
 And from about her shot darts of desire
 Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.
 And Raphael now to Adam's doubt proposed
 Benevolent and facile thus replied:—
 “To ask or search I blame thee not; for Heaven
 Is as the Book of God before thee set,
 Wherein to read his wondrous works, and learn
 His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years.
 This to attain, whether Heaven move or Earth 70
 Imports not, if thou reckon right; the rest
 From Man or Angel the great Architect
 Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
 His secrets, to be scanned by them who ought
 Rather admire. Or, if they list to try
 Conjecture, he his fabric of the Heavens
 Hath left to their disputes—perhaps to move
 His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
 Hereafter, when they come to model Heaven,
 And calculate the stars; how they will wield 80
 The mighty frame; how build, unbuild, contrive
 To save appearances; how gird the Sphere
 With Centric and Eccentric scribbled o'er,
 Cycle and Epicycle, Orb in Orb.
 Already by thy reasoning this I guess,
 Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest
 That bodies bright and greater should not serve
 The less not bright, nor Heaven such journeys run,
 Earth sitting still, when she alone receives
 The benefit. Consider, first, that great 90
 Or bright infers not excellence. The Earth,
 Though, in comparison of Heaven, so small,
 Nor glistening, may of solid good contain
 More plenty than the Sun that barren shines,
 Whose virtue on itself works no effect,
 But in the fruitful Earth; there first received,
 His beams, unactive else, their vigour find.

Yet not to Earth are those bright luminaries
 Officious, but to thee, Earth's habitant.
 And, for the Heaven's wide circuit, let it speak 100
 The Maker's high magnificence, who built
 So spacious, and his line stretched out so far,
 That Man may know he dwells not in his own—
 An edifice too large for him to fill,
 Lodged in a small partition, and the rest
 Ordained for uses to his Lord best known.
 The swiftness of those Circles attribute,
 Though numberless, to his omnipotence,
 That to corporeal substances could add
 Speed almost spiritual. Me thou think'st not slow, 110
 Who since the morning-hour set out from Heaven
 Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived
 In Eden—distance inexpressible
 By numbers that have name. But this I urge,
 Admitting motion in the Heavens, to show
 Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved;
 Not that I so affirm, though so it seem
 To thee who hast thy dwelling here on Earth.
 God, to remove his ways from human sense,
 Placed Heaven from Earth so far, that earthly sight, 120
 If it presume, might err in things too high,
 And no advantage gain. What if the Sun
 Be centre to the World, and other Stars,
 By his attractive virtue and their own
 Incited, dance about him various rounds?
 Their wandering course, now high, now low, then hid,
 Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
 In six thou seest; and what if, seventh to these,
 The planet Earth, so steadfast though she seem,
 Insensibly three different motions move? 130
 Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe,
 Moved contrary with thwart obliquities,
 Or save the Sun his labour, and that swift
 Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,
 Invisible else above all stars, the wheel
 Of Day and Night; which needs not thy belief,

If Earth, industrious of herself, fetch Day,
 Travelling east, and with her part averse
 From the Sun's beam meet Night, her other part
 Still luminous by his ray. What if that light, 140
 Sent from her through the wide transpicuous air,
 To the terrestrial Moon be as a star,
 Enlightening her by day, as she by night
 This Earth—reciprocal, if land be there,
 Fields and inhabitants? Her spots thou seest
 As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce
 Fruits in her softened soil, for some to eat
 Allotted there; and other Suns, perhaps,
 With their attendant Moons, thou wilt descry,
 Communicating male and female light— 150
 Which two great sexes animate the World,
 Stored in each Orb perhaps with some that live.
 For such vast room in Nature unpossessed
 By living soul, desert and desolate,
 Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute
 Each Orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far
 Down to this habitable, which returns
 Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.
 But whether thus these things, or whether not -
 Whether the Sun, predominant in heaven, 160
 Rise on the Earth, or Earth rise on the Sun;
 He from the east his flaming road begin,
 Or she from west her silent course advance
 With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
 On her soft axle, while she paces even,
 And bears thee soft with the smooth air along—
 Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid:
 Leave them to God above; him serve and fear.
 Of other creatures as him pleases best,
 Wherever placed, let him dispose; joy thou 170
 In what he gives to thee, this Paradise
 And thy fair Eve; Heaven is for thee too high
 To know what passes there. Be lowly wise;
 Think only what concerns thee and thy being;
 Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there

Live, in what state, condition, or degree—
Contented that thus far hath been revealed
Not of Earth only, but of highest Heaven.”

To whom thus Adam, cleared of doubt, replied :—
“ How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure 180
Intelligence of Heaven, Angel serene,
And, freed from intricacies, taught to live
The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts
To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,
And not molest us, unless we ourselves
Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions
vain !

But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
Unchecked ; and of her roving is no end,
Till, warned, or by experience taught, she learn 190
That not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom : what is more is fume,
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,
And renders us in things that most concern
Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.
Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
A lower flight, and speak of things at hand
Useful ; whence, haply, mention may arise 200
Of something not unseasonable to ask,
By sufferance, and thy wonted favour, deigned.
Thee I have heard relating what was done
Ere my remembrance ; now hear me relate
My story, which, perhaps, thou hast not heard.
And day is yet not spent ; till then thou seest
How subtly to detain thee I devise,
Inviting thee to hear while I relate—
Fond, were it not in hope of thy reply.
For, while I sit with thee, I seem in Heaven ; 210
And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
Than fruits of palm-tree, pleasantest to thirst
And hunger both, from labour, at the hour ●

Of sweet repast. They satiate, and soon fill,
 Though pleasant; but thy words, with grace divine
 Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety."

To whom thus Raphael answered, heavenly meek:—

"Nor are thy lips ungraceful, Sire of Men,
 Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
 Abundantly his gifts hath also poured, 220

Inward and outward both, his image fair:
 Speaking, or mute, all comeliness and grace
 Attends thee, and each word, each motion, forms.

Nor less think we in Heaven of thee on Earth

Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire

Gladly into the ways of God with Man;

For God, we see, hath honoured thee, and set

On Man his equal love. Say therefore on;

For I that day was absent, as befell,

Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure, 230

Far on excursion toward the gates of Hell,

Squared in full legion (such command we had),

To see that none thence issued forth a spy

Or enemy, while God was in his work,

Lest he, incensed at such eruption bold,

Destruction with Creation might have mixed.

Not that they durst without his leave attempt;

But us he sends upon his high behests

For state, as sovran King, and to inure

Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut, 240

The dismal gates, and barricadoed strong,

But, long ere our approaching, heard within

Noise, other than the sound of dance or song—

Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.

Glad we returned up to the coasts of Light

Ere Sabbath-evening; so we had in charge.

But thy relation now; for I attend,

Pleased with thy words no less than thou with mine."

So spake the Godlike Power, and thus our Sire:—

"For Man to tell how human life began 250

Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?

Desire with thee still longer to converse

Induced me. As new-waked from soundest sleep,
Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid,
In balmy sweat, which with his beams the Sun
Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed.
Straight toward Heaven my wondering eyes I turned,
And gazed a while the ample sky, till, raised
By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,
As thitherward endeavouring, and upright 260
Stood on my feet. About me round I saw
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,
Creatures that lived and moved, and walked or flew,
Birds on the branches warbling: all things smiled;
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.
Myself I then perused, and limb by limb
Surveyed, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
With supple joints, as lively vigour led;
But who I was, or where, or from what cause, 270
Knew not. To speak I tried, and forthwith spake;
My tongue obeyed, and readily could name
Whate'er I saw. 'Thou Sun,' said I, 'fair light,
And thou enlightened Earth, so fresh and gay,
Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
And ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell,
Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here!
Not of myself; by some great Maker then,
In goodness and in power pre-eminent.
Tell me, how may I know him, how adore, 280
From whom I have that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier than I know!'
While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither,
From where I first drew air, and first beheld
This happy light, when answer none returned,
On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,
Pensive I sat me down. There gentle sleep
First found me, and with soft oppression seized
My drowsed sense, untroubled, though I thought
I then was passing to my former state 290
Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:

When suddenly stood at my head a dream,
 Whose inward apparition gently moved
 My fancy to believe I yet had being,
 And lived. One came, methought, of shape divine,
 And said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise,
 First Man, of men innumerable ordained
 First father! called by thee, I come thy guide
 To the Garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.'
 So saying, by the hand he took me, raised, 300
 And over fields and waters, as in air
 Smooth sliding without step, last led me up
 A woody mountain, whose high top was plain,
 A circuit wide, enclosed, with goodliest trees
 Planted, with walks and bowers, that what I saw
 Of Earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each tree
 Loaden with fairest fruit, that hung to the eye
 Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite
 To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found
 Before mine eyes all real, as the dream 310
 Had lively shadowed. Here had new begun
 My wandering, had not he who was my guide
 Up hither from among the trees appeared,
 Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,
 In adoration at his feet I fell
 Submiss. He reared me, and, 'Whom thou sought'st
 I am,'
 Said mildly, 'Author of all this thou seest
 Above, or round about thee, or beneath.
 This Paradise I give thee; count it thine
 To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat. 320
 Of every tree that in the Garden grows
 Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth.
 But of the tree whose operation brings
 Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set,
 The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
 Amid the garden by the Tree of Life—
 Remember what I warn thee—shun to taste,
 And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
 The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command

Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die,
 From that day mortal, and this happy state
 Shalt lose, expelled from hence into a world
 Of woe and sorrow.' Sternly he pronounced
 The rigid interdiction, which resounds
 Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice
 Not to incur; but soon his clear aspect
 Returned, and gracious purpose thus renewed:—
 'Not only these fair bounds, but all the Earth
 To thee and to thy race I give; as lords
 Possess it, and all things that therein live,
 Or live in sea or air, beast, fish, and fowl. 340
 In sign whereof, each bird and beast behold
 After their kinds; I bring them to receive
 From thee their names, and pay thee fealty
 With low subjection. Understand the same
 Of fish within their watery residence,
 Not hither summoned, since they cannot change
 Their element to draw the thinner air.'
 As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold
 Approaching two and two—these cowering low 350
 With blandishment; each bird stooped on his wing.
 I named them as they passed, and understood
 Their nature; with such knowledge God endued
 My sudden apprehension. But in these
 I found not what methought I wanted still,
 And to the Heavenly Vision thus presumed:—
 "O, by what name—for thou above all these,
 Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,
 Surpassest far my naming—how may I
 Adore thee, Author of this Universe, 360
 And all this good to Man, for whose well-being
 So amply, and with hands so liberal,
 Thou hast provided all things? But with me
 I see not who partakes. In solitude
 What happiness? who can enjoy alone,
 Or, all enjoying, what contentment find?'
 Thus I, presumptuous; and the Vision bright,
 As with a smile more brightened, thus replied:—

“‘What call’st thou solitude? Is not the Earth
 With various living creatures, and the Air, 370
 Replenished, and all these at thy command
 To come and play before thee? Know’st thou not
 Their language and their ways? They also know,
 And reason not contemptibly; with these
 Find pastime, and bear rule; thy realm is large.’
 So spake the Universal Lord, and seemed
 So ordering. I, with leave of speech implored,
 And humble deprecation, thus replied:—

“‘Let not my words offend thee, Heavenly Power;
 My Maker, be propitious while I speak. 380
 Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
 And these inferior far beneath me set?
 Among unequals what society
 Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
 Which must be mutual, in proportion due
 Given and received; but, in disparity,
 The one intense, the other still remiss,
 Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
 Tedious alike. Of fellowship I speak
 Such as I seek, fit to participate 390
 All rational delight, wherein the brute
 Cannot be human consort. They rejoice
 Each with their kind, lion with lioness;
 So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined:
 Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl,
 So well converse, nor with the ox the ape;
 Worse, then, can man with beast, and least of all.’

“Whereto the Almighty answered, not displeas’d:—
 ‘A nice and subtle happiness, I see,
 Thou to thyself propos’st, in the choice 400
 Of thy associates, Adam, and wilt taste
 No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.
 What think’st thou, then, of me, and this my state?
 Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed
 Of happiness, or not, who am alone
 From all eternity? for none I know
 Second to me or like, equal much less.

How have I, then, with whom to hold converse,
 Save with the creatures which I made, and those
 To me inferior infinite descents 410
 Beneath what other creatures are to thee?’

“He ceased. I lowly answered:—‘To attain
 The highth and depth of thy eternal ways
 All human thoughts come short, Supreme of Things!
 Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
 Is no deficiency found. Not so is Man,
 But in degree—the cause of his desire
 By conversation with his like to help
 Or solace his defects. No need that thou
 Should’st propagate, already infinite, 420
 And through all numbers absolute, though One;
 But Man by number is to manifest
 His single imperfection, and beget
 Like of his like, his image multiplied,
 In unity defective; which requires
 Collateral love, and dearest amity.
 Thou, in thy secrecy although alone,
 Best with thyself accompanied, seek’st not
 Social communication—yet, so pleased,
 Canst raise thy creature to what highth thou wilt 430
 Of union or communion, deified;
 I, by conversing, cannot these erect
 From prone, nor in their ways complacence find.’
 Thus I emboldened spake, and freedom used
 Permissive, and acceptance found; which gained
 This answer from the gracious Voice Divine:—

“‘Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased,
 And find thee knowing not of beasts alone,
 Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself—
 Expressing well the spirit within thee free, 440
 My image, not imparted to the brute;
 Whose fellowship, therefore, unmeet for thee,
 Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike.
 And be so minded still. I, ere thou spak’st,
 Knew it not good for Man to be alone,
 And no such company as then thou saw’st

Intended thee—for trial only brought,
 To see how thou couldst judge of fit and meet.
 What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,
 Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, 450
 Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire.'

“He ended, or I heard no more; for now
 My earthly, by his heavenly overpowered,
 Which it had long stood under, strained to the highth
 In that celestial colloquy sublime,
 As with an object that excels the sense,
 Dazzled and spent, sunk down, and sought repair
 Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, called
 By Nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.
 Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell 460
 Of fancy, my internal sight; by which,
 Abstract as in a trance, methought I saw,
 Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the Shape
 Still glorious before whom awake I stood;
 Who, stooping, opened my left side, and took
 From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,
 And life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,
 But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed.
 The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands;
 Under his forming hands a creature grew, 470
 Man-like, but different sex, so lovely fair
 That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now
 Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained
 And in her looks, which from that time infused
 Sweetness into my heart unfelt before,
 And into all things from her air inspired
 The spirit of love and amorous delight.
 She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked
 To find her, or for ever to deplore
 Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure: 480
 When, out of hope, behold her not far off,
 Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned
 With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow
 To make her amiable. On she came,
 Led by her Heavenly Maker, though unseen

And guided by his voice, nor uninformed
Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.
Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.

I, overjoyed, could not forbear aloud :— 490

“‘This turn hath made amends ; thou hast fulfilled
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
Giver of all things fair—but fairest this
Of all thy gifts!—nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, my Self
Before me. Woman is her name, of Man
Extracted ; for this cause he shall forgo
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere,
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.’

“She heard me thus ; and, though divinely brought,
Yet innocence and virgin modesty, 501

Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
That would be wooed, and not unsought be won,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired,

The more desirable—or, to say all,
Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought—
Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turned.

I followed her ; she what was honour knew,
And with obsequious majesty approved
My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower 510

I led her blushing like the Morn ; all Heaven,
And happy constellations, on that hour
Shed their selectest influence ; the Earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill ;
Joyous the birds ; fresh gales and gentle airs
Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous bird of night
Sung spousal, and bid haste the Evening-star
On his hill-top to light the bridal lamp. 520

“Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought
My story to the sum of earthly bliss
Which I enjoy, and must confess to find
In all things else delight indeed, but such

As, used or not, works in the mind no change,
 Nor vehement desire—these delicacies
 I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flowers,
 Walks, and the melody of birds: but here,
 Far otherwise, transported I behold,
 Transported touch; here passion first I felt, 530
 Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
 Superior and unmoved, here only weak
 Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance.
 Or Nature failed in me, and left some part
 Not proof enough such object to sustain,
 Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps
 More than enough—at least on her bestowed
 Too much of ornament, in outward show
 Elaborate, of inward less exact.
 For well I understand in the prime end 540
 Of Nature her the inferior, in the mind
 And inward faculties, which most excel;
 In outward also her resembling less
 His image who made both, and less expressing
 The character of that dominion given
 O'er other creatures. Yet when I approach
 Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
 And in herself complete, so well to know
 Her own, that what she wills to do or say
 Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best. 550
 All higher Knowledge in her presence falls
 Degraded; Wisdom in discourse with her
 Loses, discountenanced, and like Folly shows;
 Authority and Reason on her wait,
 As one intended first, not after made
 Occasionally; and, to consummate all,
 Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
 About her, as a guard angelic placed."

To whom the Angel, with contracted brow:— 560
 "Accuse not Nature! she hath done her part;
 Do thou but thine! and be not diffident
 Of Wisdom; she deserts thee not, if thou

Dismiss not her, when most thou need'st her nigh,
 By attributing overmuch to things
 Less excellent, as thou thyself perceiv'st.
 For, what admir'st thou, what transports thee so?
 An outside—fair, no doubt, and worthy well
 Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love;
 Not thy subjection. Weigh with her thyself; 570
 Then value. Oft-times nothing profits more
 Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right
 Well managed. Of that skill the more thou know'st,
 The more she will acknowledge thee her head,
 And to realities yield all her shows—
 Made so adorn for thy delight the more,
 So awful, that with honour thou may'st love
 Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.
 But, if the sense of touch, whereby mankind
 Is propagated, seem such dear delight 580
 Beyond all other, think the same voutsafed
 To cattle and each beast; which would not be
 To them made common and divulged, if aught
 Therein enjoyed were worthy to subdue
 The soul of Man, or passion in him move.
 What higher in her society thou find'st
 Attractive, human, rational, love still:
 In loving thou dost well; in passion not,
 Wherein true Love consists not. Love refines
 The thoughts, and heart enlarges—hath his seat 590
 In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale
 By which to Heavenly Love thou may'st ascend,
 Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause
 Among the beasts no mate for thee was found.”
 To whom thus, half abashed, Adam replied:—
 “Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught
 In procreation, common to all kinds
 (Though higher of the genial bed by far,
 And with mysterious reverence, I deem),
 So much delights me as those graceful acts, 600
 Those thousand decencies, that daily flow
 From all her words and actions, mixed with love

And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned
 Union of mind, or in us both one soul—
 Harmony to behold in wedded pair
 More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.
 Yet these subject not; I to thee disclose
 What inward thence I feel, not therefore foiled,
 Who meet with various objects, from the sense
 Variously representing, yet, still free, 610
 Approve the best, and follow what I approve.
 To love thou blam'st me not—for Love, thou say'st,
 Leads up to Heaven, is both the way and guide;
 Bear with me, then, if lawful what I ask.
 Love not the Heavenly Spirits, and how their love
 Express they—by looks only, or do they mix
 Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?"

To whom the Angel, with a smile that glowed
 Celestial rosy-red, Love's proper hue,
 Answered:—"Let it suffice thee that thou know'st 620
 Us happy, and without Love no happiness.
 Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
 (And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
 In eminence, and obstacle find none
 Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars.
 Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,
 Total they mix, union of pure with pure
 Desiring, nor restrained conveyance need
 As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.
 But I can now no more: the parting Sun 630
 Beyond the Earth's green Cape and verdant Isles
 Hesperian sets, my signal to depart.
 Be strong, live happy, and love! but first of all
 Him whom to love is to obey, and keep
 His great command; take heed lest passion sway
 Thy judgment to do aught which else free-will
 Would not admit; thine and of all thy sons
 The weal or woe in thee is placed; beware!
 I in thy persevering shall rejoice,
 And all the Blest. Stand fast; to stand or fall 640
 Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.

Perfect within, no outward aid require ;
And all temptation to transgress repel."

So saying, he arose ; whom Adam thus
Followed with benediction :—" Since to part,
Go, Heavenly Guest, Ethereal Messenger,
Sent from whose sovran goodness I adore !
Gentle to me and affable hath been
Thy condescension, and shall be honoured ever
With grateful memory. Thou to Mankind
Be good and friendly still, and oft return !"

