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# MILTON'S SAMSON AGONISTES

*WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES, GLOSSARY  
AND INDEXES*

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## NOTE.

THE text of *Samson Agonistes* in this volume is based upon that of the first edition (1671), compared with the second edition (1680). Some little study of Milton has shown me that more errors than is generally supposed have crept into the text of his poems, and find a place even in editions of good repute. An instance in point is the blunder mentioned in the note on line 1096. It makes entire nonsense of the passage: but more than one edition in which it occurs might be cited. Often, too, the changes in the punctuation are not only unnecessary, but actually alter the sense; cf. the examples noted in ll. 1262 and 1264. My aim has been to keep as close as possible to the original.

In accordance with the suggestion of a reviewer of the first volume of this edition of Milton the philological element has, in the present case, been relegated, mainly, to a *Glossary* at the end.

I have to thank the sub-librarian of Trinity College, Mr W. White, for pointing out some interesting details in the Milton MSS. at Cambridge as they bear on *Samson Agonistes*; and Mr Leonard Whibley, of Pembroke College, for reading the proofs of the *Introduction*.

A. W. V.

BOURNEMOUTH,  
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# INTRODUCTION.

## LIFE OF MILTON.

MILTON'S life falls into three clearly defined divisions. The first period ends with the poet's return from Italy in 1639; the second at the Restoration in 1660, when release from the fetters of politics enabled him to remind the world that he was a great poet, if not a great controversialist; the third is brought to a close with his death in 1674. Samson Agonistes belongs to the last of these periods; but we propose to summarise briefly the main events of all three.

*The three periods in Milton's life.*

John Milton was born on December 9, 1608, in London. He came, in his own words, *ex genere honesto*. A family of Miltons had been settled in Oxfordshire since the reign of Elizabeth. The poet's father had been educated at an Oxford school, possibly as a chorister in one of the College choir-schools, and imbibing Anglican sympathies had conformed to the Established Church. For this he was disinherited by his father. He settled in London, following the profession of scrivener. A scrivener combined the occupations of lawyer and law-stationer. It appears to have been a lucrative calling; certainly John Milton (the poet was named after the father) attained to easy circumstances. He married about 1600, and had six children, of whom several died young. The third child was the poet.

*Born 1608; the poet's father.*

The elder Milton was evidently a man of considerable culture, in particular an accomplished musician, and a com-

poser<sup>1</sup> whose madrigals were deemed worthy of being printed side by side with those of Byrd, Orlando Gibbons and other leading musicians of the time. To him, no doubt, the poet owed the love of music of which we see frequent indications in the poems.<sup>2</sup> Realising, too, that in his son lay the promise and possibility of future greatness, John Milton took the utmost pains to have the boy adequately educated; and the lines *Ad Patrem* show that the ties of affection between father and child were of more than ordinary closeness.

Milton was sent to St Paul's School as a day scholar about the year 1620. He also had a tutor, Thomas *Early training.*

Young, a Scotchman, who subsequently became Master of Jesus College, Cambridge. More important still, Milton grew up in the stimulating atmosphere of cultured home-life. This was a signal advantage. Most men do not realise that the word 'culture' signifies anything very definite or desirable before they pass to the University, but for Milton home-life meant from the first broad interests, refinement and the easy, material prosperity under which the literary habit is best developed. In 1625 he left St Paul's. Of his extant English poems<sup>3</sup> only one, *On the Death of a Fair Infant*, dates from his school-days; but we are told that he had written much verse, English and Latin. And his early training had done that which was all-important: it had laid the foundation of the far-ranging knowledge which makes *Paradise Lost* unique for diversity of suggestion and interest.

Milton entered at Christ's College, Cambridge, commencing residence in the Easter term of 1625. Seven years *At Cambridge.* were spent at the University. He took his B.A. degree in 1629, proceeded M.A. in 1632, and in the latter year

<sup>1</sup> See the article on him in *Grove's Dict. of Music*.

<sup>2</sup> Milton was especially fond of the organ; see note on *Il Pen.* 161. During his residence at Horton Milton made occasional journeys to London to hear, and obtain instruction in, music.

<sup>3</sup> His paraphrases of *Psalms* cxiv, cxxxvi, scarcely come under this heading. Aubrey says in his quaint *Life of Milton*: "Anno Domini 1619 he was ten yeares old, as by his picture: and was then a poet."

left Cambridge. His experience of University life had not been wholly fortunate. He was, and felt himself to be, out of sympathy with his surroundings; and whenever in after-years he spoke of Cambridge<sup>1</sup> it was with something of the grave *impietas* of Gibbon who, unsoftened even by memories of Magdalen, complained that the fourteen months spent at Oxford were the least profitable part of his life. Milton, in fact, anticipates the laments that we find in the correspondence of Gray, addressed sometimes to Richard West and reverberated from the banks of the Isis. It may, however, be fairly assumed that, whether consciously or not, Milton owed a good deal to his University; and it must not be forgotten that the uncomplimentary and oft-quoted allusions to Cambridge date for the most part from the unhappy period when Milton the politician and polemical dogmatist had effectually divorced himself at once from Milton the scholar and Milton the poet. A poet he had proved himself before leaving the University. The short but exquisite ode *At a Solemn Music*, and the *Nativity Hymn* (1629), were already written.

<sup>1</sup> That Milton's feeling towards the authorities of his own college was not entirely unfriendly would appear from the following sentences written in 1642. He takes, he says, the opportunity to "acknowledge publicly, with all grateful mind, that more than ordinary respect which I found, above many of my equals, at the hands of those courteous and learned men, the Fellows of that college wherein I spent some years; who, at my parting after I had taken two degrees, as the manner is, signified many ways how much better it would content them that I would stay; as by many letters full of kindness and loving respect, both before that time and long after, I was assured of their singular good affection towards me."—*An Apology for Smectymnuus*, P. W. III. 311. Perhaps Cambridge would have been more congenial to Milton had he been sent to Emmanuel College, long a stronghold of Puritanism. Dr John Preston, the Master of the college at that time, was a noted leader of the Puritan party; see his *Life* by Thomas Ball, printed in 1885 by Mr E. W. Harcourt from the ms. at Newnham Court.

Milton's father had settled<sup>1</sup> at Horton in Buckinghamshire. Thither the son retired in 1632. He had gone to Cambridge with the intention of qualifying for some profession, perhaps the Church<sup>2</sup>. This purpose was soon given up, and when Milton returned to his father's house he seems to have made up his mind that there was no profession which he cared to enter. He would choose the better part of studying and preparing himself, by rigorous self-discipline and application, for the far-off divine event to which his whole life moved.

It was Milton's constant resolve to achieve something that should vindicate the ways of God to men, something great<sup>3</sup> that should justify his own possession of unique powers—powers of which, with no trace of egotism, he proclaims himself proudly conscious. The feeling finds repeated expression in his prose; it is the guiding-star that shines clear and steadfast even through the mists of politics.

<sup>1</sup> As tenant of the Earl of Bridgewater, according to one account; but probably the tradition arose from Milton's subsequent connection with the Bridgewater family.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Milton's own words, "The Church, to whose service by the intention of my parents and friends I was destined of a child, and in my own resolutions." What kept him from taking orders was not, at first, any difference of belief, but solely his objection to Church discipline and government. "Coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded in the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave.....(I) thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing."—*Reason of Church Government*, P. W. II. 482. Milton disliked in particular the episcopal system, and spoke of himself as "Church-outed by the prelates."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the second sonnet; "How soon hath Time." Ten years later (1641) Milton speaks of the "inward prompting which grows daily upon me, that by labour and intent study, which I take to be my portion in this life, joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to after times, as they should not willingly let it die." *Reason of Church Government*, P. W. II. 477, 478.



He has a mission to fulfil, a purpose to accomplish, no less than the most fanatic of religious enthusiasts; and the means whereby this end is to be attained are fourfold: devotion to learning, devotion to religion, ascetic purity of life, and the pursuit of *σπουδαιότης* or "excellent seriousness" of thought.

This period of self-centred isolation lasted from 1632 to 1637. Gibbon tells us among the many wise things contained in that most wise book the *Autobiography*, that every man has two educations; that which he receives from his teachers and that which he owes to himself; the latter being infinitely the more important. During these five years Milton completed his second education; ranging the whole world of classical antiquity and absorbing the classical genius so thoroughly that the ancients were to him what they afterwards became to Landor, what they have never become to any other English poet in the same degree, even as the very breath of his being; learning, too, all of art, especially music, that contemporary England could furnish; wresting from modern languages and literatures their last secrets; and combining these vast and diverse influences into a splendid equipment of hard-won, well-ordered culture. The world has known many greater scholars in the technical, limited sense than Milton, but few men, if any, who have mastered more things worth mastering in art, letters and scholarship<sup>1</sup>. It says much for the poet that he was sustained through this period of study, pursued *ohne Hast, ohne Rast*, by the full consciousness that all would be crowned by a masterpiece which should add one more testimony to the belief in that God who ordains the fates of men. It says also a very great deal for the father who suffered his son to follow in this manner the path of learning<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Milton's poems with their undercurrent of perpetual allusion are the best proof of the width of his reading; but interesting supplementary evidence is afforded by the commonplace book discovered in 1874, and printed by the *Camden Society*, 1876. It contains extracts from about 80 different authors whose works Milton had studied.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the poem *Ad Patrem*, 68—72, in which Milton thanks his father for not having forced him to be a merchant or lawyer.

True, Milton gave more than one earnest of his future fame. The dates of the early pieces—*L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Arcades*, *Comus* and *Lycidas*—are not all certain; but probably each was composed at Horton before 1638. We must speak of them elsewhere. Here we may note that four of them have great autobiographic value as an indirect commentary, written from Milton's coign of seclusion, upon the moral crisis through which English life and thought were passing, the clash between the careless hedonism of the Cavalier world and the deepening austerity of Puritanism. In *L'Allegro* the poet holds the balance almost equal between the two opposing tendencies. In *Il Penseroso* it becomes clear to which side his sympathies are leaning. *Comus* is a covert prophecy of the downfall of the Court-party, while *Lycidas* openly "foretells the ruine" of the Established Church. The latter poem is the final utterance of Milton's lyric genius. Here he reaches, in Mr Mark Pattison's words, the high-water mark of English verse; and then—the pity of it—he resigns that place among the *lyrici vates* of which the Roman singer was ambitious, and for nearly twenty years suffers his lyre to hang mute and rusty in the temple of the Muses.

The composition of *Lycidas* may be assigned to the year 1637. In the spring of the next year Milton started *Travels in Italy; close of the first period in his life.* for Italy. He had long made himself a master of Italian, and it was natural that he should seek inspiration in the land where many English poets, from Chaucer to Shelley, have found it. Milton remained abroad some fifteen months. Originally he had intended to include Sicily and Greece in his travels, but news of the troubles in England hastened his return. He was brought face to face with the question whether or not he should bear his part in the coming struggle; whether without self-reproach he could lead any longer this life of learning and indifference to the public weal. He decided as we might have expected that he would decide, though some good critics see cause to regret the decision. Milton puts his

*Cause of his return to England.*

position very clearly. "I considered it," he says "dishonourable to be enjoying myself at my ease in foreign lands, while my countrymen were striking a blow for freedom." And again: "Perceiving that the true way to liberty followed on from these beginnings, inasmuch also as I had so prepared myself from my youth that, above all things, I could not be ignorant what is of Divine and what of human right, I resolved, though I was then meditating certain other matters, to transfer into this struggle all my genius and all the strength of my industry."

The summer of 1639 (July) found Milton back in England. Immediately after his return he wrote the *Epitaphium Damonis*, the beautiful elegy in which he lamented the death of his school friend, Diodati. *Lycidas* was the last of the English lyrics: the *Epitaphium*, which should be studied in close connection with *Lycidas*, the last of the long Latin poems. Thenceforth, for a long spell, the rest was silence, so far as concerned poetry. The period which for all men represents the strength and maturity of manhood, which in the cases of other poets produces the best and most characteristic work, is with Milton a blank. In twenty years he composed no more than a bare handful of Sonnets, and even some of these are infected by the taint of political *animus*. Other interests filled his thoughts—the question of Church-reform, education, marriage, and, above all, politics.

Milton's first treatise upon the government of the Established Church (*Of Reformation touching Church-Discipline in England*) appeared in 1641. Others followed in quick succession. The abolition of Episcopacy was the watch-word of the enemies of the Anglican Church—the *delenda est Carthago* cry of Puritanism, and no one enforced the point with greater eloquence than Milton. During 1641 and 1642 he wrote five pamphlets on the subject. Meanwhile he was studying the principles of education. On his return from Italy he had undertaken the training of his nephews<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Edward and John Phillips, sons of Milton's only sister. Both subsequently joined the Royalist party. To Edward Phillips we owe a memoir of the poet.

*The second period, 1639—1660. Milton abandons poetry.*

*Pamphlets on the Church and Education.*

This led to consideration of the best educational methods; and in the *Tractate of Education*, 1644, Milton assumed the part of educational theorist. In the previous year, May, 1643, he married<sup>1</sup>. The marriage proved, at the time, unfortunate. Its immediate outcome was the pamphlets on Divorce. Clearly he had little leisure for literature proper.

The finest of Milton's prose works, *Areopagitica*, a plea for the free expression of opinion, was published in 1644. In 1645<sup>2</sup> he edited the first collection of his poems. In 1649 his advocacy of the anti-royalist cause was recognised by the offer of a post under the newly appointed Council of State. His bold vindication of the trial of Charles I., *The Tenure of Kings*, had appeared

*Political Pamphlets. Appointment to Latin Secretaryship.*

<sup>1</sup> His wife (who was only seventeen) was Mary Powell, eldest daughter of Richard Powell, of Forest Hill, a village some little distance from Oxford. She went to stay with her father in July 1643, and refused to return to Milton; why, it is not certain. She was reconciled to her husband in 1645, bore him four children, and died in 1652, in her twenty-seventh year. No doubt, the scene in *P. L.* x. 909—946, in which Eve begs forgiveness of Adam, reproduced the poet's personal experience, while many passages in *S. A.* must have been inspired by the same cause.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. old style. The volume was entered on the registers of the Stationers' Company under the date of October 6th, 1645. It was published on Jan. 2, 1645—6, with the following title-page:

"*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 King's Chappel, and one of His Majesties private Musick.*

—————*Baccare frontem*

*Cingite, ne vati noceat mala lingua futuro.* VIRG. *Ecl.* 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 Pauls Churchyard. 1645."*

From the prefatory Address to the Reader it is clear that the collection was due to the initiative of the publisher. Milton's own feeling is expressed by the motto, where the words "*vati futuro*" show that, as

earlier in the same year. Milton accepted the offer, becoming Latin<sup>1</sup> Secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs. There was nothing distasteful about his duties. He drew up the despatches to foreign governments, translated state-papers, and served as interpreter to foreign envoys. Had his duties stopped here his acceptance of the post would, I think, have proved an unqualified gain. It brought him into contact with the first men in the state<sup>2</sup>, gave him a practical insight into the working of national affairs and the motives of human action; in a word, furnished him with that experience of life which is essential to all poets who aspire to be something more than "the idle singers of an empty day." But unfortunately the secretaryship entailed the necessity of defending at every turn the past course of the revolution and the present policy of the Council. Milton, in fact, held a perpetual brief as advocate for his party. Hence the endless and unedifying controversies into which he drifted; controversies which wasted the most precious years of his life, warped, as some critics think, his nature, and eventually cost him his eyesight.

Between 1649 and 1660 Milton produced no less than eleven pamphlets. Several of these arose out of the publication of the famous *Eikon Basilike*. The book was printed in 1649 and created so extraordinary a

*The advantage of the post.*

*Its disadvantage.*

*Milton's writings on behalf of the Commonwealth.*

he judged, his great achievement was yet to come. The volume was divided into two parts, the first containing the English, the second the Latin poems. *Comus* was printed at the close of the former, with a separate title-page to mark its importance.

<sup>1</sup> A Latin Secretary was required because the Council scorned, as Edward Phillips says, "to carry on their affairs in the wheedling, lispings jargon of the cringing French." Milton's salary was £288, in modern money about £900.

<sup>2</sup> There is no proof that Milton ever had personal intercourse with Cromwell, and Mr Mark Pattison implies that he was altogether neglected by the foremost men of the time. Yet it seems unlikely that the Secretary of the Committee should not have been on friendly terms with some of its members, Vane, for example, and Whitelocke.

sensation that Milton was asked to reply to it. This he did with *Eikonoklastes*, introducing the wholly unworthy sneer at Sidney's *Arcadia* and the awkwardly expressed reference to Shakespeare<sup>1</sup>. Controversy of this barren type has the inherent disadvantage that once started it may never end. The Royalists commissioned the Leyden professor, Salmasius, to prepare a counterblast, the *Defensio Regia*, and this in turn was met by Milton's *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*, 1651, over the preparation of which he lost what little power of eyesight remained<sup>2</sup>. Salmasius retorted, and died before his second *farrago* of scurrilities was issued: Milton was bound to answer, and the *Defensio Secunda* appeared in 1654. Neither of the combatants gained anything by the dispute; while the subsequent development of the controversy in which Milton crushed the Amsterdam pastor

<sup>1</sup> See *L'AL.* 133—134, note. It would have been more to the point to remind his readers that the imprisoned king must have spent a good many hours over La Calprenède's *Cassandre*.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps this was the saddest part of the episode. Milton tells us in the *Defensio Secunda* that his eyesight was injured by excessive study in boyhood: "from the twelfth year of my age I scarce ever left my lessons and went to bed before midnight. This was the first cause of my blindness." Continual reading and writing must have increased the infirmity, and by 1650 the sight of the left eye had gone. He was warned that he must not use the other for book-work. Unfortunately this was just the time when the Commonwealth stood most in need of his services. If Milton had not written the first *Defence* he might have retained his partial vision. The choice lay between private good and public duty. He repeated in 1650 the sacrifice of 1639. "In such a case I could not listen to the physician, not if Æsculapius himself had spoken from his sanctuary; I could not but obey that inward monitor, I know not what, that spoke to me from heaven.....I concluded to employ the little remaining eyesight I was to enjoy in doing this, the greatest service to the common weal it was in my power to render" (*Second Defence*). By the Spring of 1652 Milton was quite blind. He was then in his forty-fourth year. The allusion in *P. L.* III. 21—26, leaves it doubtful from what disease he suffered, whether cataract or amaurosis. Throughout *S. A.* there are frequent references to his affliction.

and professor, Morus, goes far to prove the contention of Mr Mark Pattison, that it was an evil day when the poet left his study at Horton to do battle for the Commonwealth amid the vulgar brawls of the market-place:

“Not here, O Apollo,  
Were haunts meet for thee.”

Fortunately this poetic interregnum in Milton's life was not destined to last much longer. The Restoration came, a blessing in disguise, and in 1660 the ruin of Milton's political party and of his personal hopes, the absolute overthrow of the cause for which he had fought for twenty years, left him free. The author of *Lycidas* could once more become a poet<sup>1</sup>.

*The Restoration releases Milton from politics. Return to poetry.*

Much has been written upon this second period, 1639—1660, and a word may be said here. We saw what parting of the ways confronted Milton on his return from Italy. Did he choose aright? Should he have continued upon the path of learned leisure? There are writers who argue that Milton made a mistake. A poet, they say, should keep clear of political strife: fierce controversy can benefit no man: who touches pitch must expect to be, certainly will be, defiled: Milton sacrificed twenty of the best years of his life, doing work which an underling could have done and which was not worth doing: another *Comus* might have been written, a loftier *Lycidas*: that literature should be the poorer by the absence of these possible masterpieces, that the second greatest genius which England has produced should in a way be the “inheritor of unfulfilled renown,” is and must be a thing entirely and terribly deplorable. This is the view of the purely literary critic. Mr Mark Pattison writes very much to this effect.

*Should Milton have kept apart from political life?*

*One reply to this question.*

<sup>1</sup> We have not attempted to trace the growth of Milton's political and religious opinions: “Through all these stages,” Mr Mark Pattison writes, “Milton passed in the space of twenty years—Church-Puritan, Presbyterian, Royalist, Independent, Commonwealth's man, Oliverian.” To illustrate this statement would need many pages.

There remains the other side of the question. It may fairly be contended that had Milton elected in 1639 to live the scholar's life apart from "the action of men," *Paradise Lost*, as we have it, could never have been written<sup>1</sup>. Knowledge of life and human nature, insight into the problems of men's motives and emotions, grasp of the broader issues of the human tragedy, all these were essential to the author of an epic poem; they could only be obtained through commerce with the world; they would have remained beyond the reach of a recluse. Dryden complained that Milton saw nature through the spectacles of books: we might have had to complain that he saw men through the same medium. Fortunately it is not so: and it is not so because at the age of twenty-two he threw in his fortunes with those of his country; like the diver in Schiller's ballad he took the plunge which was to cost him so dear. The mere man of letters will never move the world. Æschylus fought at Marathon: Shakespeare was practical to the tips of his fingers; a better business man than Goethe there was not within a radius of a hundred miles of Weimar.

This aspect of the question is emphasised by Milton himself. *Milton's own opinion.* The man he says, "who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem, that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things, *not<sup>2</sup> presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have within himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy.*" Again, in estimating the qualifications which the writer of an epic such as he contemplated should possess, he is careful to include "insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs<sup>3</sup>."

Truth usually lies half-way between extremes: perhaps it does so here. No doubt, Milton did gain very greatly by breathing awhile the larger air of public life, even though that air was often tainted by

<sup>1</sup> This is equally true of *S. A.*

<sup>2</sup> The italics are not Milton's.

<sup>3</sup> *Reason of Church Government*, P. IV. II. 481.



miasmatic impurities. No doubt, too, twenty years of eristic unrest must have left their mark even on Milton. In one of the very few places<sup>1</sup> where he "abides our question," Shakespeare writes:

O! for my sake do you with Fortune chide,  
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,  
That did not better for my life provide,  
Than public means, which public manners breeds:  
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand;  
And almost thence my nature is subdu'd  
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.

Milton's genius was subdued in this way. If we compare him, the Milton of the great epics and of *Samson Agonistes*, with Homer or Shakespeare—and none but the greatest can be his parallel—we find in him a certain want of humanity, a touch of narrowness. He lacks the large-heartedness, the genial, generous breadth of Shakespeare; the sympathy and sense of the *lacrime rerum* that even in *Troilus and Cressida* or *Timon of Athens* are there for those who have eyes wherewith to see them. Milton reflects many of the less gracious aspects of Puritanism, its intolerance, want of humour, one-sided intensity. He is stern, unbending, austere, and it seems natural to assume that this narrowness was to a great extent the price he paid for two decades of ceaseless special pleading and dispute. The real misfortune of his life lay in the fact that he fell on evil, angry days when there was no place for moderate men. He had to be one of two things: either a controversialist or a student: there was no *via media*. Probably he chose aright; but we could wish that the conditions under which he chose had been different.

The last part of Milton's life, 1660—1674, passed quietly. At the age of fifty-two he was thrown back upon poetry, and could at length discharge his self-imposed obligation. The early poems he had never regarded as a fulfilment of the debt due to his Creator;

*From the Restoration to Milton's death.*

<sup>1</sup> Sonnet CXI.

even when the fire of political strife burned at its hottest Milton never lost sight of the purpose which had been with him since his boyhood. The main difficulty lay in the selection of a suitable subject. He wavered between themes drawn from the Scriptures and others taken from the history of his own country. For a time he was evidently inclined to choose the Arthurian story<sup>1</sup>, the only cycle of events in British history or legend which seems to lend itself naturally to epic treatment. Had he done so we should have lost the *Idylls of the King*. The rough drafts of his projected schemes, now among the Milton MSS.<sup>2</sup> at Trinity College, shew that exactly ninety-nine possible themes occupied his thoughts from time to time; but even as early as 1641 the story of the lost Paradise began to assume prominence. Still, even when the subject was definitively chosen, the question of its treatment—dramatic or epic—remained. Milton contemplated the former. He even commenced work upon a drama of which Satan's address to the sun in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*<sup>3</sup> formed the exordium. These lines were written about 1642. Milton recited them to his nephew Phillips at the time of their composition. Possibly had Milton not been distracted and diverted from poetry by political and other interests he might from 1642 onwards have continued this inchoate drama

<sup>1</sup> This project is not mentioned among the schemes enumerated in the Trinity MSS. Cf. however, the *Epitaphium Damonis*, 162—178, and the poem *Mansus*, 80—84. See also the note on *Comus*, 826—841. Among Milton's prose works was a *History of Britain*, written for the most part about 1649, but not printed till 1670. In it he used the materials collected for his abandoned epic on the story of King Arthur.

<sup>2</sup> They include the original drafts of *Arcades*, *Comus*, *Lycidas*, and some of the minor poems, together with Milton's notes on the design of the long poem he meditated composing, and other less important papers. The MSS. were presented to Trinity by a former member of the college, Sir Henry Newton Puckering, who died in 1700. It is not known how they originally came into his possession.

<sup>3</sup> Bk. IV. ll. 32 *et seq.*

and thus produced a dramatic epic akin to *Samson Agonistes*. As things fell out, the scheme was dropped, and never taken up again. When he finally addressed himself to the composition of *Paradise Lost* he had decided in favour of the epic or narrative form.

Following Aubrey (from Aubrey and Phillips most of our information concerning Milton is derived) we may assume that Milton began to write *Paradise Lost* <sup>*Paradise Lost begun.*</sup> about 1658. He worked continuously at the epic for some five years. It was finished in 1663, the year of his third<sup>1</sup> marriage. Two more years, however, were spent in the necessary revision, and in 1665 Milton placed the completed poem in the hands of his friend Thomas Ellwood<sup>2</sup>. In 1667 *Paradise Lost* was issued from the press<sup>3</sup>. Milton received £5. Before his death he was paid a second instalment, <sup>*The poem published.*</sup> £5. Six editions of the poem had been published by the close of the century.

When Ellwood returned the MS. of *Paradise Lost* to Milton

<sup>1</sup> Milton's second marriage took place in the autumn of 1656, i.e. after he had become blind. His wife died in February, 1658. Cf. the *Sonnet*, "Methought I saw my late espoused saint," the pathos of which is heightened by the fact that he had never seen her.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the account given in Ellwood's *Autobiography*: "after some common discourses had passed between us, he called for a manuscript of his; which, being brought, he delivered to me, bidding me take it home with me and read it at my leisure, and, when I had so done, return it to him with my judgment thereupon. When I came home, and had set myself to read it, I found it was that excellent poem which he intituled *Paradise Lost*."

<sup>3</sup> The delay was due to external circumstances. Milton had been forced by the plague to leave London, settling for a time at Chalfont St Giles in Buckinghamshire, where Ellwood had taken a cottage for him. On his return to London, after "the sickness was over, and the city well cleansed," the Great Fire threw everything into disorder; and there was some little difficulty over the licensing of the poem. For these reasons the publication of *Paradise Lost* was delayed till the autumn of 1667 (Masson).

he remarked: "Thou hast said much here of *Paradise Lost*, but what hast thou to say of *Paradise found*?"  
*Paradise Re-* Possibly we owe<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Regained* to these  
*gained: Sam-* chance words; or the poem, forming as it does a  
*son Agonistes.* natural pendant to its predecessor, may have been included in Milton's original design. In any case he must have commenced the second epic about the year 1665. *Samson Agonistes* appears to have been written a little later. The two poems were published together in 1671.

In 1673 Milton brought out a reprint of the 1645 edition of his *Poems*, adding most of the sonnets<sup>2</sup> written in the interval. The last four years of his life were devoted to prose works of no particular interest to us<sup>3</sup>. He continued to live in London. His third marriage had proved

<sup>1</sup> Ellwood himself evidently thought so; cf. his *Autobiography*, "He (Milton) showed me his second poem, called *Paradise Regained*: and, in a pleasant tone, said to me, 'This is owing to you! For you put it into my head, by the question you put to me at Chalfont! which, before, I had not thought of.'"

<sup>2</sup> The number of Milton's sonnets is twenty-three (if we exclude the piece on "The New Forcers of Conscience"), five of which were written in Italian, probably during the time of his travels in Italy, 1638—9. Ten sonnets were printed in the edition of 1645, the last of them being that entitled (from the *Cambridge MS.*) "To the Lady Margaret Ley." The remaining thirteen were composed between 1645 and 1658. The concluding sonnet, therefore (to the memory of Milton's second wife), immediately preceded his commencement of *Paradise Lost*. Four of these poems (xv. xvi. xvii. xxii.) could not, on account of their political tone, be included in the edition of 1673. They were first published by Edward Phillips together with his memoir of Milton, 1694. The sonnet on the "Massacre in Piedmont" is usually considered the finest of the collection, of which the late Rector of Lincoln College edited a well-known edition, 1883. The sonnet inscribed with a diamond on a window pane in the cottage at Chalfont where the poet stayed in 1665 is (in the judgment of a good critic) Miltonic, if not Milton's (*Garnett's Life of Milton*, p. 175).

<sup>3</sup> The treatise on *Christian Doctrine* is valuable as throwing much light on the theological views expressed in the two epic poems and *S.A.*

happy, and he enjoyed something of the renown which was rightly his. Various well-known men used to visit him—notably Dryden<sup>1</sup>, who on one of his visits asked and received permission to dramatise *Paradise Lost*.

Milton died in 1674, November 8th. He was buried in St Giles' Church, Cripplegate. When we think of him we have to think of a man who lived a life of very singular purity and devotion to duty; who for what he conceived to be his country's good sacrificed—and no one can well estimate the sacrifice—during twenty years the aim that was nearest to his heart and best suited to his genius; who, however, eventually realised his desire of writing a great work *in gloriam Dei*. *His death.*

<sup>1</sup> The lines by Dryden which were printed beneath the portrait of Milton in Tonson's folio edition of *Paradise Lost* published in 1688 are too familiar to need quotation; but it is worth noting that the younger poet had in Milton's lifetime described the great epic as "one of the most noble, and most sublime poems which either this age or nation has produced" (prefatory essay to *The State of Innocence*, 1674). Further, tradition assigned to Dryden (a Catholic and a Royalist) the remark, "this fellow (Milton) cuts us all out and the ancients too."

## SAMSON AGONISTES.

THE date of the composition of *Samson Agonistes* can be determined only approximately. The poem was published together with *Paradise Regained* in 1671: the volume containing them had been licensed on July 2nd, 1670, and entered<sup>1</sup> on the register of the Stationers' Company two months later, in September. But it is uncertain when *Samson Agonistes* was actually written. Perhaps, however, the year 1667 may be accepted with some confidence.

The account in Ellwood's *Autobiography* of his visit to Milton at Chalfont shows that *Paradise Lost* was completed in 1665 (the year of the plague). Whether *Paradise Regained*, the natural sequel to its greater precursor, formed part of Milton's original design; or whether, as Ellwood, with pardonable self-complacency, delighted to think, it was the outcome of the famous question which he addressed to Milton when he gave back the MS. of *Paradise Lost*, it scarce can be disputed that the second epic followed close upon the first. Indeed, it is conjectured that Milton began *Paradise Regained* at Chalfont in the autumn of 1665, since he showed the MS. of it to Ellwood soon after his return to London in 1666. At that time<sup>2</sup> *Samson Agonistes*

<sup>1</sup> Professor Masson quotes the entry: "Septemb. 10, 1670: Mr John Starkey entered for his copie, under the hands of Mr Tho. Tomkyns and Mr Warden Roper, a copie or Booke Intituled *Paradise regain'd*, A Poem in 4 Bookes. The Author John Milton. To which is added *Samson Agonistes*, a drammadic Poem, by the same Author."

<sup>2</sup> Stern, agreeing that *Paradise Regained* preceded *Samson*, suggests that it was purposely kept in MS. until the drama should be finished, in order that by appearing together they might each have the ad-

was probably still unwritten. The play is essentially a poet's last work, his *novissima verba* to his generation. The tone is quieter than that of *Paradise Regained*: pitched in a minor key of sad resignation. Milton has no more hope of seeing—though others will—the vindication of the cause of right. Yet the interval between the epic and the drama is not likely to have been considerable, for the closing years of Milton's life were devoted to merely mechanic work—to his *Compendium of Theology*, his *Histories* and other labours incompatible with a poet's duty. A Latin *Grammar* dates from 1669, proof eloquent that he had bidden farewell to the Muses.

Thus the issue is narrowed to the years 1667 and 1668: and of these 1667 is the more probable, since it makes *Samson Agonistes* more directly the successor of *Paradise Regained*. In the drama are centred the last rays of the light of epic inspiration which, late in time, had fired the heaven of the poet's genius.

The first edition, as we noted, was issued in 1671. The general title-page to the volume reads thus:

"PARADISE REGAIN'D. A POEM. In IV *The First Edition.*  
BOOKS. To which is added SAMSON AGONISTES<sup>1</sup>.

The Author JOHN MILTON. LONDON, Printed by J. M.<sup>2</sup> for  
*John Starkey at the Mitre in Fleet-street, near Temple-Bar.*  
MDCLXXI."

*Samson Agonistes*, of which the pagination is separate, has a special title-page, as follows: "SAMSON AGONISTES. A DRAMATIC POEM. The Author JOHN MILTON." And underneath stands the motto: "*Aristot. Poet. Cap. 6. Τραγῳδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, &c. Tragædia est imitatio actionis*

vantage of vivid contrast: *Paradise Regained* being "a panegyric of victorious patience, *Samson Agonistes* a glorification of revenge," *Milton und seine Zeit*, II. pp. 120, 121.

<sup>1</sup> Many of the dramatic sketches in the Trinity MS. have similar sub-titles, e.g. *Zedechiah νεοτεπλῶν*, *Elias Ὀρειβάτης*, *Elias Polemistes*, *Elisæus Hudrophantes*.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. Milton himself; he had had the volume printed at his own risk.

*seriæ, &c. Per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem."*

The volume is not so well printed<sup>1</sup> as *Paradise Lost*. There are a number of misprints, and at line 1527 nine verses are wanting. This, however, may not have been the printer's fault. Milton probably added the passage as the poem was passing through the press. It is supplied in a page of *Omissa*.

The second edition, 1680, was a reprint<sup>2</sup> of the first, save that the absent lines were assigned to their proper place, and that the pagination of the two poems is continuous. The third edition<sup>3</sup>, 1688, a folio, was the last in which *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* were published by themselves. In the fourth, 1705, they were supplemented by the "Poems Upon Severall Occasions;" and the same description applies to the fifth. In the sixth ("adorn'd with cuts"), 1713, the volume was further enlarged by the inclusion of the *Tractate on Education*; and editions with the same contents were numerous during the last century—sufficient witness of Milton's steadfast popularity. Of *Paradise Regained* the first separate issue was that edited by Dunster in 1795: of *Samson Agonistes* there does not appear to have been any such issue till quite modern times.

To revert to the early editions, it is worthy of note that they all repeat the blunders of the first; and it was not till Bishop Newton (in 1752) revised the text that the *Errata* marked in the original volume were corrected. Since then some fresh errors have insinuated their malignant presence into the text.

<sup>1</sup> Milton had changed his publisher, possibly because Simmons who issued *Paradise Lost* was slow in bringing out a second edition of it (Masson).

<sup>2</sup> A slight difference of reading occurs in L. 1495; see the note there.

<sup>3</sup> Some copies were bound up with Tonson's celebrated folio edition (being the fourth) of *Paradise Lost* for which Dryden's lines on the "three poets" were written.



The main source on which Milton has drawn for the account of Samson's life is, we need not say, the *Book of Judges*<sup>1</sup>, chapters xiii—xvi. Almost every detail of the scriptural narrative has been worked into the drama at some point or other: and often the language of the original is retained. So that to master the contents of these chapters beforehand is the best—indeed, the essential—introduction to the study of *Samson Agonistes*.

It were well, however, that some distinction were drawn between the story of Samson's life and the actual incidents of the drama. Strictly, only one incident in the action of *Samson Agonistes*, to wit, the catastrophe, is taken from Scripture. The dramatic mechanism whereby that catastrophe is brought about (in particular, that interview between Samson and Harapha whereof the direct sequel is the summons to the theatre of the Philistines) is of Milton's own invention. And the same holds good of all the other incidents (e.g. the meeting<sup>2</sup> between Dalila and Samson) which occur during the progress of the piece. The Scripture in short furnished the climax: that which led up to it the poet created for himself.

With the story of Samson's career the case is otherwise. The record of his past is conveyed to us in the form of retrospect—the method imposed on all playwrights who observe the 'unity of time:' and this record, so vivid at times that the incidents related seem to pass before us on the scene, Milton, as we have said, borrows almost in its entirety from the fore-cited chapters in *Judges*. He has studied them closely; how closely many passing touches indicate. The belief, for example, in Samson's supernatural power which Milton attributes to Harapha exactly represents the opinion which the Philistines were most like to have entertained<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> It is significant (says Stern) that in this drama of denunciation and personal invective M. sought his subject not in the New Testament, but in the Old, that "inexhaustible source of Puritan passion."

<sup>2</sup> Neither the *Book of Judges* nor Josephus speaks of their meeting after she betrayed Samson.

<sup>3</sup> See the note on ll. 1130—38 (from Lias' commentary).

A subsidiary source from which Milton has supplemented, in a few minor details, his picture of Samson, is the fifth book of the *Antiquities* of Josephus, chapter eight. But the debt is slight. Another possible authority (which has escaped the notice of the editors) is the *Relation* of the traveller, Sandys, one of the most popular and beguiling of the writers of Milton's time. I cannot help thinking that this furnished two or three hints, notably of the description of the building at Gaza where the catastrophe occurred. Sandys apart, Milton is alone, so far as I know, in representing that building as a theatre. The Scripture speaks of a house: in other accounts we read of a temple, or a 'public hall,' as in Quarles' *Historie*. But Sandys describes the ruins at Gaza of a vast structure traditionally supposed to have been "the theatre of *Samson*, pulled doune on the head of the Philistines." And he adds, with a touch of vivid realism which would have appealed strongly to Milton's imaginative sense, that there had formerly belonged to these ruins certain "marble pillars of an incredible bignesse," afterwards used in the construction of a mosque lower down in the valley. Were these the self-same columns with which Samson wrestled to the ruin of himself and his foes? The thought may have struck Milton and stamped the whole description on his memory. That he had read the *Relation*—who had not in the first half of the seventeenth century?—there is independent evidence<sup>1</sup>; and he may well have turned to it before writing *Samson Agonistes* to refresh his recollection of the scenes mentioned in the play. No contemporary work contained a more graphic account of the Holy Land and the surrounding districts<sup>2</sup>.

Of other poetic handlings of the subject two may be cited.

<sup>1</sup> See the note on l. 1634, and the *Nat. Ode*, 207, note (Pitt Press ed.).

<sup>2</sup> Scattered throughout *Paradise Lost* are numerous pieces of description which could only have been known to him through the works of travellers, such as Hakluyt's collection of *Voyages*.

A curious *Historie of Samson*, in most cumbrous verse, was written by Francis Quarles, whose *Emblems* were once not without admirers. The *Historie* is a narrative poem, divided into twenty-three *Sections*, or scenes, each *Section* having a stanza of four lines as *Argument* (cf. the introductory verses to the several cantos of the *Faerie Queene*), and a *Meditation* at the close, in which the writer 'points the moral.' Though each *Section* is nominally a narrative, yet so many speeches are introduced that the effect is mainly dramatic. The poem, which is in rhymed heroic couplets (with occasional lyrics), covers the whole of Samson's life. Quarles had been a member of Christ's College: and as the *Historie* appeared in 1632 when Milton—not impossibly—was still in residence at Cambridge<sup>1</sup>, he may have read it at the time from a sense of decent piety. But there was naught to carry away, and assuredly no inducement to renew the acquaintance later on, if acquaintance there had ever been. A plagiarism-quester of the nicest scent would find it hard to show that *Samson Agonistes* owed aught to Quarles' work.

The second poem is the drama, *Samson*, by the Dutch poet, Joost van den Vondel. The question of Milton's relation to Vondel is rather complex, and requires a more detailed discussion than present space admits. In the *Appendix* at the close of this volume an endeavour is made to set forth the entire unreasonableness of the claims which have been advanced on behalf of Vondel as the inspirer of *Samson Agonistes*. Todd, it may be added, discovered a poem<sup>2</sup> by an Italian writer, Alessandro Roselli, and an anonymous French

<sup>1</sup> See, however, p. x.

<sup>2</sup> Printed at Florence in 1554. The title-page describes it as *La Rappresentatione di Sansone*; and 'representation' best describes a piece which is too short and altogether too slight in character to be called a play. There is no division into acts, and the whole style is lyrical. The work seems to have had some popularity, since it was reprinted in 1571, and again at Siena in 1580.

play<sup>1</sup>, published in 1622, each on the subject of Samson. It is like enough that Milton had never heard of either. If he had read all the literature that has been mentioned as the 'sources' of his poems, hardly should he have found leisure to write a line of verse.

Whatever be the precise date of *Samson Agonistes*, the drama was no new project. As early as 1641—2 Milton had contemplated treating some episode in the life of Samson. He had passed in review a number of subjects suitable, in varying degrees, to his steadfast purpose of composing some great poem—by preference a drama: and the list of these schemes<sup>2</sup> has the following entry<sup>3</sup>:

*Milton's  
earlier schemes  
on this subject.*

*Samson pursophorus*<sup>4</sup> or *Hybristes*, or *Samson marriiing*  
or in *Ramath Lechi*. *Jud.* 15.

*Dagonalia*. *Jud.* 16.—

<sup>1</sup> There had also been an English play of *Samson*, acted in 1602, but never printed. The *Biographia Dramatica* (Baker-Reed ed., 1812), III. 239, assigns part-authorship therein to Samuel Rowley who wrote several dramas on sacred themes, e.g. *Judas* (1601), *Joshua* (1602). See Fleay's *Chronicle of the English Drama* (1891), II. 171, 308.

<sup>2</sup> See the *Life* of Milton, p. xx.

<sup>3</sup> Printed as it stands in the original.

<sup>4</sup> From Gk. *πυρσός*, a fire-brand, torch; *πυρσοφόρος* was used as the equivalent of *πυρφόρος*, the latter being a title applied to several deities, e.g. to Zeus in reference to his lightning; cf. Soph., *Philoctetes*, 1198. Prometheus, too, was called *πυρφόρος*; and Milton knowing that *πυρσοφόρος* = *πυρφόρος* may have intended the title *Samson pursophorus* as an allusion to the drama of *Προμηθεὺς πυρφόρος* by Æschylus, the first, probably, of the trilogy of plays on the Promethean legend. In the Trinity MS. the word *pursophorus* is written rather indistinctly, and at first sight one would be inclined to read it as *purgophorus*, 'tower-bearing:' which would refer to Samson's carrying away the gates of Gaza, an exploit of greater dignity. The only difference is *g* instead of *s*: and I am not quite sure that the letter is not *g*.

From this we see that four, or five<sup>1</sup>, several scenes in the career of the great champion of Israel had occupied Milton's thoughts. These, to keep to the order in which they are enumerated in the MS., were as follows:—(i) Samson's exploit of firing the corn-fields and vineyards of the Philistines (*Judges* xv. 4—6). (ii) His contemptuous treatment<sup>2</sup> of the Philistines after his victory over them. There may be a passing glance at this aspect of Samson's character in the present play; cf. lines 340—344, and 528—531; in each passage Samson is represented as filled with *ὕβρις* and disdain of his foes. Perhaps the chief incident which Milton had in his mind's eye as revealing Samson in this part of 'Hybristes' was his bearing off the gates of Gaza (*Judges* xvi. 3). (iii) "Samson marrying" clearly points to his marriage with the Philistine woman of Timnath: and (iv) "Samson in Ramath Lechi" no less clearly to the slaughter of the Philistines at Lehi (*Judges* xv. 14—17). The last entry (v) "Dagonalia" needs no comment.

With regard to these five subjects—if five there be—opinions differ as to the treatment of them which Milton intended. That it was to be dramatic is, I think, past dispute: but did Milton propose to handle all five themes, and if so, after what fashion? Professor Percival suggests that he may have contemplated writing a trilogy in the Æschylean manner: the action of three dramas might have been made to comprehend the five different episodes. Professor Masson has remarked: "Milton thought...there might be two sacred dramas founded on the accounts of Samson's life in the Book of

*Other incidents in the life of Samson.*

*Milton's proposed treatment of the incidents.*

*Dr Masson's view.*

<sup>1</sup> Whether the number of subjects be four or five depends on the interpretation we set on the word *Hybristes*. Either *Hybristes* points to the same incident as *purso-phorus*, since the destruction of the corn was a special act of *ὕβρις* or violence; or it alludes (and this is more probable) to a separate phase of the story, viz. to Samson's habitual contempt of his enemies.

<sup>2</sup> Which might be inferred from the *Book of Judges*. Percival aptly refers to Josephus (*Antiq.* v. 8. 10) who says that after the battle at Lehi Samson "held the Philistines in contempt."

Judges—the one on Samson's first marriage with a Philistine woman, and his feuds with the Philistines growing out of that incident, when he was *Pursophorus* (i.e. The Firebrand-bringer), or *Hybristes* (i.e. Violent); the other on the closing scene of his life, when he took his final vengeance on the Philistines in their feast to Dagon."

Against this view (and the objection applies, in some degree, to Professor Percival's theory) there is one fact which makes very strongly. It is that, at the time when these entries were written, the form of drama to which Milton leant, quite unmistakeably, was that of the Greek tragedians. The drafts<sup>1</sup> of his proposed tragedy on the subject of the Fall of Man, dating from this very period, leave no doubt, at least in my mind, that any drama composed by Milton about 1641—2 would have been cast in the self-same mould whence issued *Samson Agonistes*<sup>2</sup>. But the five episodes whereof we are speaking were widely separated in point of time and place: and it would have been impossible to compress them into two, or even three, dramas without disregarding those 'unities' of time and place which were organic elements of the structure of a Greek tragedy, and which in *Samson Agonistes* were rigidly observed. Moreover, the first of the plays of which Professor Masson has outlined the subject-matter, must have been crowded with a diversity of interest and incident wholly alien to the symmetrical structure and singleness of motive that mark the masterpieces of the classic stage. It would have partaken more of the free, romantic style of the Elizabethans: and for that style Milton had never shown any liking. I conclude therefore that the entry in the MS.

<sup>1</sup> Four in number: two being mere lists of *dramatis personæ* from which no inference can be drawn as to Milton's idea of dealing with the subject. The other two are tolerably complete outlines of the proposed action of each play: in each the unity of place is undoubtedly, and the unity of time almost as certainly, observed.

<sup>2</sup> Upon this point (which I hold to be a conclusive disproof of Mr Edmundson's view that Milton was indebted to Vondel for the idea of adopting the model of the Greek drama) see the *Appendix*.

simply shows that Milton had looked at the story of Samson from different points of view, and as the result of his study had decided that it presented certain incidents, each of which might yield material for a separate poem. We are not justified in assuming that he meant to combine the projects by any process of synthesis: rather, the conditions of the dramatic form which he had chosen precluded any such combination.

Here it is convenient to notice certain peculiarities in the Cambridge MS. which may throw some light on the question, and certainly indicate the order in which the subjects occurred to Milton. It is clear from the script of the entries that Milton first wrote the words *Samson in Ramath Lechi. Jud. 15.* Then, in the line above, just to the right of the word *Samson*, he added *marriing or*, meaning the MS. to run *Samson marriing or in Ramath Lechi. Jud. 15.* Next, as an after-thought, he inserted, in a cramped space, to the left of the first entry and almost level with it, the words *Samson p̄rsophorus or Hybristes, or*; so that the passage now was intended to be read, *Samson p̄rsophorus or Hybristes, or Samson marriing or in Ramath Lechi. Jud. 15.* And underneath the original entry stands the last of the subjects, *Dagonalia. Jud. 16.* But this entry, though it occupies the fifth place as the whole passage must be printed, probably came third; for if it had not been already written, filling up the space immediately under the first entry, Milton would not have been forced to insinuate at the side the after-thought *Samson p̄rsophorus, etc.*

*Peculiarities  
in the MS. at  
Cambridge.*

The sequence therefore of themes in Milton's mind appears to have been on this wise:—(i) Samson's slaughter of the Philistines; (ii) his marriage; (iii) his revenge and death; (iv) his burning the corn; (v) his insolence towards the Philistines. And from this rather haphazard order (wherein chronology is little respected) may we not infer that Milton merely jotted down those aspects of the story which impressed him most, without investigating very closely whether their internal coherences would suffer the several episodes to be brought within the limits of two dramas, or three?

On one occasion when *Samson Agonistes* was mentioned in the presence of Coleridge, he remarked<sup>1</sup>, with a just enthusiasm which did not shrink even from the most gratuitous of errors, prophecy, that it was "the finest imitation of the ancient Greek drama that ever had been, or ever would be written<sup>2</sup>." The classical character of the play is twofold: of the form and of the spirit: of the structure which admits analysis, and of the style which defies it. Upon the easier matter let something be commented first.

It is often said that *Samson Agonistes* reflects the influence of Euripides rather than Sophocles: which in the main is true. But in respect of one important element in the fabric of the drama the criticism needs to be modified. That element is the Chorus—more strictly, the purpose the Chorus fulfils on the scene. The use of the Chorus at all in an English play—even a play written for the scholar's study, and for an audience as sparse as that which Mozart promised himself when he composed *Don Juan*—evidently seemed to Milton a notable innovation. It is the point whereon he speaks first, and most fully, in the *Preface*, when he would justify his adoption of the classical form: and perhaps nothing in *Samson Agonistes* displays more strikingly his complete mastery of the mechanism of Greek tragedy than the address—the inspiration—with which he makes the Chorus play precisely the part which had been assigned to it by the author of the *Œdipus Rex*.

In Sophocles the Chorus is essentially identified with the

<sup>1</sup> From Collier's *Diary*; see Coleridge's *Lectures on Shakspeare*, ed. T. Ashe, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Of modern attempts to revive in English the manner of Greek tragedy, the most successful artistically is, I think, Matthew Arnold's *Merope*. He not only employs the traditional mechanism of the classical drama, but infuses into the piece, as into his *Empedocles*, much of the "antique spirit." The speech in which the Messenger reports the death of the king is strongly suggestive of the parallel scene in *Samson Agonistes*.



ruling interest—the dramatic *leit-motif*. It reviews what has passed in the action: prepares the audience for what is coming: and throughout maintains a close sympathy with the characters. <sup>*Its office in Sophocles.*</sup> Indeed, it is one of the characters: howbeit, gifted with a clearer vision than theirs, because less directly affected by the fortunes or misfortunes depicted, and therefore less stirred by the passion which dims perception.

On the other hand, the aloofness of the Chorus from the dramatic development in the plays of Euripides is a commonplace of criticism. He assigns to the Chorus duties which make it external to the drama: and the interest of his choric interludes lies rather in themselves—in their generalisations and philosophical views—than in their bearing on the events unfolded on the stage. <sup>*In Euripides.*</sup>

Now in *Samson Agonistes* the Chorus is so built into the structure that without it the play would fall to pieces. From the end of the prologue (where the Chorus completes the retrospect of Samson's past life, and fills us with a sense at once of his greatness and weakness, the fatal rift that ruins all) until the final *ἄφθοδος*, the Chorus never leaves the scene at all. And so long as Samson is on the stage it serves to illustrate his character, and bring home to us what manner of man he is: partly by contrast, for the Chorus has a caution and self-restraint impossible to the protagonist: partly by sympathy—by sharing in his feelings, by taking up his words and enlarging on them, by extending the train of his thought. <sup>*In Milton.*</sup> This is true not only of the dialogue in which the Chorus joins, but likewise of the long choric interludes. They always grow out of something which Samson, or one of the other *dramatis personæ*, has said or suggested: they always tend to make clearer to us the motive-springs of Samson's conduct, and to penetrate our minds with the atmosphere of the piece.

For example, when Samson prays for the advent of death, the releaser and comforter, the Chorus indirectly justifies his tone of despair by dwelling on the changes and chances under which the strongest may bow and grow faint. Again, when Dalila

has been repulsed by Samson, the long screed of venomous invective from the Chorus against women not only carries on the idea of the foregoing scene wherein womanhood as represented by her has been held up to scorn and infamy: but it exactly reflects what we feel to be passing in the mind of Samson himself. And yet again, in the ode which closes the second great episode of the drama, the interview with Harapha, how skilfully does Milton gather up the threads of the previous interests: making the Chorus to dwell, first upon the vanity of boisterous uninspired force—an echo this of Samson's own taunt, "bulk without spirit vast:" and then on the beauty of resignation and patience—a glance at Samson's expression of his readiness to die. It were not difficult to cite other places where the utterances of the Chorus harmonise with what is, we conceive, the main purport of the play: to wit, that gradual revelation of the character of Samson which is the key to the catastrophe. And when, obeying the summons, Samson has left the stage, it falls to the Chorus scarce less than to Manoa to sustain the interest while the climax pends; and, after the blow has fallen, to exemplify the mission of tragedy in purifying and calming. Milton therefore might fairly claim to have fulfilled the prescript of Aristotle—"The Chorus must be regarded as one of the actors, and a part of the whole, and as joining in the action<sup>1</sup>."

Howbeit the choral odes of *Samson Agonistes* do recall Milton's favourite poet in one thing—their moralising sententiousness. They are full of the "just sentiments," the "maxims of wisdom<sup>2</sup>," whereto

*Didactic style  
of the  
choruses.*

Euripides (with his imitator, Seneca) was most partial. With him the tendency to generalise on life and conduct was irresistible, and this speculative bent found an outlet in the choruses, to the endamage-ment of the coherence of his

<sup>1</sup> καὶ τὸν χορὸν δὲ ἕνα δεῖ ὑπολαβεῖν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν καὶ μέριον εἶναι τοῦ δλου, καὶ συναγωνίζεσθαι, *Poetics*, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Johnson, in the *Rambler*, nos. 139, 140 (July 16, and July 20, 1751).

dramas: the philosopher often o'er-mastered the poet. The same reflectiveness prevails in *Samson Agonistes*, expressed in dogmatic aphorisms: only it is better disciplined; diverted into a more legitimate channel. The character of Samson epitomising, as it were, the antagonisms of human nature, its strengths and weaknesses, with their natural sequels of triumph and tragic sorrow, affords scope for a wisdom which in touching on general truths does not lose sight of the particular case that exemplifies them. And it is here—in the broad views they contain of the human tragedy, in wide-experienced justness of thought—that the choric portions of *Samson Agonistes* are strong: here, and not on their lyrical side. They show Milton as the seer rather than the singer. The force of his sentiment (*διάνοια*) often eclipses the beauty of its expression.

Some there be who deny this, refusing to allow that *Samson Agonistes* reveals any decline from the lyric achievement of *Comus* and *Lycidas*—any loss of habit's power in the poet. There is melody, they say, here as in the earlier works: true, melody different of kind and quality, as a fugue by Bach has harmonies other than those of Mozart's sonatas: still, melody for all whose ear is sensible of delicate sound. Milton, if any other, is a 'lord of language,' a master of rhythm and cadences and balanced effects, and it is our own blame if we ~~cannot find in the odes of *Samson Agonistes* his peculiar 'embellished speech'~~—τὸν ἡδυσμένον λόγον τὸν ἔχοντα ῥυθμὸν καὶ ἀρμονίαν καὶ μέλος<sup>1</sup>.

*The choric odes as lyric verse: different estimates of.*

But to others this judgment is unpalatable. They hold that in point of style the choruses are often rugged, often crabbed, and on occasion involved to the confines of real obscurity of sense. They place "It is not virtue, wisdom" side by side with "Sabrina fair<sup>2</sup>:" a terrible test wherein the later poem, being tried, is found wanting. Personally I confess that my sympathies are, mainly, with this view.

No one, of course, should presume to tie Milton down to rigid principles of prosody, and scan his lines as though they

<sup>1</sup> *Poetics*, 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Comus*, 859 *et seq.*

were a schoolboy's copy of much-toiled iambics. A poet like Milton makes his own laws, and it is our business to find out what those laws are, ere we criticise. Again, it is scarcely fair to cavil at the odes of *Samson Agonistes* because they lack the linked sweetness of, say, *L'Allegro*: that had been ill-assorted with their didactic, ethical purpose. Further, the mere absence of rhyme is, in some degree, responsible for the impression of harshness conveyed to many readers—more especially readers from whom the classical genius of the drama is concealed. Yet, when these several points have been weighed, and due concession granted, the fact, I think, abides that the choruses seldom reach that pitch of superlative verbal beauty to which Milton has trained his audience. One sees in them—*aut vidisse putat*—the uncertain touch of a failing hand.

Nor were the cause far to seek. For over twenty years Milton had written scarce a stanza of lyric verse. He had been dead to poetry altogether during that dreary spell of barren controversy, and even after his return to literature had never gone outside the limits of blank verse. All his powers had been devoted to developing the last resources of that one metre: and his ear had grown accustomed to specific effects of involved and elaborate harmony and sheer verbal splendour such as belonged to blank verse, and to blank verse alone. Is it unreasonable therefore to think that he had lost something of his sense, aforesaid so keen, of the lighter tones, the delicate graces and charms of sound, which lyric verse needs before all else; and that herein lies the reason why the blank verse of *Samson Agonistes* is superior to the choric portions?

Next to Milton's use of a Chorus may be mentioned his observance of those 'unities' of time, place and action which are often regarded as a malicious invention of Aristotle<sup>1</sup>, though, in reality, they

*Why the lyric parts of the play are, perhaps, inferior to the rest of it.*

<sup>1</sup> He discusses the unity of action at length: that of place he omits: that of time he just glances at—*τῷ μήκει ἢ μὲν (τραγωδία) ὅτι μάλιστα*

merely stand for general principles of dramatic art deduced from the study of the works of the Greek tragedians.

The time of the action of *Samson Agonistes* is clearly defined<sup>1</sup>. It begins at sunrise, and ends at noon, thus occupying seven or eight hours. The time permitted by ancient usage was twenty-four hours, as Milton notes in the *Preface*: though the ancients allowed themselves some grace in the interpretation of the rule. The events, for instance, of the *Agamemnon* and *Trachiniae*<sup>2</sup> can hardly be brought within the compass of a single day, from sunrise to sunrise. In his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (where the unities receive full discussion) Dryden quotes a remark of Corneille, to the effect that "the choice of some signal and long-expected day, whereon the action of the play is to depend," is one of the most difficult, yet essential, tasks laid on the playwright who imitates the classical model. Milton made a very happy selection. The climax of Samson's life provided a theme which fell easily within the limits imposed, and none the less realised that completeness of action on which Aristotle lays such stress. And he has surmounted one of the difficulties which the restriction of time causes, or increases—the difficulty of explaining the antecedent circumstances out of which the complication of the play, in part, issues. Some introductory

πειράται ὑπὸ μίαν περίοδον ἡλίου εἶναι ἢ μικρὸν ἐξαλλάττειν ("in length tragedy endeavours as far as possible to fall within one revolution of the sun, or to extend beyond it but a little"), *Poetics*, 5. One of the earliest and most interesting discussions in English of the unities is in Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie*. As might be expected, he strongly insists on observance of "place, and time, the two necessary companions of all corporall actions:" ridiculing the haphazard method of contemporary play-wrights, wherein "at this day, the ordinary Players in Italie, wil not erre" (Arber's ed. pp. 63—64). Shakespeare had not then (*circa* 1581) shown what a drama, free from these conventions, might be made to yield.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ll. 11, 1596—9, 1612.

<sup>2</sup> Schlegel notes these exceptions to the general practice (*Dramatic Literature*, Lecture xvii).

prelude is necessary: and here it is furnished by the first speech of Samson (the prologue) and the *parodos* of the Chorus. In these the historic background is illuminated. At their close we have gained an insight into the past career of Samson which has won for him our pity, and stirred in us a feeling that from misfortunes so great must come a deliverance no less signal.

The unity of place is not referred to in the *Preface*: but Milton obeys it strictly—more strictly than had *Unity of place.* Æschylus in the *Eumenides* or Sophocles in the *Ajax*. The scene is laid throughout “before the Prison in Gaza.” The incident which constitutes the revolution (*περιπέτεια*) takes place at a distance, and is reported by the familiar Messenger of Greek tragedy. The same device was used by Corneille, and Ben Jonson had employed it in *Sejanus*<sup>1</sup> and *Catiline* with a skill which extorted the admiration of Dryden. There are, perhaps, few pieces of more essentially Sophoclean narrative in English than the Messenger’s speech in *Samson*.

Last comes the ‘unity of action’—a less simple matter. Very various interpretations have been put upon this convenient but rather misleading phrase, and it may not be amiss to attempt to see what Aristotle (Milton’s guide) thought on the subject: what indeed were his views in general as to the ideal construction and character of a tragedy.

*Unity of action.* The end of tragedy, Aristotle writes, is action. Action should be complete and single. By singleness or oneness of action it is meant that every tragedy should contain one ruling interest, leading up to a certain crisis or climax. There should not be diversity of interests

*This unity as understood by Aristotle.*

Where the death of Sejanus and the portents that preceded it are narrated by Terentius, while the *Nuntius* afterwards describes what befell the children of Sejanus (Act v. Sc. 10). News of the death of Catiline is brought in the same way. Speaking of the actual presentment of death on the stage, and defending the classical manner of reporting it, Dryden says: “when we see death represented, we are convinced it is but fiction; but when we hear it related, our eyes, the strongest witnesses, are wanting; and we are all willing to favour the sleight.”

which might conflict. A distinct underplot (such as the modern stage cannot dispense with) were intolerable. Episodes are permissible—nay, desirable: only, each episode (apart from its brevity which may be taken for granted, since herein tragedy differs from the epic) must have the closest logical connection with the predominant theme of the drama. Whatever is superfluous, inserted merely to lengthen the story, or to give the actors greater scope of display; whatever, in fact, stands a hair's breadth outside the broad course of the play, and fails to contribute to the bringing about of the climax, is defective art: "for that which illustrates nothing by its presence is no part of the whole."

And as regards the framework, let the several parts be arranged thus: first, a beginning, which prepares the way, and which does not follow anything itself, though it must lead to something: then, a middle which is that something, and is therefore linked with the beginning by causal connection: third, an end, the interval between which and the beginning is bridged by the middle. A well-constructed play is resolvable into these three divisions, so that we can say where each occurs. In the incidents the dramatist should aim at probability or necessity: one incident arising naturally out of another, and the solution of the plot issuing from the plot itself, through the sequence of cause and effect. Above all let it be remembered that the representation of incident is the chief object of a drama; indeed, that the action lies mainly in the incidents, since they form the plot.

Such are the main directions given by Aristotle concerning the duty of a playwright in arranging and unfolding his material. In a drama framed upon these principles there would be one main motive: a sufficient variety of incident having reference to that motive: and an organic coherence between the several parts, so that to remove one, or to transpose it, would disturb the symmetry of the whole. In a great measure, of course, these are the principles upon which all great dramatists have worked. But that which appears to be peculiar to the classical stage, to Aristotle as its prophet, and to

all dramas composed on its model, is this singleness of interest or motive.

We should best appreciate the difference between the ancient practice and the modern, could we hear Aristotle's verdict upon *Hamlet* or *Othello*. For in Shakespeare the interest is seldom— if ever—limited to one idea, however dominant and impressive. There is a complexity of motive, a wider range of appeal.

Yet the unity of the whole is not lessened. All hangs together in a golden chain of dramatic idea. The dramatist works over a much more extensive field : nevertheless he preserves an essential 'unity of action,' though not the unity advocated by the great critic. The distinction must be drawn, because the phrase 'unity of action' is used, in the vague currency of criticism, as though it were applicable in the same sense to the classical drama and the modern. This, I opine, is not so : the 'unity' of *Hamlet* does not correspond to the *πρᾶξις μία τε καὶ ὅλη* of the *Poetics* : the 'unity' of *Samson Agonistes* does.

The pre-eminent interest of the play is Samson's revenge on the Philistines. That constitutes the revolution or sudden reversal of fortune, by which the relative positions of Samson and his enemies are changed : he avenged, they flung from their pride of place. All that precedes is a preparation for this catastrophe. There is no by-plot : and of the two episodes one, at least, contributes directly to the climax. Now the way to this climax leads, as it were, through the character of Samson. Until we know what type of man he is, we cannot grasp the meaning of the crisis—why it need ever have come about : to understand him is to understand it.

Hence Milton's duty is twofold : first, to reveal to us the character of the protagonist, partly by showing, through historical retrospect of his past life, how he has become what he is, partly by revealing his character through the action of the drama : secondly—and upon a dramatist this is the greater obligation—to create complications (i.e. circumstances or inci-

*The unity of action in Shakespeare.*

*The main theme of "Samson Agonistes."*

*The relation of Samson's character to the action of the play.*



dents) of such a nature that Samson, being what we have learned him to be, shall find himself driven to do the deed which forms the solution of those complications. It is to the first of these tasks, the revelation of the character of Samson, that Milton has mainly devoted himself: and therein is he altogether successful. It is in the second, the invention of incident, that the weakness of the play lies. The climax is adequate: the character of the hero is adequate in conception and execution: but the poverty of the plot which unites the character with the climax we are unable to dispute. A brief analysis of the drama will make the point clearer.

Were *Samson Agonistes* divided into acts the first would end at line 325, with the announcement of the entry of Manoah. Up to this point, says Dr Johnson<sup>1</sup>, whose design was to show that the individual parts of the play, though beautiful *per se*, lack internal unity, "there is no design laid, no discovery made, nor any disposition formed towards the subsequent event." To this it may fairly be replied, that though no incident has occurred, yet in the space of three hundred lines Milton has given us a remarkable picture of Samson. His aim has been—and this was necessary—character-revelation, chiefly by means of reminiscence. And though there has been no hint at any definite act in the future, yet the scene has prepared us for the act when it does arrive; it has afforded a glimpse, wholly essential to the plot, of the possibilities of Samson's nature, a notion of what, under the stress of circumstances, he may be ready to do.

The close of the second act would fall just before the entrance of Dalila. It includes the interview between Samson and Manoa, with the choral ode "Many are the sayings," down to line 710, or thereabout<sup>2</sup>. In

*Lack of incident.*

*Analysis of the play: the first Act.*

*The second Act.*

<sup>1</sup> *The Rambler*, 139.

<sup>2</sup> The exact points of division cannot be indicated. Moreover, inasmuch as the dramatist has specially avoided any such divisions, we should not, in considering the symmetry of the play, lay stress on them.

this scene happens what Cumberland<sup>1</sup> calls an "incident of provocation:" namely Manoa's announcement to Samson of the feast which the Philistines intend to celebrate in honour of Dagon, since through him they had triumphed over Samson, and thus, indirectly, over Samson's God. In Samson's view the news is a kind of challenge to God. There must, he says, be discomfiture in store for Dagon and his worshippers: the God of Israel must manifest his might. And these words serve as a premonition of the catastrophe. We anticipate, from this point, some great deed, and interpret all that follows in the light of this anticipation. The incident therefore distinctly advances the action. Further, it is the first step in the required provocation of Samson. He is being wrought to the necessary pitch of mental agony and distress.

The third act is composed of the altercation with Dalila, and the ensuing ode; it may be taken to end *The third Act.* about line 1060. This is a true episode, and not of the class of episodical complications whereof Aristotle approved. It is lengthy: and it does not lend any material impetus to the action. No doubt Dalila, having been the fount and origin of all Samson's trouble, may fairly find a place in the plot—to see Samson in her presence is to realise more strongly than we did before the change which his character has undergone. Moreover, his scornful rejection of her offer deepens the conviction that release from all his misery, physical and mental, can only come through some deed of strength which shall make an end of all. Thus, the expectation of a catastrophe, suggested

<sup>1</sup> Richard Cumberland, the dramatist and essayist, a kinsman of Bentley. His reply to Dr Johnson's strictures on *Samson Agonistes* is the most just and satisfactory piece of extant criticism on the literary value of the play. It is rightly based on the view that the character of Samson is the cause of the climax: and that everything which reveals, or affects, his character belongs in some degree to the 'business' or action of the piece. The essay appeared in *The Observer* (one of the many attempts to revive the style of *The Spectator*), no. 76; see Chalmers' *British Essayists*, vol. xxxix, pp. 166—173.

first in the interview with Manoa, is increased. Still, the final result of the scene is scarcely proportionate to the space it fills, and the method used is that of debate rather than representation of action. Dramatically this is, we think, the weakest part of *Samson Agonistes*, howbeit, in many respects, of surpassing interest: the interest, though, of autobiography, not of dramatic art.