650

So parted they, the Angel up to Heaven
From the thick shade, and Adam to his bower.

THE END OF THE EIGHTH BOOK

PARADISE LOST

BOOK IX

THE ARGUMENT

Satan, having compassed the Earth, with meditated guile returns as a mist by night into Paradise; enters into the Serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labours, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each labouring apart: Adam consents not, alleging the danger lest that enemy of whom they were forewarned should attempt her found alone. Eve, loth to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make trial of her strength; Adam at last yields. The Serpent finds her alone: his subtle approach, first gazing, then speaking, with much flattery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve, wondering to hear the Serpent speak, asks how he attained to human speech and such understanding not till now; the Serpent answers that by tasting of a certain tree in the Garden he attained both to speech and reason, till then void of both. Eve requires him to bring her to that tree, and finds it to be the Tree of Knowledge forbidden: the Serpent, now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments induces her at length to eat. She, pleased with the taste, deliberates a while whether to impart thereof to Adam or not; at last brings him of the fruit; relates what persuaded her to eat thereof. Adam, at first amazed, but perceiving her lost, resolves, through vehemence of love, to perish with her, and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit. The effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover their nakedness; then fall to variance and accusation of one another.

No more of talk where God or Angel Guest
With Man, as with his friend, familiar used
To sit indulgent, and with him partake
Rural repast, permitting him the while
Venial discourse unblamed. I now must change
Those notes to tragic—foul distrust, and breach

Disloyal, on the part of man, revolt
 And disobedience ; on the part of Heaven,
 Now alienated, distance and distaste,
 Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given, 10
 That brought into this World a world of woe,
 Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,
 Death's harbinger. Sad task ! yet argument
 Not less but more heroic than the wrath
 Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued
 Thrice fugitive about Troy wall ; or rage
 Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused ;
 Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
 Perplexed the Greek, and Cytherea's son :
 If answerable style I can obtain 20
 Of my celestial Patroness, who deigns
 Her nightly visitation unimplored,
 And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
 Easy my unpremeditated verse,
 Since first this subject for heroic song
 Pleas'd me, long choosing and beginning late,
 Not sedulous by nature to indite
 Wars, hitherto the only argument
 Heroic deemed, chief mastery to dissect
 With long and tedious havoc fabled knights 30
 In battles feigned (the better fortitude
 Of patience and heroic martyrdom
 Unsung), or to describe races and games,
 Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,
 Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds,
 Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
 At joust and tournament ; then marshalled feast
 Served up in hall with sewers and seneshals :
 The skill of artifice or office mean ;
 Not that which justly gives heroic name 40
 To person or to poem ! Me, of these
 Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument
 Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
 That name, unless an age too late, or cold
 Climate, or years, damp my intended wing

Depressed ; and much they may if all be mine,
Not hers who brings it nightly to my ear.

The Sun was sunk, and after him the Star
Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring
Twilight upon the Earth, short arbiter 50

'Twixt day and night, and now from end to end
Night's hemisphere had veiled the horizon round,
When Satan, who late fled before the threats
Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved .

In meditated fraud and malice, bent
On Man's destruction, maugre what might hap
Of heavier on himself, fearless returned.

By night he fled, and at midnight returned
From compassing the Earth—cautious of day
Since Uriel, Regent of the Sun, descried 60

His entrance, and forewarned the Cherubim
That kept their watch. Thence, full of anguish, driven,

The space of seven continued nights he rode
With darkness—thrice the equinoctial line
He circled, four times crossed the car of Night
From pole to pole, traversing each colure—

On the eighth returned, and on the coast averse
From entrance or cherubic watch by stealth
Found unsuspected way. There was a place
(Now not, though Sin, not Time, first wrought the
change) 70

Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise,
Into a gulf shot under ground, till part
Rose up a fountain by the Tree of Life.
In with the river sunk, and with it rose,
Satan, involved in rising mist ; then sought
Where to lie hid. Sea he had searched and land
From Eden over Pontus, and the Pool
Mæotis, up beyond the river Ob ;

Downward as far antarctic ; and, in length,
West from Orontes to the ocean barred 80

At Darien, thence to the land where flows
Ganges and Indus. Thus the orb he roamed
With narrow search, and with inspection deep

Considered every creature, which of all
 Most opportune might serve his wiles, and found
 The Serpent subtlest beast of all the field.
 Him, after long debate, irresolute
 Of thoughts revolved, his final sentence chose
 Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom
 To enter, and his dark suggestions hide 90
 From sharpest sight; for in the wily snake
 Whatever sleights none would suspicious mark,
 As from his wit and native subtlety
 Proceeding, which, in other beasts observed,
 Doubt might beget of diabolic power
 Active within beyond the sense of brute.
 Thus he resolved, but first from inward grief
 His bursting passion into plaints thus poured:—
 “O Earth, how like to Heaven, if not preferred
 More justly, seat worthier of Gods, as built 100
 With second thoughts, reforming what was old!
 For what God, after better, worse would build?
 Terrestrial Heaven, danced round by other Heavens,
 That shine, yet bear their bright officious lamps,
 Light above light, for thee alone, as seems,
 In thee concentrating all their precious beams
 Of sacred influence! As God in Heaven
 Is centre, yet extends to all, so thou
 Centring receiv’st from all those orbs; in thee,
 Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears, 110
 Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth
 Of creatures animate with gradual life
 Of growth, sense, reason, all summed up in Man.
 With what delight could I have walked thee round,
 If I could joy in aught—sweet interchange
 Of hill and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,
 Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crowned,
 Rocks, dens, and caves! But I in none of these
 Find place or refuge; and the more I see
 Pleasures about me, so much more I feel 120
 Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
 Of contraries; all good to me becomes

Bane, and in Heaven much worse would be my state.
 But neither here seek I, no, nor in Heaven,
 To dwell, unless by mastering Heaven's Supreme;
 Nor hope to be myself less miserable
 By what I seek, but others to make such
 As I, though thereby worse to me redound.
 For only in destroying I find ease
 To my relentless thoughts; and him destroyed, 130
 Or won to what may work his utter loss,
 For whom all this was made, all this will soon
 Follow, as to him linked in weal or woe:
 In woe then, that destruction wide may range!
 To me shall be the glory sole among
 The Infernal Powers, in one day to have marred
 What he, Almighty styled, six nights and days
 Continued making, and who knows how long
 Before had been contriving? though perhaps 140
 Not longer than since I in one night freed
 From servitude inglorious well nigh half
 The Angelic Name, and thinner left the throng
 Of his adorers. He, to be avenged,
 And to repair his numbers thus impaired—
 Whether such virtue, spent of old, now failed
 More Angels to create (if they at least
 Are his created), or to spite us more—
 Determined to advance into our room
 A creature formed of earth, and him endow,
 Exalted from so base original, 150
 With heavenly spoils, our spoils. What he decreed
 He effected; Man he made, and for him built
 Magnificent this World, and Earth his seat,
 Him Lord pronounced, and, O indignity!
 Subjected to his service Angel-wings
 And flaming ministers, to watch and tend
 Their earthy charge. Of these the vigilance
 I dread, and to elude, thus wrapt in mist
 Of midnight vapour, glide obscure, and pry
 In every bush and brake, where hap may find 160
 The Serpent sleeping, in whose mazy folds

To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.
 O foul descent! that I, who erst contended
 With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
 Into a beast, and, mixed with bestial slime,
 This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
 That to the highth of deity aspired!
 But what will not ambition and revenge
 Descend to? Who aspires must down as low
 As high he soared, obnoxious, first or last, 170
 To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
 Bitter ere long back on itself recoils.
 Let it; I reck not, so it light well aimed,
 Since higher I fall short, on him who next
 Provokes my envy, this new favourite
 Of Heaven, this Man of Clay, son of despite,
 Whom, us the more to spite, his Maker raised
 From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid."

So saying, through each thicket, dank or dry,
 Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on 180
 His midnight search, where soonest he might find
 The Serpent. Him fast sleeping soon he found,
 In labyrinth of many a round self-rolled,
 His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles:
 Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
 Nor nocent yet, but on the grassy herb,
 Fearless, unfeared, he slept. In at his mouth
 The Devil entered, and his brutal sense,
 In heart or head, possessing soon inspired
 With act intelligential; but his sleep 190
 Disturbed not, waiting close the approach of morn.

Now, whenas sacred light began to dawn
 In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed
 Their morning incense, when all things that breathe
 From the Earth's great altar send up silent praise
 To the Creator, and his nostrils fill
 With grateful smell, forth came the human pair,
 And joined their vocal worship to the quire
 Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake
 The season, prime for sweetest scents and airs; 200

Then commune how that day they best may ply
 Their growing work—for much their work outgrew
 The hands' dispatch of two gardening so wide :
 And Eve first to her husband thus began :—

“ Adam, well may we labour still to dress
 This Garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flower,
 Our pleasant task enjoined ; but, till more hands
 Aid us, the work under our labour grows,
 Luxurious by restraint : what we by day,
 Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind, 210
 One night or two with wanton growth derides,
 Tending to wild. Thou, therefore, now advise,
 Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present.
 Let us divide our labours—thou where choice
 Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind
 The woodbine round this arbour, or direct
 The clasping ivy where to climb ; while I
 In yonder spring of roses intermixed
 With myrtle find what to redress till noon.
 For, while so near each other thus all day 220
 Our task we choose, what wonder if so near
 Looks intervene and smiles, or objects new
 Casual discourse draw on, which intermits
 Our day's work, brought to little, though begun
 Early, and the hour of supper comes unearned !”

To whom mild answer Adam thus returned :—
 “ Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond
 Compare above all living creatures dear !
 Well hast thou motioned, well thy thoughts employed
 How we might best fulfil the work which here 230
 God hath assigned us, nor of me shalt pass
 Unpraised ; for nothing lovelier can be found
 In woman than to study household good,
 And good works in her husband to promote.
 Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed
 Labour as to debar us when we need
 Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
 Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
 Of looks and smiles ; for smiles from reason flow

| To brute denied, and are of love the food— 240
 | Love, not the lowest end of human life.
 For not to irksome toil, but to delight,
 He made us, and delight to reason joined.
 These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint hands
 Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide
 As we need walk, till younger hands ere long
 Assist us. But, if much converse perhaps
 Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield;
 For solitude sometimes is best society,
 And short retirement urges sweet return. 250
 But other doubt possesses me, lest harm
 Befall thee, severed from me; for thou know'st
 What hath been warned us—what malicious foe,
 Envyng our happiness, and of his own
 Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame
 By sly assault, and somewhere nigh at hand
 Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find
 His wish and best advantage, us asunder,
 Hopeless to circumvent us joined, where each
 To other speedy aid might lend at need. 260
 Whether his first design be to withdraw
 Our fealty from God, or to disturb
 Conjugal love—than which perhaps no bliss
 Enjoyed by us excites his envy more—
 Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side
 That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.
 The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
 Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
 Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.”
 To whom the virgin majesty of Eve, 270
 As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,
 With sweet austere composure thus replied:—
 “ Offspring of Heaven and Earth, and all Earth's lord!
 That such an enemy we have, who seeks
 Our ruin, both by thee informed I learn,
 And from the parting Angel overheard,
 As in a shady nook I stood behind,
 Just then returned at shut of evening flowers.

But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
 To God or thee, because we have a foe 280
 May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
 His violence thou fear'st not, being such
 As we, not capable of death or pain,
 Can either not receive, or can repel.
 His fraud is, then, thy fear; which plain infers
 Thy equal fear that my firm faith and love
 Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced: '—
 Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy breast,
 Adam! misthought of her to thee so dear?"

To whom, with healing words, Adam replied:— 290
 "Daughter of God and Man, immortal Eve!—
 For such thou art, from sin and blame entire—
 Not diffident of thee do I dissuade
 Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid
 The attempt itself, intended by our foe.
 For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
 The tempted with dishonour foul, supposed
 Not incorruptible of faith, not proof
 Against temptation. Thou thyself with scorn
 And anger wouldst resent the offered wrong, 300
 Though ineffectual found; misdeem not, then,
 If such affront I labour to avert
 From thee alone, which on us both at once
 The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare;
 Or, daring, first on me the assault shall light.
 Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn—
 Subtle he needs must be who could seduce
 Angels—nor think superfluous others' aid.
 I from the influence of thy looks receive
 Access in every virtue—in thy sight 310
 More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
 Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
 Shame to be overcome or overreached,
 Would utmost vigour raise, and raised unite.
 Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel
 When I am present, and thy trial choose
 With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?"

So spake domestic Adam in his care
 And matrimonial love ; but Eve, who thought
 Less attributed to her faith sincere, 320
 Thus her reply with accent sweet renewed :—

“ If this be our condition, thus to dwell
 In narrow circuit straitened by a foe,
 Subtle or violent, we not endued
 Single with like defence wherever met,
 How are we happy, still in fear of harm ?
 But harm precedes not sin : only our foe
 Tempting affronts us with his foul esteem
 Of our integrity : his foul esteem
 Sticks no dishonour on our front, but turns 330
 Foul on himself ; then wherefore shunned or feared
 By us, who rather double honour gain
 From his surmise proved false, find peace within,
 Favour from Heaven, our witness, from the event ?

And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed
 Alone, without exterior help sustained ?
 Let us not then suspect our happy state
 Left so imperfect by the Maker wise
 As not secure to single or combined.
 Frail is our happiness, if this be so ; 340
 And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed.”

To whom thus Adam fervently replied :—
 “ O Woman, best are all things as the will
 Of God ordained them ; his creating hand
 Nothing imperfect or deficient left
 Of all that he created—much less Man,
 Or ought that might his happy state secure,
 Secure from outward force. Within himself
 The danger lies, yet lies within his power ;
 Against his will he can receive no harm. 350
 But God left free the Will ; for what obeys
 Reason is free ; and Reason he made right,
 But bid her well be ware, and still erect,
 Lest, by some fair appearing good surprised,
 She dictate false, and misinform the Will
 To do what God expressly hath forbid.

Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins
That I should mind thee oft ; and mind thou me.

Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve,
Since Reason not impossibly may meet 360
Some specious object by the foe suborned,

And fall into deception unaware,
Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warned.

Seek not temptation, then, which to avoid
Were better, and most likely if from me
Thou sever not : trial will come unsought.

Wouldst thou approve thy constancy, approve
First thy obedience ; the other who can know.

Not seeing thee attempted, who attest ?

But, if thou think trial unsought may find 370

Us both securer than thus warned thou seem'st,
Go ; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more.

Go in thy native innocence ; rely

On what thou hast of virtue ; summon all ;

For God towards thee hath done his part : do thine."

So spake the Patriarch of Mankind ; but Eve
Persisted ; yet submiss, though last, replied :—

"With thy permission, then, and thus forewarned,
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words

Touched only, that our trial, when least sought, 380

May find us both perhaps far less prepared,

The willinger I go, nor much expect

A foe so proud will first the weaker seek ;

So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse."

Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand

Soft she withdrew, and, like a wood-nymph light,

Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train,

Betook her to the groves, but Delia's self

In gait surpassed and Goddess-like deport,

Though not as she with bow and quiver armed, 390

But with such gardening tools as Art, yet rude,

Guiltless of fire had formed, or Angels brought.

To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorned,

Likest she seemed—Pomona when she fled

Vertumnus—or to Ceres in her prime,

Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.
 Her long with ardent look his eye pursued
 Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
 Oft he to her his charge of quick return
 Repeated; she to him as oft engaged
 To be returned by noon amid the bower,
 And all things in best order to invite
 Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.
 O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve,
 Of thy presumed return! event perverse!
 Thou never from that hour in Paradise
 Found'st either sweet repast or sound repose;
 Such ambush, hid among sweet flowers and shades,
 Waited, with hellish rancour imminent,
 To intercept thy way, or send thee back
 Despoiled of innocence, of faith, of bliss.
 For now, and since first break of dawn, the Fiend,
 Mere serpent in appearance, forth was come,
 And on his quest where likeliest he might find
 The only two of mankind, but in them
 The whole included race, his purposed prey.
 In bower and field he sought, where any tuft
 Of grove or garden-plot more pleasant lay,
 Their tendance or plantation for delight;
 By fountain or by shady rivulet
 He sought them both, but wished his hap might find
 Eve separate; he wished, but not with hope
 Of what so seldom chanced, when to his wish,
 Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
 Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
 Half-spied, so thick the roses bushing round
 About her glowed, oft stooping to support
 Each flower of tender stalk, whose head, though gay
 Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold,
 Hung drooping unsustained. Them she upstays
 Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while
 Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,
 From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.
 Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed

Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm ;
 Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen
 Among thick-woven arborets, and flowers
 Imbordered on each bank, the hand of Eve :
 Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned
 Or of revived Adonis, or renowned 440
 Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son,
 Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king
 Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.
 Much he the place admired, the person more.
 As one who, long in populous city pent,
 Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
 Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
 Among the pleasant villages and farms
 Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight—
 The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine, 450
 Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound—
 If chance with nymph-like step fair virgin pass,
 What pleasing seemed for her now pleases more,
 She most, and in her look sums all delight :
 Such pleasure took the Serpent to behold
 This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve
 Thus early, thus alone. Her heavenly form
 Angelic, but more soft and feminine,
 Her graceful innocēce, her every air
 Of gesture or least action, overawed 460
 His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved
 His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought.
 That space the Evil One abstracted sood
 From his own evil, and for the time remained —
 Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,
 Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.
 But the hot hell that always in him burns,
 Though in mid Heaven, soon ended his delight,
 And tortures him now more, the more he sees
 Of pleasure not for him ordained. Then soon 470
 Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts
 Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites :—
 “ Thoughts, whither have ye led me ? with what sweet

Compulsion thus transported to forget
 What hither brought us? hate, not love, nor hope
 Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste
 Of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy,
 Save what is in destroying; other joy
 To me is lost. Then let me not let pass
 Occasion which now smiles. Behold alone 480
 The Woman, opportune to all attempts—
 Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
 Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
 And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
 Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould;
 Foe not in formidable, exempt from wound—
 I not; so much hath Hell debased, and pain
 Enfeebled me, to what I was in Heaven.
 She fair, divinely fair, fit love for Gods,
 Not terrible, though terror be in love, 490
 And beauty, not approached by stronger hate,
 Hate stronger under show of love well feigned—
 The way which to her ruin now I tend.”
 So spake the Enemy of Mankind, enclosed
 In serpent, inmate bad, and toward Eve
 Addressed his way—not with indented wave,
 Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
 Circular base of rising folds, that towered
 Fold above fold, a surging maze; his head
 Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes; 500
 With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
 Amidst his curling spires, that on the grass
 Floated redundant. Pleasing was his shape
 And lovely; never since of serpent kind
 Lovelier—not those that in Illyria changed
 Hermione and Cadmus, or the God
 In Epidaurus; nor to which transformed
 Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline, was seen,
 He with Olympias, this with her who bore
 Scipio, the highth of Rome. With tract oblique 510
 At first, as one who sought access but feared
 To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.

As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought
 Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind
 Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail,
 So varied he, and of his tortuous train
 Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
 To lure her eye. She, busied, heard the sound
 Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used
 To such disport before her through the field 520
 From every beast, more duteous at her call
 Than at Circean call the herd disguised.

He, bolder now, uncalled before her stood,
 But as in gaze admiring. Oft he bowed
 His turret crest and sleek enamelled neck,
 Fawning, and licked the ground whereon she trod.
 His gentle dumb expression turned at length
 The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad
 Of her attention gained, with serpent-tongue
 Organic, or impulse of vocal air, 530
 His fraudulent temptation thus began:—

“Wonder not, sovran mistress (if perhaps
 Thou canst who art sole wonder), much less am
 Thy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain,
 Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze
 Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feared
 Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.
 Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
 Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
 By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore, 540
 With ravishment beheld—there best beheld
 Where universally admired. But here,
 In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
 Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
 Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
 Who sees thee (and what is one?) who shouldst be seen
 A Goddess among Gods, adored and served
 By Angels numberless, thy daily train?”

So glozed the Tempter, and his poem tuned.
 Into the heart of Eve his words made way, 550
 Though at the voice much marvelling; at length,

Not unamazed, she thus in answer spake :—

“What may this mean? Language of Man pronounced

By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed!

The first at least of these I thought denied

To beasts, whom God on their creation-day

Created mute to all articulate sound;

The latter I demur, for in their looks

Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.

Thee, Serpent, subtlest beast of all the field

560

I knew, but not with human voice endued;

Redouble, then, this miracle, and say,

How cam'st thou speakable of mute, and how

To me so friendly grown above the rest

Of brutal kind that daily are in sight:

Say, for such wonder claims attention due.”

To whom the guileful Tempter thus replied :—

“Empress of this fair World, resplendent Eve!

Easy to me it is to tell thee all

What thou command'st, and right thou shouldst be obeyed.

570

I was at first as other beasts that graze

The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,

As was my food, nor aught but food discerned

Or sex, and apprehended nothing high:

Till on a day, roving the field, I chanced

A goodly tree far distant to behold,

Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mixed,

Ruddy and gold. I nearer drew to gaze;

When from the boughs a savoury odour blown,

Grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense

580

Than smell of sweetest fennel, or the teats

Of ewe or goat dropping with milk at even,

Unsucked of lamb or kid, that tend their play.

To satisfy the sharp desire I had

Of tasting those fair apples, I resolved

Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once,

Powerful persuaders, quickened at the scent

Of that alluring fruit, urged me so keen.

About the mossy trunk I wound me soon ;
 For, high from ground, the branches would require 590
 Thy utmost reach, or Adam's : round the tree
 All other beasts that saw, with like desire
 Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.
 Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung
 Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill
 I spared not ; for such pleasure till that hour
 At feed or fountain never had I found.
 Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
 Strange alteration in me, to degree
 Of Reason in my inward powers, and Speech 600
 Wanted not long, though to this shape retained.
 Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
 I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind
 Considered all things visible in Heaven,
 Or Earth, or Middle, all things fair and good.
 But all that fair and good in thy divine
 Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray,
 United I beheld—no fair to thine
 Equivalent or second ; which compelled
 Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come 610
 And gaze, and worship thee of right declared
 Sovran of creatures, universal Dame !”

So talked the spirited sly Snake ; and Eve ;
 Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied :—

“ Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
 The virtue of that fruit, in thee first proved.
 But say, where grows the tree ? front, hence how far ?
 For many are the trees of God that grow
 In Paradise, and various, yet unknown
 To us ; in such abundance lies our choice 620
 As leaves a greater store of fruit untouched,
 Still hanging incorruptible, till men
 Grow up to their provision, and more hands
 Help to disburden Nature of her bearth.”

To whom the wily Adder, blithe and glad :—
 “ Empress, the way is ready, and not long—
 Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,

Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past
 Of blowing myrrh and balm. If thou accept
 My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon." 630

"Lead, then," said Eve. He, leading, swiftly rolled
 In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
 To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
 Brightens his crest. As when a wandering fire,
 Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night
 Condenses, and the cold environs round,
 Kindled through agitation to a flame
 (Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends),
 Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
 Misleads the amazed night-wanderer from his way 640
 To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,
 There swallowed up and lost, from succour far :
 So glistered the dire Snake, and into fraud
 Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the Tree
 Of Prohibition, root of all our woe ;

Which when she saw, thus to her guide she spake :—

"Serpent, we might have spared our coming hither,
 Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,
 The credit of whose virtue rest with thee—
 Wondrous, indeed, if cause of such effects ! 650
 But of this tree we may not taste nor touch ;
 God so commanded, and left that command
 Sole daughter of his voice : the rest, we live
 Law to ourselves ; our Reason is our Law."

To whom the Tempter guilefully replied :—

"Indeed ! Hath God then said that of the fruit
 Of all these garden-trees ye shall not eat,
 Yet lords declared of all in Earth or Air ?"

To whom thus Eve, yet sinless :—"Of the fruit
 Of each tree in the garden we may eat ; 660
 But of the fruit of this fair tree, amidst
 The Garden, God hath said, 'Ye shall not eat
 Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die.'"

She scarce had said, though brief, when now more
 bold

The Tempter, but, with show of zeal and love

To Man, and indignation at his wrong,
 New part puts on, and, as to passion moved,
 Fluctuates disturbed, yet comely, and in act
 Raised, as of some great matter to begin.
 As when of old some orator renowned 670
 In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence
 Flourished, since mute, to some great cause addressed,
 Stood in himself collected, while each part,
 Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue
 Sometimes in highth began, as no delay
 Of preface brooking through his zeal of right :
 So standing, moving, or to highth upgrown,
 The Tempter, all impassioned, thus began :-
 " O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving Plant,
 Mother of science ! now I feel thy power 680
 Within me clear, not only to discern
 Things in their causes, but to trace the ways
 Of highest agents, deemed however wise.
 Queen of this Universe ! do not believe
 Those rigid threats of death. Ye shall not die.
 How should ye ? By the fruit ? it gives you life
 To knowledge. By the Threatener ? look on me,
 Me who have touched and tasted, yet both live,
 And life more perfect have attained than Fate
 Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot. 690
 Shall that be shut to Man which to the Beast
 Is open ? or will God incense his ire
 For such a petty trespass, and not praise
 Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
 Of death denounced, whatever thing Death be,
 Deterred not from achieving what might lead
 To happier life, knowledge of Good and Evil ?
 Of good, how just ! of evil—if what is evil
 Be real, why not known, since easier shunned ?
 God, therefore, cannot hurt ye, and be just ; 700
 Not just, not God ; not feared then, nor obeyed :
 Your fear itself of death removes the fear.
 Why, then, was this forbid ? Why but to awe,
 Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,

His worshippers? He knows that in the day
 Ye eat thereof your eyes, that seem so clear,
 Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
 Opened and cleared, and ye shall be as Gods,
 Knowing both good and evil, as they know.
 That ye should be as Gods, since I as Man, 710
 Internal Man, is but proportion meet—
 I, of brute, human; ye, of human, Gods.
 So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off
 Human, to put on Gods—death to be wished,
 Though threatened, which no worse than this can bring!
 And what are Gods, that Man may not become
 As they, participating Godlike food?
 The Gods are first, and that advantage use
 On our belief, that all from them proceeds.
 I question it; for this fair Earth I see, 720
 Warmed by the Sun, producing every kind;
 Them nothing. If they all things, who enclosed
 Knowledge of good and evil in this tree,
 That whoso eats thereof forthwith attains
 Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies
 The offence, that Man should thus attain to know?
 What can your knowledge hurt him, or this tree
 Impart against his will, if all be his?
 Or is it envy? and can envy dwell
 In Heavenly breasts? These, these and many more 730
 Causes import your need of this fair fruit.
 Goddess humane, reach, then, and freely taste!"
 He ended; and his words, replete with guile,
 Into her heart too easy entrance won.
 Fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
 Might tempt alone; and in her ears the sound
 Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd
 With reason, to her seeming, and with truth.
 Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
 An eager appetite, raised by the smell 740
 So savoury of that fruit, which with desire,
 Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
 Solicited her longing eye; yet first,

Pausing a while, thus to herself she mused:—

“Great are thy virtues, doubtlèss, best of fruits,
Though kept from Man, and worthy to be admired,
Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay
Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise.

Thy praise he also who forbids thy use 750

Conceals not from us, naming thee the Tree
Of Knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil ;

Forbids us then to taste. But his forbidding
Commends thee more, while it infers the good

By thee communicated, and our want ;

For good unknown sure is not had, or, had

And yet unknown, is as not had at all.

In plain, then, what forbids he but to know ?

Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise !

Such prohibitions bind not. But, if Death 760

Bind us with after-bands, what profits then

Our inward freedom ? In the day we eat

Of this fair fruit, our doom is we shall die !

How dies the Serpent ? He hath eaten, and lives,

And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,

Irrational till then. For us alone

Was death invented ? or to us denied

This intellectual food, for beasts reserved ?

For beasts it seems ; yet that one beast which first

Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy 770

The good befallen him, author unsuspect,

Friendly to Man, far from deceit or guile.

What fear I, then ? rather, what know to fear . . .

Under this ignorance of good and evil,

Of God or Death, of law or penalty ?

Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,

Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,

Of virtue to make wise. What hinders, then,

To reach, and feed at once both body and mind ?”

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour 780

Forth-reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat.

Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,

Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
 That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
 The guilty Serpent, and well might, for Eve,
 Intent now only on her taste, naught else
 Regarded; such delight till then, as seemed,
 In fruit she never tasted, whether true,
 Or fancied so through expectation high
 Of knowledge; nor was Godhead from her thought.
 Greedily she ingorged without restraint, 791
 And knew not eating death. Sate at length,
 And hightened as with wine, jocund and boon,
 Thus to herself she pleasingly began:—
 “O sovran, virtuous, precious of all trees
 In Paradise! of operation blest
 To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed,
 And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end
 Created! but henceforth my early care,
 Not without song, each morning, and due praise, 800
 Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease
 Of thy full branches, offered free to all;
 Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature
 In knowledge, as the Gods who all things know.
 Though others envy what they cannot give—
 For, had the gift been theirs, it had not here
 Thus grown! Experience, next to thee I owe,
 Best guide: not following thee, I had remained
 In ignorance; thou open'st Wisdom's way,
 And giv'st access, though secret she retire. 810
 And I perhaps and secret: Heaven is high—
 High, and remote to see from thence distinct
 Each thing on Earth; and other care perhaps
 May have diverted from continual watch
 Our great Forbidder, safe with all his spies
 About him. But to Adam in what sort
 Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known
 As yet my change, and give him to partake
 Full happiness with me, or rather not,
 But keep the odds of knowledge in my power 820
 Without copartner? so to add what wants

In female sex, the more to draw his love,
 And render me more equal, and perhaps—
 A thing not undesirable—sometime
 Superior; for, inferior, who is free?
 This may be well; but what if God have seen,
 And death ensue? Then I shall be no more;
 And Adam, wedded to another Eve,
 Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct!
 A death to think! Confirmed, then, I resolve

830

|| So dear I love him that with him all deaths
 I could endure, without him live no life.”

So saying, from the tree her step she turned,
 But first low reverence done, as to the Power
 That dwelt within, whose presence had infused
 Into the plant sciential sap, derived
 From nectar, drink of Gods. Adam the while,
 Waiting desirous her return, had wove
 Of choicest flowers a garland, to adorn

Her tresses, and her rural labours crown,
 As reapers oft are wont their harvest-queen.
 Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new
 Solace in her return, so long delayed;
 Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill,
 Misgave him. He the faltering measure felt,
 And forth to meet her went, the way she took
 That morn when first they parted. By the Tree
 Of Knowledge he must pass; there he her met,
 Scarce from the tree returning; in her hand

840

850

A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smiled,
 New gathered, and ambrosial smell diffused.

To him she hasted; in her face excuse
 Came prologue, and apology to prompt,
 Which, with bland words at will, she thus addressed:—

“Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay?
 Thee I have missed, and thought it long, deprived
 Thy presence—agony of love till now
 Not felt, nor shall be twice; for never more
 Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,

860

The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange
 Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear.
 This tree is not, as we are told, a tree
 Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
 Opening the way, but of divine effect
 To open eyes, and make them Gods who taste ;
 And hath been tasted such. The Serpent wise,
 Or not restrained as we, or not obeying,
 Hath eaten of the fruit, and is become
 Not dead, as we are threatened, but thenceforth 870
 Endued with human voice and human sense,
 Reasoning to admiration, and with me
 Persuasively hath so prevailed that I
 Have also tasted, and have also found
 The effects to correspond—opener mine eyes,
 Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart,
 And growing up to Godhead ; which for thee
 Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise.
 For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss ;
 Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon. 880
 Thou, therefore, also taste, that equal lot
 May join us, equal joy, as equal love ;
 Lest, thou not tasting, different degree
 Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce
 Deity for thee, when fate will not permit.”

Thus Eve with countenance blithe her story told ;
 But in her cheek distemper flushing glowed.
 On the other side, Adam, soon as he heard
 The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,
 Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill 890
 Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed.
 From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
 Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed.
 Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length
 First to himself he inward silence broke :—

“ O fairest of Creation, last and best
 Of all God's works, creature in whom excelled
 Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,
 Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!

How art thou lost! how on a sudden lost, 900
 Defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote!
 Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress
 The strict forbiddance, how to violate
 The sacred fruit forbidden? Some cursed fraud
 Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,
 And me with thee hath ruined; for with thee
 Certain my resolution is to die.

How can I live without thee? how forgo
 Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly joined,
 To live again in these wild woods forlorn? 910
 Should God create another Eve, and I
 Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
 Would never from my heart. No, no! I feel
 The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
 Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
 Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe."

So having said, as one from sad dismay
 Recomforted, and, after thoughts disturbed,
 Submitting to what seemed remediless,
 Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turned:--- 920

"Bold deed thou hast presumed, adventurous Eve,
 And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared
 Had it been only coveting to eye
 That sacred food, sacred to abstinence;
 Much more to taste it, under ban to touch.
 But past who can recall, or done undo?
 Not God Omnipotent, nor Fate! Yet so
 Perhaps thou shalt not die; perhaps the fact
 Is not so heinous now -- foretasted fruit,
 Profaned first by the Serpent, by him first 930
 Made common and unhallowed ere our taste,
 Nor yet on him found deadly. He yet lives--
 Lives, as thou saidst, and gains to live, as Man,
 Higher degree of life: inducement strong
 To us, as likely, tasting, to attain
 Proportional ascent; which cannot be
 But to be Gods, or Angels, demi-gods.
 Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,

Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy
 Us, his prime creatures, dignified so high, 940
 Set over all his works; which, in our fall,
 For us created, needs with us must fail,
 Dependent made. So God shall uncreate,
 Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour lose—
 Not well conceived of God; who, though his power
 Creation could repeat, yet would be loth
 Us to abolish, lest the Adversary
 Triumph and say: ‘Fickle their state whom God
 Most favours; who can please him long? Me first
 He ruined, now Mankind; whom will he next?’ -- 950
 Matter of scorn not to be given the Foe.
 However, I with thee have fixed my lot,
 Certain to undergo like doom. If death
 Consort with thee, death is to me as life;
 So forcible within my heart I feel
 The bond of Nature draw me to my own—
 My own in thee; for what thou art is mine.
 Our state cannot be severed; we are one,
 One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself.”

So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied:— 960
 “O glorious trial of exceeding love,
 Illustrious evidence, example high!
 Engaging me to emulate; but, short
 Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
 Adam? from whose dear side I boast me sprung,
 And gladly of our union hear thee speak,
 One heart, one soul in both; whereof good proof
 This day affords, declaring thee resolved,
 Rather than death, or aught than death more dread,
 Shall separate us, linked in love so dear, 970
 To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,
 If any be, of tasting this fair fruit;
 Whose virtue (for of good still good proceeds,
 Direct, or by occasion) hath presented
 This happy trial of thy love, which else
 So eminently never had been known.
 Were it I thought death menaced would ensue

This my attempt, I would sustain, alone
 The worst, and not persuade thee—rather die
 Deserted than oblige thee with a fact 980
 Pernicious to thy peace, chiefly assured

Remarkably so late of thy so true,
 So faithful, love unequalled. But I feel
 Far otherwise the event—not death, but life
 Augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys,
 Taste so divine that what of sweet before •

- Hath touched my sense flat seems to this and harsh.
 On my experience, Adam, freely taste,
 And fear of death deliver to the winds.”

So saying, she embraced him, and for joy 990
 Tenderly wept, much won that he his love
 Had so ennobled as of choice to incur
 Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.

In recompense (for such compliance bad
 Such recompense best merits), from the bough
 She gave him of that fair enticing fruit
 With liberal hand. He scrupled not to eat,
 Against his better knowledge, not deceived,
 But fondly overcome with female charm.

Earth trembled from her entrails, as again 1000
 In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan ;
 Sky loured, and, muttering thunder, some sad
 drops

Wept at completing of the mortal sin
 Original ; while Adam took no thought,
 Eating his fill, nor Eve to iterate
 Her former trespass feared, the more to soothe
 Him with her loved society ; that now,
 As with new wine intoxicated both,
 They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
 Divinity within them breeding wings 1010

Wherewith to scorn the Earth. But that false fruit
 Far other operation first displayed,
 Carnal desire inflaming. He on Eve
 Began to cast lascivious eyes ; she him
 As wantonly repaid ; in lust they burn,

Till Adam thus 'gan, Eve to dalliance move:—

“Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste
 And elegant—of sapience no small part;
 Since to each meaning savour we apply,
 And palate call judicious. I the praise 1020
 Yield thee; so well this day thou hast purveyed.
 Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstained
 From this delightful fruit, nor known till now
 True relish, tasting. If such pleasure be
 In things to us forbidden, it might be wished
 For this one tree had been forbidden ten.
 But come; so well refreshed, now let us play,
 As meet is, after such delicious fare;
 For never did thy beauty, since the day
 I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned 1030
 With all perfections, so inflame my sense
 With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now
 Than ever—bounty of this virtuous tree!”

So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
 Of amorous intent, well understood
 Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.
 Her hand he seized, and to a shady bank,
 Thick overhead with verdant roof embowered,
 He led her, nothing loth; flowers were the couch,
 Pansies, and violets, and asphodel, 1040
 And hyacinth—Earth's freshest, softest lap.
 There they their fill of love and love's disport
 Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,
 The sojace of their sin, till dewy sleep
 Oppressed them, wearied with their amorous play.

Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit,
 That with exhilarating vapour bland
 About their spirits had played, and inmost powers
 Made err, was now exhaled, and grosser sleep,
 Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams 1050
 Encumbered, now had left them, up they rose
 As from unrest, and, each the other viewing,
 Soon found their eyes how opened, and their mind
 How darkened. Innocence, that as a veil

Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone ;
 Just confidence, and native righteousness,
 And honour, from about them, naked left
 To guilty Shame : he covered, but his robe
 Uncovered more. So rose the Danite strong,
 Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap 1060
 Of Philistean Dalilah, and waked
 Shorn of his strength ; they destitute and bare
 Of all their virtue. Silent, and in face
 Confounded, long they sat, as stricken mute ;
 Till Adam, though not less than Eve abashed,
 At length gave utterance to these words constrained :—
 “ O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear
 To that false Worm, of whomsoever taught
 To counterfeit Man’s voice—true in our fall,
 False in our promised rising ; since our eyes 1070
 Opened we find indeed, and find we know
 Both good and evil, good lost and evil got :
 Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know,
 Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,
 Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
 Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained,
 And in our faces evident the signs
 Of foul concupiscence ; whence evil store,
 Even shame, the last of evils ; of the first
 Be sure then. How shall I behold the face 1080
 Henceforth of God or Angel, erst with joy
 And rapture so oft beheld ? Those Heavenly Shapes
 Will dazzle now this earthly with their blaze
 Insufferably bright. Oh, might I here
 In solitude live savage, in some glade
 Obscured, where highest woods, impenetrable
 To star or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad,
 And brown as evening ! Cover me, ye pines !
 Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
 Hide me, where I may never see them more ! 1090
 But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
 What best may, for the present, serve to hide
 The parts of each from other that seem most

To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen—
 Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves, together sewed,
 And girded on our loins, may cover round
 Those middle parts, that this new comer, Shame,
 There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.”

So counselled he, and both together went
 Into the thickest wood. There soon they chose 1100
 The fig-tree—not that kind for fruit renowned,
 But such as, at this day, to Indians known,
 In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms
 Branching so broad and long that in the ground
 The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
 About the mother tree, a pillared shade
 High overarched, and echoing walks between :
 There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
 Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
 At loop-holes cut through thickest shade. Those
 leaves 1110

They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe,
 And with what skill they had together sewed,
 To gird their waist—vain covering, if to hide
 Their guilt and dreaded shame! O how unlike
 To that first naked glory! Such of late
 Columbus found the American, so girt
 With feathered cincture, naked else and wild,
 Among the trees on isles and woody shores.
 Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part
 Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind, 1120
 They sat them down to weep. Nor only tears
 Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within
 Began to rise, high passions—anger, hate,
 Mistrust, suspicion, discord—and shook sore
 Their inward state of mind, calm region once
 And full of peace, now tost and turbulent :
 For Understanding ruled not, and the Will
 Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
 To sensual Appetite, who, from beneath
 Usurping over sovran Reason, claimed 1130
 Superior sway. From thus distempered breast

Adam, estranged in look and altered style,
Speech intermitted thus to Eve renewed:—

“Would thou hadst hearkened to my words, and
stayed

With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn,
I know not whence possessed thee! We had then
Remained still happy—not, as now, despoiled
Of all our good, shamed, naked, miserable!
Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
The faith they owe; when earnestly they seek 1141
Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail.”