*The episode of Dalila: its weakness.*

The fourth act (ll. 1060—1440) includes the interviews with Harapha and the Officer: that with Harapha being, of course, the more significant. This has been classed as an episode: none the less, it has a vital connection with the plot<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, the whole scene is the most important element of the complications of the drama. For, first, it is through the instigation<sup>2</sup> of Harapha, enraged at the taunts of Samson, that the summons to the feast is sent: which summons leads straight on, undeviating, to the final goal of Samson's revenge and death.

*The fourth Act. The episode of Harapha: its importance.*

<sup>1</sup> It is absolutely necessary to insist upon this point, since some critics treat the whole interview as a digression which does *not* belong to the plot. Mr Stopford Brooke, for instance, writes: "Two episodes...interrupt the main action, the episodes of Dalila and Harapha:" and again, speaking of the later of these—"The sole importance of the scene is that it exalts Samson in our eyes and gives occasion to a chorus (i.e. ll. 1268 *et seq.*) which has all the grandeur, the solemnity, and the simple motives of a Psalm of David" (*Milton*, pp. 164—65, *Classical Writers* series). Now the first of these episodes begins at l. 710: the second, which follows immediately, ends at l. 1300. Is it conceivable that any playwright would be so maladroit as to fill the middle of his drama with six hundred lines (more than a third of the piece) which "interrupt the action"? The one plain fact that the interview has as its sequel the command brought by the officer shows how essential the scene is: that it does *not* "interrupt the action," but does advance it.

<sup>2</sup> This is clearly implied by ll. 1250—53. For some time the audience have anticipated a crisis: here the first hint is given of the quarter whence it will come.

Secondly, Harapha is an admirable foil to Samson. The character-contrast has almost the vividness of Shakespeare's touch. More than ever do we realise that there are unsounded depths of power in Samson, and that he must, and will, use this power to free himself from a position which makes him obnoxious to the insults of an Harapha. Thirdly, the war of words "exasperates, exulcerates" him beyond endurance: his wrath rises in a *crescendo* of passion, and when at the close of the act the summons of the Philistines is repeated he is ready in the inspiration of his anger to face the whole host of the enemy and let come what will. This fourth act seems to me one of the most dramatic parts of the play, vivid in characterisation, varied in circumstance and incident, and essential to the catastrophe.

The fifth act begins at the second entry of Manoa (l. 1441). It comprises the dialogue between him and the *The fifth Act.* Chorus, just on the eve of the catastrophe; their distracted conjectures after it has fallen and before the Messenger arrives; his report of it, and their concluding reflections. Against this last act criticism cannot hint a fault or hesitate the faintest dislike. The element of terror and pervasive sense of φόβος when the "universal groan," with red ruin and deathful deeds in its echo, reaches the actors; the irony of their hope that it is well with Samson and triumphant, while the audience know that it is ill with him and that his triumph is the victory of tragic death; the narrative of the Messenger with its refrain of the old, unhappy, far-off things of the *Electra* or *Ædipus at Colonus*; the resignation of Manoa and the Chorus, showing that Tragedy is justified of her mission to purge the soul of all distress and bring it back into the haven of passionless calm: these form a perfect achievement of unfaltering art which needs no prophet.

But as it were idle to criticise the closing scenes, so would it be equally useless to deny the inadequacy of incident in their forerunners. The fault of the earlier scenes is that in them Milton has used a method of characterisation which belongs to the novelist's art, not to the dramatist's. There are two main

ways of depicting character : by analysis and by the representation of action. The analytic method, tedious though it may prove, is permissible, within reasonable limits, to the novelist : to the dramatist it is forbidden. It is his duty to characterise his *personæ* by placing them in circumstances which will force them to act, so that the test of action may reveal their natures : and in the same way it is through action that their inborn bent should be developed or modified. Of these two instruments Milton has relied on that which pertains to the rival art of fiction. Analysis we have enough of and to spare : incident is sorely to seek. The sum of moving accident in *Samson Agonistes* is meagre. Our knowledge of the hero derives through the channel of long monologues<sup>1</sup>. Shakespeare, working under the same conditions, with the same material, and up to the same climax, would have made the character of Samson an equally forcible study, and as the means thereto would have invented a chain of incident in which the hero, under stress and necessity of action, would have shown the stuff that was in him. But Shakespeare, though not, it would seem, a keen student of the *Poetics*, knew with Aristotle that "Tragedy may exist without character—without action it cannot." The *analytic method in Milton.*

Milton, too, knew this. But whereas Shakespeare could put his knowledge into practice, in Milton, unfortunately, the creative faculty was not on a level with his other powers. *The use of action in Shakespeare.*

Perhaps we may treat the 'ironic' element in *Samson*

<sup>1</sup> A curious point in *S. A.*, to which we have not seen attention called, is the comparative absence of the *στίχομυθία* (i.e. dialogue in alternate lines between two characters) so largely used in classical tragedy. There is nothing here to compare with the dialogue between the Lady and Comus in *Comus*, 277—290. Such *στίχομυθίαι* were not uncommon in the pre-Shakespearian tragedy based on Seneca ; and some examples might be quoted from Shakespeare's early plays, e.g. from *Richard III.* IV. 4. 343—361. See note on *Comus* 277 (Pitt Press ed.).

*Agonistes* as part of its structure. The play is full of that irony which in the Greek theatre compensated, to some extent, for the lack of freshness in the themes treated. The classical dramatist experienced a disadvantage from which the modern playwright is exempt. In a drama of to-day there is the interest of the unknown, the feeling—‘how will it end?’ The subject-matter being—theoretically—of the writer’s own invention is his to handle as imagination prompts: and to the audience are conceded the pleasures of conjecture. With the ordinary Greek tragedy the case stood otherwise. The audience were as familiar, from the outset, with the gist of the plot as the dramatist himself, since the chief themes of Greek tragedy were drawn from those great cycles of Hellenic history and myth which were common property<sup>1</sup>. Into plays based on stories so well-worn the element of novelty and surprise could not enter. Hence as a partial remedy for this defect the tragedians, notably Sophocles<sup>2</sup>, had recourse to that effective figure of speech termed ‘irony,’ by which the knowledge of the audience was turned against the *dramatis personæ*. Unconscious of their true position, and ignorant of the drift of events, the actors are made to use expressions into which the spectators, in virtue of their familiarity with the story, can read a significance that is not intended by the speakers. Very often this by-play of veiled allusiveness foreshadows the catastrophe: a character will let fall some remark

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Aristotle: *πρῶτον μὲν οἱ ποιηταὶ τοῦς τυχόντας μύθους ἀπηρρίθμουν, νῦν δὲ περὶ ὀλίγας οἰκίας αἱ κάλλιστα τραγῳδαὶ συντίθενται* (i. e. at first poets took any plot that chanced for their subject, but now the best tragedies are composed concerning a few great families, such as those of *Œdipus*, or *Orestes*, or *Thyestes*), *Poetics* 13. In *Il Penseroso*, 99, 100, Milton epitomises the chief themes of classical Greek tragedy; see also the first of the Latin *Elégies*, 45, 46.

<sup>2</sup> The *locus classicus* on “The Irony of Sophocles” is Bishop Thirlwall’s essay, originally printed in the *Philological Museum* (Cambridge, 1833), vol. II. pp. 483—537. At the close of the article he specially draws attention to the presence of this irony in *Samson Agonistes*.

exactly descriptive of the fate which himself anticipates not, though the on-lookers have been in the secret of his doom from the very beginning.

*Samson Agonistes* is illuminated with many a quivering flash of this irony. Two or three signal examples may be instanced. In line 486 Manoa says that the Philistines ought to be merciful to Samson, seeing that he "no more [can] do them harm."

*The irony of  
"Samson Ago-  
nistes."*

It is natural for Manoa to think so: Samson does seem crushed and powerless. And if the spectator did not know better, the remark would pass unnoticed: but the spectator does know better, and his knowledge throws into tragic relief the confident unconsciousness of the speaker. Again, later on Manoa bids Samson hope, since God must still require of him some service: else why this revival of his lapsed strength? "His might continues in thee not for naught" (l. 588). Here again (for the effect of irony is usually pathetic) is the same pathos of the unconscious. Manoa is dreaming of some deed whereby Samson will win rest for his soul and ease and remission of his pain. And Samson *will* win these things: but far otherwise than as his father hopes. Manoa's words are true enough and appropriate in themselves: only we who know the end add to them a something: and "the little more, how much it means!"

One more example. His enemies, says Samson, would prove his best friends did they but take his life and make an end of all. Yet if they did this it would be out of no consideration for him: so let them look to it, lest in destroying him they should be self-destroyed:

"Yet so it may fall out, because their end  
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine  
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed."

The last line, though Samson when he speaks it has no notion of what is coming, rings ominous of the impendent crash. The words *draw* and *ruin* fall purposeless from his unconscious lips, to be caught up by the audience as a warning that the scene is not far off when the ruining structure shall,

in deed, be drawn on the heads of the Philistines. In this last case the irony is purely verbal: in the others it has a wider scope; it is rather the irony of situation, springing from the speaker's ignorance, contrasted with the spectator's knowledge, of the real position in which he and the other *dramatis personæ* are placed<sup>1</sup>. Many other examples just as effective as those we have cited occur in the play: and it is not rash to assert that there is no other work in our literature in which this classical artifice has been turned to such effective account. Sophocles himself would have welcomed Milton to the "laureate fraternity" of poets with a friendly "*frater, Ave.*"

There is an interesting reference to *Samson Agonistes* in the *Conversations* of Goethe. Speaking of Milton, Goethe said; "I have lately read his *Samson*, which has more of the antique spirit than any other production of any other modern poet. He is very great." "Antique spirit:" that after all is the gist of the matter: therein lies the uniqueness of *Samson Agonistes*, the indefinable something that gives it an artistic supremacy beyond the reach of rivalry or criticism. For a man might lay to heart all the canons of the *Poetics*, and in choice of subject, in construction of plot, in delineation of his characters, deviate never a hand's breadth from the principles of the ancients, and yet fail—as French tragedians for all their pains often failed, as the early Elizabethans habitually failed—to produce work in which should dwell the presence—the *vivida vis*—of true, living art. *Samson Agonistes* is unique because here the genius of Greek tragedy does live—really live. So oft invoked in vain, it wakes at last from the long sleep of centuries to expatiate in the warm precincts of the day. And in its train attend all these qualities of art which distinguish the classical from the romantic style.

<sup>1</sup> It is particularly frequent in the speeches of Manoa, as might be expected, he being the only character in the play who from the first has hopes of Samson's being restored to a happy life: hopes which the reader knows to be groundless.



Some one has said that this drama bears the same relation to Milton's early lyric work that sculpture bears to painting. This is a very true criticism: and true, *The romantic and classical styles.* in a wider application, of the distinction between the two types of excellence between which the kingdoms and principalities of literature are divided: the classical and the romantic styles. If we took at random a page of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and set it beside a page, selected equally "at all adventures" (as Cotgrave has it), from the *Antigone*, the comparison of a picture to a Greek statue would best express, so far as any single comparison could, the main difference between the several aims of the two writers and the qualities which each has made the quest of his art. The one charms with a splendour of colour which delights the sense and deadens the instinct of criticism: the other with a beauty of form which translates the idea of harmony into actual embodiment of outline, and provokes a criticism that increases the gratification.

That is the gratification derived from study of *Samson Agonistes*. The more closely we scan it the more keenly conscious are we of its merits—the symmetry, the subtle union of greatness and grace, the restraint and lucidity of the art. There are none of the half-effects and—a worse thing far—the confused effects into which romanticism oftentimes lapses. In *Samson Agonistes*, as in Landor's best work (for the two poets had driven afield on the selfsame hill of Helicon), the impressions are clear, definite, precise: outcome of a sane and disciplined imagination content to wait on, never to dominate, the poet's unfaltering sense of the things that make for an art which is just and lucid and self-contained—the art of the city of the violet-crown<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> It may be worth while to note that the attraction which *Samson Agonistes* possesses for classical scholars has borne fruit in two excellent renderings of the poem into Greek verse. The earlier of these, by an Oxford scholar, G. H. Glasse of Christ Church (who performed the same service for Mason's once-famous *Caractacus*), was published at Oxford in 1788. The British Museum has an interleaved copy full

Among the *dramatis personæ* Samson stands out eminent.

*The character  
of Samson.*

He is the central figure upon which the artist has expended his utmost skill : and in him we have bodied forth the ideal type of hero as defined by Aristotle<sup>1</sup>—the great man who, illustrious and prosperous once, falls from his high estate by reason of some error or fault. Fame Samson had known and good fortune, and he had lost them—lost all—through the one fatal flaw in his nature, the weakness which brought him to his present position : a position that contains all the elements of pity for him and fear for ourselves, lest we too should fare likewise.

Of the many aspects of his character those which strike us most are his sense of personal responsibility to God, and his unshaken confidence in the ultimate victory of the cause of God. When he looks back on the past it is to see how highly favoured he had been among men : adorned with special graces and gifts : destined from the womb to be the minister of Israel's Deity. On him had been imposed a special work : it should have been his privilege to execute a particular, almost personal, service to his Creator. And he had not risen to the height of

of curious and rather censorious criticisms by the Cambridge scholar, Charles Burney, brother of Madame d'Arblay. The later version by the present Lord Lyttelton was issued at Cambridge in 1867. To the same writer we owe a similar rendering of *Comus*. The Latin version of *Samson* by William Hogg (mainly into iambics) was published in his *Paraphrasis Poetica in tria Johannis Miltoni Poemata, viz. Paradisum Amissum, Paradisum Recuperatum, et Samsonem Agonisten* (1690). Hogg remarks in the preface to the volume that he made the translations in order that Milton might be better known to foreigners.

<sup>1</sup> How strongly Aristotle's conception of the ideal tragic hero had affected Milton is shown by one of the dramatic sketches in the Trinity MSS. Milton draws the outline of a play based on Abraham's proposed sacrifice of his son, and the character of Abraham which he meant to work out is that of "a noble man fallen from his reputation, either through divine justice, or superstition, or coveting to do some notable act through zeal." We may add that in this drama of *Isack redeemed* the unities of time and place were to be respected, the incident of the sacrifice reported, and a Chorus introduced.

this great argument. He had fallen short of the responsibility. How just therefore that he—the betrayer of such a trust—should suffer: he who of all men merited punishment. This sense of the equity of God in laying affliction on him never deserts Samson. True, there are moments when it yields to a transient mood of resentment—to that spirit of protest which animates Greek tragedy and informs parts of the book of *Job*: the spirit that rebels against the seeming injustice of the power which rules the universe, questioning its decrees and crying aloud for a fair dispensation of reward to the good and penalty for the wicked<sup>1</sup>. This spirit may turn to bitterness and the paralysis of cynical despair, but in *Job* and in Samson, after a brief sojourn in the land of despond, it comes back to the truth built on faith, and hope, and on the recognition that “whatever is, is right.” The harshness of his lot—the apparent excess of his suffering over his sin—may wring from Samson an occasional cry of rebellion; but in the end calmer counsel prevails and he submits to the equity of God. Nor, though himself may complain, will he suffer others to do so: when Manoa says that God has been extreme to mark offence, Samson’s reply comes unhesitating:

“Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me  
But justly; I myself have brought them on;  
Sole author I, sole cause.”

It is Milton’s favourite thought:

“Just are the ways of God,  
And justifiable to men.”

And then when Manoa tells of the honour which the Philistines purpose paying to Dagon, an honour which involves dishonour to God, Samson’s sense of physical pain gives way to a much keener distress that this disgrace to the cause of righteousness should have arisen through him. He is like a renegade who has sworn a *perfidum sacramentum* and dishonoured his standard. Howbeit, the triumph of Dagon will be short-lived. The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the essay on Milton in Professor Seeley’s *Lectures and Essays*, p. 150.

righteousness of God will prevail as ever, and work out its own vindication: and though the contest has now passed beyond the will of Samson yet, perchance, he may be used as the instrument of that revenge, and in the struggle for the good cause find his own salvation.

Such seem to me the main aspects under which we are meant to view Samson. He is the champion of God, conscious of his weakness in the past, acquiescent in his present suffering as the direct and righteous sequel of that weakness, and confident in the future triumph of good. And perhaps no trait in his character is more beautifully conceived and worked out than this unshaken conviction that good must be the final end of ill—that right, though plunged deep in distress, must emerge the fairer for its trials. Here sounds the note of Milton's eternal optimism, the hope which springs immortal in all his great works.

Very touching, too, is the depiction of Samson's weariness of existence: his painful, purposeless *tedium vitæ*. In part the pathos springs from the impression we derive of his actual infirmity of body and sordid, servile state. He reminds us of Philoctetes on his desert island, worn with wasting labour and pain, the flame of life scarce kept alive. But far more impressive than physical distress is the tone of listless despair in some of his utterances, the sunless mood of dreary, blighting 'accidie,' born of the excess of his remorse. He rues the past too bitterly: he is like to perish in his self-contempt, and only the feeling that he may, after all, do one more deed of service to his God saves him from the annihilation of self-reproach. Herein lies his difference from the Ajax of Sophocles with whom, in other respects, he has much community. Ajax, another hero of thews and might, has fallen into folly through the blindness of self-esteem: and when the film clears from his eyes and he sees the dire fruits of his madness he, like Samson, broods over the past until the thought of the future becomes intolerable. There can be no way out of the *impasse* of difficulty save through death; and his death is really cowardice, self-chosen because he cannot face the mockery of the world.

But Samson dies, not to free himself, but to vindicate the cause of God. His death is "inevitable"<sup>1</sup>—"by accident:" a last deed of lealty and service into which no thought of self enters.

From another point of view Samson reminds us of Prometheus<sup>2</sup>. Like the fire-bringing hero of Æschylus, he brought to his nation the flame of hope to kindle their hearts against the oppressor: like his prototype he has to suffer at the hands of the enemy. The Philistines regard him as the instigator of the Israelites, the author of their efforts to break the Philistine yoke; and they treat him accordingly. And worse than their cruelty is the ingratitude of those whom he had benefited. Chained to the mill, as was Prometheus to the rock, he is abandoned of all and overpowered with a sense of loneliness and desertion: an ill reward for a benefactor of his country.

After Samson, Dalila is the most elaborate and highly-wrought portrait. If he may be understood to typify the sovereign efficacy of pain and saving *Dalila*. grace of repentance, she is no less a study of hardened, heartless unrepentance: a contrast in this to Eve who equally embodies Milton's view that frailty is woman's name, but who is redeemed in our eyes and made worthy of sympathy by her regret for her sin. In Dalila there is no touch of remorse, no strain of compunction: and this want is due to her moral callousness, to the heartlessness which seems the key to her character. Milton begins, for the sake of the foil, by investing her with all possible outward charm. Circean fairness of form and soft persuasive grace are hers, with seeming innocence; but within "all is false and hollow." Among women Dalila is what Belial had been among the fallen angels. As sign of her moral indifference we note the glib readiness with which she invokes to her defence the most solemn motives—duty to country, reverence of religion, love of her husband, though she cares for none of these things, but merely juggles with the words as if they were counters, like

<sup>1</sup> See the note on *S. A.* 1665.

<sup>2</sup> Samson "possesses all the terrific majesty of Prometheus chained, the mysterious distress of Œdipus, and the pitiable wretchedness of Philoctetes" (Richard Cumberland, *Observer*, 76).

a clever casuist who to win a victory in debate will stoop to any sophistry.

Her cunning callousness leads her to use against Samson the argument which is at once the most effective and the most cynically shameless—his weakness. If, she argues, he had been weak, why bear so harshly on weakness in her—a weakness for which there was so much justification? Like Desdemona she had known a divided duty, drawn this way to help her country, drawn that way by loyalty to her husband: if in the distracting conflict she had erred, surely the error was pardonable, surely she could plead a cause such as Samson had not to justify *his* weakness withal. Nay, worse: it was his sin that led the way to hers: but for his folly in yielding to her she had never yielded to the Philistines. So she contends, and there is reasonableness in it all, and dialectic plausibility. Yet to clear herself at the expense of Samson and make him responsible for her fault, and then, with an affectation of generosity, to offer to merge their offences in a community of guilt—these are the unkindest of all cuts. Nor does she stick at misrepresenting his side of the case: arguing that he had revealed the secret out of mere levity and wantonness, to gratify a woman's passing whim; and leaving out of count the ceaseless importunity of sighs and reproaches wherewith she had wearied him, and through his very love of her had over-mastered his resistance. Equally false, too, is her pretence that she had never suspected to what uses the Philistines would turn their opportunity against Samson. For she had known beforehand that they sought to take Samson that they might "humble" him.

The word 'love' is often on her lying lips, but there is no love in her heart, no loveableness in her nature. Her affection is only a convenient mask, one of the many phases of her infidelity. At the end, when Samson's refusals show that concealment no longer avails, and that she may as well show herself in her true colours, she reveals the hard relentlessness of her character, unbending and keen as steel of the ice-brook's temper.

Throughout therefore Dalila personifies clever heartlessness; quick to perceive any argument, how shameless soever, that makes for her own justification, and ready to suppress what is true, to suggest what is false, to make the worse appear the better reason, to wound her husband by turning his love of herself as a weapon against his own heart; in a word, to forge with untruth and half-truth and taunt and equivocation the most specious defence that an unscrupulous wit can devise. It is a masterly character-study, consistent in conception and execution, and vivid with a number of telling dexterous strokes which show that Milton, no lover of women, put his best work and strongest feeling into the picture.

For the introduction of Manoa Milton had no Scriptural warranty. We do not hear of Samson's father after the incident of his marriage with the "woman in *Manoa*. Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines:" after that point (chap. xiv.) he disappears from the narrative of *Judges*. It is quite likely, however, that he was still alive at the time of Samson's death, for the reference in chapter xvi. verse 31, to "the burying-place of Manoah" may only signify the place of sepulture belonging to the family, without any implication that Manoa himself lay there. His presence in the play is so effective because it admits the element of 'irony,' whereof we have spoken. And his inability to recognise Samson's true condition, to see that death is and must be the only salvation for suffering so great and self-reproach so keen—this intensifies, by contrast, the hopelessness of Samson himself who knows that, for good or ill, his race is run.

The only other character depicted in any detail is Harapha, a type of blustering cowardice beside which the courage of Samson becomes the more conspicuous. *Harapha*.

"Bulk without spirit" is the formula in which his nature were best expressed. Of the relation of the scene in which he is introduced to the general drift of the drama something has already been said. It may be added that his name, at least, was suggested by the name *Rapha* which occurs more than once in Scripture; cf. 1 *Chronicles*, viii. 37, and ix. 43, and

2 *Samuel*, xxi. 16, 18, and 20, where the text of the Authorised Version reads "the giant," while the margin substitutes the proper name *Rapha*. He was the father of Goliath and four other giant sons. From lines 1248—49 of *Samson Agonistes* it is clear that Milton identified his *dramatis persona*, Harapha, with *Rapha*: yet the identification is not easily reconcilable with the received chronology.

There are some critics for whom the personal element in *Samson Agonistes* is its great charm. That element is, at least, marked. No one can read the play without perceiving that it has something more than an artistic value. For those who are familiar with the facts of Milton's life it serves as a record of his deepest feelings at the most tragic point of his career. It is not only that there was a strong parallel in personal experience between the poet and his hero—that each was blind, that each had been unhappy in marriage, that each passed his closing years amid circumstances of isolation and disappointment, in a world which had gone against him, repelling his efforts to make it better and saner. But the parallel held good of the broad political and religious conditions of their respective times. If Samson had fought the good fight for God, yet lived to see the heathen deity, Dagon, rise in the ascendant, though but for a space:

had not Milton likewise struggled for the cause of God, as he conceived it, and witnessed the overthrow of that cause, after a brief reign of power, by its old arch-enemy, episcopacy? And so in politics: it had been Samson's mission to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Philistines: it had been Milton's self-appointed office to help to deliver England from the fetters of royalty: and each had failed. True, the reasons for their several failures were different: and herein lies the great distinction between them, the point in which the parallel breaks down. For the rest, the resemblance was only too clear, and this it was that led Milton to recur to the story of Samson, and select it from the list of subjects enumerated in the MS at Trinity. Hitherto he had had no opportunity of disburthening

*The personal  
element in the  
drama.*

*The parallel  
between  
Milton and  
Samson.*



his resentment at the outcome of the Revolution, the miserable falling away of the nation from its hard-won freedom into the old bondage. There is, indeed, a hint from time to time in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* of what was passing in his mind; but no adequate expression of his feeling was possible within the scheme of those poems. Only in *Samson Agonistes* came the much-desired occasion. There the *sæva indignatio* of his soul found vent and made the verse.

To appreciate the intensity of that indignation, to understand at all what was the mental condition of Milton when he wrote this drama of autobiography, we must remember at once the extent of the sacrifices which he had made for his country, and the hopes which had inspired him thereto.

Milton's natural bent was toward a life of study and self-culture as a prelude to what he conceived to be the final end and object of his existence—the composition, namely, of a great work to the glory of God, and to the honour of his country and himself.

*The great  
sacrifice  
Milton made.*

Fortune had granted the material affluence necessary to this end. Had he been so disposed—selfishly disposed—he could have prolonged his stay in Italy, perhaps remained abroad until the stress of political disturbance was overpast. And then returning he could easily have gained a livelihood by teaching, or some such occupation, and still prosecuted his studies. This life he had surrendered for one in which he ceased altogether to be a man of letters. And he had been prompted to make the surrender from a sense of civic duty, and from a conviction that the struggle on which England was embarking would lead to such glorious results. Milton, as Professor Seeley well brings out, was one of the few men who took a large view of the Revolution, a view comprehensive of all its main aspects. For some it meant a change in religion: for others a change in politics. Milton saw both sides: for him the Revolution signified complete freedom in the two vital elements of national life—political government and religion.

*Milton's attitude  
towards  
the Revolution.*

More: he looked for progress in literature and education as

a result of the contest. Henceforth thought and its expression would be free. Talent would make its way to the front. High office would be open as much to genius as to birth. There would be a dissolution of the fetters of prejudice and repression, a possibility of self-advancement for merit, a real liberty in all that concerns the well-being of a people. For these views, which spring from Milton's ingrained republicanism, from his impatience of authority and restraint, we must turn to his prose pamphlets, notably to the *Areopagitica*. They give us a clear notion of the intellectual development which Milton expected that the new regimen would bring.

As the hopes therefore with which Milton started were high, the disappointment which he felt when they were all falsified must have been proportionately keen. In moments of despondence it may well have seemed to him that he had thrown away nigh twenty of the best years of a man's life, sacrificing health, sight, estate—above all, poetry—and effecting nothing by the surrender.

To embitter his case there was the sense that he and his party had failed through the sheer unreasonableness of the people. The national apostasy was, in his eyes, so inconceivably causeless and capricious. For Milton, be it recollected, was as thorough-paced a doctrinaire as any of the philosophers who during the earlier stages of the French revolution drew up a fresh constitution for France every morning to tear it up at night. He appealed to men's reason, ignoring the fact that the majority act—not from reason, but—from impulse and illogical emotion, seeing, it may be, the better course, and following the worse. Like Shakespeare's Brutus, Milton was an idealist, a man of logical extremes, not practical, half-way compromises. With him "it is the cause, it is the cause" that should determine action—never expediency. His intervention in politics had intensified his habit of looking at things solely from his own point of view. The happy unreason of human nature in the average lay beyond his purview, so that in

*His hopes of what it would effect.*

*His disappointment.*

*The unreasonableness of the Restoration.*

his pamphlets he often beat the air, invoking principles of abstract justice quite over the head of the ordinary reader. A striking proof of this impractical, theorising habit is his treatise on *The ready and easy way to establish a Free Commonwealth*, published in 1660. For months it had been clear to the ken of most men that a return of royalty was inevitable: yet here, with the exiles almost on the march home, and the people ready to fling open the gates and acclaim their coming, was Milton arguing against facts, laying down excellent maxims of constitutional practice about which the mass of the nation were quite indifferent, and solemnly protesting that that thing never should or could come to pass which everyone in London knew to be only a question of days. It is easy to flout at this blind pedantic belief in the efficacy of pure reason, but that belief is the key to sentiments which have left an indelible stamp upon Milton's works, *Samson Agonistes* not excepted.

We said that the parallel between Samson and Milton ceases when we investigate the respective causes of the failure of each, Milton having been overthrown through the weakness and folly of others, Samson through his own. Hence in Samson's bitter self-reproach and remorse Milton had no share. On this side of his character Samson typified—not Milton but—the English nation, who, like him, had profaned *their* mystery of Heaven-sent freedom, selling themselves into the slavery of kings and priests and politicians<sup>1</sup> (worse Philistines than those of Gaza), and yielding to the fascination of the Dalila<sup>2</sup> of the Restoration. Moreover, this remorse of Samson would in the future—not even the far future—be the feeling of the English

*The parallel  
between Sam-  
son and the  
English  
nation.*

<sup>1</sup> Of course, this is only meant to represent Milton's view; see *S. A.* 1653—4, and cf. the note on l. 1605.

<sup>2</sup> *Samson Agonistes* is not the only work in which Milton has used the character of Dalila allegorically. In the *Reason of Church Government* (1641), bk. II, he makes Dalila typify the ensnaring power of Episcopacy, which had increased its authority by cajoling and flattering the King, *P. W.* II. 506.

people, when they should reflect on their work, and reflecting should see how evil it was, how they had sinned in restoring all the ills that the Revolution had swept away.

That the day of repentance would come Milton, of course, never doubted. No man ever held opinions with more unwavering confidence in their absolute correctness. So here, as in all his other controversies, the right (he thought) lay with him, the wrong with his enemies. Their triumph was the supremacy of evil over good: how then could it endure? how could the victory be to any but the just? Milton knew only one answer to these questions: nor did he hesitate to foreshadow the time when the baseless fabric of the Restoration Court would be overturned, and the reign of right be renewed, the greater order of things begun.

*Milton's  
prophecy of a  
second Revo-  
lution.*

In the *Preface to Samson Agonistes* Milton insists with rather unnecessary emphasis that the work was not intended for the stage. The most relentless of Puritan denouncers of the theatre could scarce have found an occasion of stumbling in a work so remote from the conventional type of acted drama. *Samson Agonistes* is an isolated masterpiece, no more akin to the contemporary drama of the reign of Charles II. than to the drama of the present day: and it appears to us altogether a labour of supererogation to take account of what was then being produced by Dryden and Shadwell (most unjustly traduced by his great rival), and the inglorious throng of Restoration playwrights—too 'easy' Etheredge, and the Killigrews, and Wilson (whose masterly comedy *The Cheats* even Milton might have admired), and Lord Orrery, and other faded immortals of whom memory lingers in the pages of Downes' *Roscius Anglicanus*. Not one of their works presents the slightest point of contact with *Samson*, which stands by itself, linked with no period in the history of the English drama, but deriving all its artistic worth from its observance of the principles of the ancients.

*The remote-  
ness of  
"Samson  
Agonistes"  
from the  
Restoration  
stage.*

It is interesting, however, to note that, in spite of Milton's

clearly expressed wish, the play did, on two occasions in the last century, come within measurable distance of representation. In his *Life of Milton* prefixed to the edition<sup>1</sup> of *Paradise Lost* which he issued in 1749, Bishop Newton, speaking of *Samson Agonistes*, says: "Bishop Atterbury had an intention of getting Mr Pope to divide it into acts and scenes, and of having it acted by the King's Scholars at Westminster<sup>2</sup>, but his commitment to the Tower put an end to that design." What authority Newton had for this statement I have been unable to discover. His information may have been derived through some friend of Pope or Atterbury—some member, perchance, of the literary coterie whose *obiter dicta* are chronicled in the *Anecdotes of 'Polymetis'* Spence. There is no definite allusion to the project in the correspondence of Atterbury with Pope, though the following passage in one of the Bishop's letters may well refer to it. "I wish," he writes, "you (i.e. Pope) would review, and polish that piece (*Samson*). If upon a new perusal of it, which I desire you to make, you think as I do, that it is written in the very spirit of the ancients, it deserves your care, and is capable of being improved, with little trouble, into a perfect model and standard of tragic poetry<sup>3</sup>." The date of this letter is June 15, 1722: it tallies therefore with Newton's explanation that the scheme fell through because of Atterbury's committal to the Tower, which took place in August of that year.

The tradition as to the second attempt to adapt *Samson* to the stage rests on the authority of the *Biographia Dramatica*<sup>4</sup>. The play, we read, was prepared for representation at Dublin (then a very important

*Bishop Atterbury's scheme to act it.*

*A later attempt to represent it.*

<sup>1</sup> vol. i. p. xlv, whence it was copied by the editors of the *Biographia Dramatica*; see the *Biographia* (ed. of 1812), vol. i. p. 519.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. Westminster School: the English tragedy was to take the place of the ordinary Latin Comedy acted in the great dormitory at Christmas.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Works* of Pope (in the Elwin-Courthope edition), vol. ix. p. 49. The editor of the *Correspondence*, Mr Courthope, does not give any note on the passage; but I think it must refer to this scheme.

<sup>4</sup> vol. III. p. 240 (ed. of 1812).

centre of theatrical activity) in 1741—2; and Baker, the first editor of the *Biographia*, mentions that he had himself seen the acting version of the piece which had been got ready, and even the play-bills of the performance which at the last moment was frustrated through some dispute among the actors. Twice therefore did *Samson Agonistes* escape the fate which its author deprecated, and Geneste<sup>1</sup> *Never acted.* was doubtless correct in including it in his list of "Plays unacted." May it always be conceded such immunity.