To whom, soon moved with touch of blame, thus
Eve:—

“What words have passed thy lips, Adam severe?
Imput'st thou that to my default, or will
Of wandering, as thou call'st it, which who knows
But might as ill have happened thou being by,
Or to thyself perhaps? Hadst thou been there,
Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discerned
Fraud in the Serpent, speaking as he spake; 1150
No ground of enmity between us known
Why he should mean me ill or seek to harm.
Was I to have never parted from thy side?
As good have grown there still, a lifeless rib.
Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,
Command me absolutely not to go,
Going into such danger, as thou saidst?
Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay,
Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Hadst thou been firm and fixed in thy dissent, 1160
Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me.”

To whom, then first incensed, Adam replied:—
“Is this the love, is this the recompense
Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, expressed
Immutable when thou wert lost, not I—
Who might have lived, and joyed immortal bliss,
Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?
And am I now upbraided as the cause

Of thy transgressing ? not enough severe,
It seems, in thy restraint ! What could I more ? 1170
I warned thee, I admonished thee, foretold
The danger, and the lurking enemy
That lay in wait ; beyond this had been force,
And force upon free will hath here no place.
But confidence then bore thee on, secure
Either to meet no danger, or to find
Matter of glorious trial ; and perhaps
I also err'd in overmuch admiring
What seemed in thee so perfect that I thought
No evil durst attempt thee. But I rue 1180
That error now, which is become my crime,
And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befall
Him who, to worth in women overtrusting,
Lets her will rule : restraint she will not brook ;
And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
She first his weak indulgence will accuse.”
Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning ;
And of their vain contest appeared no end.

PARADISE LOST

BOOK X

THE ARGUMENT

Man's transgression known, the guardian Angels forsake Paradise, and return up to Heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved ; God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the transgressors ; who descends, and gives sentence accordingly ; then, in pity, clothes them both, and reascends. Sin and Death, sitting till then at the gates of Hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new World, and the sin by Man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in Hell, but to follow Satan, their sire, up to the place of Man : to make the way easier from Hell to this World to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over Chaos, according to the track that Satan first made ; then, preparing for Earth, they meet him, proud of his success, returning to Hell ; their mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandemonium ; in full assembly relates, with boasting, his success against Man : instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed, with himself also, suddenly into Serpents, according to his doom given in Paradise ; then, deluded with a show of the Forbidden Tree springing up before them, they, greedily reaching to take of the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death : God foretells the final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things ; but, for the present, commands his Angels to make several alterations in the Heavens and Elements. Adam, more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails, rejects the condolment of Eve ; she persists, and at length appeases him : then, to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways ; which he approves not, but, conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be revenged on the Serpent, and exhorts her, with him, to seek peace of the offended Deity by repentance and supplication.

..

MEANWHILE the heinous and spiteful act
Of Satan done in Paradise, and how

He, in the Serpent, had perverted Eve,
 Her husband she, to taste the fatal fruit,
 Was known in Heaven ; for what can scape the eye
 Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart
 Omniscient ? who, in all things wise and just,
 Hindered not Satan to attempt the mind
 Of Man, with strength entire and free will armed
 Complete to have discovered and repulsed 10
 Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.
 For still they knew, and ought to have still remembered,
 The high injunction not to taste that fruit,
 Whoever tempted ; which they not obeying
 Incurred (what could they less ?) the penalty,
 And, manifold in sin, deserved to fall.

Up into Heaven from Paradise in haste
 The Angelic guards ascended, mute and sad
 For Man ; for of his state by this they knew,
 Much wondering how the subtle Fiend had stolen 20
 Entrance unseen. Soon as the unwelcome news
 From Earth arrived at Heaven-gate, displeased
 All were who heard ; dim sadness did not spare
 That time celestial visages, yet, mixed
 With pity, violated not their bliss.
 About the new-arrived, in multitudes,
 The Ethereal people ran, to hear and know
 How all befell. They towards the throne supreme,
 Accountable, made haste, to make appear,
 With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance, 30
 And easily approved ; when the Most High,
 Eternal Father, from his secret cloud
 Amidst, in thunder uttered thus his voice :—

“ Assembled Angels, and ye Powers returned
 From unsuccessful charge, be not dismayed
 Nor troubled at these tidings from the Earth,
 Which your sincerest care could not prevent,
 Foretold so lately what would come to pass,
 When first this Tempter crossed the gulf from Hell.
 I told ye then he should prevail, and speed 40
 On his bad errand—Man should be seduced,

And flattered out of all, believing lies
 Against his Maker ; no decree of mine,
 Concurring to necessitate his fall,
 Or, touch with lightest moment of impulse
 His free will, to her own inclining left
 In even scale. But fallen he is ; and now
 What rests, but that the mortal sentence pass
 On his transgression, Death denounced that day ?
 Which he presumes already vain and void, 50
 Because not yet inflicted, as he feared,
 By some immediate stroke, but soon shall find
 Forbearance no acquittance ere day end.
 Justice shall not return, as bounty, scorned.
 But whom send I to judge them ? whom but thee,
 Vicegerent Son ? To thee I have transferred
 All judgment, whether in Heaven, or Earth, or Hell.
 Easy it may be seen that I intend
 Mercy colleague with justice, sending thee,
 Man's friend, his Mediator, his designed 60
 Both ransom and Redeemer voluntary,
 And destined Man himself to judge Man fallen."

So spake the Father ; and, unfolding bright
 Toward the right hand his glory, on the Son
 Blazed forth unclouded deity. He full
 Resplendent all his Father manifest
 Expressed, and thus divinely answered mild :—

" Father Eternal, thine is to decree ;
 Mine both in Heaven and Earth to do thy will
 Supreme, that thou in me, thy Son beloved, 70
 May'st ever rest well pleased. I go to judge
 On Earth these thy transgressors ; but thou know'st,
 Whoever judged, the worst on me must light,
 When time shall be ; for so I undertook
 Before thee, and, not repenting, this obtain
 Of right, that I may mitigate their doom
 On me derived. Yet, I shall temper so
 Justice with mercy as may illustrate most
 Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.
 Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none 80

Are to behold the judgment but the judged,
 Those two; the third best absent is condemned,
 Convict by flight, and rebel to all law;
 Conviction to the Serpent none belongs."

Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose
 Of high collateral glory. Him Thrones and Powers,
 Princedoms, and Dominations ministrant,
 Accompanied to Heaven-gate, from whence
 Eden and all the coast in prospect lay.
 Down he descended straight; the speed of Gods 90
 Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes winged.

Now was the Sun in western cadence low
 From noon, and gentle airs due at their hour
 To fan the Earth now waked, and usher in
 The evening cool, when he, from wrath more cool,
 Came, the mild judge and intercessor both,
 To sentence Man. The voice of God they heard
 Now walking in the Garden, by soft winds
 Brought to their ears, while day declined; they heard,
 And from his presence hid themselves among 100
 The thickest trees, both man and wife, till God,
 Approaching, thus to Adam called aloud:—

"Where art thou, Adam, wont with joy to meet
 My coming, seen far off? I miss thee here,
 Not pleased, thus entertained with solitude,
 Where obvious duty erewhile appeared unsought.
 Or come I less conspicuous, or what change
 Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come forth!"

He came, and with him Eve, more loth, though first
 To offend, discountenanced both, and discomposed. 110
 Love was not in their looks, either to God
 Or to each other, but apparent guilt,
 And shame, and perturbation, and despair,
 Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile.

Whence Adam, faltering long, thus answered brief:—

"I heard thee in the Garden, and, of thy voice
 Afraid, being naked, hid myself." To whom
 The gracious Judge, without revile, replied:—

"My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not feared,

But still rejoiced ; how is it now become 120
 So dreadful to thee? That thou art naked who
 Hath told thee? Hast thou eaten of the tree
 Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?"

To whom thus Adam, sore beset, replied :—

“ O Heaven! in evil strait this day I stand
 Before my Judge—either to undergo
 Myself the total crime, or to accuse
 My other self, the partner of my life,
 Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,
 I should conceal, and not expose to blame 130

By my complaint. But strict necessity
 Subdues me, and calamitous constraint,
 Lest on my head both sin and punishment,
 However insupportable, be all
 Devolved; though, should I hold my peace, yet thou
 Wouldst easily detect what I conceal.

This Woman, whom thou mad'st to be my help,
 And gav'st me as thy perfect gift, so good,
 So fit, so acceptable, so divine,
 That from her hand I could suspect no ill, 140
 And what she did, whatever in itself,
 Her doing seemed to justify the deed—
 She gave me of the tree, and I did eat.”

To whom the Sovran-Presence thus replied :—

“ Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey
 Before his voice? or was she made thy guide,
 Superior, or but equal, that to her
 Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place
 Wherein God set thee above her, made of thee
 And for thee, whose perfection far excelled 150
 Hers in all real dignity? Adorned

She was indeed, and lovely, to attract
 Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts
 Were such as under government well seemed—
 Unseemly to bear rule; which was thy part
 And person, hadst thou known thyself aright.”

So having said, he thus to Eve in few :—

“ Say, Woman, what is this which thou hast done?"

To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelmed,
 Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge 160
 Bold or loquacious, thus abashed replied:—
 “The Serpent me beguiled, and I did eat.”

Which when the Lord God heard, without delay
 To judgment he proceeded on the accused
 Serpent, though brute, unable to transfer
 The guilt on him who made him instrument
 Of mischief, and polluted from the end
 Of his creation—justly then accursed,
 As vitiated in nature. More to know
 Concerned not Man (since he no further knew), 170
 Nor altered his offence; yet God at last
 To Satan, first in sin, his doom applied,
 Though in mysterious terms, judged as then best;
 And on the Serpent thus his curse let fall:—

“Because thou hast done this, thou art accursed
 Above all cattle, each beast of the field;
 Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go,
 And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.
 Between thee and the Woman I will put
 Enmity, and between thine and her seed; 180
 Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel.”

So spake this oracle—then verified
 When Jesus, son of Mary, second Eve,
 Saw Satan fall like lightning down from Heaven,
 Prince of the Air; then, rising from his grave,
 Spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphed
 In open show, and, with ascension bright,
 Captivity led captive through the air,
 The realm itself of Satan, long usurped,
 Whom he shall tread at last under our feet, 190
 Even he who now foretold his fatal bruise,
 And to the Woman thus his sentence turned:—

“Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
 By thy conception; children thou shalt bring
 In sorrow forth, and to thy husband's will
 Thine shall submit; he over thee shall rule.”

On Adam last thus judgment he pronounced:—

"Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife,
 And eaten of the tree concerning which
 I charged thee, saying, *Thou shalt not eat thereof,* 200
 Curs'd is the ground for thy sake ; thou in sorrow
 Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life ;
 Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth
 Unbid ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field ;
 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,
 Till thou return unto the ground ; for thou
 Out of the ground wast taken : know thy birth,
 For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return."

So judg'd he Man, both Judge and Saviour sent,
 And the instant stroke of death, denounced that day, 210
 Removed far off ; then, pitying how they stood
 Before him naked to the air, that now
 Must suffer change, disdain'd not to begin
 Thenceforth the form of servant to assume.
 As when he washed his servants' feet, so now,
 As father of his family, he clad
 Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain,
 Or, as the snake, with youthful coat repaid ;
 And thought not much to clothe his enemies.
 Nor he their outward only with the skins 220
 Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more
 Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness
 Arraying, covered from his Father's sight.
 To him with swift ascent he up returned,
 Into his blissful bosom reassum'd
 In glory as of old ; to him, appeas'd,
 All, though all-knowing, what had pass'd with Man
 Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.

Meanwhile, ere thus was sinned and judg'd on Earth,
 Within the gates of Hell sat Sin and Death, 230
 In counterview within the gates, that now
 Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame
 Far into Chaos, since the Fiend pass'd through,
 Sin opening ; who thus now to Death began :—

"O Son, why sit we here, each other viewing
 Idly, while Satan, our great author, thrives

In other worlds, and happier seat provides
 For us, his offspring dear? It cannot be
 But that success attends him; if mishap,
 Ere this he had returned, with fury driven 240
 By his avengers, since no place like this
 Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.
 Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,
 Wings growing, and dominion given me large
 Beyond this Deep—whatever draws me on,
 Or sympathy, or some connatural force,
 Powerful at greatest distance to unite
 With secret amity things of like kind
 By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade
 Inseparable, must with me along; 250
 For Death from Sin no power can separate.
 But, lest the difficulty of passing back
 Stay his return perhaps over this gulf
 Impassable, impervious, let us try
 (Adventurous work, yet to thy power and mine
 Not unagreeable!) to found a path
 Over this main from Hell to that new World
 Where Satan now prevails—a monument
 Of merit high to all the infernal host,
 Easing their passage hence, for intercourse 260
 Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.
 Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn
 By this new-felt attraction and instinct.”

Whom thus the meagre Shadow answered soon :—

“Go whither fate and inclination strong
 Leads thee; I shall not lag behind, nor err
 The way, thou leading: such a scent I draw
 Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste
 The savour of death from all things there that live.
 Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest 270
 Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid.”

So saying, with delight he snuffed the smell
 Of mortal change on Earth. As when a flock
 Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,
 Against the day of battle, to a field

Where armies lie encamped come flying, lured
 With scent of living carcasses designed
 For death the following day in bloody fight ;
 So scented the grim Feature, and upturned
 His nostril wide into the murky air, 280
 Sagacious of his quarry from so far.
 Then both, from out Hell-gates, into the waste
 Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,
 Flew diverse, and, with power (their power was great)
 Hovering upon the waters, what they met
 Solid or slimy, as in raging sea
 Tossed up and down, together crowded drove,
 From each side shoaling, towards the mouth of Hell ;
 As when two polar winds, blowing adverse
 Upon the Cronian sea, together drive 290
 Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way
 Beyond Petsora eastward to the rich
 Cathaian coast. The aggregated soil
 Death with his mace petrific, cold and dry,
 As with a trident smote, and fixed as firm
 As Delos, floating once ; the rest his look
 Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move,
 And with asphaltic slime ; broad as the gate,
 Deep to the roots of Hell the gathered beach
 They fastened, and the mole immense wrought on 300
 Over the foaming Deep high-arched, a bridge
 Of length prodigious, joining to the wall
 Immovable of this now fenceless World,
 Forfeit to Death—from hence a passage broad,
 Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to Hell.
 So, if great things to small may be compared,
 Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke,
 From Susa, his Memnonian palace high,
 Came to the sea, and, over Hellespont
 Bridging his way, Europe with Asia joined, 310
 And scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves.
 Now had they brought the work by wondrous art
 Pontifical—a ridge of pendent rock
 Over the vexed Abyss, following the track

Of Satan, to the self-same place where he
 First lighted from his wing and landed safe
 From out of Chaos—to the outside bare
 Of this round World. With pins of adamant
 And chains they made all fast, too fast they made
 And durable; and now in little space 320
 The confines met of empyrean Heaven
 And of this World, and on the left hand Hell,
 With long reach interposed; three several ways
 In sight to each of these three places led.
 And now their way to Earth they had descried,
 To Paradise first tending, when, behold
 Satan, in likeness of an Angel bright,
 Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering
 His zenith, while the Sun in Aries rose!
 Disguised he came; but those his children dear 330
 Their parent soon discerned, though in disguise.
 He, after Eve seduced, unminded slunk
 Into the wood fast by, and, changing shape
 To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act
 By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded
 Upon her husband—saw their shame that sought
 Vain covertures; but, when he saw descend
 The Son of God to judge them, terrified
 He fled, not hoping to escape, but shun
 The present—fearing, guilty, what his wrath 340
 Might suddenly inflict; that past, returned
 By night, and, listening where the hapless pair
 Sate in their sad discourse and various plaint,
 Thence gathered his own doom; which understood
 Not instant, but of future time, with joy
 And tidings fraught, to Hell he now returned,
 And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
 Of this new wondrous pontifice, unhopèd
 Met who to meet him came, his offspring dear.
 Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight 350
 Of that stupendious bridge his joy increased.
 Long he admiring stood, till Sin, his fair
 Enchanting daughter, thus the silence broke:—

“ O Parent, these are thy magnific deeds,
 Thy trophies! which thou view’st as not thine own;
 Thou art their author and prime architect.
 For-I no sooner in my heart divined
 (My heart, which by a secret harmony
 Still moves with thine, joined in connexion sweet)
 That thou on Earth hadst prospered, which thy looks 360
 Now also evidence, but straight I felt—
 Though distant from thee worlds between, yet felt—
 That I must after thee with this thy son;
 Such fatal consequence unites us three.
 Hell could no longer hold us in her bounds,
 Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure
 Detain from following thy illustrious track.
 Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined
 Within Hell-gates till now; thou us empowered
 To fortify thus far, and overlay 370
 With this portentous bridge the dark Abyss.
 Thine now is all this World; thy virtue hath won
 What thy hands builded not; thy wisdom gained,
 With odds, what war hath lost, and fully avenged
 Our foil in Heaven. Here thou shalt monarch reign,
 There didst not; there let him still victor sway,
 As battle hath adjudged, from this new World
 Retiring, by his own doom alienated,
 And henceforth monarchy with thee divide
 Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds, 380
 His quadrature, from thy orbicular World,
 Or try thee now more dangerous to his throne.”

Whom thus the Prince of Darkness answered glad:--
 “ Fair daughter, and thou, son and grandchild both,
 High proof ye now have given to be the race
 Of Satan (for I glory in the name,
 Antagonist of Heaven’s Almighty King),
 Amply have merited of me, of all
 The Infernal Empire, that so near Heaven’s door
 Triumphal with triumphal act have met, 390
 Mine with this glorious work, and made one realm
 Hell and this World—one realm, one continent

Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore, while I
 Descend through Darkness, on your road with ease,
 To my associate Powers, them to acquaint
 With these successes, and with them rejoice, . . .
 • You two this way, among these numerous orbs,
 All yours, right down to Paradise descend ;
 There dwell, and reign in bliss ; thence on the Earth
 Dominion exercise and in the air, 400
 Chiefly on Man, sole lord of all declared ;
 Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill. . .
 My substitutes I send ye, and create
 Plenipotent on Earth, of matchless might . . .
 Issuing from me. On your joint vigour now
 My hold of this new kingdom all depends,
 Through Sin to Death exposed by my exploit.
 If your joint power prevail, the affairs of Hell
 No detriment need fear ; go, and be strong.”
 So saying, he dismissed them ; they with speed 410
 Their course through thickest constellations held,
 Spreading their bane ; the blasted stars looked wan,
 And planets, planet-strook, real eclipse
 Then suffered. The other way Satan went down
 The causey to Hell-gate ; on either side
 Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaimed,
 And with rebounding surge the bars assailed,
 That scorned his indignation. Through the gate,
 Wide open and unguarded, Satan passed,
 And all about found desolate ; for those 420
 Appointed to sit there had left their charge,
 Flown to the upper World ; the rest were all
 Far to the inland retired, about the walls
 Of Pandemonium, city and proud seat
 Of Lucifer, so by allusion called
 Of that bright star to Satan paragoned.
 There kept their watch the legions, while the Grand
 In council sat, solicitous what chance
 Might intercept their Emperor sent ; so he
 Departing gave command, and they observed. 430
 As when the Tartar from his Russian foe,

By Astracan, over the snowy plains,
 Retires, or Bactrian Sophi, from the horns
 Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond
 The realm of Aladule, in his retreat
 To Tauris or Casbeen; so these, the late
 Heaven-banished host, left desert utmost Hell
 Many a dark league, reduced in careful watch
 Round their metropolis, and now expecting
 Each hour their great Adventurer from the search 440
 Of foreign worlds. He through the midst unmarked,
 In show plebeian Angel militant
 Of lowest order, passed, and, from the door
 Of that Plutonian hall, invisible
 Ascended his high throne, which, under state
 Of richest texture spread, at the upper end
 Was placed in regal lustre. Down a while
 He sat, and round about him saw, unseen.
 At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head
 And shape star-bright appeared, or brighter, clad 450
 With what permissive glory since his fall
 Was left him, or false glitter. All amazed
 At that so sudden blaze, the Stygian throng
 Bent their aspect, and whom they wished beheld,
 Their mighty Chief returned: loud was the acclaim.
 Forth rushed in haste the great consulting Peers,
 Raised from their dark Divan, and with like joy
 Congratulant approached him, who with hand
 Silence, and with these words attention, won:—
 “Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues,
 Powers!— 460

For in possession such, not only of right,
 I call ye, and declare ye now, returned,
 Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth
 Triumphant out of this infernal pit
 Abominable, accursed, the house of woe,
 And dungeon of our tyrant! Now possess,
 As lords, a spacious World, to our native Heaven
 Little inferior, by my adventure hard
 With peril great achieved. Long were to tell

What I have done, what suffered, with what pain 470
 Voyaged the unreal, vast, unbounded Deep
 Of horrible confusion—over which
 By Sin and Death a broad way now is paved,
 To expedite your glorious march; but I
 Toiled out my uncouth passage, forced to ride
 The untractable Abyss, plunged in the womb
 Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild,
 That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed
 My journey strange, with clamorous uproar
 Protesting Fate supreme; thence how I found 480
 The new-created World, which fame in Heaven
 Long^d had foretold, a fabric wonderful,
 Of absolute perfection; therein Man
 Placed in a paradise, by our exile
 Made happy. Him by fraud I have seduced
 From his Creator, and, the more to increase
 Your wonder, with an apple! He, thereat
 Offended—worth your laughter!—hath given up
 Both his beloved Man and all his World
 To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us, 490
 Without our hazard, labour, or alarm,
 To range in, and to dwell, and over Man
 To rule, as over all he should have ruled.
 True is, me also he hath judg'd; or rather
 Me not, but the brute Serpent, in whose shape
 Man I deceived. That which to me belongs
 Is enmity, which he will put between
 Me and Mankind: I am to bruise his heel;
 His seed—when is not set—shall bruise my head!
 A world who would not purchase with a bruise, 500
 Or much more grievous pain? Ye have the account
 Of my performance; what remains, ye Gods,
 But up and enter now into full bliss?"