To the public of the last century *Samson Agonistes* was, probably, best known through Handel's oratorio<sup>2</sup>, written in the autumn of 1741, and first rendered at Covent Garden theatre in the Lent of 1743, immediately after that visit to Dublin during which the *Messiah* was produced. The original title-page of the libretto, printed by Tonson, describes the oratorio as "alter'd from the SAMSON AGONISTES of Milton:" but some portions were taken from his early poems: e.g. the air "Thus when the sun," which comes from the *Nativity Ode*, and the famous "Let the bright Seraphim," from the ode *At a Solemn Musick*—a poem which musicians now associate with a later setting, under the title *Blessed pair of Sirens*. For the rest, the text of the drama receives very free treatment at the hands of the librettist, whose rhymed commonplace would have been more distasteful to Milton than even Dryden's paraphrase of *Paradise Lost* in the *State of Innocence*. Not, indeed, that *Samson* fared worse than did *Comus*<sup>3</sup> when it was arranged for Dr Arne; or *Lycidas*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> vol. x. p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> The MS. of the Musical Score is in the Library of Buckingham Palace. It shows that the Oratorio was composed in September and October, 1741, save the three concluding numbers which bear the date October 12, 1742.

<sup>3</sup> See the Pitt Press ed., pp. xliii—iv.

<sup>4</sup> The elegy was arranged as a musical cantata and performed at Covent Garden Theatre on November 4, 1767, the night after the funeral of the Duke (*Geneste*, v. 186). The music was by William

when it was tortured into a musical medley expressive of a nation's lament over the death of the Duke of York; or *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* when at Handel's bidding they were made to take unto themselves an ignoble partner in *Il Moderato*. Handel, who really did much to increase the general acceptance of Milton's poetry<sup>1</sup>, *Handel and Milton.* though perfectly indifferent himself what liberties his librettists took with the text, never could quite decide whether he preferred *Samson* to the *Messiah*, and during the 18th century the former seems to have been very popular<sup>2</sup>—perhaps more popular than it is now<sup>3</sup>.

Jackson, organist of Exeter Cathedral, a well-known composer of the last century. One of his operas, *The Lord of the Manor*, held the stage for many years.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Warton in his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* attributed the popularity of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* to the fact that they had been "set to admirable music by Mr Handel" (see the Pitt Press ed. of those poems, p. xxxvi); and Bishop Newton was of opinion—very justly—that the genius of the great musician was exactly suited to illustrate that of the great poet (*Introduction to Paradise Lost*, ed. 1749, I. xlv).

<sup>2</sup> Thus the reprints of the libretto were numerous: the Catalogue of the British Museum mentions seven editions issued before 1765.

<sup>3</sup> Apart from Handel's oratorio there have been several musical works based on the story of Samson: e.g. an oratorio by the celebrated Italian Church-composer, Giovanni Paolo Colonna, of Bologna, whose *Samson* was written only a few years after Milton's drama—viz. in 1677; a French opera by the Court-composer Rameau, for which Voltaire prepared the text-book (1732); a German opera, *Samson*, by Raff, never acted; and the *Samson et Dalila* of the living French musician Saint-Saëns. The libretto of this opera (produced at Weimar in 1877) is interesting because it deals with the last day in Samson's life, and in it, as in *Samson Agonistes*, Dalila is one of the chief *dramatis personæ*. In the last scene (laid in the temple of Dagon) she attempts to kill Samson by offering him a poisoned chalice. This she does at the bidding of the priest of Dagon; cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 857—861.

In the blank verse of *Samson Agonistes*, as distinguished from that of *Paradise Lost*, one peculiarity is noticeable—the prevalence, namely, of lines with an extra syllable at the close, such as the following:

*The blank  
verse of "Sam-  
son Agonistes."*

"Why thou should'st wed Philistian women rather."

Here the italicised syllable is superfluous. The percentage of verses in which this metrical license occurs is very small in Milton's epics, but not inconsiderable in his dramas. According to Professor Masson the percentages read as follows: in *Comus* 9; in *Paradise Lost* 1 (about); in *Paradise Regained* 3—4; in *Samson* 6. The extra syllable is far more suitable to dramatic than to epic verse, since it knits a passage together with a rapidity of movement akin to the naturalness of ordinary conversation. Epic narration requires a statelier, slower effect<sup>1</sup>.

Milton's occasional use of rhyme in the play is not easy to explain. In some instances the rhyme is probably accidental: in others<sup>2</sup> it may be intended, as Professor Percival suggests, to express contempt.

*The use of  
Rhyme.*

In the choruses it serves to emphasise their lyrical character, and Milton may mean it to compensate, in some degree, for their lack of division<sup>3</sup> into strophe, antistrophe and epode.

<sup>1</sup> Mr Bridges, who has done so much to elucidate the principles of Milton's prosody, shows in his recently published pamphlet on the verse of *P.R.* and *S.A.* that these poems contain several elisions and metrical licenses which Milton did not allow himself in *P.L.*; in fact, that their verse is of a somewhat freer type than that of *P.L.* But it would not be profitable to discuss the point without considering the whole question of elided syllables in Milton.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ll. 1010 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> See Milton's *Preface* to *S. A.*



# SAMSON AGONISTES.



## OF THAT SORT OF DRAMATIC POEM CALLED TRAGEDY.

TRAGEDY, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems: therefore said by Aristotle to be of power, by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such-like passions; that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion; for so in physic things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours. Hence philosophers and other gravest 10 writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 33; and Paræus, commenting on the *Revelation*, divides the whole book as a tragedy, into acts, distinguished each by a Chorus of heavenly harpings and song between. Heretofore men in highest dignity have laboured not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious than before of his attaining to the tyranny. 20 Augustus Cæsar also had begun his *Ajax*, but unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca, the philosopher, is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a Father of the Church, thought it not unbecoming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which

he entitled *Christ Suffering*. This is mentioned to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day, with other common  
 30 interludes; happening through the poet's error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons: which by all judicious hath been counted absurd, and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient Tragedy use no Prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence, or explanation, that which Martial calls an Epistle; in behalf of this tragedy, coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much beforehand may be *epistled*: that Chorus is here introduced after the Greek  
 40 manner, not ancient only, but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the Ancients and Italians are rather followed, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the Chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks *Monostrophic*, or rather *Apolelymenon*, without regard had to Strophe, Antistrophe, or Epode, which were a kind of stanzas framed only for the music, then used with the Chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material; or, being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be called *Allæostropha*. Division  
 50 into act and scene, referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended), is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act. Of the style and uniformity, and that commonly called the plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such economy, or disposition of the fable, as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum; they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write Tragedy. The circum-  
 60 scription of time, wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is, according to ancient rule, and best example, within the space of twenty-four hours.

## THE ARGUMENT.

SAMSON, made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common workhouse, on a festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old father, Manoa, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which 10 yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistian lords for Samson's redemption; who in the meanwhile is visited by other persons; and lastly by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence. He at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come; at length persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him. The Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyful hope to procure ere long his son's deliverance; in the midst of which 20 discourse an Ebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterwards more distinctly, relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the Tragedy ends.

## THE PERSONS.

**SAMSON.**

**MANOA,** the father of Samson.

**DALILA,** his wife.

**HARAPHA** of Gath.

**Public officer.**

**Messenger.**

**Chorus** of Danites.

*The Scene, before the Prison in Gaza.*

## SAMSON AGONISTES.

*Samson.* A little onward lend thy guiding hand  
To these dark steps, a little further on ;  
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade ;  
There I am wont to sit, when any chance  
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,  
Daily in the common prison else enjoined me,  
Where I, a prisoner chained, scarce freely draw  
The air imprisoned also, close and damp,  
Unwholesome draught. But here I feel amends,  
The breath of heaven fresh-blowing, pure and sweet, 10  
With day-spring born ; here leave me to respire.  
This day a solemn feast the people hold  
To Dagon their sea-idol, and forbid  
Laborious works—unwillingly this rest  
Their superstition yields me—hence, with leave  
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek  
This unfrequented place to find some ease ;  
Ease to the body some, none to the mind  
From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm  
Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone, 20  
But rush upon me thronging, and present  
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.  
O wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold

Twice by an Angel, who at last, in sight  
Of both my parents, all in flames ascended  
From off the altar, where an offering burned,  
As in a fiery column charioting  
His godlike presence, and from some great act  
Or benefit revealed to Abraham's race?  
Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed 30  
As of a person separate to God,  
Designed for great exploits, if I must die  
Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out,  
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze,  
To grind in brazen fetters under task  
With this heaven-gifted strength? O glorious strength,  
Put to the labour of a beast, debased  
Lower than bond-slave! Promise was that I  
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver:  
Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him 40  
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,  
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke.  
Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt  
Divine prediction: what if all foretold  
Had been fulfilled but through mine own default?  
Whom have I to complain of but myself?  
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,  
In what part lodged, how easily bereft me,  
Under the seal of silence could not keep,  
But weakly to a woman must reveal it, 50  
O'ercome with importunity and tears.  
O impotence of mind in body strong!  
But what is strength without a double share  
Of wisdom? vast, unwieldy, burdensome,  
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall  
By weakest subtleties; not made to rule,



But to subserve where wisdom bears command.  
God, when he gave me strength, to show withal  
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.  
But peace! I must not quarrel with the will 60  
Of highest dispensation, which herein  
Haply had ends above my reach to know:  
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,  
And proves the source of all my miseries,  
So many, and so huge, that each apart  
Would ask a life to wail; but, chief of all,  
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!  
Blind among enemies! O worse than chains,  
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!  
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct, 70  
And all her various objects of delight  
Annulled, which might in part my grief have eased,  
Inferior to the vilest now become  
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me:  
They creep, yet see; I, dark in light, exposed  
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,  
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,  
In power of others, never in my own;  
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.  
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon, 80  
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse  
Without all hope of day!  
O first-created beam, and thou great Word,  
"Let there be light, and light was over all,"  
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?  
The Sun to me is dark  
And silent as the Moon,  
When she deserts the night,  
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

Since light so necessary is to life, 90  
And almost life itself, if it be true  
That light is in the soul,  
She all in every part; why was the sight  
To such a tender ball as the eye confined,  
So obvious and so easy to be quenched?  
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,  
That she might look at will through every pore? .  
Then had I not been thus exiled from light,  
As in the land of darkness, yet in light,  
To live a life half dead, a living death, 100  
And buried; but, O yet more miserable!  
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave;  
Buried, yet not exempt  
By privilege of death and burial  
From worst of other evils, pains, and wrongs;  
But made hereby obnoxious more  
To all the miseries of life,  
Life in captivity  
Among inhuman foes.  
But who are these? for with joint pace I hear 110  
The tread of many feet steering this way;  
Perhaps my enemies, who come to stare  
At my affliction, and perhaps to insult—  
Their daily practice to afflict me more.  
*Chorus.* This, this is he; softly a while;  
Let us not break in upon him.  
O change beyond report, thought, or belief!  
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,  
With languished head unpropt,  
As one past hope, abandoned, 120  
And by himself given over;  
In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds

O'er-worn and soiled.

Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,  
That heroic, that renowned,  
Irresistible Samson? whom unarmed  
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast, could withstand;  
Who tore the lion as the lion tears the kid;  
Ran on embattled armies clad in iron,  
And, weaponless himself, 130  
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery  
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammered cuirass,  
Chalybean-tempered steel, and frock of mail  
Adamantean proof:

But safest he who stood aloof,  
When insupportably his foot advanced,  
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,  
Spurned them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite  
Fled from his lion ramp, old warriors turned  
Their plated backs under his heel, 140  
Or grovelling soiled their crested helmets in the dust.  
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,  
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,  
A thousand foreskins fell, the flower of Palestine,  
In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day:  
Then by main force pulled up, and on his shoulders bore,  
The gates of Azza, post and massy bar,  
Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old—  
No journey of a sabbath-day, and loaded so—  
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heaven. 150  
Which shall I first bewail,  
Thy bondage or lost sight,  
Prison within prison  
Inseparably dark?  
Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)

The dungeon of thyself; thy soul  
(Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain)  
Imprisoned now indeed,  
In real darkness of the body dwells,  
Shut up from outward light 160  
To incorporate with gloomy night;  
For inward light, alas!  
Puts forth no visual beam.  
O mirror of our fickle state,  
Since man on earth unparalleled!  
The rarer thy example stands,  
By how much from the top of wondrous glory,  
Strongest of mortal men,  
To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen.  
For him I reckon not in high estate 170  
Whom long descent of birth  
Or the sphere of fortune raises;  
But thee, whose strength, while virtue was her mate,  
Might have subdued the Earth,  
Universally crowned with highest praises.

*Sams.* I hear the sound of words; their sense the air  
Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

*Chor.* He speaks; let us draw nigh. Matchless in might,  
The glory late of Israel, now the grief!  
We come, thy friends and neighbours not unknown, 180  
From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale,  
To visit or bewail thee; or, if better,  
Counsel or consolation we may bring,  
Salve to thy sores; apt words have power to swage  
The tumours of a troubled mind,  
And are as balm to festered wounds.

*Sams.* Your coming, friends, revives me; for I learn  
Now of my own experience, not by talk,

How counterfeit a coin they are who 'friends'  
Bear in their superscription (of the most 190  
I would be understood). In prosperous days  
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,  
Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,  
How many evils have enclosed me round ;  
Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,  
Blindness ; for had I sight, confused with shame,  
How could I once look up, or heave the head,  
Who, like a foolish pilot, have shipwrecked  
My vessel trusted to me from above,  
Gloriously rigged, and for a word, a tear, 200  
Fool! have divulged the secret gift of God  
To a deceitful woman? Tell me, friends,  
Am I not sung and proverbied for a fool  
In every street? Do they not say, 'How well  
Are come upon him his deserts'? Yet why?  
Immeasurable strength they might behold  
In me ; of wisdom nothing more than mean :  
This with the other should, at least, have paired ;  
These two, proportioned ill, drove me transverse.

*Chor.* Tax not divine disposal ; wisest men 210  
Have erred, and by bad women been deceived ;  
And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.  
Deject not then so overmuch thyself,  
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides ;  
Yet, truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder  
Why thou should'st wed Philistian women rather  
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,  
At least of thy own nation, and as noble.

*Sams.* The first I saw at Timna, and she pleased  
Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed 220  
The daughter of an infidel : they knew not

That what I motioned was of God ; I knew  
From intimate impulse, and therefore urged  
The marriage on, that by occasion hence  
I might begin Israel's deliverance,  
The work to which I was divinely called.  
She proving false, the next I took to wife  
(O that I never had ! fond wish too late !)  
Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,  
That specious monster, my accomplished snare. 230  
I thought it lawful from my former act,  
And the same end, still watching to oppress  
Israel's oppressors. Of what now I suffer  
She was not the prime cause, but I myself,  
Who, vanquished with a peal of words, (O weakness !)  
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

*Chor.* In seeking just occasion to provoke  
The Philistine, thy country's enemy,  
Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness :  
Yet Israel still serves with all his sons. 240

*Sams.* That fault I take not on me, but transfer  
On Israel's governors and heads of tribes,  
Who, seeing those great acts which God had done  
Singly by me against their conquerors,  
Acknowledged not, or not at all considered,  
Deliverance offered : I, on the other side,  
Used no ambition to commend my deeds ;  
The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the doer.  
But they persisted deaf, and would not seem  
To count them things worth notice, till at length 250  
Their lords, the Philistines, with gathered powers,  
Entered Judea seeking me, who then  
Safe to the rock of Etham was retired,  
Not flying, but forecasting in what place

To set upon them, what advantaged best.  
Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent  
The harass of their land, beset me round :  
I willingly on some conditions came  
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me  
To the Uncircumcised a welcome prey, 260  
Bound with two cords ; but cords to me were threads  
Touched with the flame : on their whole host I flew  
Unarmed, and with a trivial weapon felled  
Their choicest youth ; they only lived who fled.  
Had Judah that day joined, or one whole tribe,  
They had by this possessed the towers of Gath,  
And lorded over them whom now they serve.  
But what more oft in nations grown corrupt,  
And by their vices brought to servitude,  
Than to love bondage more than liberty, 270  
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty ;  
And to despise, or envy, or suspect,  
Whom God hath of his special favour raised  
As their deliverer ? If he aught begin,  
How frequent to desert him, and at last  
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds !

*Chor.* Thy words to my remembrance bring  
How Succoth and the fort of Penuel  
Their great deliverer contemned,  
The matchless Gideon, in pursuit 280  
Of Madian and her vanquished kings :  
And how ingrateful Ephraim  
Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,  
Not worse than by his shield and spear,  
Defended Israel from the Ammonite,  
Had not his prowess quelled their pride  
In that sore battle when so many died

Without reprieve, adjudged to death  
For want of well pronouncing *Shibboleth*.

*Sams.* Of such examples add me to the roll; 290  
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,  
But God's proposed deliverance not so.

*Chor.* Just are the ways of God,  
And justifiable to men;  
Unless there be who think not God at all:  
If any be, they walk obscure;  
For of such doctrine never was there school,  
But the heart of the fool,  
And no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just, 300  
As to his own edicts found contradicting;  
Then give the reins to wandering thought,  
Regardless of his glory's diminution;  
Till, by their own perplexities involved,  
They ravel more, still less resolved,  
But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine the Interminable,  
And tie him to his own prescript,  
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,  
And hath full right to exempt 310  
Whomso it pleases him by choice  
From national obstriction, without taint  
Of sin, or legal debt;  
For with his own laws he can best dispense.

He would not else, who never wanted means,  
Nor in respect of the enemy just cause,  
To set his people free,  
Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,  
Against his vow of strictest purity,  
To seek in marriage that fallacious bride, 320



Unclean, unchaste.

Down, Reason, then ; at least, vain reasonings down ;  
Though Reason here aver  
That moral verdict quits her of unclean :  
Unchaste was subsequent ; her stain, not his.

But see ! here comes thy reverend sire,  
With careful step, locks white as down,  
Old Manoa : advise  
Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.

*Sams.* Ay me ! another inward grief, awaked 330  
With mention of that name, renews the assault.

*Manoa.* Brethren and men of Dan (for such ye seem  
Though in this uncouth place), if old respect,  
As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,  
My son, now captive, hither hath informed  
Your younger feet, while mine, cast back with age,  
Came lagging after, say if he be here.

*Chor.* As signal now in low dejected state  
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.

*Man.* O miserable change ! Is this the man, 340  
That invincible Samson, far renowned,  
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength  
Equivalent to Angels' walked their streets,  
None offering fight ; who, single combatant,  
Duelled their armies ranked in proud array,  
Himself an army—now unequal match  
To save himself against a coward armed  
At one spear's length ? O ever-failing trust  
In mortal strength ! and, oh, what not in man  
Deceivable and vain ! Nay, what thing good 350  
Prayed for, but often proves our woe, our bane ?  
I prayed for children, and thought barrenness  
In wedlock a reproach ; I gained a son,

And such a son as all men hailed me happy :  
Who would be now a father in my stead ?  
O wherefore did God grant me my request,  
And as a blessing with such pomp adorned ?  
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt  
Our earnest prayers—then, given with solemn hand  
As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind ? 360  
For this did the Angel twice descend ? for this  
Ordained thy nurture holy, as of a plant  
Select and sacred ? glorious for a while,  
The miracle of men : then in an hour  
Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,  
Thy foes' derision, captive, poor and blind,  
Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves !  
Alas ! methinks whom God hath chosen once  
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,  
He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall 370  
Subject him to so foul indignities,  
Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

*Sams.* Appoint not heavenly disposition, father.  
Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me  
But justly ; I myself have brought them on,  
Sole author I, sole cause : if aught seem vile,  
As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned  
The mystery of God, given me under pledge  
Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,  
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy. 380  
This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,  
But warned by oft experience. Did not she  
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal  
The secret wrested from me in her highth  
Of nuptial love professed, carrying it straight  
To them who had corrupted her, my spies,

And rivals? In this other was there found  
More faith? who also in her prime of love,  
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,  
Though offered only, by the scent conceived, 390  
Her spurious first-born, Treason against me.  
Thrice she assayed, with flattering prayers and sighs,  
And amorous reproaches, to win from me  
My capital secret, in what part my strength  
Lay stored, in what part summed, that she might know;  
Thrice I deluded her, and turned to sport  
Her importunity, each time perceiving  
How openly and with what impudence  
She purposed to betray me, and (which was worse  
Than undissembled hate) with what contempt 400  
She sought to make me traitor to myself.  
Yet the fourth time, when mustering all her wiles,  
With blandished parleys, feminine assaults,  
Tongue-batteries, she surceased not day nor night  
To storm me over-watched and wearied out,  
At times when men seek most repose and rest,  
I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart,  
Who, with a grain of manhood well resolved,  
Might easily have shook off all her snares;  
But foul effeminacy held me yoked 410  
Her bond-slave. O indignity, O blot  
To honour and religion! servile mind  
Rewarded well with servile punishment!  
The base degree to which I now am fallen,  
These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base  
As was my former servitude, ignoble,  
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,  
True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,  
That saw not how degenerately I served.

*Man.* I cannot praise thy marriage-choices, son, 420  
Rather approved them not ; but thou didst plead  
Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st  
Find some occasion to infest our foes.  
I state not that ; this I am sure, our foes  
Found soon occasion thereby to make thee  
Their captive, and their triumph ; thou the sooner  
Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms,  
To violate the sacred trust of silence  
Deposited within thee ; which to have kept  
Tacit was in thy power. True ; and thou bear'st 430  
Enough, and more, the burden of that fault ;  
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying,  
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains ;  
This day the Philistines a popular feast  
Here celebrate in Gaza, and proclaim  
Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud,  
To Dagon, as their god who hath delivered  
Thee, Samson, bound and blind, into their hands—  
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.  
So Dagon shall be magnified, and God, 440  
Besides whom is no god, compared with idols,  
Disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn  
By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine ;  
Which to have come to pass by means of thee,  
Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,  
Of all reproach the most with shame that ever  
Could have befallen thee and thy father's house.

*Sams.* Father, I do acknowledge and confess  
That I this honour, I this pomp, have brought  
To Dagon, and advanced his praises high 450  
Among the heathen round ; to God have brought  
Dishonour, obloquy, and oped the mouths

Of idolists and atheists ; have brought scandal  
 To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt  
 In feeble hearts, propense enough before  
 To waver, or fall off and join with idols :  
 Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,  
 The anguish of my soul, that suffers not  
 Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.  
 This only hope relieves me, that the strife 460  
 With me hath end : all the contest is now  
 Twixt God and Dagon. Dagon hath presumed,  
 Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,  
 His deity comparing and preferring  
 Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,  
 Will not connive, or linger, thus provoked,  
 But will arise, and his great name assert :  
 Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive  
 Such a discomfit as shall quite despoil him  
 Of all these boasted trophies won on me, 470  
 And with confusion blank his worshippers.

*Man.* With cause this hope relieves thee, and these words  
 I as a prophecy receive ; for God  
 (Nothing more certain) will not long defer  
 To vindicate the glory of his name  
 Against all competition, nor will long  
 Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord,  
 Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done ?  
 Thou must not in the meanwhile, here forgot,  
 Lie in this miserable loathsome plight 480  
 Neglected. I already have made way  
 To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat  
 About thy ransom : well they may by this  
 Have satisfied their utmost of revenge,  
 By pains and slaveries, worse than death, inflicted

On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

*Sams.* Spare that proposal, father, spare the trouble  
Of that solicitation ; let me here,  
As I deserve, pay on my punishment,  
And expiate, if possible, my crime, 490  
Shameful garrulity. 'To have revealed  
Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,  
How heinous had the fact been, how deserving  
Contempt and scorn of all—to be excluded  
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,  
The mark of fool set on his front !  
But I God's counsel have not kept, his holy secret  
Presumptuously have published, impiously,  
Weakly at least, and shamefully : a sin  
That Gentiles in their parables condemn 500  
To their Abyss and horrid pains confined.

*Man.* Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite,  
But act not in thy own affliction, son ;  
Repent the sin ; but if the punishment  
Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids ;  
Or the execution leave to high disposal,  
And let another hand, not thine, exact  
Thy penal forfeit from thyself. Perhaps  
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt ;  
Who ever more approves and more accepts 510  
(Best pleased with humble and filial submission)  
Him who, imploring mercy, sues for life,  
Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due ;  
Which argues over-just, and self-displeased  
For self-offence, more than for God offended.  
Reject not then what offered means who knows  
But God hath set before us to return thee  
Home to thy country and his sacred house,

Where thou may'st bring thy offerings, to avert  
His further ire, with prayers and vows renewed. 520

*Sams.* His pardon I implore ; but as for life,  
To what end should I seek it? When in strength  
All mortals I excelled, and great in hopes,  
With youthful courage, and magnanimous thoughts  
Of birth from Heaven foretold and high exploits,  
Full of divine instinct, after some proof  
Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond  
The sons of Anak, famous now and blazed,  
Fearless of danger, like a petty god  
I walked about, admired of all and dreaded 530  
On hostile ground, none daring my affront :  
Then, swollen with pride, into the snare I fell  
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,  
Softened with pleasure and voluptuous life,  
At length to lay my head and hallowed pledge  
Of all my strength in the lascivious lap  
Of a deceitful concubine, who shore me,  
Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,  
Then turned me out ridiculous, despoiled,  
Shaven, and disarmed among my enemies. 540

*Chor.* Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,  
Which many a famous warrior overturns,  
Thou could'st repress ; nor did the dancing ruby,  
Sparkling out-poured, the flavour or the smell,  
Or taste that cheers the heart of gods and men,  
Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

*Sams.* Wherever fountain or fresh current flowed  
Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure  
With touch ethereal of Heaven's fiery rod,  
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying 550  
Thirst, and refreshed ; nor envied them the grape

Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

*Chor.* O madness! to think use of strongest wines  
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,  
When God with these forbidden made choice to rear  
His mighty champion, strong above compare,  
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook!

*Sams.* But what availed this temperance, not complete  
Against another object more enticing?

What boots it at one gate to make defence, 560

And at another to let in the foe,

Effeminately vanquished? by which means,

Now blind, disheartened, shamed, dishonoured, quelled,

To what can I be useful? wherein serve

My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed?

But to sit idle on the household hearth,

A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze,

Or pitied object; these redundant locks,

Robustious to no purpose, clustering down,

Vain monument of strength; till length of years 570

And sedentary numbness craze my limbs

To a contemptible old age obscure.

Here rather let me drudge, and earn my bread,

Till vermin, or the draff of servile food,

Consume me, and oft-invoked death

Hasten the welcome end of all my pains

*Man.* Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that gift  
Which was expressly given thee to annoy them?

Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,

Inglorious, unemployed, with age outworn. 580

But God, who caused a fountain at thy prayer

From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay

After the brunt of battle, can as easy

Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,



Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast.  
And I persuade me so : why else this strength  
Miraculous yet remaining in those locks ?  
His might continues in thee not for naught,  
Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

*Sams.* All otherwise to me my thoughts portend— 590  
That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,  
Nor the other light of life continue long,  
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand :  
So much I feel my genial spirits droop,  
My hopes all flat ; Nature within me seems  
In all her functions weary of herself ;  
My race of glory run, and race of shame,  
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

*Man.* Believe not these suggestions, which proceed  
From anguish of the mind, and humours black 600  
That mingle with thy fancy. I, however,  
Must not omit a father's timely care  
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance  
By ransom, or how else : meanwhile be calm,  
And healing words from these thy friends admit. [*Exit.*

*Sams.* O that torment should not be confined  
To the body's wounds and sores,  
With maladies innumerable  
In heart, head, breast, and reins ;  
But must secret passage find 610  
To the inmost mind,  
There exercise all his fierce accidents,  
And on her purest spirits prey,  
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,  
With answerable pains, but more intense,  
Though void of corporal sense !  
My griefs not only pain me

As a lingering disease,  
But, finding no redress, ferment and rage;  
Nor less than wounds immedicable 620  
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,  
To black mortification.  
Thoughts, my tormentors, armed with deadly stings,  
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,  
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise  
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb  
Or med'cinal liquor can asswage,  
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.  
Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er  
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure: 630  
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,  
And sense of Heaven's desertion.

I was his nursling once and choice delight,  
His destined from the womb,  
Promised by heavenly message twice descending.  
Under his special eye  
Abstemious I grew up and thrived amain;  
He led me on to mightiest deeds,  
Above the nerve of mortal arm,  
Against the Uncircumcised, our enemies: 640  
But now hath cast me off as never known,  
And to those cruel enemies,  
Whom I by his appointment had provoked,  
Left me all helpless, with the irreparable loss  
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated  
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.  
Nor am I in the list of them that hope;  
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless:  
This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,  
No long petition—speedy death, 650

The close of all my miseries and the balm.

*Chor.* Many are the sayings of the wise,  
In ancient and modern books enrolled,  
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude,  
And to the bearing well of all calamities,  
All chances incident to man's frail life,  
Consolatories writ  
With studied argument, and much persuasion sought,  
Lenient of grief and anxious thought ;  
But with the afflicted in his pangs their sound 660  
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune  
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint ;  
Unless he feel within  
Some source of consolation from above,  
Secret refreshings that repair his strength  
And fainting spirits uphold.

God of our fathers ! what is Man,  
That thou towards him with hand so various—  
Or might I say contrarious ?—  
Temper'st thy providence through his short course, 670  
Not evenly, as thou rul'st  
The angelic orders, and inferior creatures mute,  
Irrational and brute ?  
Nor do I name of men the common rout,  
That, wandering loose about,  
Grow up and perish as the summer fly,  
Heads without name, no more remembered ;  
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,  
With gifts and graces eminently adorned,  
To some great work, thy glory, 680  
And people's safety, which in part they effect :  
Yet toward these, thus dignified, thou oft,  
Amidst their highth of noon,

Changest thy countenance and thy hand, with no regard  
Of highest favours past  
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.

Nor only dost degrade them, or remit  
To life obscured, which were a fair dismissal,  
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them high—  
Unseemly falls in human eye, 690  
Too grievous for the trespass or omission ;  
Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword  
Of heathen and profane, their carcasses  
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captived,  
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,  
And condemnation of the ungrateful multitude.  
If these they scape, perhaps in poverty  
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,  
Painful diseases and deformed,  
In crude old age ; 700  
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering  
The punishment of dissolute days : in fine,  
Just or unjust alike seem miserable,  
For oft alike both come to evil end.

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

But who is this? what thing of sea or land— 710  
Female of sex it seems—  
That, so bedecked, ornate, and gay,  
Comes this way sailing,  
Like a stately ship  
Of Tarsus, bound for the isles  
Of Javan or Gadire,

With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,  
Sails filled, and streamers waving,  
Courtèd by all the winds that hold them play ;  
An amber scent of odorous perfume 720  
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind ;  
Some rich Philistian matron she may seem ;  
And now, at nearer view, no other certain  
Than Dalila thy wife.

*Sams.* My wife! my traitress! let her not come near me.

*Chor.* Yet on she moves ; now stands and eyes thee fixed,  
About to have spoke ; but now, with head declined,  
Like a fair flower surcharged with dew, she weeps,  
And words addressed seem into tears dissolved,  
Wetting the borders of her silken veil : 730  
But now again she makes address to speak.

*Dal.* With doubtful feet and wavering resolution  
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,  
Which to have merited, without excuse,  
I cannot but acknowledge ; yet, if tears  
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew  
In the perverse event than I foresaw),  
My penance hath not slackened, though my pardon  
No way assured. But conjugal affection, 740  
Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt,  
Hath led me on, desirous to behold  
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,  
If aught in my ability may serve  
To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease  
Thy mind with what amends is in my power—  
Though late, yet in some part to recompense  
My rash but more unfortunate misdeed.

*Sams.* Out, out, hyæna ! these are thy wonted arts,  
And arts of every woman false like thee,

To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray ; 750  
Then, as repentant, to submit, beseech,  
And reconciliation move with feigned remorse,  
Confess, and promise wonders in her change—  
Not truly penitent, but chief to try  
Her husband, how far urged his patience bears,  
His virtue or weakness which way to assail :  
Then with more cautious and instructed skill  
Again transgresses, and again submits ;  
That wisest and best men, full oft beguiled,  
With goodness principled not to reject 760  
The penitent, but ever to forgive,  
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,  
Entangled with a poisonous bosom-snake,  
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,  
As I by thee, to ages an example.

*Dal.* Yet hear me, Samson ; not that I endeavour  
To lessen or extenuate my offence,  
But that, on the other side, if it be weighed  
By itself, with aggravations not surcharged,  
Or else with just allowance counterpoised, 770  
I may, if possible, thy pardon find  
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.  
First granting, as I do, it was a weakness  
In me, but incident to all our sex,  
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune  
Of secrets, then with like infirmity  
To publish them—both common female faults :  
Was it not weakness also to make known  
For importunity, that is for naught,  
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety ? 780  
To what I did thou show'dst me first the way.  
But I to enemies revealed, and should not !

Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's frailty :  
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.  
Let weakness then with weakness come to parle,  
So near related, or the same of kind ;  
Thine forgive mine, that men may censure thine  
The gentler, if severely thou exact not  
More strength from me than in thyself was found.  
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate, 790  
The jealousy of love, powerful of sway  
In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,  
Caused what I did ? I saw thee mutable  
Of fancy ; feared lest one day thou would'st leave me  
As her at Timna ; sought by all means, therefore,  
How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest :  
No better way I saw than by importuning  
To learn thy secrets, get into my power  
Thy key of strength and safety. 'Thou wilt say,  
'Why, then, revealed?' I was assured by those 800  
Who tempted me, that nothing was designed  
Against thee but safe custody and hold :  
That made for me ; I knew that liberty  
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,  
While I at home sat full of cares and fears,  
Wailing thy absence in my widowed bed ;  
Here I should still enjoy thee, day and night,  
Mine and love's prisoner, not the Philistines',  
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,  
Fearless at home of partners in my love. 810  
These reasons in love's law have passed for good,  
Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps ;  
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,  
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtained.  
Be not unlike all others, not austere

As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.  
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,  
In uncompassionate anger do not so.

*Sams.* How cunningly the sorceress displays  
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine ! 820  
That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither  
By this appears: I gave, thou say'st, the example,  
I led the way: bitter reproach, but true ;  
I to myself was false ere thou to me.  
Such pardon, therefore, as I give my folly  
Take to thy wicked deed ; which when thou seest  
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,  
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather  
Confess it feigned. Weakness is thy excuse,  
And I believe it—weakness to resist 830  
Philistian gold : if weakness may excuse,  
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,  
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it ?  
All wickedness is weakness: that plea, therefore,  
With God or man will gain thee no remission.  
But love constrained thee ! Call it furious rage  
To satisfy thy lust : love seeks to have love ;  
My love how could'st thou hope, who took'st the way  
To raise in me inexpiable hate,  
Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betrayed ? 840  
In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,  
Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

*Dal.* Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea  
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,  
Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,  
What sieges girt me round, ere I consented ;  
Which might have awed the best-resolved of men,  
The constantest, to have yielded without blame.