So having said, a while he stood, expecting
 Their universal shout and high applause
 To fill his ear; when, contrary, he hears,
 On all sides, from innumerable tongues
 A dismal universal hiss, the sound

Of public scorn. He wondered, But not long
 Had leisure, wondering at himself now more. 510
 His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,
 His arms clung to his ribs, his legs entwining
 Each other, till, supplanted, down he fell,
 A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,
 Reluctant, but in vain; a greater power
 Now ruled him, punished in the shape he sinned,
 According to his doom. He would have spoke,
 But hiss for hiss returned with forked tongue
 To forked tongue; for now were all transformed
 Alike, to serpents all, as accessories 520
 To his bold riot. Dreadful was the din
 Of hissing through the hall, thick-swarming now
 With complicated monsters, head and tail—
 Scorpion, and Asp, and Amphisbæna dire,
 Cerastus horned, Hydrus, and Ellops drear,
 And Dipsas (not so thick swarmed once the soil
 Bedropt with blood of Gorgon, or the isle
 Ophiusa); but still greatest he the midst,
 Now Dragon grown, larger than whom the Sun
 Engendered in the Pythian vale on slime, 530
 Huge Python; and his power no less he seemed
 Above the rest still to retain. They all
 Him followed, issuing forth to the open field,
 Where all yet left of that revolted rout,
 Heaven-fallen, in station stood or just array,
 Sublime with expectation when to see .
 In triumph issuing forth their glorious Chief.
 They saw, but other sight instead—a crowd
 Of ugly serpents! Horror on them fell,
 And horrid sympathy; for what they saw 540
 They felt themselves now changing. Down their arms,
 Down fell both spear and shield; down they as fast,
 And the dire hiss renewed, and the dire form
 Caught by contagion, like in punishment
 As in their crime. Thus was the applause they meant
 Turned to exploding hiss, triumph to shame
 Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There stood

A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,
 His will who reigns above, to aggravate
 Their penance, laden with fair fruit, like that 550
 Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve
 • Used by the Tempter. On that prospect strange •
 Their earnest eyes they fixed, imagining
 For one forbidden tree a multitude
 Now risen, to work them further woe or shame ;
 Yet, parched with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,
 Though to delude them sent, could not abstain,
 But on they rolled in heaps, and, up the trees
 Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks •
 That curled Megæra. Greedily they plucked 560
 The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew
 Near that bituminous lake where Sodom flamed ;
 This, more delusive, not the touch, but taste
 Deceived ; they, fondly thinking to allay
 Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit
 Chewed bitter ashes, which the offended taste
 With spattering noise rejected. Oft they assayed,
 Hunger and thirst constraining ; drugged as oft,
 With hatefulest disrelish writhed their jaws
 With soot and cinders filled ; so oft they fell 570
 Into the same illusion, not as Man
 Whom they triumphed once •lapsed. Thus were they
 plagued,
 And, worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss,
 Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed—
 Yearly enjoined, some say, to undergo
 This annual humbling certain numbered days,
 To dash their pride, and joy for Man seduced.
 However, some tradition they dispersed
 Among the Heathen of their purchase got,
 And fabled how the Serpent, whom they called 580
 Ophion, with Eurynome (the wide-
 Encroaching Eve perhaps), had first the rule
 Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driven
 And Ops, ere yet Dictæan Jove was born.
 Meanwhile in Paradise the Hellish pair

Too soon arrived—Sin, there in power before
 Once actual, now in body, and to dwell
 Habitual habitant ; behind her Death,
 Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet
 On his pale horse ; to whom Sin thus began :— 596

“Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death!
 What think’st thou of our empire now? though earned
 With travail difficult, not better far
 Than still at Hell’s dark threshold to have sat watch,
 Unnamed, undreaded, and thyself half-starved?”

Whom thus the Sin-born Monster answered soon :—

“To me, who with eternal famine pine,
 Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven—
 There best where most with ravin I may meet :
 Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems 600
 To stuff this maw, this vast unhide-bound corpse.”

To whom the incestuous Mother thus replied :—
 “Thou, therefore, on these herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
 Feed first ; on each beast next, and fish, and fowl—
 No homely morsels ; and whatever thing
 The scythe of Time mows down devour unspared ;
 Till I, in Man residing through the race,
 His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect,
 And season him thy last and sweetest prey.”

This said, they both betook them several ways, 610
 Both to destroy, or unimmortal make
 All kinds, and for destruction to mature
 Sooner or later ; which the Almighty seeing,
 From his transcendent seat the Saints among,
 To those bright Orders uttered thus his voice :—

“See with what heat these dogs of Hell advance
 To waste and havoc yonder World, which I
 So fair and good created, and had still
 Kept in that state, had not the folly of Man
 Let in these wasteful furies, who impute 620
 Folly to me (so doth the Prince of Hell
 And his adherents), that with so much ease
 I suffer them to enter and possess
 A place so heavenly, and, conniving, seem

To gratify my scornful enemies,
 That laugh, as if, transported with some fit
 Of passion, I to them had quitted all,
 At random yielded up to their misrule ;
 And know not that I called and drew them thither,
 My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth 630
 Which Man's polluting sin with taint hath shed
 On what was pure ; till, crammed and gorged, nigh
 burst

With sucked and glutted offal, at one sling
 Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,
 Both Sin and Death, and yawning Grave, at last
 Through Chaos hurled, obstruct the mouth of Hell
 For ever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.
 Then Heaven and Earth, renewed, shall be made pure
 To sanctity that shall receive no stain :
 Till then the curse pronounced on both precedes." 640

He ended, and the Heavenly audience loud
 Sung Halleluiah, as the sound of seas,
 Through multitude that sung :—" Just are thy ways,
 Righteous are thy decrees on all thy works ;
 Who can extenuate thee ? Next, to the Son,
 Destined restorer of Mankind, by whom
 New Heaven and Earth shall to the ages rise,
 Or down from Heaven descend." Such was their song,
 While the Creator, calling forth by name
 His mighty Angels, gave them several charge, 650
 As sorted best with present things. The Sun
 Had first his précept so to move, so shine,
 As might affect the Earth with cold and heat
 Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call
 Decrepit winter, from the south to bring
 Solstitial summer's heat. To the blanc Moon
 Her office they prescribed ; to the other five
 Their planetary motions and aspécts,
 In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite,
 Of noxious efficacy, and when to join 660
 In synod unbenign ; and taught the fixed
 Their influence malignant when to shower—

Which of them, rising with the Sun or falling,
 Should prove tempestuous. To the winds they set
 Their corners, when with bluster to confound
 Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll
 'With terror through the dark aerial hall.

Some say he bid his Angels turn askance
 The poles of Earth twice ten degrees and more
 From the Sun's axle; they with labour pushed 670
 Oblique the centric Globe: some say the Sun
 Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road
 Like distant breadth—to Taurus with the seven
 Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins,
 Up to the Tropic Crab; thence down amain
 By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,
 As deep as Capricorn; to bring in change
 Of seasons to each clime. Else had the spring
 Perpetual smiled on Earth with vernant flowers,
 Equal in days and nights, except to those 680
 Beyond the polar circles; to them day
 Had unbenighted shone, while the low Sun,
 To recompense his distance, in their sight
 Had rounded still the horizon, and not known
 Or east or west—which had forbid the snow
 From cold Estotiland, and south as far
 Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit,
 The Sun, as from Thyestean banquet, turned
 His course intended; eise how had the World
 Inhabited, though sinless, more than now 690
 Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?
 These changes in the heavens, though slow, produced
 Like change on sea and land—sideral blast,
 Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot,
 Corrupt and pestilent. Now from the north
 Of Norumbega, and the Samoed shore,
 Bursting their brazen dungeon, armed with ice,
 And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw,
 Boreas and Cæcias and Argestes loud
 And Thrascias rend the woods, and seas upturn; 700
 With adverse blasts upturns them from the south

Notus and Afer, black with thundrous clouds
 From Serrationa; thwart of these, as fierce
 Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent winds,
 Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise,
 Sirocco and Libecchio. Thus began
 Outrage from lifeless things; but Discord first,
 Daughter of Sin, among the irrational
 Death introduced through fierce antipathy.
 Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl, 710
 And fish with fish. To graze the herb all leaving
 Devoured each other; nor stood much in awe
 Of Man, but fled him, or with countenance grim
 Glared on him passing. These were from without
 The growing miseries; which Adam saw
 Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
 To sorrow abandoned, but worse felt within,
 And, in a troubled sea of passion tost,
 Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint:—

“O miserable of happy! Is this the end 720
 Of this new glorious World, and me so late
 The glory of that glory? who now, become
 Accursed of blessed, hide me from the face
 Of God, whom to behold was then my highth
 Of happiness! Yet well, if here would end
 The misery! I deserved it, and would bear
 My own deservings. But this will not serve:
 All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
 Is propagated curse. O voice, once heard
 Delightfully, ‘*Increase and multiply;*’ 730
 Now death to hear! for what can I increase
 Or multiply but curses on my head?
 Who, of all ages to succeed, but, feeling
 The evil on him brought by me, will curse
 My head? ‘Ill fare our Ancestor impure!
 For this we may thank Adam!’ but his thanks
 Shall be the execration. So, besides
 Mine own that bide upon me, all from me
 Shall with a fierce reflux on me redound—
 On me, as on their natural centre, light; 740

Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys
 Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!
 Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
 To mould me Man? Did I solicit thee
 From darkness to promote me, or here place
 In this delicious Garden? As my will
 Concurred not to my being, it were but right
 And equal to reduce me to my dust,
 Desirous to resign and render back
 All I received, unable to perform 750
 Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
 The good I sought not. To the loss of that,
 Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added
 The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
 Thy justice seems. Yet, to say truth, too late
 I thus contest; then should have been refused
 Those terms, whatever, when they were proposed.
 Thou didst accept them: wilt thou enjoy the good,
 Then cavil the conditions? And, though God
 Made thee without thy leave, what if thy son 760
 Prove disobedient, and, reprov'd, retort,
 'Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not!'
 Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee
 That proud excuse? yet him not thy election,
 But natural necessity, begot.
 God made thee of choice his own, and of his own
 To serve him; thy reward was of his grace;
 Thy punishment, then, justly is at his will.
 Be it so, for I submit; his doom is fair,
 That dust I am, and shall to dust return. 770
 O welcome hour whenever! Why delays
 His hand to execute what his decree
 Fixed on this day? Why do I overlive?
 Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened out
 To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet
 Mortality, my sentence, and be earth
 Insensible! how glad would lay me down
 As in my mother's lap! There I should rest,
 And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more

Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse 780 ..
 To me and to my offspring would torment me
 With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt
 Pursues me still—lest all I cannot die;
 Lest that pure breath of life, the Spirit of Man
 Which God inspired, cannot together perish
 With this corporeal clod. Then, in the grave,
 Or in some other dismal place, who knows
 But I shall die a living death? O thought
 Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath
 Of life that sinned: what dies but what had life . 790
 And sin? The body properly hath neither.
 All of me, then, shall die: let this appease
 The doubt, since human reach no further knows.
 For, though the Lord of all be infinite,
 Is his wrath also? Be it, Man is not so,
 But mortal doomed. How can he exercise
 Wrath without end on Man, whom death must end?
 Can he make deathless death? That were to make
 Strange contradiction; which to God himself
 Impossible is held, as argument 800
 Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out,
 For anger's sake, finite to infinite
 In punished Man, to satisfy his rigour
 Satisfied never? That were to extend
 His sentence beyond dust and Nature's law;
 By which all causes else according still
 To the reception of their matter act,
 Not to the extent of their own sphere. But say
 That death be not one stroke, as I supposed,
 Bereaving sense, but endless misery 810
 From this day onward, which I feel begun
 Both in me and without me, and so last
 To perpetuity—Ay me! that fear
 Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution
 On my defenceless head! Both Death and I
 Am found eternal, and incorporate both:
 Nor I on my part single; in me all
 Posterity stands cursed. Fair patrimony

That I must leave ye, sons! Oh, were I able
 To waste it all myself, and leave ye none! 820
 So disinherited, how would ye bless
 Me, now your curse! Ah, why should all Mankind,
 For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemned?
 If guiltless! But from me what can proceed
 But all corrupt—both mind and will depraved
 Not to do only, but to will the same
 With me? How can they, then, acquitted stand
 In sight of God? Him, after all disputes,
 Forc'd I absolve. All my evasions vain
 And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still
 But to my own conviction: first and last 831
 On me, me only, as the source and spring
 Of all corruption, all the blame lights due.
 So might the wrath! Fond wish! couldst thou
 support

That burden, heavier than the Earth to bear—
 Than all the world much heavier, though divided
 With that bad Woman? Thus, what thou desir'st,
 And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope
 Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
 Beyond all past example and future— 840
 To Satan only like, both crime and doom.
 O Conscience! into what abyss of fears
 And horrors hast thou driven me; out of which
 I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged!"

Thus Adam to himself lamented loud
 Through the still night—not now, as ere Man fell,
 Wholesome and cool and mild, but with black air
 Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom;
 Which to his evil conscience represented
 All things with double terror. On the ground 850
 Outstretched he lay, on the cold ground, and oft
 Cursed his creation; Death as oft accused
 Of tardy execution, since denounced
 The day of his offence. "Why comes not Death,"
 Said he, "with one thrice-acceptable stroke
 To end me? Shall Truth fail to keep her word,

Justice divine not hasten to be just?
 But Death comes not at call; Justice divine
 Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.
 O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bowers! 860
 With other echo late I taught your shades
 To answer, and resound far other song."
 Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld,
 Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh,
 Soft words to his fierce passion she assayed;
 But her, with stern regard, he thus repelled:—

“Out of my sight, thou serpent! That name best
 Befits thee, with him leagued, thyself as false
 And hateful: nothing wants, but that thy shape
 Like his, and colour serpentine, may show 870
 The inward fraud, to warn all creatures from thee
 Henceforth, lest that too heavenly form, pretended
 To hellish falsehood, snare them. But for thee
 I had persisted happy, had not thy pride
 And wandering vanity, when least was safe,
 Rejected my forewarning, and disdained
 Not to be trusted—longing to be seen,
 Though by the Devil himself; him overweening
 To overreach; but, with the Serpent meeting,
 Fooled and beguiled; by him, thou, I by thee, 880
 To trust thee from my side, imagined wise,
 Constant, mature, proof against all assaults,
 And understood not all was but a show,
 Rather than solid virtue, all but a rib
 Crooked by nature—bent, as now appears,
 More to the part sinister—from me drawn;
 Well if thrown out, as supernumerary
 To my just number found! Oh, why did God,
 Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven
 With Spirits masculine, create at last 890
 This novelty on Earth, this fair defect
 Of Nature, and not fill the World at once
 With men as Angels, without feminine;
 Or find some other way to generate
 Mankind? This mischief had not then befallen,

. And more that shall befall—innumerable
 Disturbances on Earth through female snares,
 . And strait conjunction with this sex. For either
 He never shall find out fit mate, but such
 As some misfortune brings him, or mistake ; 900
 . Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain,
 Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained
 By a far worse, or, if she love, withheld
 By parents ; or his happiest choice too late
 Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound
 To a fell adversary, his hate or shame :
 Which infinite calamity shall cause
 To human life, and household peace confound.”

He added not, and from her turned ; but Eve,
 Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing, 910
 And tresses all disordered, at his feet
 Fell humble, and, embracing them, besought
 His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint :—

“ Forsake me not thus, Adam ! witness Heaven
 What love sincere and reverence in my heart
 I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
 Unhappily deceived ! Thy suppliant
 I beg, and clasp thy knees ; bereave me not
 Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
 Thy counsel in this uttermost distress, 920
 My only strength and stay. Forlorn of thee,
 Whither shall I betake me, where subsist ?
 While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,
 Between us two let there be peace ; both joining,
 As joined in injuries, one enmity
 Against a foe by doom express assigned us,
 That cruel Serpent. On me exercise not
 Thy hatred for this misery befallen—
 On me already lost, me than thyself
 More miserable. Both have sinned ; but thou 930
 Against God only ; I against God and thee,
 And to the place of judgment will return,
 There with my cries importune Heaven, that all
 . The sentence, from thy head removed, may light

On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,
Me, me only, just object of his ire."

1 She ended, weeping; and her lowly plight,
Immovable till peace obtained from fault
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
Commiseration. Soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress—
Creature so fair his reconcilment seeking,
His counsel whom she had displeas'd, his aid.
As one disarm'd, his anger all he lost,
And thus with peaceful words uprais'd her soon:

940

“Unwary, and too desirous, as before
So now, of what thou know'st not, who desir'st
The punishment all on thyself! Alas!
Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain
His full wrath whose thou feel'st as yet least part,
And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers
Could alter high decrees, I to that place
Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
That on my head all might be visited,
Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,
To me committed, and by me expos'd.
But rise; let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere, but strive
In offices of love how we may lighten
Each other's burden in our share of woe;
Since this day's death denounced, if aught I see,
Will prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil,
A long day's dying, to augment our pain,
And to our seed (O hapless seed!) derived.”