It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,  
That wrought with me: thou know'st the magistrates 850  
And princes of my country came in person,  
Solicited, commanded, threatened, urged,  
Adjured by all the bonds of civil duty  
And of religion; pressed how just it was,  
How honourable, how glorious, to entrap  
A common enemy, who had destroyed  
Such numbers of our nation: and the priest  
Was not behind, but ever at my ear,  
Preaching how meritorious with the gods  
It would be to ensnare an irreligious 860  
Dishonourer of Dagon. What had I  
To oppose against such powerful arguments?  
Only my love of thee held long debate,  
And combated in silence all these reasons  
With hard contest. At length, that grounded maxim,  
So rife and celebrated in the mouths  
Of wisest men—that to the public good  
Private respects must yield—with grave authority  
Took full possession of me, and prevailed;  
Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty, so enjoining. 870

*Sams.* I thought where all thy circling wiles would  
end,

In feigned religion, smooth hypocrisy!  
But had thy love, still odiously pretended,  
Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee  
Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.  
I, before all the daughters of my tribe  
And of my nation, chose thee from among  
My enemies, loved thee, as too well thou knew'st,  
Too well; unbosomed all my secrets to thee,  
Not out of levity, but overpowered 880



To afflict thyself in vain. Though sight be lost,  
 Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed  
 Where other senses want not their delights,  
 At home, in leisure and domestic ease,  
 Exempt from many a care and chance to which  
 Eyesight exposes, daily, men abroad.  
 I to the lords will intercede, not doubting 920  
 Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee  
 From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide  
 With me, where my redoubled love and care,  
 With nursing<sup>d</sup> diligence, to me glad office,  
 May ever tend about thee to old age,  
 With all things grateful cheered, and so supplied,  
 That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

*Sam.* No, no; of my condition take no care;  
 It fits not; thou and I long since are twain;  
 Nor think me so unwary or accursed 930  
 To bring my feet again into the snare  
 Where once I have been caught. I know thy trains,  
 Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils;  
 Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms,  
 No more on me have power, their force is nulled;  
 So much of adder's wisdom I have learned,  
 To fence my ear against thy sorceries.  
 If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men  
 Loved, honoured, feared me, thou alone could hate me,  
 Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forgo me; 940  
 How would'st thou use me now, blind, and thereby  
 Deceivable, in most things as a child  
 Helpless, thence easily contemned, and scorned,  
 And last neglected! How would'st thou insult,  
 When I must live uxorious to thy will  
 In perfect thralldom! how again betray me,

Bearing my words and doings to the lords  
To gloss upon, and, censuring, frown or smile !  
This jail I count the house of liberty  
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter. 950

*Dal.* Let me approach, at least, and touch thy hand.

*Sams.* Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake  
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.  
At distance I forgive thee, go with that ;  
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works  
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable  
Among illustrious women, faithful wives :  
Cherish thy hastened widowhood with the gold  
Of matrimonial treason : so farewell.

*Dal.* I see thou art implacable, more deaf 960  
To prayers than winds and seas ; yet winds to seas  
Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore :  
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,  
Eternal tempest never to be calmed.  
Why do I humble thus myself, and, suing  
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate,  
Bid go with evil omen, and the brand  
Of infamy upon my name denounced ?  
To mix with thy concernments I desist  
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own. 970  
Fame, if not double-faced, is double-mouthed,  
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds ;  
On both his wings, one black, the other white,  
Bears greatest names in his wild aery flight.  
My name, perhaps, among the Circumcised  
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,  
To all posterity may stand defamed,  
With malediction mentioned, and the blot  
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduced.

But in my country, where I most desire, 980  
 In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,  
 I shall be named among the famoussest  
 Of women, sung at solemn festivals,  
 Living and dead recorded, who, to save  
 Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose  
 Above the faith of wedlock bands; my tomb  
 With odours visited and annual flowers;  
 Not less renowned than in Mount Ephraim  
 Jael, who with inhospitable guile  
 Smote Sisera sleeping, through the temples nailed. 990  
 Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy  
 The public marks of honour and reward  
 Conferred upon me for the piety  
 Which to my country I was judged to have shown.  
 At this whoever envies or repines,  
 I leave him to his lot, and like my own. [Exit.

*Chor.* She's gone—a manifest serpent by her sting  
 Discovered in the end, till now concealed.

*Sams.* So let her go: God sent her to debase me,  
 And aggravate my folly, who committed 1000  
 To such a viper his most sacred trust  
 Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

*Chor.* Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,  
 After offence returning, to regain  
 Love once possessed, nor can be easily  
 Repulsed, without much inward passion felt,  
 And secret sting of amorous remorse.

*Sams.* Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,  
 Not wedlock-treachery endangering life.

*Chor.* It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit, 1010  
 Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,  
 That woman's love can win, or long inherit;

But what it is, hard is to say,  
Harder to hit,

Which way soever men refer it ;  
Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day  
Or seven though one should musing sit.

If any of these, or all, the Timnian bride  
Had not so soon preferred

Thy paronymph, worthless to thee compared, 1020  
Successor in thy bed,

Nor both so loosely disallied

Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously  
Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.

Is it for that such outward ornament

Was lavished on their sex, that inward gifts

Were left for haste unfinished, judgment scant,

Capacity not raised to apprehend

Or value what is best

In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong ? 1030

Or was too much of self-love mixed,

Of constancy no root infix'd,

That either they love nothing, or not long ?

Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best

Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,

Soft, modest, meek, demure,

Once joined, the contrary she proves, a thorn

Intestine, far within defensive arms

A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue

Adverse and turbulent ; or by her charms 1040

Draws him awry, enslaved

With dotage, and his sense depraved

To folly and shameful deeds, which ruin ends.

What pilot so expert but needs must wreck,

Embarked with such a steers-mate at the helm ?

Favoured of Heaven who finds  
One virtuous, rarely found,  
That in domestic good combines !  
Happy that house ! his way to peace is smooth :  
But virtue which breaks through all opposition, 1050  
And all temptation can remove,  
Most shines and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal law  
Gave to the man despotic power  
Over his female in due awe,  
Nor from that right to part an hour,  
Smile she or lour :  
So shall he least confusion draw  
On his whole life, not swayed  
By female usurpation, nor dismayed. 1060

But had we best retire ? I see a storm.

*Sams.* Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

*Chor.* But this another kind of tempest brings.

*Sams.* Be less abstruse, my riddling days are past.

*Chor.* Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear  
The bait of honeyed words ; a rougher tongue  
Draws hitherward ; I know him by his stride,  
The giant Harapha of Gath, his look  
Haughty, as is his pile high-built and proud.  
Comes he in peace ? What wind hath blown him hither  
I less conjecture than when first I saw 1071  
The sumptuous Dalila floating this way :  
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

*Sams.* Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

*Chor.* His fraught we soon shall know, he now arrives.

*Harapha.* I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,  
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,  
Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath ;

Men call me Harapha, of stock renowned  
As Og, or Anak, and the Emims old 1080  
That Kiriathaim held : thou know'st me now,  
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard  
Of thy prodigious might and feats performed,  
Incredible to me, in this displeased,  
That I was never present on the place  
Of those encounters, where we might have tried  
Each other's force in camp or listed field ;  
And now am come to see of whom such noise  
Hath walked about, and each limb to survey,  
If thy appearance answer loud report. 1090

*Sams.* The way to know were not to see, but taste.

*Har.* Dost thou already single me? I thought  
Gyves and the mill had tamed thee. O that fortune  
Had brought me to the field where thou art famed  
To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw !  
I should have forced thee soon wish other arms,  
Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown :  
So had the glory of prowess been recovered  
To Palestine, won by a Philistine  
From the unforeskinned race, of whom thou bear'st 1100  
The highest name for valiant acts ; that honour,  
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,  
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

*Sams.* Boast not of what thou would'st have done, but do  
What then thou would'st ; thou seest it in thy hand.

*Har.* To combat with a blind man I disdain,  
And thou hast need much washing to be touched.

*Sams.* Such usage as your honourable lords  
Afford me, assassinated and betrayed ;  
Who durst not with their whole united powers 1110  
In fight withstand me single and unarmed,



Nor in the house with chamber-ambushes  
Close-banded durst attack me, no, not sleeping,  
Till they had hired a woman with their gold,  
Breaking her marriage-faith, to circumvent me.  
Therefore, without feign'd shifts, let be assigned  
Some narrow place enclosed, where sight may give thee,  
Or rather flight, no great advantage on me ;  
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet  
And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon, 1120  
Vant-brace and greaves and gauntlet ; add thy spear,  
A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield ;  
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,  
And raise such outcries on thy clattered iron,  
Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,  
That in a little time, while breath remains thee,  
Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath, to boast  
Again in safety what thou would'st have done  
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

*Har.* Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms 1130  
Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,  
Their ornament and safety, had not spells  
And black enchantments, some magician's art,  
Armed thee or charmed thee strong, which thou from Heaven  
Feign'dst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair,  
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs  
Were bristles ranged like those that ridge the back  
Of chafed wild boars or ruffled porcupines.

*Sams.* I know no spells, use no forbidden arts ;  
My trust is in the Living God, who gave me, 1140  
At my nativity this strength, diffused  
No less through all my sinews, joints, and bones,  
Than thine, while I preserved these locks unshorn,  
The pledge of my unviolated vow.

For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,  
Go to his temple, invoke his aid  
With solemnest devotion, spread before him  
How highly it concerns his glory now  
To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,  
Which I to be the power of Israel's God 1150  
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,  
Offering to combat thee, his champion bold,  
With the utmost of his godhead seconded :  
Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow  
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.

*Har.* Presume not on thy God, whate'er he be ;  
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off  
Quite from his people, and delivered up  
Into thy enemies' hand ; permitted them  
To put out both thine eyes, and fettered send thee 1160  
Into the common prison, there to grind  
Among the slaves and asses, thy comrades,  
As good for nothing else, no better service  
With those thy boisterous locks—no worthy match  
For valour to assail, nor by the sword  
Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour,  
But by the barber's razor best subdued.

*Sams.* All these indignities, for such they are  
From thine, these evils I deserve and more,  
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me 1170  
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon  
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye  
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant ;  
In confidence whereof I once again  
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,  
By combat to decide whose god is God,  
Thine, or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

*Har.* Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting  
He will accept thee to defend his cause,  
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber! 1180

*Sams.* Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove me  
these?

*Har.* Is not thy nation subject to our lords?  
Their magistrates confessed it when they took thee  
As a league-breaker, and delivered bound  
Into our hands: for hadst thou not committed  
Notorious murder on those thirty men  
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,  
Then, like a robber, stripp'dst them of their robes?  
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,  
Went up with armed powers thee only seeking, 1190  
To others did no violence nor spoil.

*Sams.* Among the daughters of the Philistines  
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe,  
And in your city held my nuptial feast;  
But your ill-meaning politician lords,  
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,  
Appointed to await me thirty spies,  
Who, threatening cruel death, constrained the bride  
To wring from me, and tell to them, my secret,  
That solved the riddle which I had proposed. 1200  
When I perceived all set on enmity,  
As on my enemies, wherever chanced,  
I used hostility, and took their spoil,  
To pay my underminers in their coin.  
My nation was subjected to your lords!  
It was the force of conquest: force with force  
Is well ejected when the conquered can.  
But I, a private person, whom my country  
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presumed

Single rebellion, and did hostile acts ! 1210  
I was no private, but a person raised,  
With strength sufficient and command from Heaven,  
To free my country : if their servile minds  
Me, their deliverer sent, would not receive,  
But to their masters gave me up for nought,  
The unworthier they ; whence to this day they serve.  
I was to do my part from Heaven assigned,  
And had performed it if my known offence  
Had not disabled me, not all your force.  
These shifts refuted, answer thy appelland, 1220  
Though by his blindness maimed for high attempts,  
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,  
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.

*Har.* With thee, a man condemned, a slave enrolled,  
Due by the law to capital punishment?  
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

*Sams.* Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,  
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?  
Come nearer, part not hence so slight informed ;  
But take good heed my hand survey not thee. 1230

*Har.* O Baal-zebub ! can my ears unused  
Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

*Sams.* No man withholds thee ; nothing from thy hand  
Fear I incurable ; bring up thy van ;  
My heels are fettered, but my fist is free.

*Har.* This insolence other kind of answer fits.

*Sams.* Go, baffled coward, lest I run upon thee,  
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,  
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,  
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down, 1240  
To the hazard of thy brains and shattered sides.

*Har.* By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament

These braveries, in irons loaden on thee. [Exit.

*Chor.* His giantship is gone somewhat crest-fallen,  
Stalking with less unconscionable strides,  
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.

*Sams.* I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood,  
Though fame divulge him father of five sons,  
All of gigantic size, Goliath chief.

*Chor.* He will directly to the lords, I fear, 1250  
And with malicious counsel stir them up  
Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.

*Sams.* He must allege some cause, and offered fight  
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise  
Whether he durst accept the offer or not ;  
And that he durst not plain enough appeared.  
Much more affliction than already felt  
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain,  
If they intend advantage of my labours,  
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping, 1260  
With no small profit daily to my owners.  
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove  
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence ;  
The worst that he can give, to me the best.  
Yet so it may fall out, because their end  
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine  
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

*Chor.* O, how comely it is, and how reviving  
To the spirits of just men long oppressed,  
When God into the hands of their deliverer 1270  
Puts invincible might,  
To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressor,  
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,  
Hardy and industrious to support  
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue

The righteous, and all such as honour truth!  
He all their ammunition  
And feats of war defeats,  
With plain heroic magnitude of mind  
And celestial vigour armed ;  
Their armouries and magazines contemns,  
Renders them useless, while  
With winged expedition  
Swift as the lightning glance he executes  
His errand on the wicked, who, surprised,  
Lose their defence, distracted and amazed.

1280

But patience is more oft the exercise  
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,  
Making them each his own deliverer,  
And victor over all  
That tyranny or fortune can inflict.  
Either of these is in thy lot,  
Samson, with might endued  
Above the sons of men ; but sight bereaved  
May chance to number thee with those  
Whom patience finally must crown.

1290

This Idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,  
Labouring thy mind  
More than the working day thy hands ;  
And yet, perhaps, more trouble is behind,  
For I descry this way  
Some other tending ; in his hand  
A sceptre or quaint staff he bears,  
Comes on amain, speed in his look.  
By his habit I discern him now  
A public officer, and now at hand :  
His message will be short and voluble.

1300

*Off.* Ebrews, the prisoner Samson here I seek.

*Chor.* His manacles remark him; there he sits.

*Off.* Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say: 1310  
This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,  
With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games;  
Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,  
And now some public proof thereof require  
To honour this great feast, and great assembly.  
Rise, therefore, with all speed, and come along,  
Where I will see thee heartened and fresh clad,  
To appear as fits before the illustrious lords.

*Sams* Thou know'st I am an Ebrew; therefore tell  
them

Our law forbids at their religious rites 1320  
My presence: for that cause I cannot come.

*Off.* This answer, be assured, will not content them.

*Sams.* Have they not sword-players, and every sort  
Of gymnic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,  
Jugglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics,  
But they must pick me out, with shackles tired,  
And over-laboured at their public mill,  
To make them sport with blind activity?  
Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels,  
On my refusal, to distress me more, 1330  
Or make a game of my calamities?  
Return the way thou cam'st; I will not come.

*Off.* Regard thyself; this will offend them highly.

*Sams.* Myself! my conscience, and internal peace.  
Can they think me so broken, so debased  
With corporal servitude, that my mind ever  
Will condescend to such absurd commands?  
Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,  
And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief  
To show them feats, and play before their god— 1340

The worst of all indignities yet on me  
Joined with extreme contempt! I will not come.

*Off.* My message was imposed on me with speed,  
Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?

*Sams.* So take it with what speed thy message needs.

*Off.* I am sorry what this stoutness will produce. [*Exit.*

*Sams.* Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

*Chor.* Consider, Samson; matters now are strained  
Up to the highth, whether to hold or break:  
He's gone, and who knows how he may report      1350  
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?  
Expect another message, more imperious,  
More lordly thundering than thou well wilt bear.

*Sams.* Shall I abuse this consecrated gift  
Of strength, again returning with my hair  
After my great transgression? so requite  
Favour renewed, and add a greater sin  
By prostituting holy things to idols,  
A Nazarite, in place abominable,  
Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon?      1360  
Besides how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,  
What act more execrably unclean, profane?

*Chor.* Yet with this strength thou serv'st the Philistines,  
Idoltrous, uncircumcised, unclean.

*Sams.* Not in their idol-worship, but by labour  
Honest and lawful to deserve my food  
Of those who have me in their civil power.

*Chor.* Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.

*Sams.* Where outward force constrains, the sentence  
holds:

But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon,      1370  
Not dragging? The Philistian lords command:  
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,



I do it freely, venturing to displease  
God for the fear of man, and man prefer,  
Set God behind; which in his jealousy  
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.  
Yet that he may dispense with me, or thee,  
Present in temples at idolatrous rites  
For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

*Chor.* How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach.

*Sams.* Be of good courage; I begin to feel 1381  
Some rousing motions in me, which dispose  
To something extraordinary my thoughts.  
I with this messenger will go along,  
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour  
Our law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.  
If there be aught of presage in the mind,  
This day will be remarkable in my life  
By some great act, or of my days the last.

*Chor.* In time thou hast resolved; the man returns. 1390

*Off.* Samson, this second message from our lords  
To thee I am bid say: Art thou our slave,  
Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,  
And dar'st thou at our sending and command  
Dispute thy coming? Come without delay;  
Or we shall find such engines to assail  
And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,  
Though thou wert firmlier fastened than a rock.

*Sams.* I could be well content to try their art,  
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious; 1400  
Yet, knowing their advantages too many,  
Because they shall not trail me through their streets  
Like a wild beast, I am content to go:  
Masters' commands come with a power resistless  
To such as owe them absolute subjection;

And for a life who will not change his purpose?  
(So mutable are all the ways of men!)  
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply  
Scandalous or forbidden in our law.

*Off.* I praise thy resolution. Doff these links: 1410  
By this compliance thou wilt win the lords  
To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

*Sams.* Brethren, farewell: your company along  
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them  
To see me girt with friends; and how the sight  
Of me, as of a common enemy,  
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them,  
I know not. Lords are lordliest in their wine;  
And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired  
With zeal, if aught religion seem concerned; 1420  
No less the people, on their holy-days,  
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable.  
Happen what may, of me expect to hear  
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy  
Our God, our law, my nation, or myself;  
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

[*Exeunt* Samson and the Officer.]

*Chor.* Go, and the Holy One  
Of Israel be thy guide  
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name  
Great among the heathen round; 1430  
Send thee the Angel of thy birth, to stand  
Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field  
Rode up in flames after his message told  
Of thy conception, and be now a shield  
Of fire; that Spirit that first rushed on thee  
In the camp of Dan,  
Be efficacious in thee now at need!

For never was from Heaven imparted  
Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,  
As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen. 1440  
But wherefore comes old Manoa in such haste  
With youthful steps? Much livelier than erewhile  
He seems: supposing here to find his son,  
Or of him bringing to us some glad news?

*Man.* Peace with you, brethren! My inducement hither  
Was not at present here to find my son,  
By order of the lords new parted hence  
To come and play before them at their feast.  
I heard all as I came, the city rings,  
And numbers thither flock; I had no will, 1450  
Lest I should see him forced to things unseemly.  
But that which moved my coming now was chiefly  
To give ye part with me what hope I have  
With good success to work his liberty.

*Chor.* That hope would much rejoice us to partake  
With thee: say, reverend sire; we thirst to hear.

*Man.* I have attempted, one by one, the lords,  
Either at home, or through the high street passing,  
With supplication prone and father's tears,  
To accept of ransom for my son, their prisoner. 1460  
Some much averse I found, and wondrous harsh,  
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;  
That part most revered Dagon and his priests:  
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim  
Private reward, for which both God and State  
They easily would set to sale: a third  
More generous far and civil, who confessed  
They had enough revenged, having reduced  
Their foe to misery beneath their fears;  
The rest was magnanimity to remit, 1470

If some convenient ransom were proposed—  
What noise or shout was that? It tore the sky.

*Chor.* Doubtless the people shouting to behold  
Their once great dread, captive and blind before them,  
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

*Man.* His ransom, if my whole inheritance  
May compass it, shall willingly be paid  
And numbered down: much rather I shall choose  
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,  
And he in that calamitous prison left. 1480  
No, I am fixed not to part hence without him.  
For his redemption all my patrimony,  
If need be, I am ready to forgo  
And quit: not wanting him, I shall want nothing.

*Chor.* Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons,  
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all;  
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age,  
Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son,  
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.

*Man.* It shall be my delight to tend his eyes, 1490  
And view him sitting in his house, ennobled  
With all those high exploits by him achieved,  
And on his shoulders waving down those locks  
That of a nation armed the strength contained.  
And I persuade me God had not permitted  
His strength again to grow up with his hair,  
Garrisoned round about him like a camp  
Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose  
To use him further yet in some great service—  
Not to sit idle with so great a gift 1500  
Useless, and thence ridiculous, about him.  
And, since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,  
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

*Chor.* Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem vain,  
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon  
Conceived, agreeable to a father's love;  
In both which we, as next, participate.

*Man.* I know your friendly minds, and—O, what noise!  
Mercy of Heaven! what hideous noise was that?  
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout. 1510

*Chor.* Noise call you it, or universal groan,  
As if the whole inhabitation perished?  
Blood, death, and deathful deeds, are in that noise,  
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

*Man.* Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise:  
Oh! it continues; they have slain my son.

*Chor.* Thy son is rather slaying them: that outcry  
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

*Man.* Some dismal accident it needs must be;  
What shall we do, stay here, or run and see? 1520

*Chor.* Best keep together here, lest, running thither,  
We unawares run into danger's mouth.  
This evil on the Philistines is fallen:  
From whom could else a general cry be heard?  
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here;  
From other hands we need not much to fear.  
What if, his eye-sight (for to Israel's God  
Nothing is hard) by miracle restored,  
He now be dealing dole among his foes,  
And over heaps of slaughtered walk his way? 1530

*Man.* That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

*Chor.* Yet God hath wrought things as incredible  
For his people of old; what hinders now?

*Man.* He can, I know, but doubt to think he will;  
Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.  
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

*Chor.* Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner ;  
For evil news rides post, while good news baits.  
And to our wish I see one hither speeding,  
An Ebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe. 1540

*Messenger.* O, whither shall I run, or which way fly  
The sight of this so horrid spectacle,  
Which erst my eyes beheld, and yet behold ?  
For dire imagination still pursues me.  
But providence or instinct of nature seems,  
Or reason, though disturbed and scarce consulted,  
To have guided me aright, I know not how,  
To thee first, reverend Manoa, and to these  
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,  
As at some distance from the place of horror, 1550  
So in the sad event too much concerned.

*Man.* The accident was loud, and here before thee  
With rueful cry ; yet what it was we hear not :  
No preface needs, thou seest we long to know.

*Mess.* It would burst forth ; but I recover breath,  
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

*Man.* Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

*Mess.* Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fallen,  
All in a moment overwhelmed and fallen.

*Man.* Sad ! but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest  
The desolation of a hostile city. 1561

*Mess.* Feed on that first ; there may in grief be surfeit.

*Man.* Relate by whom.

*Mess.* By Samson.

*Man.* That still lessens  
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

*Mess.* Ah ! Manoa, I refrain too suddenly  
To utter what will come at last too soon ;  
Lest evil tidings, with too rude irruption

Hitting thy aged ear, should pierce too deep.

*Man.* Suspense in news is torture, speak them out.

*Mess.* Then take the worst in brief: Samson is dead.

*Man.* The worst indeed! O, all my hope's defeated 1571  
To free him hence! but Death who sets all free  
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.

What windy joy this day had I conceived,  
Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves  
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring  
Nipt with the lagging rear of winter's frost!  
Yet, ere I give the reins to grief, say first  
How died he? death to life is crown or shame.

All by him fell, thou say'st: by whom fell he? 1580  
What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?

*Mess.* Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

*Man.* Wearied with slaughter then, or how? explain.

*Mess.* By his own hands.

*Man.* Self-violence? What cause  
Brought him so soon at variance with himself  
Among his foes?

*Mess.* Inevitable cause,  
At once both to destroy and be destroyed;  
The edifice, where all were met to see him,  
Upon their heads and on his own he pulled.

*Man.* O lastly over-strong against thyself! 1590  
A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.  
More than enough we know; but while things yet  
Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,  
Eye-witness of what first or last was done,  
Relation more particular and distinct.

*Mess.* Occasions drew me early to this city;  
And, as the gates I entered with sun-rise,  
The morning trumpets festival proclaimed

Through each high street. Little I had dispatched,  
When all abroad was rumoured that this day 1600  
Samson should be brought forth, to show the people  
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games ;  
I sorrowed at his captive state, but minded  
Not to be absent at that spectacle.  
The building was a spacious theatre,  
Half round on two main pillars vaulted high,  
With seats where all the lords, and each degree  
Of sort, might sit in order to behold ;  
The other side was open, where the throng  
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand ; 1610  
I among these aloof obscurely stood.  
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice  
Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,  
When to their sports they turned. Immediately  
Was Samson as a public servant brought,  
In their state livery clad : before him pipes  
And timbrels ; on each side went armed guards ;  
Both horse and foot before him and behind,  
Archers and slingers, cataphracts, and spears.  
At sight of him the people with a shout 1620  
Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise,  
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.  
He, patient but undaunted, where they led him,  
Came to the place ; and what was set before him,  
Which without help of eye might be assayed,  
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed,  
All with incredible, stupendious force,  
None daring to appear antagonist.  
At length, for intermission sake, they led him  
Between the pillars ; he his guide requested 1630  
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard),



As over-tired, to let him lean a while  
With both his arms on those two massy pillars  
That to the arched roof gave main support.  
He unsuspecting led him ; which when Samson  
Felt in his arms, with head a while inclined,  
And eyes fast fixed, he stood, as one who prayed,  
Or some great matter in his mind revolved ;  
At last, with head erect, thus cried aloud :—  
“Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed 1640  
I have performed, as reason was, obeying,  
Not without wonder or delight beheld ;  
Now, of my own accord, such other trial  
I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater,  
As with amaze shall strike all who behold.”  
This uttered, straining all his nerves, he bowed ;  
As with the force of winds and waters pent  
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars  
With horrible convulsion to and fro  
He tugged, he shook, till down they came, and drew 1650  
The whole roof after them with burst of thunder  
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,  
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,  
Their choice nobility and flower, not only  
Of this, but each Philistian city round,  
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.  
Samson, with these immixed, inevitably  
Pulled down the same destruction on himself ;  
The vulgar only scaped, who stood without.

*Chor.* O dearly bought revenge, yet glorious ! 1660  
Living or dying thou hast fulfilled  
The work for which thou wast foretold  
To Israel, and now liest victorious  
Among thy slain self-killed ;

Not willingly, but tangled in the fold  
Of dire Necessity, whose law in death conjoined  
Thee with thy slaughtered foes, in number more  
Than all thy life had slain before.

*Semichor.* While their hearts were jocund and sublime,  
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine, 1670  
And fat regorged of bulls and goats,  
Chaunting their idol, and preferring  
Before our living Dread, who dwells  
In Silo, his bright sanctuary,  
Among them he a spirit of phrenzy sent,  
Who hurt their minds,  
And urged them on with mad desire  
To call in haste for their destroyer;  
They, only set on sport and play,  
Unweeingly importuned 1680  
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.  
So fond are mortal men,  
Fallen into wrath divine,  
As their own ruin on themselves to invite,  
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,  
And with blindness internal struck.

*Semichor.* But he, though blind of sight,  
Despised, and thought extinguished quite,  
With inward eyes illuminated,  
His fiery virtue roused 1690  
From under ashes into sudden flame,  
And as an evening dragon came,  
Assailant on the perched roosts  
And nests in order ranged  
Of tame villatic fowl; but as an eagle  
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.  
So Virtue, given for lost,

Depressed and overthrown, as seemed,  
Like that self-begotten bird  
In the Arabian woods embost, 1700  
That no second knows nor third,  
And lay erewhile a holocaust,  
From out her ashy womb now teemed,  
Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most  
When most unactive deemed ;  
And, though her body die, her fame survives,  
A secular bird, ages of lives.

*Man.* Come, come ; no time for lamentation now,  
Nor much more cause : Samson hath quit himself  
Like Samson, and heroicly hath finished 1710  
A life heroic, on his enemies  
Fully revenged ; hath left them years of mourning,  
And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor  
Through all Philistian bounds ; to Israel  
Honour hath left and freedom, let but them  
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion ;  
To himself and father's house eternal fame ;  
And, which is best and happiest yet, all this  
With God not parted from him, as was feared,  
But favouring and assisting to the end. 1720  
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail  
Or knock the breast ; no weakness, no contempt,  
Dispraise, or blame ; nothing but well and fair,  
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.  
Let us go find the body where it lies  
Soaked in his enemies' blood, and from the stream  
With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off  
The clotted gore. I, with what speed the while  
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay),  
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends, 1730

To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend,  
With silent obsequy and funeral train,  
Home to his father's house. There will I build him  
A monument, and plant it round with shade  
Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,  
With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled  
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.  
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,  
And from his memory inflame their breasts  
To matchless valour and adventures high ; 1740  
The virgins also shall, on feastful days,  
Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing  
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,  
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

*Chor.* All is best, though we oft doubt  
What the unsearchable dispose  
Of Highest Wisdom brings about,  
And ever best found in the close.  
Oft he seems to hide his face,  
But unexpectedly returns, 1750  
And to his faithful champion hath in place  
Bore witness gloriously ; whence Gaza mourns,  
And all that band them to resist  
His uncontrollable intent.  
His servants he, with new acquist  
Of true experience from this great event,  
With peace and consolation hath dismissed,  
And calm of mind, all passion spent. [Exeunt.

## NOTES.

Though the abbreviations used in the Notes are, it is hoped, clear, it may be well to explain that :—

M.=Milton, or Milton's poetry, as distinguished from his prose.

G.=Glossary.

P. W.=Milton's prose-works, the edition to which reference is made being that published in Bohn's 'Standard Library.'

The following are the titles of those of the prose-works which are most frequently quoted; together with the abbreviations (in brackets) of their titles :—

'Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence against Smectymnuus,' 1641 (*Animadversions*).

'An Apology for Smectymnuus,' 1642 (*Apol. for Smect.*).

'Of Reformation in England, and the Causes that Hitherto have hindered it,' 1641 (*Of Reformation*).

'The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty,' 1641 (*Church Gov.*).

'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce,' 1643 (*Doct. of Div.*).

'A Tractate on Education,' 1644 (*On Education*).

'Areopagitica: a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing: to the Parliament of England,' 1644 (*Areopagitica*).

'Tetrachordon,' 1645.

'The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates,' 1649.

*De Doctrina Christiana*. This was a treatise in Latin, not published till 1823; translated by Bishop Sumner (*Christian Doct.*).

## THE TITLE.

The form *Samson* comes from the Septuagint Σαμψών, the Hebrew being *Shimshōn*; cf. the German title of the play—*Simson der Athlet*. It means 'solar,' being connected with *Shemesh*, the sun. Some,

however, interpret it 'the waster,' or 'the strong,' from *shamam*, to waste. Cf. Josephus, *Antiq.* v. 8. 4, "and they called the child, when he was born, Samson, which name signifieth one that is strong."

'*Ἀγωνιστής*' = a combatant at public games. Cf. Herodotus, v. 22, where the reference is to the Olympic festival—*φάμενοι οὐ βαρβάρων ἀγωνιστέων εἶναι τὸν ἀγῶνα, ἀλλὰ Ἑλλήνων*. Here the noun points to the catastrophe of the drama, emphasising the main aspect under which Samson appears, viz. as wrestler before the assembled Philistines. Greek dramatists sometimes used a sub-title of this kind to define the scope of a play; cf. Euripides' *Ἰππόλυτος Στεφανηφόρος* and *Ἡρακλῆς Μαινώμενος*; or Æschylus' *Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης* and *Προμηθεὺς Λυόμενος*. Often a sub-title was necessary to distinguish the different plays of a trilogy.

### THE PREFACE.

Milton's object in writing this Preface was twofold: to excuse himself in the eyes of the Puritans for having composed a play, which, he is careful to add, was never meant for the stage; and to explain why he had chosen the classical style of drama. Cf. *Church Gov.* (II. Pref.), 1641, where speaking of his desire to write a great work, he expresses a doubt whether to select the epic form, "or whether those dramatic constitutions, wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign, shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation. The Scripture also affords us a divine pastoral drama in the Song of Solomon, consisting of two persons, and a double chorus, as Origen rightly judges. And the Apocalypse of St John is the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies: and this my opinion the grave authority of Paræus, commenting that book, is sufficient to confirm," *P. W.* II. 478, 479. We may note how in each case he defends the dignity of the drama by an appeal to Scripture and the Fathers of the Church and Divines: with his Puritan readers this would have great weight.

The avowal of his preference for the classical over the modern drama—cf. the passage on the Greek dramatists in *P. R.* IV. 261—66—may, I think, have been intended as a retort to Dryden's *Essay Of Dramatic Poesy*, 1665. Dryden had pointedly praised the contemporary stage at the expense of the ancient, finding particular progress since "his Majesty's return," i.e. since the Restoration. His

views on other points, e.g. on the union of the comic and tragic element in a play, are exactly opposite to those of M., and the Essay should be contrasted with this Preface.

3. *said by Aristotle.* Aristotle's words are, δι' ἑλέου καὶ φόβου περαινουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν: 'pity,' because a tragedy shows us a great man in distress: 'fear,' because it makes us realise that there is at work in the universe a power higher than any human power. 'Fear' was a special element in Greek tragedy where Necessity (see l. 1666), mightier than the gods, played so great a part.

— 8—10. A general reference (cf. *quality*, l. 9) to the doctrine *similia similibus curantur*: applied in isolated cases by Hippocrates and first systematised into a theory by Samuel Hahnemann. Closely allied with this was the doctrine (cf. *hue*, l. 8) of *Signatures*, according to which the efficacy of a plant or mineral was indicated by its similarity in *colour* or *shape* to the part of the body diseased. Thus euphrasy, because it has a flower with an eyelike mark, was good for the eyes (*shape*); while saffron would be good for the liver (*colour*), and lungwort for the lungs, which it was thought to resemble in its spotted leaves. These kindred ideas were developed by Paracelsus, though neither originated with him. For *melancholy*, see l. 600, note.

11. *Cicero*; often in his works, in letters especially. Cf. *Ad Fam.* XIII. 15. 2, *ab Homeri magniloquentia confero me ad vera præcepta* Εὐριπίδου—μισῶ σοφιστὴν ὅστις οὐχ αὐτῷ σοφός. In *Quæst. Tusc.* II. 10, he translates 28 lines from the *Prometheus Unbound* of Æschylus.

*Plutarch*; many instances might be quoted from the *Moralia*.

13. *a verse*, viz. "evil communications corrupt good manners." In all the MSS. of 1 *Cor.* the reading is *φθειρουσιν ἢ θη χρηστὰ ὁμιλῶν κακά* (i.e. not *χρήσθ'*, as M. implies), a fact which "seems to show that it had lost its character as a verse, and become a proverb" (Stanley, see his note on 1 *Cor.* xv. 33). The original line has been variously assigned to Euripides and the *Thais* of Menander. See the *Fragments* (1013) of Eurip. in Dindorf's *Poetae Scenici*. It is often quoted in patristic writings, without mention of any author; Tertullian gives it in a Latin form—*bonos corrumpunt mores congressus mali*. Cf. the *Areopagitica*: "Paul...thought it no defilement to insert into holy Scripture the sentences of three Greek poets, and one of them a tragedian," *P. W.* II. 63.

15. *Paraus*, a Calvinist theologian on whose authority Puritans would set great store; born at Francostein in Silesia, 1548, died 1622. His real name was Wangler, which, in accordance with the common

practice of learned men at that time, he changed for its Greek equivalent: *πρπεῖος*, from *πρπεῖα*, a cheek, exactly equals *Wängler*, supposed to come from Germ. *Wange*, a cheek. He wrote a mass of *Commentaries* on certain books of the Bible, and *Adversaria* on others. The editors appear not to have noticed that the commentary on the *Revelation* to which M. alludes was translated into English, 1644. Chapter VIII. of the Preface is "Touching the Forme of the Revelation;" and he remarks that hitherto no one has understood the scheme of the book. The first three chapters, he says, are an *epistle*: "but that which beginneth at the fourth Chapter, and the following unto the End, if you well observe them, have plainly a *Dramaticall* forme, hence the *Revelation* may truly be called a *Propheticall Drama*, show, or representation... it is an Heavenly *Drama* or Interlude, not onely of foure, but of diverse persons & things, by Typicall Speeches and Actions, exhibiting to John's sight or hearing those things in the Heavenly Theatre, which God would have him to understand." And then he breaks up the *Revelation* into seven acts or *Visions*, interspersed with Choruses of Angels, Harpers, Elders, etc. See the allusion in *Church Gov.* quoted *supra*. M. refers to him often in the tracts on Divorce.

19. *Dionysius*, Tyrant of Syracuse; lived B.C. 431—367. He devoted much time to poetry, contending often for the prize of tragedy at Athens. Just before his death he obtained the first prize at the Lenæa with a play called 'The Ransom of Hector.'

21. *Augustus Cæsar*, the first Roman emperor; lived B.C. 63—A.D. 14. Macrobius says (*Saturnalia*, II. 4) that Augustus *Ajacem tragædiam scripserat, eamdemque, quod sibi displicuisset, deleverat. Postea Lucius, gravis tragædiarum scriptor, interrogabat eum, quid ageret Ajax suus: et ille 'in spongiam,' inquit, 'incubuit;'* meaning that his *Ajax* had committed suicide by falling on a sponge, just as the real *Ajax* in Sophocles had perished by falling on his sword. Macrobius took the story from Suetonius, II. 85.

23. *Seneca*, the stoic philosopher, tutor to Nero, died A.D. 65. There are extant ten tragedies of which he was probably the author (though the point is not absolutely established), written in iambic senarii, with choruses. They were modelled on Greek masterpieces (cf. their titles, *Hercules Furens*, *Medea*, *Œdipus*, *Agamemnon* etc.), and seem not to have been intended for actual performance. They had very great influence on the dramatists of Italy and France ("Seneca is directly responsible for Corneille," says Mr Saintsbury), and on the English pre-Shakespearian play-writers, e.g. Sackville and Norton (whose



*Gorboduc* is based on the *Thebais*), Edwards and Daniel. All the plays were translated into English between 1559—1581, and published in the latter year (Collier, *Dram. Poet.* III. 13, Ward, *Dram. Lit.* I. 106—107, 121). There is a study of them in Lessing's *Theatralische Bibliothek*—"Von den Trauerspielen des Seneca."

by some; e.g. Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* IX. 2. 9, *ut Medea apud Senecam*, 'quas peti terras jubet,' where the quotation is from Seneca's play of *Medea*, 453. In the *Tenure of Kings* M. speaks of "Seneca, the tragedian," and cites some verses from his *Hercules* (*P. W.* II. 18).

25—27. *Gregory Nazianzen*, Bishop of Constantinople; born about 325—29 A.D., died about 389—390. The play of the *Christus Patiens*, formerly attributed to Gregory, has also been thought to be one of the many works which Apollinarius the elder (born about 300 A.D.) composed as a substitute for Greek literature, when Christians were forbidden to study it in their schools by the edict of the Emperor Julian, A.D. 362; see, however, p. 138. Apollinarius borrowed largely from the classical writers and often merely adapted their works to Christian subjects. Thus the *Christus Patiens*, in 2061 lines, contains passages from most of Euripides' plays (especially the *Bacchæ* and *Medea*), and in the case of the *Bacchæ*, *Trôades* and *Rhesus*, where the MSS. authority is comparatively weak, these borrowed extracts in the *Christus* have some value in establishing the text of Euripides. (See Dr Sandys' *Introduct.* to the *Bacchæ*, p. xci.) The *Christus* is also interesting as an early example of the religious drama which preceded the Miracle and Mystery plays. Elizabethan apologists of the stage, believing the *Christus* to have been written by Gregory Nazianzen, used to quote it (very much as Milton does) as a proof that the Church had supported the drama. There was another drama with the same title by the jurist Grotius, a free rendering of which into English rhymed heroics was published in London in 1640, under the name *Christ's Passion*. M. who had known Grotius in Paris (cf. the *Defensio Secunda*) may have known the play, especially as the *Adamus Exul* (a Latin tragedy) of the same writer is supposed to have supplied hints for *P. L.*

29. *at this day*. Cf. *On Education*, 1644; he appeals there, as here, to the authority of Aristotle and Italian writers, condemning the playwrights of his own country. Let the students, he says, study "that sublime art which in Aristotle's *Poetics*, in Horace (i.e. in the *Ars Poetica*), and the Italian commentaries of Tasso, Mazzoni, and others, teaches what the laws are of a true epic poem, what of a dramatic... This

would make them soon perceive what despicable creatures our common rhymers and play-writers be," *P. W.* III. 473, 474.

30. *interludes*, comedies. The "most lamentable comedy" of Pyramus and Thisbe is described thus, *Midsummer N. D.* I. 2. 6, v. 156. Properly an *interlude* was "a play performed in the intervals of a festival:" then it was used of any slight dramatic piece. With M. it is always depreciatory; cf. *Church Gov.* (II. Pref.), "we know the corruption and bane which they suck in daily from the writings and interludes of libidinous and ignorant poetasters," *P. W.* II. 480.

30—34. *intermixing comic stuff* etc. These lines condemn Elizabethan tragedy, and show why in *Il Pen.* 102, M. thought that few great tragic pieces had been written by modern writers. They make us doubt whether he was a strong admirer of Shakespeare: a scene like that of the gravediggers in *Hamlet*, v. 1, or *Macbeth*, II. 3, must have been distasteful to him.

31. *sadness*, seriousness. *Sad*=serious is common in M.; see G.

32. *by all judicious*. The blending of comedy and tragedy had been discussed and approved by Dryden, *Of Dram. Poesy*, 55—56. Shelley in his *Defence* of poetry held that this was the one point in which the modern drama was superior to the ancient, being "an extension of the dramatic circle;" he instanced the comic scenes in *Lear*.

34. *no Prologue*, i.e. no address from the author to the audience asking their indulgence, such as Terence and Plautus used, and such as we find in the English drama (e.g. in *Henry V.*, *Romeo*). But in the Greek theatre (Aristot. *Poet.* 12) the Prologue meant the part of the play previous to the entrance of the Chorus; i.e. the introduction which told the audience just so much as they needed to know for the following of the story. In this sense Samson's first speech, I—114, is a Prologue; so is the speech of the Attendant Spirit in *Com.* I—92; and in the third draft of *P. L.*, where the story was to be told in dramatic form, M. has sketched the outline of a Prologue in the manner of Euripides whose habit of beginning his pieces thus was ridiculed by Aristophanes.

36. Martial (A.D. 43—104) prefixed an *Epistola ad Lectorem* to the first book of his *Epigrams*; written in prose it formed a preface. At the beginning of bk II. he introduced his friend Decianus protesting that an *epistle* was not wanted: *quid nobis cum epistola? quid hic dicturus es quod non possis versibus dicere?* The poet cut the preface short, and began most of the remaining books with pieces in verse, though bk VIII. has a prose-dedication to Domitian. Some of Dryden's plays, e.g. *The Rival Ladies*, have an 'Epistle dedicatory.'

40. *among the Italians.* The dramas of Seneca had had so great an influence on the Italian stage that the use of the Chorus was natural. Of plays in which it is introduced with conspicuous success critics mention Trissino's *Sophonisba*, written about 1514, of which Lessing said that Greeks of the age of Sophocles could have seen it without any surprise, so classical was the style; Ruccelai's *Rosmunda* (1516), modelled on *Sophonisba*; and Tasso's *Torrismondo*, 1586 (see Symonds' *Renaissance*, II. 122, 'The Catholic Reaction'). Cf. also (in a different style) the *Pastor Fido* of Guarini (1537—1612); and the Scriptural drama *Adamo*, by Milton's contemporary Giovanni Andreini (1578—1652) to which Voltaire thought that *P. L.* owed something. Milton's admiration of Italian writers, especially Tasso, is shown frequently in his prose-works; cf. too the preface on "The Verse" of *P. L.*, where he justifies his use of an unrhymed metre by the example of "Italian poets.....of prime note."

42. *and Italians.* He omits all reference to French dramatists, though Racine was then observing the canons of criticism laid down in this preface; see the *Dialogue* on *S. A.* between Landor and Southey, Landor's *Works*, ed. 1876, IV. 491.

45. *Apolelymenon*, freed, ἀπολελυμένος: i.e. released from the restraint of any particular stanza, so that each line can be of any metre the poet chooses (Masson). M. borrowed this irregular verse from the Italians. He had used it in *Lycidas*, and we may apply to *S. A.* Johnson's remarks on the earlier poem: "Milton's acquaintance," he wrote in the *Life*, "with the Italian writers may be discovered by a mixture of longer and shorter verses, according to the rules of Tuscan poetry." So Landor speaking of *Lyc.*: "No poetry so harmonious had ever been written in our language, but in the same free metre both Tasso and Guarini had captivated the ear of Italy," *Works* (ed. 1876), IV. 499. Cf. also Landor's lines *On Swift joining Avon.*

*without regard*, etc. Stern has observed that the lack of divisions in the choruses of *S. A.* weakens their lyrical effect. The *Strophé* was the stanza sung by the Chorus as they moved from right to left on the orchestra; the *Antistrophé* corresponded exactly to the *Strophé* and was sung as they moved from left to right; the *Epode* was the conclusion of the song, sung as they stood still. The introduction of these divisions into the original *Monostrophic* ode was attributed to Stesichorus. It is thought by some that in Sophocles the *Strophé* and *Antistrophé* respectively were sung by half, and only the *Epode* by the whole, Chorus. (See Smith's *Dict. of Antiq.*, 1891, s. v. *Chorus*.)

47. *music*. In the Greek theatre the musical accompaniment was originally played on a kind of stringed instrument called *κλειψαμβος*: afterwards by one flute player using a double flute, the flute being the instrument (according to Aristotle) which best harmonises with the human voice.

*not essential*. In the later stages of Greek tragedies the lyrical element became excessive. Cf. Aristotle, *Poet.* 18: "In other poets (he has just mentioned Sophocles) the songs have no more to do with the plot than with a different tragedy; wherefore, they sing interludes, a practice first started by Agathon" (died 400 B.C.). It was partly this that led to the disuse of the Chorus.

49. *Allaestrophia*. Gk. ἀλλοιόστροφος = of irregular *strophés*; i.e. not consisting of alternate *strophé* and *antistrophé*.

51. *never intended*. See *Introduction*.

52. *beyond the fifth act*. According to Horace's direction, *A. P.* 189. Dryden investigates it, *Of Dram. Poesy*, p. 28.

53. *style*, λέξις, one of the six points enumerated by Aristotle (6), and defined thus: λέγω δὲ λέξιν μὲν αὐτὴν τὴν τῶν μέτρων σύνθεσιν. He treats of it in chap. 22. Practically it means the diction of the play.

*uniformity*, a rendering perhaps of Aristotle's τὸ ὁμαλόν. In speaking of the delineation of character he says that one great quality to be aimed at is consistency: a character should be logically developed; and he takes as an example Iphigenia in the *Iphigenia in Aulide* of Euripides (*Poet.* 15). Horace lays down the same rule, *A. P.* 126.

54. *plot*, μῦθος: Aristotle places it first among the six elements of a tragedy, regarding it as ἀρχὴ καὶ οἷον ψυχὴ τῆς τραγῳδίας ("the basis and as it were soul"), *Poet.* 6. In 6—14 he deals at length with types of plots, dividing them (10) into classes—*simple* (i.e. 'explicit') and *complex* (i.e. 'intricate'): εἰσι δὲ τῶν μύθων οἱ μὲν ἀπλοὶ οἱ δὲ πεπλεγμένοι.

55. *economy*, arrangement, ordering of events; cf. Aristotle's definition of the plot: λέγω γὰρ μῦθον τοῦτον τὴν σύνθεσιν τῶν πραγμάτων = the construction or putting together of the incidents. Aristotle also calls it ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων σύστασις.

56. "*Decorum* of the stage" was evidently a technical phrase; cf. Dryden, "the French contrive their plots more regularly, and observe the laws of comedy, and decorum of the stage, with more exactness than the English," *Of Dram. Poesy*, p. 53; and again p. 62. No doubt *decorum* was due to Cicero's use of *decorum* (cf. *De Offic.* I. 17, 27, 35) as a trans. of the Gk. τὸ πρέπον, discussed by Plato, *Hipp. Maj.* 294, and elsewhere. Cf. Cic. *Or.* 21. 7, *id quod Graece πρέπον dicitur 'decorum'*

*dicti Latine potest.* In Quintilian it is *decor* or *decus*. See Milton's *Tractate on Education*, P. W. III. 474.

58. *Euripides*. Milton's favourite books, "after Homer, which he could almost repeat, were Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Euripides" (Johnson, *Life*). Cf. the allusion to "sad Electra's poet" in the Sonnet *When the Assault*. His copy of Euripides is in the British Museum. Johnson had seen it and thought the notes and emendations "nothing remarkable." Masson traces its history (*Life*, I. 531).

59. *circumscription of time*. Referring to the 'Unity of time.'

### THE ARGUMENT

i.e. the subject-matter of which the play treats.

1. *Gaza*, the modern Guzzeh, in south-west Palestine; about three miles from the sea, and situate on the borders of the desert (cf. "Gaza's frontier bounds," P. L. I. 466) that separates Palestine from Egypt. It was one of the five cities that formed the Confederation of the Philistines; see I. 981. The traveller Sandys visited it in the 17th cent. and left a description which M. seems to have used; probably he also knew the account in Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, XVII. 1, 2.

9. *Philistines*. This people of whom we read so often in the Bible were immigrants into Canaan, like the Israelites, and consequently distinct from the Canaanites or native inhabitants. Their name is from a Semitic root 'to wander'; in the Septuagint they are called ἀλλοφύλοι, 'aliens.' They seem to have come over the sea, not by land: thus their chief towns were on the sea-coast and their chief deity, *Dagon*, was a sea god. The place whence they immigrated is stated in *Jeremiah*, xlvii. 4, *Deut.* ii. 23, to have been Caphtor: probably Caphtor = Crete, see however note on I. 1713. They were Semitic in origin; their religion was Semitic; and their language only differed dialectically from that of the Israelites. They had much in common with the Phœnicians. They formed a confederacy of five towns, Ashdod being probably the chief (cf. 1 *Sam.* v. 1, vi. 17), under five 'lords' or Serānīm (see I. 482). See *Encyclopædia Britan.* s. v.

22. *catastrophe*, i.e. in the theatrical sense of the event which produces the climax of a play. Cf. Dryden, "Lastly, the *Catastrophe*, which the Grecians call λύσις, the French *le dénouement*, and we the discovery, or unravelling of the plot," *Of Dram. Poesy*, 28. So *Lear*, I. 2. 146, "pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy," *Love's L. L.* IV. I. 77, and *Shep. Cal. Maye, Glosse*.

## THE PLAY.

1, 2. The editors compare the opening scene of the *Œdipus Coloneus* where Œdipus is led forward by Antigone, and the *Phanissa* of Eurip. where Teiresias appeals to his daughter: ἡγοῦ πάροιθε, θύγατερ, ὡς τυφλῷ ποδὶ | ὀφθαλμὸς εἴ σὺ, 834. *lend thy*, spoken to the guide who leads Samson. *dark steps*, being those of a blind man.

3. *of sun*. Masson compares the account left by the painter Richardson, how Milton at the end of his life used to sit "at the door of his house, near Bunhill Fields, without Moorgate, in warm sunny weather, to enjoy the fresh air." Richardson, born 1665, knew some of Milton's friends, and learned much about him from them.

5. *servile*. Lias notes that grinding was the employment of slaves of the lowest class (cf. *Exod.* xi. 5, xii. 29), and that to Greek and Roman slaves it was a punishment. He cites Terence, *Phorm.* II. 1. 18, *meditata mihi sunt omnia mea incommoda, herus si redierit, molendum usque in pistrino; vapulandum.*

6. *else*, at other times.

7. *draw, breathe*; cf. *Lyc.* 126, "the rank mist they draw." So *duco*; cf. Lucret. VI. 1129, *spirantes mixtas hinc ducimus auras.*

11. *day-spring* = day-break, dawn; cf. *P. L.* v. 139, VI. 521. From *Luke* i. 78, "the day-spring from on high hath visited us;" or *Job* xxxviii. 12, rendered by Coverdale (1535), "Haste thou shewed the daye springe his place?" A wind often rises at day-break.

12. Samson is now alone, the guide having left. *solemn*, perhaps in the sense of Lat. *sollemnis*, used of religious festivals held yearly.

13. *Dagon*, the national god of the Philistines, half-man and half-fish; cf. *P. L.* i. 462, 463, "Dagon his name; sea monster, upward man And downward fish." His chief temples were at Gaza (as *S. A.* shows) and Ashdod; see *Judg.* xvi. and *1 Sam.* v. His worship seems to have come into Canaan from Babylonia, since cuneiform Assyrian inscriptions mention a god *Dakan* or *Dagan*, probably identical with Dagon (Chambers' *Encyclopædia*). The name has also been derived (i) from Hebrew *Dag*, a fish, (ii) from Hebrew word for 'corn,' Dagon being the god of agriculture as well as of other things.

19—20. The simile is repeated in l. 623; cf. *P. R.* i. 196—7.

20. *found* qualifies *me*: it would have been simpler had he written *find*, i.e. they rush on me as soon as they find me.

22. Cf. *P. L.* IV. 24, 25; "the bitter memory Of what he was, what *is*." Self-conscious contrast between the past and the present is

often the essence of pathos. Cf. what Tennyson says of "a sorrow's crown of sorrow," *Locksley Hall*.

24. *twice*. The first time to Samson's mother alone (*Judg.* xiii. 3—5), the second time to Manoah and his wife (xiii. 10—20). See ll. 361, 635; and cf. *P. R.* i. 238.

25. *all*, altogether, i.e. adverbial; very common in *M.* Cf. *II Pen.* 33, "all in a robe of darkest grain."

26. *the altar*, the rock that served as a temporary altar, *Judg.* xiii.

27—8. Cf. ll. 1431—33. He was thinking (cf. *P. R.* ii. 16—17) of the account in 2 *Kings*, iii. 11, of Elijah's translation to Heaven; and perhaps still more of the first and tenth chapters of *Ezek.*, to which there is a similar reference in the *Death of a Fair Infant*, 36—37, and again in the *Apol. for Smect.* ("Zeal, whose substance is ethereal, ascends his fiery chariot"), *P. W.* iii. 129.

28. i.e. from the altar and from revealing some great act.

30. *breeding*, education; "a gentleman of excellent breeding," *Merry Wives*, ii. 2. 234. The Angel commanded that Samson should "drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing," *Judg.* xiii. 7 (i.e. *unclean* for a Nazarite, not for other Jews).

31. *separate*, set apart for; cf. l. 363. Etymologically the primary idea of the word *Nazarite* is 'separation,' and Samson purposely uses the special term applied to that sect; cf. *Numbers*, vi. 2, "When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord." Cf. St Paul, *Rom.* i. 1. Note that the vow conferred a kind of priestly character on those who took it: this made Samson's sin the greater, his self-reproach the keener.

32. Cf. the picture of Belial in *P. L.* ii. 111, "For dignity composed and high exploit." See l. 525. *O. F. exploit* = *explicitum*, a thing displayed; cf. *espleiten*, to display, *Romaunt of the Rose*, 6177.

*must*, am destined to. Cf. *Lyc.* 38, "gone, and never must return;" and *Nat. Ode*, 152, 156. So *Macbeth*, v. 8. 12, "A charmed life, which must not yield." Cf. the use of *sollen* in German.

33. *captived*, made a prisoner; cf. *Henry V.* ii. 4. 55, "when Cressy battle fatally was struck, And all our princes captived." See note on *proverbed*, l. 203. Scan *captived* here and in l. 694; so Spenser, *F. Q.* ii. 4. 16, "Thus when as Guyon Furor had captivd."

34. *gaze*, used passively, 'an object gazed at;' cf. l. 567, and *Macbeth*, v. 8. 24, "the show and gaze o' the time."

37. *labour of a beast*, asses were employed in mills; cf. l. 1162.

38. i.e. it was promised; but note the words of the Angel in *Judg.*

xiii. 5, "he shall *begin* to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." Cf. 225, "begin Israel's deliverance," and 1661, note.

47. *this high gift*, the object after *keep* in l. 49.

48. Two indirect clauses dependent on *being told*, or some such phrase, understood from *committed* in l. 47. We might also connect them with *keep* in the next line. See l. 394.

50. *woman* is the emphatic word: bad enough if he had told his secret to a man, worse to have betrayed it to a woman. Cf. l. 202.

53—4. Cf. Horace, *vis consili expers mole ruit sua* (Odes, III. 4. 65). The editors also quote Ovid, *Met.* XIII. 363, *Tu vires sine mente geris...tu tantum corpore prodes, Nos animo*. Rhodes' *Boke of Nurture* (Early E. Text Society) says: "If ye have sturdy Sampsons strength And want reason withall, It helpeth you nothing." We might compare the character that Shakespeare draws in *Troilus* of the bulky, stupid Ajax contrasted with the sharp-witted Thersites; see Act II. sc. 1.

55. *secure*, careless, Lat. *securus*; see G.

59. *hung it*, perhaps figuratively, 'made it depend on;' cf. the intrans. use, "his own life hung upon the staff," 2 *Hen.* IV. IV. l. 126.

60. *quarrel with*, complain against; see G.

62. *reach*, capacity, intellect; cf. l. 1380. So *Hamlet*, II. 1. 64, "we of wisdom and of reach."

66. *ask*, require; see G.

67. Contrast ll. 195—197. There, in the presence of others, he feels that physical infirmity is a less evil than the shame of his state.

70. *prime*, i.e. the first work of God, after the creation of the heaven and earth. *extinct*, in the literal sense 'quenched,' *extinctus*. So twice in Shak. *Hamlet*, I. 3. 118, "these blazes...extinct in both," and *Rich.* II. 1. 3. 222. Shak. also uses *extincted*—cf. *Othel.* II. 1. 81—never *extinguished*.

73. *inferior*, agreeing with *me* understood from *my* in 72.

75—8. The poet was thinking of his own blindness and the misfortunes it involved. In the period between his second marriage and his third, his life at home had been most unhappy, his daughters treating him unworthily. One can hardly credit the accounts that survive (by Aubrey and others) of their ill-doings.

77. *still*, always.

81. Mr Bridges scans "irre | cóvera | bly dark, | tótal | eclipse," i.e. treating the first, second, and fourth feet as cases of inverted rhythm. In Handel's Oratorio these lines form the words of the great air "total



eclipse," which the musician, after he lost his own sight, could never hear without weeping. See *Art. on Samson*, Grove's *Dict. of Music*.

82. *without all*, i.e. without *any*; see G.

83—4. See *Genesis*, i. 3, and cf. the account of the creation in *P. L.* VII. 242 *et seq.* The line is not printed as a quotation in the original ed., but it is better to regard it as such, although the second half differs slightly from the Scripture. *great Word*, i.e. great command.

85. *bereaved*, robbed; for the omission of the preposition *of*, cf. the *Tetrachordon*, "error should be acquitted, and fraud bereaved his morsel," *P. W.* III. 359. So *Venus and Adonis*, 381, "'tis your fault I am bereft him so." In Shakespeare, as here, this construction is always passive. M., like Shak., uses *bereaved* and *bereft* indifferently.

87—9. These lines have several Latinisms. *silent* = 'not shining;' a reference to the phrase *luna silens*, used of the period between the waning of the old and the rising of the new moon; i.e. in exactly the same sense as *interlunar*, l. 89. Cf. Cato, *R. R.* 29, 40; Columella, II. 10. 11; and Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* XVI. 74, *quem diem alii interlunii, alii silentis luna appellant*.

89. *vacant*, at leisure; i.e. in the sense of Lat. *vacare*. Cf. *P. R.* II. 116, "Satan...had left him vacant," i.e. unemployed. Strictly the epithet belongs here not to the *cave*, but to the *moon* who is supposed to rest from her toil. The cave "is the place of seclusion into which the moon was anciently supposed to retire at such times" (*Century Dict.*). *interlunar*, cf. l. 87; see G.

91. i.e. 'since light is almost life if it be true that.'

92. Cf. *P. L.* III. 51—53, where, mourning for his loss of the light of the eyes, M. says: "So much the rather thou, celestial light, Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers Irradiate."

93. Alluding to the philosophical idea that the soul pervades every portion of the body. He adopts the same view in *Christian Doct.*, chap. VII., speaking of the soul as "equally diffused throughout any given whole, and throughout every part of that whole," *P. W.* IV. 192; in illustration of which Mr St John cites St Augustine's *De Origine Animæ—per omnes ejus (corporis) particulas tota simul adest...in omnibus tota et in singulis tota*. Cf. *P. L.* VI. 344—351.

95. *obvious*, exposed to; see G. *quenched*, cf. *P. L.* III. 25.

96. *as feeling*, i.e. as feeling *is*.

98. Scan *exiled*, the usual accentuation in Shakespeare; cf. *Romeo*, III. 2. 133, "Both you and I; for Romeo is *exiled*." It becomes *exiled* only before a word accented on the first syllable; cf. *Lucrece*,

640, "I sue for éxiled májesty's repeal." The same rule applies in Shakespeare and M. to many dissyllabic adjectives and participles, e.g. *extreme, complete, obscure, exact, misplaced, despised*.

100. *a living death*, i.e. a life resembling death, a death in life; the phrase was traditional. Cf. *Lucrece*, 726, "and made her thrall To living death and pain perpetual;" and *P. L.* x. 788, "die a living death." Cf. the curious adjective *living-dead* in the *Comedy of Errors*, v. 241. We may recollect St Paul's "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" *Rom.* vii. 24. Bishop Hall has the line—"And each day dying lives, and living dies," *Sat.* bk. v. 2, while Coleridge introduces "The Night-mare, Life-in-Death," in the *Ancient Mariner*, I. 111.

106. *obnoxious*, exposed to, Lat. *obnoxius*; see G.

110—11. Cf. *P. L.* IV. 866, "I hear the tread of nimble feet Hasting this way;" and *Com.* 145, 146.

111. *many feet*. In Attic tragedy the Chorus originally consisted of twelve actors, afterwards of fifteen; in comedy it numbered twenty-four. *steering*, directing their course; cf. *Nat. Ode*, 146. Used intransitively, with the same metaphor of a ship's course, in *Henry VIII.* II. 4. 200, "I did steer Toward this remedy."

115. Here begins the *παρόδος*, that is, the *πρώτη λέξις* of the Chorus; sung either by all the Chorus or by the *Coryphæus* alone. Often the *παρόδος* was written in anapaests, and some of the lines in this passage have an anapaestic movement. Note that the Ode serves two purposes: (i) it impresses on us the physical misery of Samson, his bodily helplessness and sordid outcast state: (ii) it fills in the picture of Samson's past life, and illustrates the skill with which Milton has overcome the difficulty imposed by the 'Unity of time' (see *Introduction*). A less able writer might have continued Samson's speech, placing in his mouth the description of his exploits, 124—150. Some such description was necessary: but it comes better from the Chorus, and the introductory speech was already sufficiently long.

*this, this*...Cf. *Arc.* 5, 6, "This, this is she To whom our vows and wishes bend." The passage in *Arc.* was probably an echo of some verses in Jonson's *Satyr*, "This is she, this is she In whose world" etc.

118. *at random*, carelessly; see G. *diffused*, stretched, extended = Lat. *fusus*. The editors quote *Æneid*, VI. 422, 423, *immania terga resolvit Fusus humi*; and Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, III. iii. 8, *fusaque erant toto languida membra toro*. Also Spenser, *F. Q.* I. I. 7, "Poured out in looseness on the grassy ground."

119. *languished* = drooping; cf. the *Epitaph on the M. of Winchester*, 33, where the sense is 'fading.'

The order of the words—a noun placed between two participles or adjectives—is a favourite one with M. Cf. *P. L.* v. 11, "temperate vapours bland," and *Nat. Ode*, 187, "flower-inwoven tresses torn." See l. 658. The idiom is Greek; Mr Jerram, in his note on *Lyc.* 6, quotes Hesiod, *Theog.* 811, χάλκεος οὐδὸς ἀστεμφής, and Eurip. *Phæn.* 234, νιφόβολον ὄρος ἱρόν.

121. *given over*, despaired of; cf. 1697.

122—3. *habit*, dress, Lat. *habitus*; cf. ll. 1073, 1305. Cf. the *Prayer-Book*, "each of them being decently habited" (*Making of Deacons*). So in the compound *riding-habit*. *weeds*, clothes; see *G. o'er-worn*, worn out; cf. Shakespeare, *Sonnet*, 63, "with Time's injurious hand crush'd and o'er-worn."

125. *that*, i.e. the famous (Lat. *ille*).

126. Scan "irre|sisti|ble Samson," i.e. inverting the rhythm of the first two feet. So in l. 341.

128. *Judg.* xiv. 5—6: "and, behold, a young lion roared against him...and he rent him as he would have rent a kid." From the lion's body he afterwards took the honey.

129. *embattle* = to draw up in battle array; cf. *On Education*, "having...served out the rudiments of their soldiery, in all the skill of embattling, marching, encamping," *P. W.* III. 477. So *Henry V.* iv. 2. 14, "the English are embattled." Often in Shakespeare and M. *battle* = an army; cf. *Rich. III.* v. 3. 88, "prepare thy battle."

131. *forgery*, i.e. the act of making; usually passive, the thing made. For the active use, with the sense 'invention,' cf. *Hamlet*, iv. 7. 90, "I, in forgery of shapes and tricks Came short of what he did."

133. i.e. steel tempered by the Chalybes, a people famous for their works in iron and steel, and generally represented as living on the south shore of the Euxine or Black Sea. Cf. Vergil, *G.* i. 58, *at Chalybes nudi ferrum* etc. Of course *Chalybean*, like the references later on to Atlas, l. 150, and Tantalus, 501—502, is inappropriate in the mouth of a Hebrew. Probably the word must be scanned *Chaly-bean*, instead of the more correct *Chalybéan*; Newton compares *P. L.* x. 688, "The sun, as from Thyésteian banquet, turned." Dr Abbott takes *Epicurean* in the same way, *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. i. 24, and says "the Elizabethans generally did not accent the *e* in such words."

133—4. *frock of mail*, i.e. coat of mail of Adamantean proof (or impenetrability). For the elliptic form of the expression, cf. *P. L.* i.

185, "his ponderous shield, Ethereal temper," and VII. 471, "a creature new, manlike, but different sex." For *proof* as noun cf. *Il Pen.* 158, and see G. *Adamantean*, see G.

136. *insupportably*, irresistibly; a rare use, but cf. Spenser, *F. Q.* I. 7. 11, "he gan advaunce With huge force and insupportable mayne." In Shakespeare *insupportable* = insufferable, intolerable; cf. *Julius Caesar*, IV. 3. 151, *Othello*, V. 2. 98.

137. *tools*, weapons; cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I. 1. 37.

138. *Ascalonite*. See l. 1186, note. Ashkelon, or Askelon, on the coast north of Gaza, is mentioned in *1 Sam.* vi. 17 as one of the five chief cities of the Philistines.

139. *lion ramp*, his lion-like spring, *lion* being an adjective. Cf. *P. L.* IV. 343, "Sporting the lion ramped." *ramp*, see G.