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To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied:—

“Adam, by sad experiment, I know
How little weight my words with thee can find,
Found so erroneous, thence by just event
Found so unfortunate. Nevertheless,
Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place
Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain
Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart,

970

Living or dying from thee I will not hide
 What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen,
 Tending to some relief of our extremes,
 Or erd, though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,
 As in our evils, and of easier choice.
 If care of our descent perplex us most,
 Which must be born to certain woe, devoured 980
 By Death at last (and miserable it is
 To be to others cause of misery,
 Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring
 Into this cursed world a woeful race,
 That, after wretched life, must be at last
 Food for so foul a monster), in thy power
 It lies, yet ere conception, to prevent
 The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.
 Childless thou art ; childless remain. So Death
 Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two 990
 Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.
 But, if thou judge it hard and difficult,
 Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain
 From love's due rites, nuptial embraces sweet,
 And with desire to languish without hope
 Before the present object languishing
 With like desire—which would be misery
 And torment less than none of what we dread—
 Then, both our selves and seed at once to free
 From what we fear for both, let us make short ; 1000
 Let us seek Death, or, he not found, supply
 With our own hands his office on ourselves.
 Why stand we longer shivering under fears
 That show no end but death, and have the power,
 Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,
 Destruction with destruction to destroy ?
 She ended here, or vehement despair
 Broke off the rest ; so much of death her thoughts
 Had entertained as dyed her cheeks with pale.
 But Adam, with such counsel nothing swayed, 1010
 To better hopes his more attentive mind
 Labouring had raised, and thus to Eve replied :—

“ Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
 To argue in thee something more sublime
 And excellent than what thy mind contemns :
 But self-destruction therefore sought refutes
 • That excellence thought in thee, and implies
 Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret
 For loss of life and pleasure overloved.
 Or, if thou covet death, as utmost end 1020
 Of misery, so thinking to evade
 The penalty pronounced, doubt not but God
 Hath wiselier armed his vengeful ire than so
 To be forestalled. Much more I fear lest death
 So snatch'd will not exempt us from the pain
 We are by doom to pay ; rather such acts
 Of contumacy will provoke the Highest
 To make death in us live. Then let us seek
 Some safer resolution—which methinks
 I have in view, calling to mind with heed 1030
 Part of our sentence, that thy seed shall bruise
 The Serpent's head. Piteous amends ! unless
 Be meant whom I conjecture, our grand foe,
 Satan, who in the Serpent hath contrived
 Against us this deceit. To crush his head
 Would be revenge indeed—which will be lost
 By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
 Resolved as thou proposest ; so our foe
 Shall scape his punishment ordain'd, and we
 Instead shall double ours upon our heads. 1040
 No more be mention'd, then, of violence
 Against ourselves, and wilful barrenness
 That cuts us off from hope, and savours only
 Rancour and pride, impatience and despite,
 Reluctance against God and his just yoke
 Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild
 And gracious temper he both heard and judged,
 Without wrath or reviling. • We expected
 Immediate dissolution, which we thought
 Was meant by death that day ; when, lo ! to thee 1050
 Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,

And bringing forth, soon recompensed with joy,
 Fruit of thy womb. On me the curse aslope
 Glanced on the ground. With labour I must earn
 My bread; what harm? Idleness had been worse;
 My labour will sustain me; and, lest cold
 Or heat should injure us, his timely care
 Hath, unbesought, provided, and his hands
 Clothed us unworthy, pitying while he judged.
 How much more, if we pray him, will his ear 1060
 Be open, and his heart to pity incline,
 And teach us further by what means to shun
 The inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow!
 Which now the sky, with various face, begins
 To show us in this mountain, while the winds
 Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks
 Of these fair spreading trees; which bids us seek
 Some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish
 Our limbs benumbed—ere this diurnal star
 Leave cold the night, how we his gathered beams 1070
 Reflected may with matter sere foment,
 Or by collision of two bodies grind
 The air attrite to fire; as late the clouds,
 Justling, or pushed with winds, rude in their shock,
 Tine the slant lightning, whose thwart flame, driven
 down,
 Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine,
 And sends a comfortable heat from far,
 Which might supply the Sun. Such fire to use,
 And what may else be remedy or cure
 To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought, 1080
 He will instruct us praying, and of grace
 Beseeching him; so as we need not fear
 To pass commodiously this life, sustained
 By him with many comforts, till we end
 In dust, our final rest and native home.
 What better can we do than, to the place
 Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall
 Before him reverent, and there confess
 Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears

Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air 1090
 Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
 Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek?
 Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn
 From his displeasure, in whose look serene,
 When angry most he seemed and most severe,
 What else but favour, grace, and mercy shone?"
 So spake our Father penitent; nor Eve
 Felt less remorse. They, forthwith to the place
 Repairing where he judg'd them, prostrate fell
 Before him reverent, and both confessed 1100
 Humbly their faults, and pardon begged, with tears
 Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
 Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
 Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek.

PARADISE LOST

BOOK XI

THE ARGUMENT

The Son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents now repenting, and intercedes for them. God accepts them, but declares that they must no longer abide in Paradise; sends Michael with a band of Cherubim to dispossess them, but first to reveal to Adam future things: Michael's coming down. Adam shows to Eve certain ominous signs: he discerns Michael's approach; goes out to meet him: the Angel denounces their departure. Eve's lamentation. Adam pleads, but submits: the Angel leads him up to a high hill; sets before him in vision what shall happen till the Flood.

Thus they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood
Praying; for from the mercy-seat above
Prevenient grace descending had removed
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
Regenerate grow instead, that sighs now breathed
Unutterable, which the Spirit of prayer
Inspired, and winged for Heaven with speedier flight
Than loudest oratory. Yet their port
Not of mean suitors; nor important less
Seemed their petition than when the ancient pair 10
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
The race of mankind drowned, before the shrine
Of Themis stood devout. To Heaven their prayers
Flew up, nor missed the way, by envious winds
Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they passed
Dimensionless through heavenly doors; then, clad
With incense, where the golden altar fumed,

By their great Intercessor, came in sight
 Before the Father's throne. Them the glad Son 20
 Presenting thus to intercede began:—

“See, Father, what first-fruits on Earth are sprung
 • From thy implanted grace in Man—these sighs
 And prayers, which in this golden censer, mixed
 With incense, I, thy priest, before thee bring;
 Fruits of more pleasing savour, from thy seed
 Sown with contrition in his heart, than those
 Which, his own hand manuring, all the trees
 Of Paradise could have produced, ere fallen
 From innocence. Now, therefore, bend thine ear 30
 To supplication; hear his sighs, though mute;
 Unskilful with what words to pray, let me
 Interpret for him, me his advocate
 And propitiation; all his works on me,
 Good or not good, ingraft; my merit those
 Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.
 Accept me, and in me from these receive
 The smell of peace toward Mankind; let him live,
 Before thee reconciled, at least his days
 Numbered, though sad, till death, his doom (which I
 To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse), 41
 To better life shall yield him, where with me
 All my redeemed may dwell in joy and bliss,
 Made one with me, as I with thee am one.”

To whom the Father, without cloud, serene:—

“All thy request for Man, accepted Son,
 Obtain; all thy request was my decree.
 But longer in that Paradise to dwell
 The law I gave to Nature him forbids;
 Those pure immortal elements, that know 50
 No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,
 Eject him, tainted now, and purge him off,
 As a distemper, gross, to air as gross,
 And mortal food, as may dispose him best
 For dissolution wrought by sin, that first
 Distempered all things, and of incorrupt
 Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts

Created him endowed—with Happiness
 And Immortality; that fondly lost,
 This other served but to eternize woe, 60
 Till I provided Death: so Death becomes
 His final remedy, and, after life
 Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined
 By faith and faithful works, to second life,
 Waked in the renovation of the just,
 Resigns him up with Heaven and Earth renewed.
 But let us call to synod all the Blest
 Through Heaven's wide bounds; from them I will not
 hide

My judgments—how with Mankind I proceed,
 As how with peccant Angels late they saw, 70
 And in their state, though firm, stood more confirmed.”

He ended, and the Son gave signal high
 To the bright Minister that watched. He blew
 His trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps
 When God descended, and perhaps once more
 To sound at general doom. The angelic blast
 Filled all the regions: from their blissful bowers
 Of amarantine shade, fountain or spring,
 By the waters of life, where'er they sat
 In fellowships of joy, the Sons of Light 80
 Hasted, resorting to the summons high,
 And took their seats, till from his throne supreme
 The Almighty thus pronounced his sovran will:—

“O Sons, like one of us Man is become
 To know both good and evil, since his taste
 Of that defended fruit; but let him boast
 His knowledge of good lost and evil got,
 Happier had it sufficed him to have known
 Good by itself and evil not at all.
 He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite— 90
 My motions in him; longer than they move,
 His heart I know how variable and vain,
 Self-left. Lest, therefore, his now bolder hand
 Reach also of the Tree of Life, and eat,
 And live for ever, dream at least to live

For ever, to remove him I decree,
 And send him from the Garden forth, to till
 The ground whence he was taken, fitter soil.
 Michael, this my behest have thou in charge :
 Take to thee from among the Cherubim 100
 Thy choice of flaming warriors, lest the Fiend,
 Or in behalf of Man, or to invade
 Vacant possession, some new trouble raise ;
 Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God
 Without remorse drive out the sinful pair,
 From hallowed ground the unholy, and denounce
 To them, and to their progeny, from thence
 Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint
 At the sad sentence rigorously urged
 (For I behold them softened, and with tears 110
 Bewailing their excess), all terror hide.
 If patiently thy bidding they obey,
 Dismiss them not disconsolate ; reveal
 To Adam what shall come in future days,
 As I shall thee enlighten ; intermix
 My covenant in the Woman's seed renewed.
 So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace ;
 And on the east side of the Garden place,
 Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
 Cherubic watch, and of a sword the flame 120
 Wide-waving, all approach far off to fright,
 And guard all passage to the Tree of Life ;
 Lest Paradise a receptacle prove
 To Spirits foul, and all my trees their prey,
 With whose stolen fruit Man once more to delude."

He ceased, and the Archangelic Power prepared
 For swift descent ; with him the cohort bright
 Of watchful Cherubim. Four faces each
 Had, like a double Janus ; all their shape
 Spangled with eyes more numerous than those 130
 Of Argus, and more wakeful than to drowse,
 Charmed with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed
 Of Hermes, or his opiate rod. Meanwhile,
 To resalute the World with sacred light,

Leucothea waked, and with fresh dews embalmed
 The Earth, when Adam and first matron Eve
 Had ended now their orisons, and found
 Strength added from above, new hope to spring
 Out of despair, joy, but with fear yet linked ;
 Which thus to Eve his welcome words renewed : - 140

“ Eve, easily may faith admit that all
 The good which we enjoy from Heaven descends ;
 But that from us aught should ascend to Heaven
 So prevalent as to concern the mind
 Of God high-blest, or to incline his will,
 Hard to belief may seem. Yet this will prayer,
 Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne
 Even to the seat of God. For, since I sought
 By prayer the offended Deity to appease,
 Kneeled and before him humbled all my heart, ” 150
 Methought I saw him placable and mild,
 Bending his ear ; persuasion in me grew
 That I was heard with favour ; peace returned
 Home to my breast, and to my memory
 His promise that thy seed shall bruise our Foe ;
 Which, then not minded in dismay, yet now
 Assures me that the bitterness of death
 Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee !
 Eve rightly called, Mother of all Mankind,
 Mother of all things living, since by thee 160
 Man is to live, and all things live for Man.”

To whom thus Eve with sad demeanour meek :—
 “ Ill-worthy I such title should belong
 To me transgressor, who, for thee ordained
 A help, became thy snare ; to me reproach
 Rather belongs, distrust and all dispraise.
 But infinite in pardon was my Judge,
 That I, who first brought death on all, am graced
 The source of life ; next favourable thou,
 Who highly thus to entitle me voutsaf’st, 170
 Far other name deserving. But the field
 To labour calls us, now with sweat imposed,
 Though after sleepless night ; for see ! the Morn,

All unconcerned with our unrest, begins
 Her rosy progress smiling. Let us forth,
 I never from thy side henceforth to stray,
 Where'er our day's work lies, though now enjoined,
 • Laborious, till day droop. While here we dwell,
 What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks?
 Here let us live, though in fallen state, content." 180

So spake, so wished, much-humbled Eve; but
 Fate,

Subscribed not. Nature first gave signs, impressed
 On bird, beast, air—air suddenly eclipsed,
 After short blush of morn. Nigh in her sight
 The bird of Jove, stooped from his aery tour,
 Two birds of gayest plume before him drove;
 Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods,
 First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace,
 Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind;
 Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight. 190
 Adam observed, and, with his eye the chase
 Pursuing, not unmoved to Eve thus spake:—

“ O Eve, some further change awaits us nigh,
 Which Heaven by these mute signs in Nature shows,
 Forerunners of his purpose, or to warn
 Us, haply too secure of our discharge
 From penalty because from death released
 Some days: how long, and what till then our life,
 Who knows, or more than this, that we are dust,
 And thither must return, and be no more? 200
 Why else this double object in our sight,
 Of flight pursued in the air and o'er the ground
 One way the self-same hour? Why in the east
 Darkness ere day's mid-course, and morning-light
 More orient in yon western cloud, that draws
 O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
 And slow descends, with something heavenly fraught?”

He erred not; for, by this, the heavenly bands
 Down from a sky of jasper lighted now
 In Paradise, and on a hill made halt— 210
 A glorious apparition, had not doubt

And carnal fear that day dimmed Adam's eye.
 Not that more glorious, when the Angels met
 Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw
 The field pavilioned with his guardians bright ;
 Nor that which on the flaming mount appeared
 In Dothan, covered with a camp of fire,
 Against the Syrian king, who, to surprise
 One man, assassin-like, had levied war,
 War unproclaimed. The princely Hierarch 220
 In their bright stand there left his Powers to seize
 Possession of the Garden ; he alone,
 To find where Adam sheltered, took his way,
 Not unperceived of Adam ; who to Eve,
 While the great visitant approached, thus spake :—
 “ Eve, now expect great tidings, which, perhaps,
 Of us will soon determine, or impose
 New laws to be observed ; for I descry,
 From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,
 One of the heavenly host, and, by his gait, 230
 None of the meanest—some great Potentate
 Or of the Thrones above, such majesty
 Invests him coming ; yet not terrible,
 That I should fear, nor sociably mild,
 As Raphael, that I should much confide,
 But solemn and sublime ; whom, not to offend,
 With reverence I must meet, and thou retire.”
 He ended ; and the Archangel soon drew nigh,
 Not in his shape celestial, but as man
 Clad to meet man. Over his lucid arms 240
 A military vest of purple flowed,
 Livelier than Melibœan, or the grain
 Of Sarra, worn by kings and heroes old
 In time of truce ; Iris had dipt the woof.
 His starry helm unbuckled showed him prime
 In manhood where youth ended ; by his side,
 As in a glistening zodiac, hung the sword,
 Satan's dire dread, and in his hand the spear.
 Adam bowed low ; he, kingly, from his state
 Inclined not, but his coming thus declared :— 250

“ Adam, Heaven’s high behest no preface needs.
Sufficient that thy prayers are heard, and Death,
Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,
Defeated of his seizure many days,

Given thee of grace, wherein thou may’st repent,
And one bad act with many deeds well done
May’st cover. Well may then thy Lord, appeased,
Redeem thee quite from Death’s rapacious claim ;
But longer in this Paradise to dwell

Permits not. To remove thee I am come, 260
And send thee from the Garden forth, to till
The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil.”

He added not ; for Adam, at the news
Heart-strook, with chilling gripe of sorrow stood,
That all his senses bound ; Eve, who unseen
Yet all had heard, with audible lament
Discovered soon the place of her retire :—

“ O unexpected stroke, worse than of Death !
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise ? thus leave
Thee, native soil ? these happy walks and shades, 270
Fit haunt of Gods, where I had hope to spend,

Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both ? O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last

At even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names,
Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount ?

Thee, lastly, nuptial bower, by me adorned 280
With what to sight or smell was sweet, from thee
How shall I part, and whither wander down

Into a lower world, to this obscure
And wild ? How shall we breathe in other air
Less pure, accustomed to immortal fruits ? ”

Whom thus the Angel interrupted mild :—
“ Lament not, Eve, but patiently resign
What justly thou hast lost ; nor set thy heart,
Thus over-fond, on that which is not thine.

Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes 290
 Thy husband; him to follow thou art bound;
 Where he abides, think there thy native soil."
 Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp
 Recovering, and his scattered spirits returned,
 To Michael thus his humble words addressed:—
 "Celestial, whether among the Thrones, or named
 Of them the highest—for such of shape may seem
 Prince above princes—gently hast thou told
 Thy message, which might else in telling wound,
 And in performing end us. What besides 300
 Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,
 Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring—
 Departure from this happy place, our sweet
 Recess, and only consolation left
 Familiar to our eyes; all places else
 Inhospitable appear, and desolate,
 Nor knowing us, nor known. And, if by prayer
 Incessant I could hope to change the will
 Of him who all things can, I would not cease
 To weary him with my assiduous cries; 310
 But prayer against his absolute decree
 No more avails than breath against the wind,
 Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth:
 Therefore to his great bidding I submit.
 This most afflicts me—that, departing hence,
 As from his face I shall be hid, deprived
 His blessed countenance. Here I could frequent,
 With worship, place by place where he voutsafed
 Presence Divine, and to my sons relate,
 'On this mount he appeared; under this tree 320
 Stood visible; among these pines his voice
 I heard; here with him at this fountain talked.'
 So many grateful altars I would rear
 Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone
 Of lustre from the brook, in memory
 Or monument to ages, and thereon
 Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers.
 In yonder nether world where shall I seek

His bright appearances, or footstep trace?
 For, though I fled him angry, yet, recalled 330
 To life prolonged and promised race, I now
 Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts
 Of glory, and far off his steps adore."

To whom thus Michael, with regard benign:—
 "Adam, thou know'st Heaven his, and all the Earth,
 Not this rock only; his omnipresence fills
 Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives,
 Fomented by his virtual power and warmed.
 All the Earth he gave thee to possess and rule,
 No despicable gift; surmise not, then, 340
 His presence to these narrow bounds confined
 Of Paradise or Eden. This had been
 Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread
 All generations, and had hither come,
 From all the ends of the Earth, to celebrate
 And reverence thee their great progenitor.
 But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down
 To dwell on even ground now with thy sons:
 Yet doubt not but in valley and in plain
 God is, as here, and will be found alike 350
 Present, and of his presence many a sign
 Still following thee, still compassing thee round
 With goodness and paternal love, his face
 Express, and of his steps the track divine.
 Which that thou may'st believe, and be confirmed
 Ere thou from hence depart, know I am sent
 To show thee what shall come in future days
 To thee and to thy offspring. Good with bad
 Expect to hear, supernal grace contending 360
 With sinfulness of men—thereby to learn
 True patience, and to temper joy with fear
 And pious sorrow, equally inured
 By moderation either state to bear,
 Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead
 Safest thy life, and best prepared endure
 Thy mortal passage when it comes. Ascend
 This hill; let Eve (for I have drenched her eyes)

Here sleep below while thou to foresight wak'st,
 As once thou slept'st while she to life was formed."
 To whom thus Adam gratefully replied:— 370
 "Ascend; I follow thee, safe guide, the path
 Thou lead'st me, and to the hand of Heaven submit,
 However chastening—to the evil turn
 My obvious breast, arming to overcome
 By suffering, and earn rest from labour won,
 If so I may attain." So both ascend
 In the visions of God. It was a hill,
 Of Paradise the highest, from whose top
 The hemisphere of Earth in clearest ken
 Stretched out to the amplest reach of prospect lay. 380
 Not higher that hill, nor wider looking round,
 Whereon for different cause the Tempter set
 Our second Adam, in the wilderness,
 To show him all Earth's kingdoms and their glory.
 His eye might there command wherever stood
 City of old or modern fame, the seat
 Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls
 Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,
 And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,
 To Paquin of Sinaean kings, and thence 390
 To Agra and Lahor of Great Mogul,
 Down to the golden Chersonese, or where
 The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since
 In Hispahan, or where the Russian Ksar
 In Mosco, or the Sultan in Bizance,
 Turchestan-born; nor could his eye not ken
 The empire of Negus to his utmost port
 Ercoco, and the less maritime kings,
 Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melind,
 And Sofala (thought Ophir), to the realm 400
 Of Congo, and Angola farthest south,
 Or thence from Niger flood to Atlas mount,
 The kingdoms of Almanzor, Fez and Sus,
 Marocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen;
 On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway
 The world: in spirit perhaps he also saw

Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume,
 And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat
 Of Atabalipa, and yet unspoiled
 Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons
 Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights
 Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed
 Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight
 Had bred; then purged with euphrasy and rue
 The visual nerve, for he had much to see,
 And from the well of life three drops instilled.
 So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,
 Even to the inmost seat of mental sight,
 That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes,
 Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranced. 420
 But him the gentle Angel by the hand
 Soon raised, and his attention thus recalled:—

“Adam, now ope thine eyes, and first behold
 The effects which thy original crime hath wrought
 In some to spring from thee, who never touched
 The excepted tree, nor with the Snake conspired,
 Nor sinned thy sin, yet from that sin derive
 Corruption to bring forth more violent deeds.”