140. *plated*, clad in armour; cf. *Richard II.* I. 3. 28, "plated in habiliments of war;" or *Antony and C.* I. 1. 4, "like plated Mars."

142—5. See *Judg.* xv. 15—17. *what weapon*, i.e. *whatever*.

144. i.e. a thousand uncircumcised men; cf. l. 640. Keightley notes that the Philistines are specially described thus in Scripture; cf. *Judg.* xiv. 3, xv. 18.

145. *Ramath-lechi* = "the height, or eminence, of the jawbone," though the margin of the A. V. in *Judg.* xv. 17 interprets it "The lifting up, or casting away, of the jawbone." See l. 582, where there is the same confusion between *Lehi* = the jawbone, and *Lehi* = the name of the rock where the event happened. Probably the rock was called the 'ass's jawbone,' from its peculiar shape, *before* Samson's exploit: this would account for the difficulty in rendering the Hebrew.

146—8. *Judg.* xvi. 3, "and Samson...took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all." Cf. Sylvester, "th' Iron Gates, whose hugeness wont to shake The massie Tours of Gaza, thou dost take On thy broad shoulders."

147. *Asza*, another name of Gaza; used by Quarles in his *Historie of Samson*; Sandys says, "*Gaza* or *Aza* signifieth strong," *Relation*, p. 149. Cf. *Ferem.* xxv. 20. *massy*; M. never uses *massive*.

148. *Hebron*, before called Kirjath-arba, had been the city of Arba, father of Anak, whose descendants the Anakim were giants. Cf. *Josh.* xiv. 15, xv. 13—14.

149. i.e. no short, easy journey, because "the Jews were only permitted to go a distance of three-quarters of a mile on the Sabbath" (Keightley). The temporary prohibition to the Israelites mentioned in *Exod.* xvi. 29, that they should not go outside the camp, had become a

permanent law, the city taking the place of the camp. Hebron was about 40 miles from Gaza. *Sabbath* is from a root meaning 'to rest.'

150. Referring to Atlas, one of the Titans, who was supposed to support the heaven on his head and shoulders (or according to some accounts, in his hands). Cf. *P. L.* II. 305—7: "With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear The weight of mightiest monarchies." *Gentiles* = "the nations of the West:" the Chorus speak as Israelites.

156. Cf. *Com.* 383—5: "he that hides a dark soul...Himself is his own dungeon." Samson had used a far stronger phrase, *L.* 102; but he would feel his own misfortune more keenly than the Chorus could.

156—8. The thought is a commonplace, used by many writers; cf. 3 *Henry VI.* II. 1. 74—77:

"Now my soul's palace is become a prison:

Ah, would she break from thence, that this my body

Might in the ground be closed up in rest."

157. *which*, i.e. a thing which, referring to what follows—that the soul is imprisoned in the body. *complain*, i.e. complain of: original ed. has *complain'd*, corrected in *Errata*.

161. *incorporate*, grow one with, unite; cf. the *Doctrine of Divorce*, chap. XVI., for its active use, "the fit union of their souls...may even incorporate them to love and amity," *P. W.* III. 249. See *P. L.* x. 816.

162. i.e. the light of the soul; cf. *Com.* 381, 382: "He that has light within his own clear breast May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day;" lines which the poet wrote long before his own eyesight failed: when that affliction came he realised that "inward light" could not altogether take the place of physical.

163. *no visual beam*, no ray of light giving or causing vision; *visual* being used actively. Cf. *P. L.* XI. 415, "then purged...The visual nerve, for he had much to see;" and "visual ray" in *P. L.* III. 620.

164. *mirror*. In Samson's condition the mutability of life seemed reflected. Or *mirror* may signify 'pattern,' 'exemplar,' as in 1 *Hen.* VI. 1. 4. 74, "mirror of all martial men," and *Hen.* VIII. II. 1. 53, "mirror of all courtesy."

165. i.e. since man has been on earth: an awkward idiom suggested by the Latin. Cf. *P. L.* I. 573, "never, since man created," i.e. since the creation of man, *post hominem creatum*. So *P. L.* I. 798.

166, 167. *the rarer...by how much*. Cf. *Church Gov.* II., "by how much the internal man is more excellent and noble than the

external, by so much is his cure more exactly to be performed," *P. W.* II. 492. Cf. the Lat. idiom *co...quo*, with a comparative.

169. *pitch*, depth; cf. the *Doctrine of Divorce*, XIX., "sinks him to a low and vulgar pitch of endeavour in all his actions," *P. W.* III. 259, with the *Animadversions*, "poor and low-pitched desires," III. 82. So possibly in *Henry VIII.* II. 2. 50. Usually *pitch* implies height, from the metaphor of a hawk soaring to its highest point. Cf. the opposite uses of *altus* in Latin. *object*, see G.

172. Referring probably (i) to the 'wheel of Fortune;' cf., among several references in Shakespeare, *Henry V.* III. 6. 28, "giddy Fortune's furious fickle wheel," where Fluellen explains that the goddess is "painted...with a wheel, to signify to you...that she is turning, and inconstant, and mutability, and variation." A turn of this wheel *raises* one man and lowers another. The only objection to this interpretation is that *sphere*=wheel is unusual, and it would be more natural (ii) to explain *sphere* of the *globe* on which the goddess was supposed to stand; cf. the same description in *Henry V.* III. 6. 37, "her foot, look you, is fixed upon a spherical stone, which rolls, and rolls." But a globe could scarcely be said to 'raise.' On the whole (i) is preferable.

173. i.e. 'but thee *I reckon* to have been in high estate.' *virtue*: Samson had attributed his fall to lack of wisdom, 53—7; cf. 207.

175. Scan "úni|vérsal|ly," and cf. *P. L.* VI. 34, "úni|vérsal| reproach, far worse to bear:" that is, in each line treat the first two feet as inversions of rhythm.

181. *Eshtaol and Zora*. Towns of the tribe of Dan, *Josh.* xix. 41; lying "in the valley," *Josh.* xv. 33; and not far apart, *Judg.* xiii. 25. Samson was born at Zora, *Judg.* xiii. 2, and buried "between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying-place of Manoah," xvi. 31.

182. *or bewail*. Probably M. dictated *and bewail*. This is not the only place in *S. A.* where *or* seems to have been substituted for *and*; cf. II. 545, 1653. Keightley thought that it was a common mistake with printers, and gave many likely cases.

182, 183. Percival, though he places a comma after *better*, makes *we may bring* depend on *if*: 'we come to see if better we may bring,' i.e. *better*=more befittingly. But it is simpler to take *we may* as a main verb: the Chorus state the fact that they can bring Samson counsel, *if it be better* for him.

184. *salve to...sore*s; a traditional phrase; cf. *F. Q.* III. 2. 36, V. 7. 38, and VI. 6. 5, "Give salves to every sore, but counsell to the minde."

Earle (*Philology*, p. 609) notes that the force of alliteration has held together many expressions like *kith and kin*, *weal and woe*: probably *salve and sore* is an instance. For *salve*. see G.

185, 186. Thyer quotes *Prometheus Vincit*, 377, ὀργῆς νοσοῦσης εἶσιν λατοὶ λόγοι (where ζεοῦσης is a better reading). See 659.

185. *tumours*, turmoils, swellings, Lat. *tumores*.

189, 190. i.e. who bear the stamp 'friends.' *Superscription* = the words inscribed on a coin, is rare, and no doubt M. was thinking of Christ's reply to the Pharisees, "Whose is this image and superscription?" *Matt.* xxii. 20, where the margin has *inscription*.

190—1. i.e. 'what I say applies to the majority of men.' The Chorus, he means, form the exception: they are still true to him. Milton himself had no cause to complain of want of loyalty in friends like Thomas Ellwood; nor did the outside world neglect him. On the contrary, "he was visited by the learned much more than he did desire;...foreigners came much to see him and much admired him" (Aubrey). Phillips writes to the same effect.

191—3. Cf. Ovid's oft-quoted couplet in the *Tristia*, i. 9. 5—6: *Donec eris felix multos numerabis amicos; Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris*. The thought is the groundwork of *Timon of Athens*.

195. Contrast ll. 66—68.

197. *heave the head*, i.e. lift, cf. Germ. *heben*. M. has the expression in three other places, *Com.* 885, "rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head," *P. L.* i. 211, and *L'Al.* 145. Imitated by Dryden, *Song for St Cecilia's Day*:

"When Nature underneath a heap  
Of jarring atoms lay,  
And could not heave her head;"

and by Pope, *Dunciad*, II. 256.

200—2. *for*, because of; cf. l. 779, where Dalila uses this argument against Samson. *to a woman*, cf. l. 50, with note.

203. Todd compares *Job* xxx. 9, "and now am I their song, yea I am their by-word." *proverbed*, made a proverb or by-word of. M. has a number of these adjectival participles formed from nouns with the termination of the p.p. Cf. *captived*, 33, 694, *helmed* and *sworded*, *Nat. Ode*, 112, 113, with many others. Oddly enough, Johnson (criticising Gray) spoke of the practice of forming words thus as a new one.

207. i.e. 'only an average measure of wisdom;' *mean*, 'middling,' from Low Lat. *medianus*, through Fr. *moyen*, is an adjective, as in phrases like 'mean temperature.' In the next line he says that his

wisdom should have been equal to (i.e. *paired with*, from Lat. *par*=equal) his strength: the disparity drove him awry (*transverse*).

209. *transverse*, i.e. like a vessel (the metaphor of l. 200) driven by wind or tide out of its course. Cf. *P. L.* III. 488. Lat. *transversus*=turned across: so used of that which goes crosswise instead of straight ahead; *ex transverso*=sideways.

210. *tax*, find fault with, blame; not elsewhere in M., but common in Shakespeare; cf. *Troilus*, I. 3. 197, "they tax our policy," or *Hamlet*, I. 4. 18, "traded and taxed of other nations." From *taxare*=*tactare*, to handle a thing and so find its value; cf. Fr. *taxer* and its doublet, *tâcher*. *disposal*; cf. *disposition*, 373.

210, 211. Milton says in the *Tetrachordon*: "The best and wisest men, amidst the sincere and most cordial desires of their hearts, do daily err in choosing"—viz. wives.

212. i.e. 'however wise their intentions may be.' Probably *wise* is adverbial, and *pretend*=intend; cf. the *Two Kinsmen*, I. 1. 210, "omit not anything in the pretended celebration." But *pretend* may have its ordinary sense, i.e. feign to be wise: if so, M. is imitating the use of *simulo* in Latin. Cf. Livy, XXV. 12, *Hannibal ægrum simulabat*, or Ovid, *Rem. Amoris*, 493, *sanum simula*.

213. *deject*. In modern E. only the p.p. *dejected* is used; but cf. Shakespeare, *Troilus*, II. 2. 121, "nor once deject the courage of our minds." So M. in the *Tetrachordon*, "what a stupidity then is it, that...we should deject ourselves," *P. W.* III. 340. The advice of the Chorus is that which Manoa gives, ll. 502—515.

215—8. Replying to Samson's question "Am I not sung?" 203.

219—225. See *Judg.* xiv. 1—4, which M. follows very closely.

219. *Timna*, a little south of Gath; the modern Tibnah; see Tristram's *Bible Places*, p. 47.

220. *not my parents*. The negotiations for the marriage were carried on between the respective parents on either side; it throws light on the marriage-customs of the time; Lias compares *Gen.* xxi. 21, *Exod.* xxi. 9. Cf. *P. L.* x. 904.

221. *infidel*, i.e. not of their faith.

222. *motioned*, i.e. proposed; cf. *P. L.* IX. 229, "Well hast thou motioned!" or 1 *Hen. VI.* I. 3. 63, "Still motions (i.e. counsels) war and never peace." Cf. the noun *motion* as used in politics. The first ed. has *mention'd*; corrected in *Errata*, but repeated in 1680 ed.

223. *intimate*, i.e. inward; cf. Germ. *innig*, Lat. *intimus*. Nowhere else in M. Conversely *inward*=intimate is not uncommon; cf. Bacon,



"a servant or a favourite, if he be inward," i.e. on intimate terms with his master (*Of Great Place*); and *Richard III.* III. 4. 8.

224. *by occasion hence*, i.e. by the opportunity it offered. M. has kept the A. V. rendering of *Judg.* xiv. 4, "he sought an occasion against the Philistines," where the Hebrew means 'a thing brought to pass.' *occasion*=chance, favourable time, is common in Shak.

225. *begin...deliverance*, cf. 38—9, note; and 1661—3, note.

226. *divinely*=Lat. *divinitus*, by divine means or communication, i.e. of the angel, l. 24. This is the usual sense of *divinely* in M.; cf. *P. R.* I. 26, and IV. 357, "divinely taught"=inspired by God.

227. *to wife*. Cf. *II Pen.* 112. Minsheu (1617) has, "to take to wife *vide* to Marrie." So *Judg.* xvii. 13, "seeing I have a Levite to my priest." Among many instances in Shak., cf. *Tempest*, III. 3. 54, and *Rich. II.* IV. 308, "I have a king here to my flatterer."

229. *Judg.* xvi. 4, "he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek." *Dalila*; the 2nd syllable is long (=Dalela), and I think that M. meant the last two syllables to form a trochee, *Dalila*; so in 723, 1072.

230. *specious*, exactly in the sense it now bears, 'fair-seeming but deceptive.' So always in his prose works; cf. *Church Gov.* I., "it hath the outside of a specious reason, and specious things we know are aptest to work with human lightness and frailty," *P. W.* II. 459. *accomplished*, either 'complete,' as in *Cymbeline*, I. 4. 101—3; or 'full of accomplishments'; cf. *blandished*=full of blandishments, 403.

231, 232. i.e. lawful because I had done the same thing before, and because my object was the same, viz. to oppress the Philistines.

235. Cf. l. 96, and *Church Gov.* II., "to profess, to petition, and never leave pealing our ears," *P. W.* II. 504. The allusion is to *Judg.* xvi. 16, "she pressed him daily with her words." *Peal* was used of any loud noise; cf. "these peals of praise," *Merchant of V.* III. 2. 146; but *fort* in l. 236, and *batteries* in l. 404, make it probable that the reference (though an anachronism) is to artillery. See l. 906, with the quotation from *P. L.* II. 940.

236. For the metaphor in *fort* cf. *Hamlet*, I. 4. 28, "breaking down the pales and forts of reason."

240. *still serves*, is still in subjection to the Philistines.

245. *considered*, valued.

247. *ambition*, i.e. canvassing: 'I did not go about soliciting applause.' The sense is practically that of the Latin *ambitio*=going round to seek votes. The *New E. D.* quotes Elyot's *Governor*, III. xvi. (1531), "Certayne lawes were made by the Romaynes...named

the lawes of ambition." Elsewhere in M., as always in Shakespeare, *ambition* bears its ordinary meaning, 'desire of power.'

248. One of George Herbert's sayings is, "Neither praise nor dispraise thyself, thy actions serve the turn," *Jacula Prudentum*.

249. i.e. persisted in being deaf; cf. *P. L.* x. 874, "but for thee I had persisted happy," i.e. remained. *Persist* generally implies steady pursuit of a bad course.

251. *powers*, armed forces; cf. 1190. Common in Shakespeare, though he more often uses the singular. Referring to *Judg.* xv. 9.

253. *Etham*, identified with modern *Beit' Atab*; near Zora and Eshtaol, within the borders of Judah.

256. i.e. the "three thousand men of Judah," *Judg.* xv. 11.

258. *on some conditions*: "And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves," *Judg.* xv. 12.

259. *yield*, a historic present, since *yield* does not seem to have been used as a preterite. Some texts print *yielded*, with no authority.

261, 262. "And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him from the rock...and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed," *Judg.* xv. 13, 14.

263. *weapon*, the ass's jawbone; *trivial*, see G.

266. *by this*, by this time: "I do know, by this, they stay for me," *Julius Caesar*, 1. 3. 125; cf. *by then* = 'by the time that,' *Com.* 540.

268—271. For the opposite sentiment cf. *P. L.* II. 255—57:

"Free and to none accountable, preferring  
Hard liberty before the easy yoke  
Of servile pomp."

Newton quotes Sallust—*potior visa est periculosa libertas quieto servitio*. The bondage meant is the Restoration of the Stuarts. In the year 1660 M. published a treatise *On the Ready Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*, the substance of which was an exhortation to his countrymen not "to fall back, or rather to creep back, to their once abjured and detested thralldom," *P. W.* II. 113.

274. *their deliverer*. Percival, following Dunster, thinks that Lambert may be intended; cf. l. 695, note. This is more probable than Masson's view that the poet is referring to himself.

278—281. See *Judg.* viii. 5—9. Succoth and Penuel refused to supply Gideon and his three hundred men with food when they were pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the "vanquished kings."

281. *Madian*, cf. *Acts*, vii. 29, "Moses was a stranger in the land of *Madian*." In the O. T. (cf. *Exod.* iii. 15) we find *Midian*. The

Septuagint has *Madian*; cf. Sylvester's *Du Bartas* (Grosart, 1. 195):

"Arad and Og (that of huge Giants springs)

Proud Hesebon, and the five *Madian* kings."

283. Alluding to the message which Jephthah sent to the Ammonites, *Judg.* xi. 14—27. *had dealt*, i.e. would have dealt; cf. 1495.

286—289. See *Judg.* xii. 1—6. *sore battle*, at the passages of the Jordan. *so many*, forty-two thousand. *well pronouncing*, Blount's *Glossographia* quotes similar instances: "Pichigni (Fr.), by the pronunciation of this word in *France*, *Aliens* were discerned from the native French. As *Shibboleth* among the Hebrews, *Judg.* xii. 6. So likewise (in Sands, his *Travels*) you may read how the *Genoese* were distinguished from the *Venetians*, by naming a *Sheep*."

291. *mine*, my countrymen, *mei*; an intentional Latinism. Cf. *thine*, 1169. But the possessive pronouns in English, being uninflected, are ill adapted to this idiom.

293, 294. Cf. *Psalm* cxlv. 17, *Rev.* xv. 3, "just and true are thy ways." Milton's object in writing *P. L.* was to "assert eternal Providence, And justify the ways of God to men," *P. L.* I. 25, 26. Pope professed the same design; cf. the *Essay on Man*: "Laugh where we must, be candid where we can, But vindicate the ways of God to man." M. uses the expression *ad asserendam justitiam Dei* in the *Christian Doct.* XII.

295. i.e. justifiable to all men save those who do not believe in any God at all. *think not God*, i.e. think that there is no God; an imitation of the use of *νομίζω* with an accusative, but no infinitive. Cf. Plato, *Apology*, 18 C, *οἱ γὰρ ἀκούοντες ἡγοῦνται τοὺς ταῦτα ζητοῦντας οὐδὲ θεοὺς νομίζειν*, i.e. disbelieve in the existence of Gods. So Æschylus, *Persæ*, 497:

θεοὺς δὲ τίς

τὸ πρὶν νομίζων οὐδαμῶ.

In Greek this construction is usually found in negative clauses; cf. the instances just quoted.

297—98. "The rhyme and rapid rhythm here, and at lines 30—306, may have been intended to have a contemptuous effect" (Bradshaw).

297. i.e. there never was a systematic philosophy of Atheism. For *school*=a sect professing a special doctrine, cf. *Com.* 439, "shall I call Antiquity from the old schools of Greece?" The term *Atheist* was first applied to some of the followers of Democritus, the author of the "atomic system." Bacon (see his essay *Of Atheism*) and Addison have

doubted whether a genuine atheist ever existed; and Ascham declared that the word was "vnknown somtyme in England, vntill som Englishe man tooke peines, to fetch that deuelesh opinion out of Italie," *Scholemaster*, p. 138. But Ascham held that everything evil came from Italy.

298. Cf. the *Christian Doct.* II., "'the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,' *Psal.* xiv. 1, yet the Deity has inprinted upon the human mind so many unquestionable tokens of himself, and so many traces of him are apparent throughout the whole of nature, that no one in his senses can remain ignorant of the truth," *P. W.* IV. 14, 15.

299. *doctor*, learned man.

300—6. Cf. the condemnation of philosophy and barren speculation in *P. R.* IV. 285; and contrast the praise of it in *Com.* 476.

301. Scan *edicts*; so in *P. L.* v. 798, the only other place where M. uses it. Shakespeare has both scausions; cf. *Midsummer N. D.* I. 1. 151, "It stands as an edict in destiny;" and *Henry IV.* IV. 3. 79, "Some certain édicts and some strait decrees."

303. M. remembered the technical Lat. phrase *majestatem minuere* (or *ludere*), 'to commit high treason.' Cf. Cicero, *Philippics*, I. 9. 11, *qui majestatem populi Romani per vim minuerit*. Cf. the *Areopagitica*, "neither is it in God's esteem, the diminution of his glory, when honourable things are spoken of good men," *P. W.* II. 50. So possibly in *P. L.* VII. 612.

305. *ravel*, become more entangled, confused; for the intrans. use, cf. *Two G. of Verona*, III. 2. 52: "Therefore, as you *unwind* her love from him, Lest it should *ravel*...." Strictly to *ravel* is to 'untwist'; cf. Cotgrave, "Esfilé: Ravelled, unwound, loosened;" so s. v. *desfilé*. But unwinding leads to entanglement: hence to *ravel*=to entangle.

*still less resolved*, i.e. always in greater doubt, perplexity. In Shakesperian E. to *resolve* often means to clear up a person's difficulties, to free him from ignorance or uncertainty. Cf. *Julius Caesar*, IV. 2. 14, "how he received you let me be resolved;" or Earle's *Characters*, "his whole life is a *question*, which death onely concludes, and then he is *resolu'd*," Arber's *Reprint*, p. 68.

307. *Interminable*, i.e. without limit. Cf. *P. L.* III. 372—73: "Thee, Father, first they sung Omnipotent,.....Infinite." In the *Christian Doct.* II. he treats of the attributes of God, amongst them being "Immensity and Infinity."

308. For *prescript*=order, command, cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. 5. 8, "the prescript of this roll," and *Hamlet*, II. 2. 142.

309. This thought is discussed in the third chapter ("Of the Divine Decrees") of *Christian Doctrine*. See also *P. L.* v. 882.

312. *national obstruction*, the obligation resting on Samson as a Jew not to marry a Gentile; see *Exod.* xxxiv. 16, *Deut.* vii. 3. *obstruction*; cf. Lat. *obstrictus* (from *obstringo*), 'bound,' and so, metaphorically, 'placed under an obligation.' M. coined *obstruction*.

313. *legal debt* = duty to fulfil the Mosaic law; connect with *exempt from*.

314. *dispense with*, i.e. abrogate, cancel; cf. *Love's L. L.* I. I. 148, "We must dispense with this decree."

319. *his vow*. The vow taken by those who wished "to separate themselves unto the Lord," by becoming Nazarites; but according to the account of it in *Numb.* vi. 1—21, it did not include celibacy. Possibly there was a Jewish tradition to that effect; or M. may imply that, as abstinence from all impurity was the essential idea of the law of the Nazarites, it was more necessary for Samson, *quâ* Nazarite, than for an ordinary Jew to refrain from 'unclean' marriage.

321. *unclean*, i.e. according to the Mosaic law; used thus often in his *Tetrachordon* and *Doct. of Divorce*. *unchaste*, there is the same charge in *P. L.* IX. 1060; it is not stated so in Scripture.

324. *quits her*, i.e. acquits her of being unclean; cf. Shak. *All's Well*, III. I. 11, "till thou can'st quit thee...of what we think against thee."

327. *careful*, showing care, anxiety; cf. l. 805. Contrast the description of Manoa in 1441—4: there he has hope of freeing Samson.

328—330. *advise*, consider; see G. *ay me*; see G.

333. *uncouth*, strange; A. S. *uncuð* = unknown, from *un*, not, and *cūð*, the p.p. of *cunnan*, to know. Bullokar, 1616, explains it by *strange*, and Minsheu, 1617, by *incognitus*. These are the meanings it almost always bears in M.—cf. *P. L.* II. 407, 827, VIII. 232, X. 475—and 'strange' exactly suits here: the speaker being an Israelite visiting a Philistine town.

335. Cf. *Com.* 180, "where else Shall I inform my unacquainted feet?" i.e. guide, direct; an uncommon use.

338. *signal*, conspicuous, remarkable.

341. Scan, "Thát in|vinci|ble Samson" etc.; cf. 126.

345. *duel* implies a combat between only two (*du-o*) men, and on the side of Samson it had been a single-handed fight. Cf. *P. R.* I. 174.

348. *at one spear's length*; which would give him room to escape the blind Samson; cf. 1117—8.

349—50. i.e. 'what in man is not vain' = everything is vain.

354. *as all men*; *as* = that, after *such* or *so*, is a common Elizabethan idiom; cf. 1 *Henry VI.* v. 5. 86, "I feel such sharp dissension in my breast, As I am sick." Newton cites some very similar lines from Terence's *Andria*, I. 1.

357. *and* has almost the force of 'and that too;' cf. *Winter's Tale*, II. I. 141, "abused (i.e. deceived) and by some putter-on."

360. Cf. *Luke* xi. 12, *Rev.* ix. 10. The point of the comparison is that the gifts, seemingly good at first, prove bitter in the end. Todd quotes from the *Doctrine of Divorce*, "the most deadly and scorpion-like gift," *P. W.* III. 229. See *Macbeth*, III. 2. 36.

*graces*, favours; so probably in *P. L.* III. 674. Cf. *Macbeth*, I. 6. 30, "We love him highly, And shall continue our graces towards him." But Shak. prefers the sing. in this sense, especially in the phrase 'do grace;' cf. *Comedy of E.* v. 164, "to do him all the grace...I could."

363. *select*, set aside. In Elizabethan E. the form of the p.p. is often influenced by the Latin. Cf. the *Utopia*, "reject from all common administration" (i.e. *rejectus*), p. 148, and More's *Richard III.*, "whose mynd, in tender youth infect, shal redily fal to mischief" (i.e. *infectus*), p. 10—Pitt Press eds. So *pollute* = *pollutus*, in *Nat. Ode*, 41.

364. *miracle*, wonder; "O miracle of men," 2 *Hen. IV.* II. 3. 33.

365. *ensnared*, by Dalila; *overcome*, by his enemies.

373. i.e. 'do not think to determine the manner in which Heaven should order or arrange affairs.' Cf. the *Arcopagitica*, "Neither is God appointed and confined where and out of what place these his chosen shall be first heard to speak," *P. W.* II. 98. *appoint* = fix, settle, is common in Shakespeare; but see G. For *disposition* = arrangement, cf. *Acts* vii. 53, "who have received the law by the disposition of angels" (as the A. V. renders it). Cf. *disposal*, 210, *dispose*, 1746. The proverb says, *l'homme propose, Dieu dispose*.

377-8. *profaned*, published and thus made it *profanum*. *mystery*, God's revelation to Samson; see G.

380. *Canaanite*, not strictly applicable to the Philistines; see p. 67.

382-87. See *Judg.* xiv. 11-18. *the secret*, Samson's riddle, "out of the eater came forth meat...;" cf. l. 1199. *highth*, see G. *corrupted*; by the threat, "lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire." *spies*, the "thirty companions;" cf. l. 1197.

385. i.e. pretended nuptial love, *Judg.* xiv. 16, 17; for the order see l. 119, note.

388-391. i.e. 'who, being vitiated (corrupted) by gold, though it was only offered, conceived treason against me:' *spousal embraces* is in

apposition to *prime of love*; *vitiating* qualifies *who*; and *offered* agrees with *gold*. See *Judg.* xvi. 5, "And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth...and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver." Cf. also verse 18, and see note on l. 722.

390. *by the scent*, i.e. by the mere offer; she was persuaded before the money ever came into her hands. Some editors find here an allusion to the story of Danaë. *scent*, see G.

392. *thrice*, see *Judg.* xvi. 6—15. *assayed*, tried; see G.

394. *capital*, fatal, deadly. Cf. *P. L.* XII. 383, "Needs must the serpent now his capital bruise expect." Some editors interpret *capital* literally in each passage, i.e. pertaining to the head, *caput*. Here, as applied to Samson's hair, the epithet would be simply a pun.

402. *mustering*, i.e. assembling, as though they were troops; the metaphor is shown by *assaults*, *batteries*, *storm*. See G.

403. *blandished*, full of blandishments. Note that the participial ending *-ed* here has the same force as the adjectival *-ful*. This occurs in Shakespeare; cf. "*guiled* shore"=*guileful*, *Merchant of V.* III. 2. 97; "*disdain'd* contempt"=*disdainful*, 1 *Hen. IV.* I. 3. 183 (Abbott, *Shaksp. Gram.* pp. 204, 273—4). For *blandish*, see G.

404. *tongue-batteries*. Suggested perhaps by 1 *Henry VI.* III. 3. 79, "these haughty words of hers Have batter'd me like roaring cannon-shot." Cf. 235, 906, and the *Colasterion*, "I answer, that it (his opponent's argument) lays no battery against mine, no, nor so much as faces it," *P. W.* III. 439. *surceased*, ceased, desisted; see G.

405. *over-watched*, tired with being kept awake; cf. *Lear*, II. 2. 177, "weary and o'er-watched." So *P. L.* II. 288, "sea-faring men o'er-watched."

407. Cf. *Com.* 756, "I had not thought to have unlocked my lips."

414—419. There is a similar sentiment in one of Bishop Hall's *Contemplations*, x. iv., which is devoted to the story of Samson: "he was more blind when he saw licentiously, than now when he sees not. He was a greater slave when he served his affections, than now in grinding for the Philistines."

414. *degree*, rank; cf. l. 1607.

417. A favourite form of line with many poets; cf. *P. L.* v. 899, "unshaken, unseduced, unterrified;" or Shakespeare's "unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd," *Hamlet*, I. v. 77. The lack of connecting particles gives the effect of emphasis.

422. *prompting*, 'suggesting;' it qualifies *impulsion*; for the allusion see l. 222.

423. *infest*, harass; cf. *Tempest*, v. 246, where Mr Aldis Wright quotes Cotgrave, "Infester: To infest, annoy, molest." From Lat. *infestare*, *infestus*, 'hostile.'

424. *state*, i.e. I do not enter into the details of that. Cf. the definition of *state* in Johnson's *Dict.*, "to represent in all the circumstances of modification;" with the quotation which Todd gives from Atterbury, "I pretended not fully to state, much less to demonstrate, the truth contained in the text." Manoa means that he will not *discuss* the matter: he passes to a point on which there can be no dispute.

430. *tacit*, undivulged, Lat. *tacitum*.

433. *score*, debt; see G.

434—39. See *Judg.* xvi. 23.

434. *popular*, like *populous*, is almost always dissyllabic in M. the *u* not being sounded; cf. 16, and *P. L.* II. 313, XII. 338.

436. *pomp*, cf. l. 1310. Probably in the sense 'festival procession,' like Gk. *πομπή*; cf. Bullokar's *Expositor*, 1616, "Pompe, a great shew, a solemne traine." So *King John*, III. 1. 104, "shall braying trumpets...be measure to our pomp?" Later came the sense 'pageant,' 'spectacle,' as in *Midsummer N. D.* I. 1. 15. See *L'Al.* 127.

439. *thine*, i.e. thy hands; *them*, i.e. to their loss, a dative of disadvantage. Referring to *Judg.* xvi. 24, "Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy...which slew many of us." Dryden seems to have imitated Milton; cf. *Alexander's Feast* (1697), "thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain."

440—447. Newton well remarks that this reproach which Samson feels so keenly was the invention of the poet; also that it was rightly placed in the mouth of Manoa; from the Chorus it would have sounded insulting.

442. *disglorified*, robbed of glory; these compounds with *dis* as a negative prefix are very common in M.; cf. *dispeople*, *disenthral*, *disexercise* (in the *Areopagitica*), *disburden*.

443. Mr Bridges scans, "By the | idol|atrous rout | amidst | their wine | ;" i.e. treating *atr* as elided. So again in 1378 and 1670 (*idolatry*). *rout*=multitude, is a favourite word with M., and always depreciatory. Fr. *route*=Lat. *rupta*, a broken mass of troops.

446. i.e. 'the most shameful of all reproaches that could have befallen thee;' *reproach* is a collective word for 'disgrace,' 'infamy.'

450. *advanced*, raised aloft; cf. *P. L.* v. 191, "Ye mists and exha-



lations...still advance his praise." It is the metaphor of 'advancing,' i.e. lifting up, a standard. Cf. *Romeo*, v. 3. 96, "death's pale flag is not advanced there;" imitated by Giles Fletcher, "And, after all, Death doeth his flag advance," Grosart's ed. p. 97. So *P. L.* I. 536, "the imperial ensign...full high advanced," and v. 588.

451. Cf. I. 1430. Cf. *Levit.* xxv. 44, "the heathen that are round about you."

453. *idolists*, worshippers of idols. M. appears to have coined the word; cf. *idolism* in *P. R.* IV. 234. Perhaps the termination *ist* implies contempt; cf. the *Tenure of Kings*, where he invents a noun *motionist*—"these nimble motionists can find not even legs to stand upon"—*P. W.* II. 45. *scandal*, cause of offence; see G.

454. *diffidence*, distrust.

455. *propense*, inclined; cf. the *Apol. for Smeat.*, "being likewise propense to all such as were...worthy of esteem," *P. W.* III. 111. Jeremy Taylor says, "God is more propense to rewards than to punishments." Cf. *propension*=inclination, in Shak., *Troilus*, II. 2. 133.

456. *fall off*, apostatise; cf. 'fall away,' *Hebrews*, vi. 6.

459. *harbour*, shelter, entertain; usually intrans. in M. Cf. *P. L.* I. 185, "There rest, if any rest can harbour there."

460. *only*, one, sole.

461. M. always accents the noun, as we do the verb, *contést*; cf. *P. L.* XI. 800, "In sharp contést of battle found no aid."

463. *me overthrown*. Cf. *P. L.* VII. 142: "the seat Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed, He trusted to have seized." In Shakespearean, as in modern E., the absolute case is a nominative: in O. E. it was a dative. Morris (*Outlines*, p. 103) quotes Wyclif, *Matt.* xxviii. 13, "Thei han stolen him us slepinge." M. retained the earlier idiom, treating the pronoun as a dative (but Masson takes it as accus.), perhaps because this seemed closer to the use of the ablative absolute in Latin: "*me overthrown*" has more of a Latin sound than "*I overthrown*."