His eyes he opened, and beheld a field,
 Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves 430
 New-reaped, the other part sheep-walks and folds;
 I' the midst an altar as the landmark stood,
 Rustic, of grassy sord. Thither anon
 A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought
 First-fruits, the green ear and the yellow sheaf,
 Unculled, as came to hand. A shepherd next,
 More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,
 Choicest and best; then, sacrificing, laid
 The inwards and their fat, with incense strewed,
 On the cleft wood, and all due rites performed. 440
 His offering soon propitious fire from heaven
 Consumed, with nimble glance and grateful steam;
 The other's not, for his was not sincere:
 Whereat he inly raged, and, as they talked,
 Smote him into the midriff with a stone

That beat out life; he fell, and, deadly pale,
Groaned out his soul, with gushing blood effused.

Much at that sight was Adam in his heart
Dismayed, and thus in haste to the Angel cried:—

“O Teacher, some great mischief hath befallen 450
To that meek man, who well had sacrificed:
Is piety thus and pure devotion paid?”

To whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied:—

“These two are brethren, Adam, and to come
Out of thy loins. The unjust the just hath slain,
For envy that his brother’s offering found
From Heaven acceptance; but the bloody fact
Will be avenged, and the other’s faith approved
Lose no reward, though here thou see him die,
Rolling in dust and gore.” To which our Sire:— 460

“Alas, both for the deed and for the cause!
But have I now seen Death? Is this the way
I must return to native dust? O sight
Of terror, foul and ugly to behold!
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!”

To whom thus Michael:—“Death thou hast seen
In his first shape on Man; but many shapes
Of Death, and many are the ways that lead
To his grim cave—all dismal, yet to sense
More terrible at the entrance than within. 470
Some, as thou saw’st, by violent stroke shall die,
By fire, flood, famine; by intemperance more
In meats and drinks, which on the Earth shall bring
Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
Before thee shall appear, that thou may’st know
What misery the inabstinence of Eve
Shall bring on men.” Immediately a place
Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark;
A lazar-house it seemed, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased—all maladies 480
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,

Demoniac phrenzy, moping melancholy,
 And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
 Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
 Dropsies and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.
 Dire was the tossing, deep the groans; Despair
 Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch; 490
 And over them triumphant Death his dart
 Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoked
 With vows, as their chief good and final hope.
 Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
 Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,
 Though not of woman born: compassion quelled
 His best of man, and gave him up to tears
 A space, till firmer thoughts restrained excess,
 And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renewed:—

‘O miserable Mankind, to what fall 500
 Degraded, to what wretched state reserved!
 Better end here unborn. Why is life given
 To be thus wrested from us? rather why
 Obtruded on us thus? who, if we knew
 What we receive, would either not accept
 Life offered, or soon beg to lay it down,
 Glad to be so dismissed in peace. Can thus
 The image of God in Man, created once
 So goodly and erect, though faulty since,
 To such unsightly sufferings be debased 510
 Under inhuman pains? Why should not Man,
 Retaining still divine similitude
 In part, from such deformities be free,
 And for his Maker’s image’ sake exempt?’

“Their Maker’s image,” answered Michael, “then
 Forsook them, when themselves they vilified
 To serve unguided Appetite, and took
 His image whom they served—a brutish vice,
 Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.
 Therefore so abject is their punishment, 520
 Disfiguring not God’s likeness, but their own;
 Or, if his likeness, by themselves defaced
 While they pervert pure Nature’s healthful rules

To loathsome sickness—worthily, since they
 God's image did not reverence in themselves."

"I yield it just," said Adam, "and submit.

But is there yet no other way, besides

These painful passages, how we may come

To death, and mix with our connatural dust?"

"There is," said Michael, "if thou well observe 530

The rule of *Not too much*, by temperance taught

In what thou eat'st and drink'st, seeking from thence

Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,

Till many years over thy head return.

So may'st thou live, till, like ripe fruit, thou drop

Into thy mother's lap, or be with ease

Gathered, not harshly plucked, for death mature.

This is old age; but then thou must outlive

Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change

To withered, weak, and grey; thy senses then, 540

Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forgo

To what thou hast; and, for the air of youth,

Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign

A melancholy damp of cold and dry,

To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume

The balm of life." To whom our Ancestor:—

"Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong

Life much—bent rather how I may be quit,

Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge,

Which I must keep till my appointed day 550

Of rendering up, and patiently attend

My dissolution." Michaël replied:—

"Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou liv'st

Live well; how long or short permit to Heaven.

And now prepare thee for another sight."

He looked, and saw a spacious plain, whereon

Were tents of various hue: by some were herds

Of cattle grazing: others whence the sound

Of instruments that made melodious chime

Was heard, of harp and organ, and who moved 560

Their stops and chords was seen: his volant touch

Instinct through all proportions low and high

Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.
 In other part stood one who, at the forge
 Labouring, two massy clods of iron and brass
 Had melted (whether found where casual fire
 Had wasted woods, on mountain or in vale,
 Down to the veins of earth, thence gliding hot
 To some cave's mouth, or whether washed by stream
 From underground); the liquid ore he drained 570
 Into fit moulds prepared; from which he formed
 First his own tools, then what might else be wrought
 Fusil or graven in metal. After these,
 But on the hither side, a different sort
 From the high neighbouring hills, which was their
 seat,

Down to the plain descended: by their guise
 Just men they seemed, and all their study bent
 To worship God aright, and know his works
 Not hid; nor those things last which might preserve
 Freedom and peace to men. They on the plain 580
 Long had not walked when from the tents behold
 A bevy of fair women, richly gay
 In gems and wanton dress! to the harp they sung
 Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on.
 The men, though grave, eyed them, and let their eyes
 Rove without rein, till, in the amorous net
 Fast caught, they liked, and each his liking chose.
 And now of love they treat, till the evening-star,
 Love's harbinger, appeared; then, all in heat,
 They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke 590
 Hymen, then first to marriage rites invoked:
 With feast and music all the tents resound.
 Such happy interview, and fair event
 Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flowers,
 And charming symphonies, attached the heart
 Of Adam, soon inclined to admit delight,
 The bent of Nature; which he thus expressed:—
 “ True opener of mine eyes, prime Angel blest,
 Much better seems this vision, and more hope
 Of peaceful days portends, than those two past: 600

Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse ;
Here Nature seems fulfilled in all her ends."

To whom thus Michael:—" Judge not what is best
By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet,
Created, as thou art, to nobler end,
Holy and pure, conformity divine.

Those tents thou saw'st so pleasant were the tents
Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race

Who slew his brother: studious they appear

Of arts that polish life, inventors rare; 610

Unmindful of their Maker, though his Spirit
Taught them; but they his gifts acknowledged none.

Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget;
For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seemed
Of Goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,

Yet empty of all good wherein consists

Woman's domestic honour and chief praise;

Bred only and completed to the taste

Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,

To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye;— 620

To these that sober race of men, whose lives

Religious titled them the Sons of God,

Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame,

Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles

Of these fair atheists, and now swim in joy

(Erelong to swim at large) and laugh; for which

The world erelong a world of tears must weep."

To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft:—

" O pity and shame, that they who to live well

Entered so fair should turn aside to tread 630

Paths indirect, or in the midway faint!

But still I see the tenor of Man's woe

Holds on the same, from Woman to begin."

" From Man's effeminate slackness it begins,"

Said the Angel, " who should better hold his place

By wisdom, and superior gifts received.

But now prepare thee for another scene."

He looked, and saw wide territory spread
Before him—towns, and rural works between,

Cities of men with lofty gates and towers, 640
 Concourse in arms, fierce faces threatening war,
 Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise.
 Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,
 Single or in array of battle ranged
 Both horse and foot, nor idly mustering stood.
 One way a band select from forage drives
 A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine,
 From a fat meadow-ground, or fleecy flock,
 Ewes and their bleating lambs, over the plain,
 Their booty; scarce with life the shepherds fly, 650
 But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray:
 With cruel tournament the squadrons join;
 Where cattle pastured late, now scattered lies
 With carcasses and arms the ensanguined field
 Deserted. Others to a city strong
 Lay siege, encamped, by battery, scale, and mine,
 Assaulting; others from the wall defend
 With dart and javelin, stones and sulphurous fire;
 On each hand slaughter and gigantic deeds.
 In other part the sceptred haralds call 660
 To council in the city-gates: anon
 Grey-headed men and grave, with warriors mixed,
 Assemble, and harangues are heard; but soon
 In factious opposition, till at last
 Of middle age one rising, eminent
 In wise deport, spake much of right and wrong,
 Of justice, of religion, truth, and peace,
 And judgment from above: him old and young
 Exploded, and had seized with violent hands,
 Had not a cloud descending snatched him thence, 670
 Unseen amid the throng. So violence
 Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law,
 Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.
 Adam was all in tears, and to his guide
 Lamenting turned full sad:—"Oh, what are these?
 Death's ministers, not men! who thus deal death
 Inhumanly to men, and multiply
 Ten thousandfold the sin of him who slew

His brother; for of whom such massacre
 Make they but of their brethren; men of men? 680
 But who was that just man, whom had not Heaven
 Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost?"

To whom thus Michael:—"These are the product
 Of those ill-mated marriages thou saw'st,
 Where good with bad were matched; who of themselves
 Abhor to join, and, by imprudence mixed,
 Produce prodigious births of body or mind.
 Such were these Giants, men of high renown;
 For in those days might only shall be admired,
 And valour and heroic virtue called. 690
 To overcome in battle, and subdue
 Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
 Manslaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
 Of human glory, and, for glory done,
 Of triumph to be styled great conquerors,
 Patrons of mankind, Gods, and sons of Gods—
 Destroyers rightlier called, and plagues of men.
 Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth,
 And what most merits fame in silence hid.
 But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheld'st
 The only righteous in a world perverse, 701
 And therefore hated, therefore so beset
 With foes, for daring single to be just,
 And utter odious truth, that God would come
 To judge them with his Saints—him the Most High,
 Rapt in a balmy cloud, with winged steeds,
 Did, as thou saw'st, receive, to walk with Cod
 High in salvation and the climes of bliss,
 Exempt from death, to show thee what reward
 Awaits the good, the rest what punishment; 710
 Which now direct thine eyes and soon behold."

He looked, and saw the face of things quite changed.
 The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar;
 All now was turned to jollity and game,
 To luxury and riot, feast and dance,
 Marrying or prostituting, as befell,
 Rape or adultery, where passing fair

Allured them ; thence from cups to civil broils.
 At length a reverend sire among them came,
 And of their doings great dislike declared, 720
 And testified against their ways. He oft
 Frequented their assemblies, whereso met,
 Triumphs or festivals, and to them preached
 Conversion and repentance, as to souls
 In prison, under judgments imminent ;
 But all in vain. Which when he saw, he ceased
 Contending, and removed his tents far off ;
 Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall,
 Began to build a vessel of huge bulk,
 Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and highth, 730
 Smeared round with pitch, and in the side a door
 Contrived, and of provisions laid in large
 For man and beast : when lo ! a wonder strange !
 Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,
 Came sevens and pairs, and entered in, as taught
 Their order ; last, the sire and his three sons,
 With their four wives ; and God made fast the door.
 Meanwhile the South-wind rose, and, with black wings
 Wide-hovering, all the clouds together drove
 From under heaven ; the hills to their supply 740
 Vapour, and exhalation dusk and moist,
 Sent up amain ; and now the thickened sky
 Like a dark ceiling stood : down rushed the rain
 Impetuous, and continued till the earth
 No more was seen. The floating vessel swum
 Uplifted, and secure with beaked prow
 Rode tilting o'er the waves ; all dwellings else
 Flood overwhelmed, and them with all their pomp
 Deep under water rolled ; sea covered sea,
 Sea without shore : and in their palaces, 750
 Where luxury late reigned, sea-monsters whelped
 And stabled : of mankind, so numerous late,
 All left in one small bottom swum embarked.
 How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
 The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
 Depopulation ! Thee another flood,

Of tears and sorrow a flood thee also drowned,
 And sunk thee as thy sons; till, gently reared
 By the Angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last,
 Though comfortless, as when a father mourns 760
 His children, all in view destroyed at once,
 And scarce to the Angel utter'dst thus thy plaint:—

“O visions ill foreseen! Better had I
 Lived ignorant of future—so had borne
 My part of evil only, each day's lot
 Enough to bear. Those now, that were dispensed
 The burden of many ages, on me light
 At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth
 Abortive, to torment me, ere their being,
 With thought that they must be. Let no man seek
 Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall 771
 Him or his children—evil, he may be sure,
 Which neither his foreknowing can prevent,
 And he the future evil shall no less
 In apprehension than in substance feel
 Grievous to bear. But that care now is past;
 Man is not whom to warn; those few escaped
 Famine and anguish will at last consume,
 Wandering that watery desert. I had hope,
 When violence was ceased and war on Earth, 780
 All would have then' gone well, peace would have
 crowned

With length of happy days the race of Man;
 But I was far deceived, for now I see
 Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.
 How comes it thus? Unfold, Celestial Guide,
 And whether here the race of Man will end.”

To whom thus Michael:—“Those whom last thou
 saw'st

In triumph and luxurious wealth are they
 First seen in acts of prowess eminent
 And great exploits, but of true virtue void; 790
 Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste,
 Subduing nations, and achieved thereby
 Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey,

Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
 Surfeit, and lust, till wantonness and pride
 Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.
 The conquered, also, and enslaved by war,
 Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose,
 And fear of God—from whom their piety feigned
 In sharp contest of battle found no aid 800
 Against invaders; therefore, cooled in zeal,
 Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,
 Worldly or dissolute, on what their lords
 Shall leave them to enjoy; for the Earth shall bear
 More than enough, that temperance may be tried.
 So all shall turn degenerate, all depraved,
 Justice and temperance, truth and faith, forgot;
 One man except, the only son of light
 In a dark age, against example good,
 Against allurements, custom, and a world 810
 Offended. Fearless of reproach and scorn,
 Or violence, he of their wicked ways
 Shall them admonish, and before them set
 The paths of righteousness, how much more safe
 And full of peace, denouncing wrath to come
 On their impenitence, and shall return
 Of them derided, but of God observed
 The one just man alive: by his command
 Shall build a wondrous ark, as thou beheld'st,
 To save himself and household from amidst 820
 A world devote to universal wrack.
 No sooner he, with them of man and beast
 Select for life, shall in the ark be lodged
 And sheltered round, but all the cataracts
 Of Heaven set open on the Earth shall pour
 Rain day and night; all fountains of the deep,
 Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp
 Beyond all bounds, till inundation rise
 Above the highest hills. Then shall this Mount
 Of Paradise by might of waves be moved 830
 Out of his place, pushed by the horned flood,
 With all his verdure spoiled, and trees adrift,

Down the great river to the opening Gulf,
 And there take foot, an island salt and bare,
 The haunt of seals, and orcs, and sea-mews' clang—
 To teach thee that God attributes to place
 No sanctity, if none be thither brought
 By men who there frequent or therein dwell.
 And now what further shall ensue behold."

He looked, and saw the ark hull on the flood, 840
 Which now abated; for the clouds were fled,
 Driven by a keen North-wind, that, blowing dry,
 Wrinkled the face of deluge, as decayed;
 And the clear sun on his wide watery glass
 Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew;
 As after thirst; which made their flowing shrink
 From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole
 With soft foot towards the deep, who now had stopt
 His sluices, as the heaven his windows shut.

The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground, 850
 Fast on the top of some high mountain fixed.

And now the tops of hills as rocks appear;
 With clamour thence the rapid currents drive
 Towards the retreating sea their furious tide.
 Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies,
 And, after him, the surer messenger,
 A dove, sent forth once and again to spy
 Green tree or ground whereon his foot may light;
 The second time returning, in his bill
 An olive-leaf he brings, pacific sign. 860

Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark
 The ancient sire descends, with all his train;
 Then, with uplifted hands and eyes devout,
 Grateful to Heaven, over his head beholds
 A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow
 Conspicuous with three listed colours gay,
 Betokening peace from God, and covenant new.
 Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad,
 Greatly rejoiced; and thus his joy broke forth:—

"O thou, who future things canst represent 870
 As present, Heavenly Instructor, I revive

At this last sight, assured that Man shall live,
 With all the creatures, and their seed preserve.
 Far less I now lament for one whole world
 Of wicked sons destroyed, than I rejoice
 For one man found so perfect and so just,
 That God voutsafes to raise another world
 From him, and all his anger to forget.
 But say what mean those coloured streaks in Heaven :
 Distended as the brow of God appeased? 880
 Or serve they as a flowery verge to bind
 The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,
 Lest it again dissolve and shower the Earth?"

To whom the Archangel :—"Dextrously thou aim'st.
 So willingly doth God remit his ire :
 Though late repenting him of Man depraved,
 Grieved at his heart, when, looking down, he saw
 The whole Earth filled with violence, and all flesh
 Corrupting each their way ; yet, those removed,
 Such grace shall one just man find in his sight 890
 That he relents, not to blot out mankind,
 And makes a covenant never to destroy
 The Earth again by flood, nor let the sea
 Surpass his bounds, nor rain to drown the world
 With man therein or beast ; but, when he brings
 Over the Earth a cloud, will therein set
 His triple-coloured bow, whereon to look
 And call to mind his covenant. Day and night,
 Seed-time and harvest, heat and hoary frost,
 Shall hold their course, till fire purge all things new, 900
 Both Heaven and Earth, wherein the just may dwell."

Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,
 Corn, wine, and oil; and, from the herd or flock
 Oft sacrificing bullock, lamb, or kid, 20
 With large wine-offerings poured, and sacred feast
 Shall spend their days in joy unblamed, and dwell
 Long time in peace, by families and tribes,
 Under paternal rule, till one shall rise,
 Of proud, ambitious heart, who, not content
 With fair equality, fraternal state,
 Will arrogate dominion undeserved
 Over his brethren, and quite dispossess
 Concord and law of Nature from the Earth—
 Hunting (and men, not beasts, shall be his game) 30
 With war and hostile snare such as refuse
 Subjection to his empire tyrannous.
 A mighty hunter thence he shall be styled
 Before the Lord, as in despite of Heaven,
 Or from Heaven claiming second sovranity,
 And from rebellion shall derive his name,
 Though of rebellion others he accuse.
 He, with a crew, whom like ambition joins
 With him or under him to tyrannize,
 Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find 40
 The plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge
 Boils out from under ground, the mouth of Hell.
 Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast to build
 A city and tower, whose top may reach to Heaven;
 And get themselves a name, lest, far dispersed
 In foreign lands, their memory be lost—
 Regardless whether good or evil fame.
 But God, who oft descends to visit men
 Unseen, and through their habitations walks,
 To mark their doings, them beholding soon, 50
 Comes down to see their city, ere the tower
 Obstruct Heaven-towers, and in derision sets
 Upon their tongues a various spirit, to rase
 Quite out their native language, and, instead,
 To sow a jangling noise of words unknown.
 Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud

Among the builders; each to other calls,
 Not understood—till, hoarse and all in rage,
 As mocked they storn. Great laughter was in Heaven,
 And looking down to see the hubbub strange 60
 And hear the din. Thus was the building left
 Ridiculous, and the work *Confusion* named.”

Whereto thus Adam, fatherly displeas'd:—

“O execrable son, so to aspire
 Above his brethren, to himself assuming
 Authority usurped, from God not given!
 He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,
 Dominion absolute; that right we hold
 By his donation: but man over men
 He made not lord—such title to himself 70
 Reserving, human left from human free.
 But this usurper his encroachment proud
 Stays not on Man; to God his tower intends
 Siege and defiance. Wretched man! what food
 Will he convey up thither, to sustain
 Himself and his rash army, where thin air
 Above the clouds will pine his entrails gross,
 And famish him of breath, if not of bread?”

To whom thus Michael:—“Justly thou abhorrest
 That son, who on the quiet state of men 80
 Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
 Rational liberty; yet know withal,
 Since thy original lapse, true liberty
 Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
 Twinned, and from her hath no dividual being.
 Reason in Man obscured, or not obeyed,
 Immediately inordinate desires
 And upstart passions catch the government
 From Reason, and to servitude reduce
 Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits 90
 Within himself unworthy powers to reign
 Over free reason, God, in judgment just,
 Subjects him from without to violent lords,
 Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
 His outward freedom. Tyranny must be,

Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.
 Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
 From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
 But justice and some fatal curse annexed,
 Deprives them of their outward liberty, 100
 Their inward lost: witness the irreverent son
 Of him who built the ark, who, for the shame
 Done to his father, heard this heavy curse,
Servant of servants, on his vicious race.
 Thus will this latter, as the former world,
 Still tend from bad to worse, till God at last,
 Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw
 His presence from among them, and avert
 His holy eyes, resolving from thenceforth
 To leave them to their own polluted ways, 110
 And one peculiar nation to select
 From all the rest, of whom to be invoked—
 A nation from one faithful man to spring.
 Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,
 Bred up in idol-worship—Oh, that men
 (Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,
 While yet the patriarch lived who scaped the Flood,
 As to forsake the living God, and fall
 To worship their own work in wood and stone
 For Gods!—yet him God the Most High voutsafes 120
 To call by vision from his father's house,
 His kindred, and false Gods, into a land
 Which he will show him, and from him will raise
 A mighty nation, and upon him shower
 His benediction so that in his seed
 All nations shall be blest. He straight obeys;
 Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes.
 I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith
 He leaves his Gods, his friends, and native soil,
 Ur of Chaldæa, passing now the ford 130
 To Haran—after him a cumbersome train
 Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude—
 Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth
 With God, who called him, in a land unknown.

Canaan he now attains; I see his tents
 Pitched about Sechem, and the neighbouring plain
 Of Moreh. There, by promise, he receives
 Gift to his progeny of all that land,
 From Hamath northward to the Desert south
 (Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed), 140
 From Hermon east to the great western sea;
 Mount Hermon, yonder sea, each place behold
 In prospect, as I point them: on the shore,
 Mount Carmel; here, the double-founted stream,
 Jordan, true limit eastward; but his sons
 Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills.
 This ponder, that all nations of the Earth
 Shall in his seed be blessed. By that seed
 Is meant the great Deliverer, who shall bruise
 The Serpent's head; whereof to thee anon 150
 Plainlier shall be revealed. This patriarch blest,
 Whom *faithful Abraham* due time shall call,
 A son, and of his son a grandchild, leaves,
 Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown.
 The grandchild, with twelve sons increased, departs,
 From Canaan to a land hereafter called
 Egypt, divided by the river Nile;
 See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths
 Into the sea. To sojourn in that land
 He comes, invited by a younger son 160
 In time of dearth—a son whose worthy deeds
 Raise him to be the second in that realm
 Of Pharaoh. There he dies, and leaves his race
 Growing into a nation, and now grown
 Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks
 To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests
 Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves
 Inhospitably, and kills their infant males:
 Till, by two brethren (those two brethren call
 Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim 170
 His people from enthralment, they return,
 With glory and spoil, back to their promised land.
 But first the lawless tyrant, who denies

To know their God, or message to regard,
 Must be compelled by signs and judgments dire :
 To blood unshed the rivers must be turned ;
 Frogs, lice, and flies must all his palace fill
 With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land ;
 His cattle must of rot and murrain die ;
 Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss, 180
 And all his people ; thunder mixed with hail,
 Hail mixed with fire, must rend the Egyptian sky,
 And wheel on the earth, devouring where it rolls ;
 What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,
 A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down
 Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green ;
 Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,
 Palpable darkness, and blot out three days ;
 Last, with one midnight-stroke, all the first-born 190
 Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds
 The river-dragon tamed at length submits
 To let his sojourners depart, and oft
 Humbles his stubborn heart, but still as ice
 More hardened after thaw ; till, in his rage
 Pursuing whom he late dismissed, the sea
 Swallows him with his host, but them lets pass,
 As on dry land, between two crystal walls,
 Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand
 Divided till his rescued gain their shore :
 Such wondrous power God to his Saint will lend, 200
 Though present in his Angel, who shall go
 Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire—
 By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire—
 To guide them in their journey, and remove
 Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues.
 All night he will pursue, but his approach
 Darkness defends between till morning-watch ;
 Then through the fiery pillar and the cloud
 God looking forth will trouble all his host,
 And craze their chariot-wheels : when, by command, 210
 Moses once more his potent rod extends
 Over the sea ; the sea his rod obeys ;

On their embattled ranks the waves return,
 And overwhelm their war. The race elect
 Safe towards Canaan, from the shore, advance
 Through the wild Desert—not the readiest way,
 Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarmed,
 War terrify them in expert, and fear
 Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather
 Inglorious life with servitude; for life 220
 To noble and ignoble is more sweet
 Untrained in arms, where rashness leads not on.
 This also shall they gain by their delay
 In the wide wilderness: there they shall find
 Their government, and their great Senate choose
 Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordained.
 God, from the Mount of Sinai, whose grey top
 Shall tremble, he descending, will himself,
 In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpet's sound,
 Ordain them laws—part, such as appertain 230
 To civil justice; part, religious rites
 Of sacrifice, informing them, by types
 And shadows, of that destined Seed to bruise
 The Serpent, by what means he shall achieve
 Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God
 To mortal ear is dreadful: they beseech
 That Moses might report to them his will,
 And terror cease; he grants what they besought,
 Instructed that to God is no access
 Without Mediator, whose high office now 240
 Moses in figure bears, to introduce
 One greater, of whose day he shall foretell,
 And all the Prophets, in their age, the times
 Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus laws and rites
 Established, such delight hath God in men
 Obedient to his will that he voutsafes
 Among them to set up his tabernacle—
 The Holy One with mortal men to dwell.
 By his prescript a sanctuary is framed
 Of cedar, overlaid with gold; therein 250
 An ark, and in the ark his testimony,

The records of his covenant; over these
 A mercy-seat of gold, between the wings
 Of two bright Cherubim; before him burn
 Seven lamps, as in a zodiac representing
 The heavenly fires. Over the tent a cloud
 Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night,
 Save when they journey; and at length they come,
 Conducted by his Angel, to the land
 Promised to Abraham and his seed. The rest 260
 Were long to tell—how many battles fought;
 How many kings destroyed, and kingdoms won;
 Or how the sun shall in mid-heaven stand still
 A day entire, and night's due course adjourn,
 Man's voice commanding, 'Sun, in Gibeon stand,
 And thou, Moon, in the vale of Aialon,
 Till Israel overcome!'—so call the third
 From Abraham, son of Isaac, and from him
 His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win."

Here Adam interposed:—"O sent from Heaven,
 Enlightener of my darkness, gracious things 271
 Thou hast revealed, those chiefly which concern
 Just Abraham and his seed. Now first I find
 Mine eyes true opening, and my heart much eased,
 Erewhile perplexed with thoughts what would become
 Of me and all mankind; but now I see
 His day, in whom all nations shall be blest—
 Favour unmerited by me, who sought
 Forbidden knowledge by forbidden means.
 This yet I apprehend not—why to those 280
 Among whom God will deign to dwell on Earth
 So many and so various laws are given.
 So many laws argue so many sins
 Among them; how can God with such reside?"
 To whom thus Michael:—"Doubt not but that sin
 Will reign among them, as of thee begot;
 And therefore was law given them, to evince
 Their natural pravity, by stirring up
 Sin against Law to fight, that, when they see
 Law can discover sin, but not remove, 290

Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
 The blood of bulls and goats, they may conclude
 Some blood more precious must be paid for Man,
 Just for unjust, that in such righteousness,
 To them by faith imputed, they may find
 Justification towards God, and peace
 Of conscience, which the law by ceremonies
 Cannot appease, nor man the moral part
 Perform, and not performing cannot live.
 So Law appears imperfect, and but given 300
 With purpose to resign them, in full time,
 Up to a better covenant, disciplined
 From shadowy types to truth, from flesh to spirit,
 From imposition of strict laws to free
 Acceptance of large grace, from servile fear
 To filial, works of law to works of faith.
 And therefore shall not Moses, though of God
 Highly beloved, being but the minister
 Of Law, his people into Canaan lead;
 But Joshua, whom the Gentiles Jesus call, 310
 His name and office bearing who shall quell
 The adversary Serpent, and bring back
 Through the world's wilderness long-wandered Man
 Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.
 Meanwhile they, in their earthly Canaan placed,
 Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins
 National interrupt their public peace,
 Provoking God to raise them enemies—
 From whom as oft he saves them penitent,
 By Judges first, then under Kings; of whom 320
 The second, both for piety renowned
 And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive
 Irrevocable, that his regal throne
 For ever shall endure. The like shall sing
 All Prophecy—that of the royal stock
 Of David (so I name this king) shall rise
 A son, the Woman's Seed to thee foretold,
 Foretold to Abraham as in whom shall trust
 All nations, and to kings foretold of kings

The last, for of his reign shall be no end. 330
 But first a long succession must ensue ;
 And his next son, for wealth and wisdom famed,
 The clouded ark of God, till then in tents
 Wandering, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.
 Such follow him as shall be registered
 Part good, part bad ; of bad the longer scroll :
 Whose foul idolatries and other faults,
 Heaped to the popular sum, will so incense
 God, as to leave them, and expose their land,
 Their city, his temple, and his holy ark, 340
 With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey
 To that proud city whose high walls thou saw'st
 Left in confusion, Babylon thence called.
 There in captivity he lets them dwell
 The space of seventy years ; then brings them back,
 Remembering mercy, and his covenant sworn
 To David, stablished as the days of Heaven.
 Returned from Babylon by leave of kings,
 Their lords, whom God disposed, the house of God
 They first re-edify, and for a while 350
 In mean estate live moderate, till, grown
 In wealth and multitude, factious they grow.
 But first among the priests dissension springs—
 Men who attend the altar, and should most
 Endeavour peace : their strife pollution brings
 Upon the temple itself ; at last they seize
 The sceptre, and regard not David's sons ;
 Then lose it to a stranger, that the true
 Anointed King Messiah might be born
 Barred of his right. Yet at his birth a star, 360
 Unseen before in heaven, proclaims him come,
 And guides the eastern sages, who inquire
 His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold :
 His place of birth a solemn Angel tells
 To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night ;
 Then gladly thither haste, and by a quire
 Of squadroned Angels hear his carol sung.
 A Virgin is his mother, but his sire

The Power of the Most High. He shall ascend
 The throne hereditary, and bound his reign 370
 With Earth's wide bounds, his glory with the Heavens."

He ceased, discerning Adam with such joy
 Surcharged as had, like grief, been dewed in tears,
 Without the vent of words; which these he breathed:—

"O prophet of glad tidings, finisher
 Of utmost hope! now clear I understand
 What oft my steadiest thoughts have searched in vain—
 Why our great Expectation should be called
 The Seed of Woman. Virgin Mother, hail!
 High in the love of Heaven, yet from my loins 380
 Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the Son
 Of God Most High; so God with Man unites.
 Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise
 Expect with mortal pain. Say where and when
 Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victor's heel."

To whom thus Michael:—"Dream not of their fight
 As of a duel, or the local wounds
 Of head or heel. Not therefore joins the Son
 Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
 Thy enemy; nor so is overcome 390
 Satan, whose fall from Heaven, a deadlier bruise,
 Disabled not to give thee thy death's wound;
 Which he who comes thy Saviour shall recure,
 Not by destroying Satan. but his works
 In thee and in thy seed. Nor can this be,
 But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
 Obedience to the law of God, imposed
 On penalty of death, and suffering death,
 The penalty to thy transgression due,
 And due to theirs which out of thine will grow: 400
 So only can high justice rest appaid.
 The Law of God exact he shall fulfil
 Both by obedience and by love, though love
 Alone fulfil the Law; thy punishment
 He shall endure, by coming in the flesh
 To a reproachful life and cursed death,
 Proclaiming life to all who shall believe

In his redemption, and that his obedience
 Imputed becomes theirs by faith—his merits
 To save them, not their own, though legal, works. 410
 For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,
 Seized on by force, judged, and to death condemned
 A shameful and accursed, nailed to the cross
 By his own nation, slain for bringing life;
 But to the cross he nails thy enemies—
 The Law that is against thee, and the sins
 Of all mankind, with him there crucified,
 Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
 In this his satisfaction. So he dies,
 But soon revives; Death over him no power 420
 Shall long usurp. Ere the third dawning light
 Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise
 Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,
 Thy ransom paid, which Man from Death redeems—
 His death for Man, as many as offered life
 Neglect not, and the benefit embrace
 By faith not void of works. This Godlike act
 Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have died,
 In sin for ever lost from life; this act
 Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength, 430
 Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms,
 And fix far deeper in his head their stings
 Than temporal death shall bruise the Victor's heel,
 Or theirs whom he redeems—a death like sleep,
 A gentle wafting to immortal life.
 Nor after resurrection shall he stay
 Longer on Earth than certain times to appear
 To his disciples—men who in his life
 Still followed him; to them shall leave in charge
 To teach all nations what of him they learned 440
 And his salvation, them who shall believe
 Baptizing in the profluent stream—the sign
 Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
 Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,
 For death like that which the Redeemer died.
 All nations they shall teach; for from that day

Not only to the sons of Abraham's Joins
 Salvation shall be preached, but to the sons
 Of Abraham's faith, wherever through the world;
 So, in his seed all nations shall be blest. 450
 Then to the Heaven of Heavens he shall ascend
 With victory, triumphing through the air
 Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise
 The Serpent, Prince of Air, and drag in chains
 Through all his realm, and there confounded leave;
 Then enter into glory, and resume
 His seat at God's right hand, exalted high
 Above all names in Heaven; and thence shall come,
 When this World's dissolution shall be ripe,
 With glory and power, to judge both quick and dead—
 To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward 461
 His faithful, and receive them into bliss,
 Whether in Heaven or Earth; for then the Earth
 Shall be all Paradise, far happier place
 Than this of Eden, and far happier days."

So spake the Archangel Michaël; then paused,
 As at the World's great period; and our Sire,
 Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied:—

"O Goodness infinite, Goodness immense,
 That all this good of evil shall produce, 470
 And evil turn to good—more wonderful
 Than that which by creat'ion first brought forth
 Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
 Whether I should repent me now of sin
 By me done and occasioned, or rejoice
 Much more that much more good thereof shall
 spring—

To God more glory, more good-will to men
 From God—and over wrath grace shall abound.
 But say, if our Deliverer up to Heaven
 Must reascend, what will betide the few, 480
 His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd,
 The enemies of truth. Who then shall guide
 His people, who defend? Will they not deal
 Worse with his followers than with him they dealt?"

“Be sure they will,” said the Angel; “but from
Heaven

He to his own a Comforter will send,
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell,
His Spirit, within them, and the law of faith
Working through love upon their hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth, and also arm 490
With spiritual armour, able to resist
Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts—
What man can do against them, not afraid,
Though to the death; against such cruelties
With inward consolations recompensed,
And oft supported so as shall amaze
Their proudest persecutors. For the Spirit,
Poured first on his Apostles, whom he sends
To evangelize the nations, then on all
Baptized, shall them with wondrous gifts endue 500
To speak all tongues, and do all miracles,
As did their Lord before them. Thus they win
Great numbers of each nation to receive
With joy the tidings brought from Heaven: at length.
Their ministry performed, and race well run,
Their doctrine and their story written left,
They die; but in their room, as they forewarn,
Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven
To their own vile advantages shall turn 510
Of lucre and ambition, and the truth
With superstitions and traditions taint,
Left only in those written records pure,
Though not but by the Spirit understood.
Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
Places, and titles, and with these to join
Secular power, though feigning still to act
By spiritual; to themselves appropriating
The Spirit of God, promised alike and given
To all believers; and, from that pretence, 520
Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force
On every conscience—laws which none shall find

Left them enrolled, or what the Spirit within
 Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then
 But force the Spirit of Grace itself, and bind
 His consort, Liberty? what but unbuild
 His living temples, built by faith to stand—
 Their own faith, not another's? for, on Earth,
 Who against faith and conscience can be heard
 Infallible? Yet many will presume: 530
 Whence heavy persecution shall arise
 On all who in the worship persevere
 Of Spirit and Truth; the rest, far greater part,
 Will deem in outward rites and specious forms
 Religion satisfied; Truth shall retire
 Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of Faith
 Rarely be found. So shall the World go on,
 To good malignant, to bad men benign,
 Under her own weight groaning, till the day
 Appear of respiration to the just 540
 And vengeance to the wicked, at return
 Of him so lately promised to thy aid,
 The Woman's Seed—obscurely then foretold,
 Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord;
 Last in the clouds from Heaven to be revealed
 In glory of the Father, to dissolve
 Satan with his perverted world; then raise
 From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined,
 New Heavens, new Earth, ages of endless date
 Founded in righteousness and peace and love, 550
 To bring forth fruits, joy and eternal bliss."

He ended; and thus Adam last replied:—
 "How soon hath thy prediction, Seer blest,
 Measured this transient World, the race of Time,
 Till Time stand fixed! Beyond is all abyss—
 Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.
 Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,
 Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
 Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain;
 Beyond which was my folly to aspire. 560
 Henceforth I learn that to obey is best,

And love with fear the only God, to walk
 As in his presence, ever to observe
 His providence, and on him sole depend,
 Merciful over all his works, with good
 Still overcoming evil, and by small
 Accomplishing great things—by things deemed weak
 Subverting worldly-strong, and worldly-wise
 By simply meek; that suffering for Truth's sake
 Is fortitude to highest victory, 570
 And to the faithful death the gate of life—
 Taught this by his example whom I now
 Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest.”

To whom thus also the Angel last replied:—
 “This having learned, thou hast attained the sum
 Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the stars
 Thou knew'st by name, and all the ethereal powers,
 All secrets of the Deep, all Nature's works,
 Or works of God in heaven, air, earth, or sea,
 And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst, 580
 And all the rule, one empire. Only add
 Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith;
 Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,
 By name to come called Charity, the soul
 Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth
 To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
 A Paradise within thee, happier far.
 Let us descend now, therefore, from this top
 Of speculation; for the hour precise
 Exacts our parting hence; and, see! the guards, 590
 By me encamped on yonder hill, expect
 Their motion, at whose front a flaming sword,
 In signal of remove, waves fiercely round.
 We may no longer stay: Go, waken Eve;
 Her also I with gentle dreams have calmed,
 Portending good, and all her spirits composed
 To meek submission: thou, at season fit,
 Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard—
 Chiefly what may concern her faith to know,
 The great deliverance by her seed to come 600

(For by the Woman's Seed) on all mankind—
That ye may live, which will be many days,
Both in one faith unanimous; though sad
With cause for evils past, yet much more cheered
With meditation on the happy end."

He ended, and they both descend the hill.
Descended, Adam to the bower where Eve
Lay sleeping ran before, but found her waked;
And thus with words not sad she him received:—
"Whence thou return'st and whither went'st I 610
know;

For God is also in sleep, and dreams advise,
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since, with sorrow and heart's distress
Wearied, I fell asleep. But now lead on;
In me is no delay; with thee to go
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me
Art all things under Heaven, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime art banished hence.
This further consolation yet secure 620
I carry hence: though all by me is lost,
Such favour I unworthy am voutsafed,
By me the Promised Seed shall all restore."

So spake our mother Eve; and Adam heard
Well pleased, but answer'd not; for now too nigh
The Archangel stood, and from the other hill
To their fixed station, all in bright array,
The Cherubim descended, on the ground
Gliding meteorous, as evening mist
Risen from a river o'er the marish glides, 630
And gathers ground fast at the labourer's heel
Homeward returning. High in front advanced,
The brandished sword of God before them blazed,
Fierce as a comet; which with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Libyan air adust,
Began to parch that temperate clime; whereat
In either hand the hastening Angel caught
Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate

Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain—then disappeared. 640
They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

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