466. *connive*, tolerate it; see G. *provoked*, challenged, Lat. *provocatus*; cf. 643. So *Antony and C.* III. 8. 3, "provoke not battle."

467. *assert*, maintain the cause of, champion; cf. *P. L.* I. 25, "assert eternal Providence," or Pope, *Iliad*, II. 339, "sedition silence, and assert the throne."

469. *discomfit*, defeat; see G.

470. *won on*= 'won over.' In Elizabethan E. *on* often has the same sense as *over*; cf. *Cymbeline*, v. 5. 418, "the power that I have on you." Shak. uses 'win upon,' *Antony*, II. 4. 9, *Coriol.*, I. 1. 224.

471. *confusion*, ruin, overthrow; a much stronger word in Eliza-  
bethan than in modern E. *blank*, confound; see G.

472—3. *these words I...receive*. M. has borrowed a favourite  
formula of the Greek dramatists; cf. Soph. *Elect.* 668, where Clytæ-  
nestra exclaims, when the pædagogus says that he has brought good  
news, "I welcome the omen, accept what you have said," ἐδεξάμην τὸ  
ῥηθέν. So Eurip. *Ion*, 562, φίλον γε φθέγμ' ἐδεξάμην τὸδε (spoken under  
similar circumstances).

476. *competition*, rivalry; cf. Bacon, *Of Envy*, "triumphing over  
all opposition or competition." Cf. Lat. *competitor* = a rival candidate.

479. *forgot*. Schmidt notes (*Lexicon*) that in Shakespeare *forgot*  
is much more common than *forgotten*, which only occurs in combina-  
tion with a noun; e.g. *forgotten dust*, *things forgotten*.

481. *made way to*, approached.

482. Note that *lords* occurs often in *S. A.*; cf. the phrase "lords of  
the Philistines," *Judg.* xvi. 5, *Josh.* iii. 3, and elsewhere.

484. *utmost*; cf. 1153. As a noun it is generally used either in the  
phrase 'to the utmost,' or with a clause, e.g. 'the utmost you can do.'

485. *pains*, punishments; we speak of 'pains and penalties.'

486. Note the 'irony' in "no more canst do them harm."

489. *pay on*, i.e. continue to pay; with verbs the preposition *on*  
often signified 'continuation,' 'without ceasing.' Shakespeare has 'say  
on,' 'speak on,' 'scoff on,' 'read on,' etc.

493. *heinous*, hateful; see G. *fact*, deed.

494—95. *to be excluded...avoided*; connect *to be* with *deserving*.

496—97. Printed so in the original ed., l. 496 being a verse of four  
feet, and l. 497 an Alexandrine. Many editors, without any authority,  
transfer *But I* from 497 to 496, making each a line of five feet.

497. Contrast "*God's* counsel" with "*secrets of men*," l. 492.

499. i.e. his conduct was, at least, weak, if not actually impious.

500, 501. Alluding—by an anachronism like that in l. 150—to the  
story of Tantalus, who for betraying the secrets of Zeus was punished  
by being placed in the midst of water, beneath a fruit-tree, without the  
power to reach either and slake his thirst. Cf. *P. L.* II. 612—614,  
"the water flies.....as once it fled The lip of Tantalus." Euripides  
says of him (*Orest.* 10), ἀκόλαστον ἔσχε γλῶσσαν, ἀσχίστην νόσον, and  
Ovid calls him *garrulus*; see *Ars Am.* II. 603 *et seq.* *parables*, stories,  
legends. *Abyss*, Hades; see G. *their*, i.e. the Hell in which they—  
pagans—believe. The whole description is applicable rather to the  
*sinner* than the *sin* (499) itself.

502—3. i.e. 'it is sufficient to repent: you need not go out of your way to afflict yourself.' M. puts the same thought in the *Christian Doct.*, VIII.: "The love of man towards himself consists in loving himself next to God, and in seeking his own temporal and eternal good ... Opposed to this is a perverse hatred of self," *P. W.* v. 78. Cf. also the *Areopagitica*, "why should we affect a rigour contrary to the manner of God and of nature?" *P. W.* II. 75.

502. *contrite*, as always in M.; cf. *P. L.* XI. 90, "He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite."

505. *bids*, i.e. bids thee avoid it.

508—9. *forfeit*, penalty; see G. *quit thee*, remit the debt to thee: *thee* a dative. Cf. *M. of Venice*, IV. I. 381, "to quit the fine for one half of his goods," i.e. release him from paying the fine. *quit*, see G.

512. *him who, imploring*; e.g. David in *Ps.* li., or Hezekiah.

514. *argues over-just*, proves a man to be over-just. For *argue* = show, prove, Lat. *arguo*, cf. l. 1193. It is the commonest sense in Shakespeare; cf. 2 *Hen. IV.* IV. I. 160, "That argues but the shame of your offence."

515. i.e. more displeased for the offence *against* oneself than for that against God. Shak. once uses *self-offence*, but differently; cf. *Measure for M.* III. 2. 279—80: "More nor less to others paying Than by self-offences weighing;" i.e. weighing our own crimes when we judge others.

516—7. i.e. 'such offered means as God—who knows?—may have set:' *means* being the object of *set*. Keightley puts a full stop at *means*, explaining *what offered means* = 'whatever means may be offered,' which seems very awkward. *who knows but*, cf. *P. L.* IX. 1146, X. 787, "who knows But I shall die a living death?"

526. *instinct*, impulse. Scan *instinct*, as always in M.; cf. 1545.

528. i.e. the Anakim, *Numb.* xiii. 33, *Deut.* xi. 21. *famous...* *blazed*, agreeing with *I.* *blazed* = much proclaimed, spoken of; see G.

531. *my affront*, i.e. to meet me. Cf. *Cymbeline*, v. 3. 87, where "gave the affront" = met or encountered the enemy. In *Hamlet*, III. I. 31, "affront Ophelia" = meet her. Cf. *confront*.

533. *venereal trains*, snares of love (*Venus*); *trains*, see G.

535. *to lay*, i.e. so softened as to lay. For the allusion, cf. *P. L.* IX. 1060, and see *Judg.* xvi. 19, "she made him sleep upon her knees." Todd cites a very similar passage in the *Faerie Q.* II. 6. 14.

537. *me*, from me; a dative of disadvantage.

541—545. The object of the Chorus is to mitigate Samson's extreme self-contempt by reminding him that if he had been weak

and self-indulgent in one thing, he had been temperate and strong in another.

543. *thou*, emphatic (like *thee*, l. 546), in contrast to *famous warrior*. Samson, being a Nazarite, was bound to "separate himself from wine and *strong drink*" (cf. l. 554)—*Numb.* vi. 2.

*dancing ruby*. Cf. *Com.* 672, 673, "this cordial Julep here, That flames and dances in his crystal bounds." *dancing* implies 'flashing;' Shak. applies it to the quivering light of the sun and stars; cf. *Much Ado*, II. i. 349, *Coriol.* v. 4. 54. *rubied* is an epithet of nectar, *P. L.* v. 633.

545. M. has combined *Judg.* ix. 13, "should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man?", with *Psalms* civ. 15, "wine that maketh glad the heart of man." *gods and men* is a conventional phrase for 'all beings, human and divine.'

546. M. always accents *crystalline*; cf. *P. L.* vi. 772, "On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned." So *P. L.* III. 482, VII. 271. Contrast *Cymbeline*, v. 4. 113, "Mount, eagle, to my palace crystalline."

548. i.e. wherever a fresh stream flowed in the direction of (*against*) the rising sun (*eastern ray*). Prof. Percival is the only editor who has noticed that *eastern* is an allusion to the 'holy waters' seen in the vision of Ezekiel. Cf. *Ezek.* xlvi. 1, "Behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house *eastward*;" and verses 8, 9 where the waters are described as having healing, life-giving powers. The same editor quotes Burton's *Anatomy*, II. ii. 1. 1, "Rain water is purest... next to it fountain water that riseth in the east, and runneth eastward, from a quick running spring." I may add that Sir Thomas Browne discusses in his *Vulgar Errors*, vi. vii., a number of current beliefs as to the efficacy of a position facing eastward, and a footnote by Wren says, "The waters of those springs are held to be most medicinal (of all others) which rise in the east: hence in the west parts of England, to difference such from all others, they call them by a significant name, East-up-springs, intimating by that proper name, a proper kind of excellency, above other springs," Pickering's ed. III. 241. We have, perhaps, a foretaste of this line in *L'Al.* 59, with which, in turn, cf. *Midsummer N. D.* III. 2. 391.

549. Pope has borrowed from M.; cf. the *Essay on Man*, III. 68, "favoured man by touch ethereal slain." *fiery rod*, i.e. the sun's ray. Cf. Eurip. *Supplices*, 650, λαμπρά μὲν ἀκτὶς ἡλίου, κανὼν σαφὴς, | ἔβαλλε γαῖαν; or *Com.* 340, "long levelled *rule* of streaming light."

550. *the clear milky juice*, i.e. the fresh water; but the expression is

strange. Cf. *P. L.* v. 306, "nectarous draughts from milky stream." Perhaps in each case *milky*=sweet as milk. Drayton (*Polyolbion*, XIII. 171) speaks of "the milch dew," where he may mean 'sweet' or 'fragrant.' Or *milky* might point to the white froth one often sees in the side-currents of a brook. *juice*=*fluid*, "a strong oxymoron, but he uses it with reference to the juice of the grape, to which he opposes it" (Keightley).

551. *and*; it connects *refreshed* with *allaying*.

552. *fumes*, vapours; cf. Dryden, *Aurengzebe*:

"Power like new wine does your weak brain surprise,  
And its mad fumes in hot discourses rise."

Cf. *P. L.* ix. 1050, and the *Tempest*, v. i. 67, "fumes that mantle Their clearer reason," i.e. overspread and obscure it.

553—557. M. himself rarely drank wine, and he repeatedly advocates abstinence in this respect. Cf. *P. L.* xi. 530, and *Christian Doct.* ix. In the *Apol. for Smeat.* he refuses to be called "a sack-drinker," since he is "sober both of wine and word," *P. W.* III. 123.

557. *liquid*, i.e. clear, transparent; Lat. *liquidus*. Cf. *Com.* 980, "there I suck the liquid air," and Vergil's *nare per æstatem liquidam*, *G.* iv. 59.

560, 561. The metaphor of defending a fortress. Cf. the *Areopagitica*, "that single endeavour they knew would be but fond labour; to shut and fortify one gate against corruption, and be necessitated to leave others round about wide open," *P. W.* II. 73.

*what boots*, i.e. of what use is it. Minsheu (1617) has, "Boote is an old word, and signifieth help, aid...we say, what booteth or auaieth it?" and Sherwood (1650), "It booteth not, *c'est en vain, cela ne profite rien.*" Middle E. *bote*=remedy, succour, from the root seen in *better*, *best*.

566. i.e. 'wherein serve but to sit: that is all I am capable of.'

568. *redundant*, in the lit. sense 'flowing.' Cf. Wordsworth, *Lao-damia*: "Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair

As when their breath enriched Thessalian air."

Cf. *P. L.* ix. 503. Warton in his *First of April* speaks of streams that flow "redundant through the sparkling grass."

569. *robustious*, i.e. vigorous; commonly in a bad sense=violet; cf. *Eikonoklastes*, "in Scotland they had handled the bishops in a more robustious manner," *P. W.* I. 349. So *Hamlet*, III. 2. 10, "see a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to pieces." It has a good sense in *Hen. V.* III. 7. 159.

571. *sedentary*, caused by sitting (*sedere*). *craze*, break down, im-

pair. Cf. *Lear*, III. 4. 175, "grief hath crazed my wits;" and Dryden, "a judgment so weak and crazed," *Of Dram. Poesy*, 99. Hence *crazy* = weakminded. See G.

574. *draff*, refuse; cf. *P. L.* x. 630, "lick up the draff and filth;" see G.

578. *annoy*, damage, hurt; cf. *P. R.* III. 365, "able by invasion to annoy thy country." See G.

579, 580. *bed-rid*, confined to bed, infirm; see G. *outworn*; in Shakespeare *outworn*=past. Cf. *Sonnet* 68, "the map of days outworn"=past times; so "outworn age"=past ages, *Sonnet*, 64.

581. *a fountain*, i.e. *En-hakkore*, "the fountain of him who called."

582. *from the dry ground*. The verse, 19, in *Judg.* xv., "But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout," is not clear. Scholars variously interpret the Hebrew to mean that the water sprang (i) from the jaw itself (so the A. V. and the Vulgate), or (ii) from the cavity of a rock, the *place* being called *Lehi* (so the margin of the A. V., the Revised V. and the Septuagint); in the latter case we must substitute "in *Lehi*" for "in the jaw." M. followed this view; cf. also Josephus, v. viii. 9, "God...raised him up a plentiful fountain of sweet water at a certain rock."

583. *brunt*, the heat (see G.) or burden of the battle.

586. *I persuade me*=I am sure, convinced, cf. 1495; a common Shakespearean use. Cf. *Hen. VIII.* III. 2. 50: "I persuade me, from her Will fall some blessing to this land."

587. *miraculous*. A trisyllable; cf. *Macbeth*, IV. 3. 147, "A most mirá'c'ulous work in this good king."

588. *not for naught*. There is the same grim 'irony' as in l. 486.

589. *frustrate*. In Elizabethan E. participles in *-ate*=Lat. *-atus* are very common. Many occur in Shakespeare, e.g. *consecrate* ("the imperial seat, to virtue consecrate," *Titus*, I. I. 14), *situate* etc. Cf. *separate*, 31. For the influence of Latin forms on the English p. p. see l. 363, note.

590. Samson's presentiment of disaster reminds us of Antonio's sadness in the first scene of the *Merchant of Venice*, and Hamlet's disquiet before the fencing match.

591. *treat with*, i.e. have dealings or intercourse with.

592. *light*. Shak., who is fond of quibbling on the word, several times uses *light*=*life*; cf. *Othello*, v. 2. 10, *Rich. II.* I. 3. 221.

593. Cf. "double night of darkness and of shades," *Com.* 335. *double*, because it is the darkness of blindness and of death.

594, 595. *genial*, see G. *flat*, i.e. like a liquid effervesced; cf. Hamlet's "weary, stale, flat and unprofitable," I. 2. 133. Coleridge recollected these lines when he wrote his 'Ode on Dejection,' III.

600. *humours black*=*melancholy*, from μέλας and χολή. "Ancient physicians recognised four *Cardinal Humours*, viz. blood, choler, phlegm and melancholy (black bile), regarded by them as determining by their conditions and proportions, a person's physical and mental qualities and dispositions" (*Century Dictionary*). This old physiology of the 'humours' is often alluded to by M.; cf. *Com.* 809, 810, *P. L.* XI. 543—545; in each passage he speaks of depression of spirits as caused by the black bile or humour. See also the preface (ll. 8—10) of *S. A. Nash, Terrors of the Night*, 1594, says: "The grossest part of our blood is the melancholy humour; which with his thick-steaming fenny vapours casts a mist over the spirit...It (melancholy) sinketh down to the bottom like the lees of the wine, corrupteth all the blood, and is the cause of lunacy." Similar illustrations might be quoted from Burton's *Anatomy*. Ben Jonson introduces "the four Humours" in his *Masque of Hymen*; but the *locus classicus* on the subject is the *Induction* to his *Every Man out of his Humour*.

603. *prosecute*, go on with.

605. Todd notes that Euripides (*Hippol.* 478) has the expression λόγοι θελκτήριοι. Cf. *P. L.* IX. 290, "with healing words Adam replied." The metaphor is the same as in ll. 184—186.

606. The change of the metre to a rapid, irregular rhythm is obviously intended to represent the increasing emotion of Samson.

612. *accidents*, pains, tortures; see G.

615. *answerable*, corresponding, similar. Cf. *Tenure of Kings*, "answerable was the opinion of another learned divine," *P. W.* II. 25; and *Areopagitica*, "a virtue answerable to your highest actions."

620. Ovid, *Met.* x. 189, has *immedicabile vulnus*.

624. Cf. ll. 19, 20. *apprehensive*, sensitive. The word which now means 'full of alarm,' signified in Shakespearian E. "quick to take impressions, *physical* or *mental*:" here the former, but usually the latter, as in *All's Well*, I. 2. 60: "Younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses All but new things disdain."

625. *exulcerate*. Minsheu, 1617, has the verb, defining it, 'to raise into ulcers by irritation.'

627. *med'cinal*. Spelt so in the first ed., and in *Com.* 634; cf. the modern tendency to abbreviate *medicine* to *med'cine*. These are the only places where M. uses the word, and in each it must be treated

as a dissyllable by the elision of the second *i* as well as of the first. Thus the present verse is of four feet—"or méd|'cinal li|quor can | asswage|;" the verse in *Com.* is of five feet—"and yet | more méd|'cinal is | it than | that Mo|ly." In either case the *i* is silent. *asswage*, see G.

628. For *Alp* used (as by late Latin poets and mediæval travellers) of any high mountain, especially if snow-capped, cf. *P. L.* II. 620. The *New E. D.* quotes Hakluyt's *Voyages*, I. 112, "Certaine Alpes or mountaines directly Southward;" and notes that M. has the word in his *Tetrachordon* in a metaphorical sense,—“this adamantine Alp of wedlock has leave to dissolve,” *P. W.* III. 333. Usually *Alp* is said to be a corruption of *albus*; it may however be a Celtic word, akin to Gaelic, *alp*=a high mountain, Irish *alp*.

630. Cf. *Winter's Tale*, v. 3. 102, “bequeath to death your numbness.”

635. *message*, messenger; cf. l. 1512, note.

637. *abstemious*, Lat. *abstemius*, i.e. refraining from (*ab*) strong drink (*temetum*). Blount, *Glossographia*, has, “Abstemious, that drinks no wine, sober.” *amain*, see G., and cf. *P. R.* II. 430, “they...thrive in wealth amain.”

639. *nerve*, muscle; see G.

643. *appointment*, command; cf. *Henry VIII.* II. 2. 134, “That good fellow, If I command him, follows my appointment.”

645. *repeated*, i.e. repeatedly made.

647. To Samson “hope never comes, That comes to all,” *P. L.* I. 66, 67.

651. *balm*, Fr. *baume*, Lat. *balsamum*, signified a medicinal ointment or oil, especially that wherewith the English sovereigns were anointed at their coronation. Cf. *Richard II.* III. 2. 55, IV. 207. Scan ‘miseries’ as a dissyllable, by eliding *er*. Mr Bridges notes that this elision never occurs in *P. L.*

654. *fortitude*, courage; in modern E. it rather implies constancy or power of endurance. For the sentiment cf. *P. L.* IX. 31, “The better fortitude Of patience and heroic martyrdom.” M. may be thinking of the praise of *fortitudo* in Chaucer's *Remedium contra Accidiam*, the *Persones Tale*.

655—59. ‘i.e. and many are the consolatories writ with a view to the bearing of calamities.’

656. *incident*, liable to befall; cf. l. 774, and the *Areopagitica*, “errors in a good government and in a bad are equally almost



incident," *P. W.* II. 100. So in Shakespeare, e.g. in the *Winter's Tale*, IV. 4. 125.

658. *sought*, a p.p. used adjectivally, with the sense 'carefully collected,' to qualify *persuasion*: it balances *studied*, the epithet of *argument*. For the order, see l. 119. Warburton needlessly conjectured *fraught*.

659. Cf. Horace, *Ep.* I. I. 34, *Sunt verba et voces, quibus hunc lenire dolorem* | *Possis*. Cf. ll. 184, 185.

662. *mood*. The metaphor of the passage—cf. *sound, tune, dissonant*—shows that *mood*, 'strain' or 'harmony,' is the musical word = Lat. *modus*, a term applied to the arrangement of intervals in the musical scale; cf. *P. L.* I. 550, "the Dorian mood of flutes and soft recorders;" with *Lyc.* 87. Cf. Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse*, "how many cliffes (i.e. *clefts*), how many moodes, how many flats, how many sharps," Arber's *Reprint*, p. 28. Sometimes spelt *mode*; distinct from *mood* = disposition, Germ. *mut*.

In *dissonant* there may be a glance at the notion that certain styles of music harmonise with, or produce, certain emotions. Cf. the *Republic*, 398, where Plato rejects the Ionian and Lydian 'modes' as effeminate, and accepts the Phrygian and Dorian: the Phrygian, according to Aristotle (*Politics*, VIII. 5), raising enthusiasm in the listener—the Dorian, "a moderate and settled temper."

667. *what is Man*; a phrase frequent in the Bible; cf. *Ps.* viii. 4, "what is man, that thou art mindful of him?;" and *Job*, vii. 17.

672. *the angelic orders*. According to a mediæval belief the heavenly beings were divided into three Hierarchies, and each Hierarchy was subdivided into three Orders or Choirs. These Orders comprised the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones (*θρόνοι*), forming the first Hierarchy; Dominations (*κυριότητες*), Virtues (*δυνάμεις*), and Powers (*ἐξουσίαι*), forming the second; Principalities (*ἀρχαί*), Archangels and Angels, forming the third. This system was deduced, in the main, from St Paul's words in *Ephes.* i. 21 and *Colos.* i. 16. First formulated in the treatise *περὶ τῆς οὐρανίας ἱεραρχίας* which was long attributed, though falsely, to Dionysius, the Areopagite, the notion had great influence in the Middle Ages; cf. Dante, *Paradiso*, XXVIII. 98—126. M. accepted it; cf. *P. L.* I. 737, "Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright;" and *Church Gov.* I. I, "Yea, the angels themselves...are distinguished into their celestial principedoms satrapies," *P. W.* II. 442.

676. *the summer fly*, typifying short life. Cf. *Love's L. L.* v. 2. 408, and 3 *Henry VI.* II. 6. 17, "sprung like summer flies." So George Herbert in *The Temple*, 'Complaining.'

677. *heads without name*, persons unknown to fame. Cf. the use of *κάρα* and *κεφαλή* meaning 'a person.' So *κάρηνον* in the plural, especially in the Homeric phrase *νεκῶν ἀμειννὰ κάρηνα*=the dead; and *caput* in Latin, e.g. in Terence, *Andria* II. 2. 34, *ridiculum caput*.

678—704. In this passage the speaker is really Milton himself, and we must interpret his words as a reference, first (ll. 678—696), to the political changes in England in 1659—1660, especially the overthrow and misfortunes of the Independent, Republican party; secondly, to his own troubles (ll. 697—704).

679. Cf. *P. R.* II. 137, "with more than human gifts from Heaven adorned" (said of Christ).

680. The work which M. would have wished to see effected fully, and not "in part," was the establishment of a Commonwealth.

682. *toward these*. On the abdication of Richard Cromwell in 1659 the Independent Republicans were for a brief space supreme.

683. i.e. in the very midst of their prosperity. Cf. *P. L.* IV. 564, where "at highth of noon" is used literally of 'midday.' See 1612.

684. The Restoration of the Stuarts is meant.

685—6. *favours*, because God had helped the Republicans in their struggle against tyranny in Church and State: *service*, because they in return had declared for Independency in Religion, and a Commonwealth in Politics (Warburton).

686. *of service*, i.e. *with no regard* of service done from them to thee.

687. *remit*, put back.

691. *trespass*, there had been dissensions among the Independent leaders; *omission*, they had not been sufficiently thorough in their reform of the constitution (Warburton).

693—94. The *literary* form of the allusion is from the classics; cf. *Iliad*, I. 4, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλώρια τεύχε κύνεσσιν | ὠλυνόισι τε πᾶσι. The *historical* allusion is to the disinterment of the bodies of Cromwell, Bradshaw and Ireton. In accordance with a motion passed unanimously in the House of Commons, Dec. 4, 1660, they were removed from their graves on Jan. 26, 1661, and on Jan. 30, the twelfth anniversary of the death of Charles I., were "hanged on the gallows from nine in the morning till six at night...thousands of people being spectators," Evelyn's *Diary*. Cf. also Pepys, who would not go to Tyburn himself, though his wife did. A tradition grew up in the last century that the body taken from Westminster Abbey was not Cromwell's at all.

694. *captived*; this refers to the Parliamentary generals, Lambert

and Martin. Lambert was condemned to death at the same time as Vane (June, 1662), but reprieved, and imprisoned in Guernsey till his death in 1694. *Scan captived.*

695. *or to, i.e. or leav'st them to.* He is thinking of the fate of the Regicides, in particular of Sir Henry Vane, chief of the Independents. At the Restoration Vane was omitted from the Indemnity Act, but a petition from both Houses asking that his life might be spared was accepted by Charles II. Yet, on June 2, 1662, he was put on his trial, received a very unfair one, was condemned, and on June 14 executed. Charles wrote of him to Clarendon, "too dangerous a man to let live, if we can honestly put him out of the way." Milton's feeling towards him is shown in the sonnet, "Vane, young in years."

697. *in poverty.* The property left by M. at his death barely amounted to £1000 (Masson, *Life*, vi. 743). He is said to have lost in the fire of London the only house that belonged to him. His poetry did not enrich him: for *P. L.* he received £10.

698—700. M. is glancing at his own ill-health; cf. Johnson's *Life*, "when he had attained his sixty-sixth year, the gout, with which he had been long tormented, prevailed over the enfeebled powers of nature." Aubrey says, "towards his latter end he was visited with the gout, spring and fall (i.e. autumn). He would be very cheerful even in his gout fits, and sing," *Letters from the Bodleian*, II. 449.

699. *deformed*; in the active sense, 'disfiguring;' cf. *Comedy of Errors*, v. 298:

"And careful hours with Time's deformed hand  
Have written strange defeatures in my face."

700. *crude*, premature. Dunster compares Homer, *Od.* xv. 356, *ἐν ὥμῳ γῆραι*, and Hesiod, *Works*, *ὥμῳ γῆραι δῶκεν*. *crude*; see G.

701, 702. i.e. suffering, although never intemperate themselves, the punishment (*viz.* sickness) which usually is the result of an intemperate life.

701. *disordinate*, irregular in their lives, intemperate; *disordered* in *Lear*, I. 4. 263, has the same force.

706. *minister*, servant, in the Latin sense.

710. *of sea*; introducing the simile of the vessel.

714, 715. Alluding to the expression "ships of Tarshish," frequent in the Bible, e.g. in *Isai.* xxiii. 1, 14, *Psalms* xlviii. 7, "Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind." Clearly M. identified *Tarshish* with *Tarsus* in Cilicia; more commonly it was identified with *Tartessus*, in Southern Spain, since *Tartessus* is known to have

been an emporium of the Phœnicians, and it is generally in connection with the Phœnician city of Tyre that "ships of Tarshish" are mentioned, as in *Ezek.* xxvii. 12, 25.

715, 716. *isles of Javan*=isles of Greece; cf. *Isai.* lxvi. 19, where all the names represent the Gentile world, "to Tarshish...to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off." Javan, son of Japhet, stands for the Greek race; the name, being the same word as *Ion* (older form *Ἰάων*), whence *Ionians*, the section of the Greeks with whom Orientals were best acquainted through Phœnician trade. Cf. *P. L.* i. 508, "The Ionian gods, of Javan's issue." (See *Bible Dict.* s. v.)

716. *Gadire*, i.e. Cadiz. Spelt *Gadier* in first ed.; cf. Gk. *Γάδειρα*. In *P. R.* iv. 77, he uses the Latin *Gades*. Greek forms are appropriate in *S. A.*; see l. 281.

717. *bravery*, finery; see G.

*tackle*, or *tackling*=the ropes of a vessel, distinct from the sails; cf. *Richard III.* iv. 4. 233, "like a poor bark of sails and tackling reef;" and the *Tempest*, i. 2. 146—47.

719. *hold them play*, make play for them—*them* being a dative. We should say, 'hold them *in* play.'

720, 721. *amber*, i.e. ambergris; see G. *harbinger*, precursor; see G. *a damsel train*; they do not come on the stage.

724. *Dalila* is from a root signifying to droop, hang down like a palm: the name may refer either to her grace of form, or to her weakness. Note that the Bible does not say that she was a Philistine. Josephus takes it for granted; so of course does M. throughout *S. A.*, and the view is generally held. Yet, if she was a Philistine, it is curious that so large a bribe as that mentioned in *Judg.* xvi. 5, should have been required to win her over (*Lias*).

*thy wife*; the Bible does not state this; contrast *P. L.* ix. 1060, 1061, where M. has followed Josephus v. 8; no doubt, in *S. A.* he wished to emphasize the resemblance to his own case.

728. The simile is from *Iliad*, viii. 306: μήκων δ' ὡς ἐτέρωσε κάρη βάλεν, ἥν' ἐνὶ κήπῳ | καρπῷ βριθομένη νοτλήσῃ τε ελαρινῆσιν. Vergil had anticipated M. in borrowing it, *Æn.* ix. 436, and Dryden followed; cf. *Aurengzebe*, "Your head declined, as hiding grief from view, Droops, like a rose surcharged with morning dew." (From Todd's note.)

*dew*, Shakespeare is fond of comparing dew to tears; cf. *Lucrece*, 1226—27, *Midsummer N. D.* iv. i. 60, 61.

729. *addressed*, prepared; see G. Cf. *address*=preparation, 731.

736—7. *fact*, action; cf. 493. *event*, issue (Lat. *eventus*).

738—9. *penance*=penitence. *assured*. Some editors supply *is* from *hath* in 737. But M. has a peculiar use of the p.p. with *though*, in imitation of the Latin ablative absolute, with *quamvis* or *quamquam* and a participle. Cf. *P. L.* I. 140—41, "vigour soon returns, Though all our glory extinct," i.e. *extincta quamvis gloria*. The present case may be an instance of the idiom.

747. Cf. 907—908. She means that she never anticipated such an evil result of her rash act. But the plea is false; see *Judg.* xvi. 5 (quoted at l. 800).

748. He calls her a hyæna because that animal was supposed to have peculiar powers of deceiving men, e.g. by simulating the human voice and drawing them to destruction; cf. Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse*, "*Hyæna* speakes like a friend, and devoures like a Foe," Arber's *Reprint*, p. 20. Or by feigning to shed tears; cf. Ben Jonson, *The Fox*, IV. 1, "Out, thou camelion! now thine eyes Vie tears with the hyæna." Cf. ll. 728—730, where the Chorus tell Samson that Dalila is weeping. In Philemon Holland's *Pliny* (1601) we read, "Magicians hold that in the Hyæna there is a certain Magicall Vertue, attributing a wonderfull power thereto, in transporting the mind of man or woman," vol. II. p. 311.

752. *move*, propose; cf. *motion*, l. 222.

754—6. *husband* is the direct object after *try*, while the clauses *how far...* and *which way...* are indirect questions dependent on *try*.

755. *bears*=endures, holds out; cf. *King John*, v. 6. 38, "tempt us not to bear above our power."

759, 760. *that*=so that. *principled*, taught, instructed; cf. *On Education*, "others betake them to state affairs, with souls so unprincipled in virtue," *P. W.* III. 466; and *Com.* 367, "unprincipled in Virtue's book." See also the tract *Of True Religion*, "to tolerate men thus principled in religion," i.e. holding these principles, *P. W.* II. 514.

761. Milton had forgiven and received back his own wife who had returned to her father's house soon after her marriage, and declined for some time to live with her husband. He may be alluding to it here, as he certainly does in *P. L.* x. 909—946. Their marriage seems to have been unhappy throughout.

763. The snake cherished in the breast has long been a type of treachery and ingratitude. Cf. 2 *Henry VI.* III. 1. 343, "you but warm the starved snake, Who, cherish'd in your breasts, will sting your hearts," lines almost repeated in *Rich. II.* III. 2. 131. Cf. also Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, II. 2, "you are an impudent snake indeed, sir. Are

you scarce warm, and do you show your sting?" and Sylvester's *Du Bartas* (Grosart, I. 184):

"Cruell Snakes w<sup>ch</sup> thy kinde brest did warm,  
Sting thee to death, with their ungratefull swarm."

764. The expression 'cut off,' implying utter destruction, is very common in the Bible; cf. *Exod.* xii. 15, "that soul shall be cut off from Israel." So *Hamlet*, I. 5. 76, *Lear*, IV. 5. 38. By a touch of irony Samson is made to apply to himself the very words that later on, ll. 1156—7, Harapha flings at him.

767. *extenuate*, palliate, make light (i.e. Lat. *tenuis*). Cf. *Othello*, V. 2. 342—43, "nothing extenuate, Nor set down aught in malice."

769, 770. i.e. 'not exaggerated, or with due allowances made to counterbalance it.' M. uses *aggravations*=exaggerations in the *Doctrine of Divorce*, chap. xv. Cf. Addison, "accordingly they got a painter... by a little aggravation of the features to change it (the face) into the Saracen's head." *poise*=O. F. *pois*, weight, from Lat. *pensum*.

774. i.e. 'but one which is incident to;' *incident*, cf. 656.

775. *importune*; more commonly *importunate*, but cf. Bacon, *Of Envy*, "touching the affection of envy...of all affections it is the most importune." Perhaps this was the reading intended by the editors of the first Folio in *Lear*, IV. 4. 26. See *P. L.* IX. 610.

777. i.e. *to publish* them was *a weakness*.

778—80. Cf. Eve's reproach to Adam, *P. L.* IX. 1115—61. It is the argument which Samson used against himself, ll. 200—2.

782. *but*, i.e. but you will say; cf. 895.

784. Cf. *Com.* 679, "why should you be so cruel to yourself?" and Shakespeare's first *Sonnet*, "Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel." In the translation of More's *Utopia* we read, "When nature biddeth the (i.e. *thee*) to be good and gentle to other, she commaundeth the not to be cruell and ungentle to the selfe," p. 107, Pitt Press ed. Probably the idea was suggested by *Proverbs*, xi. 17, "the merciful man doeth good to his own soul, but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh."

785. *come to parle*, i.e. treat, confer. *parle*=*parley* generally meant, as it does here, a conference to settle disputed points. Shakespeare has both words often in this sense. Fr. *parler*=Low Lat. *parabolare*, to talk; cf. Fr. *parole*=Lat. *parabola*, Gk. παραβολή.

786. *kind*, quality, nature.

787. i.e. 'let thy weakness be an excuse for mine:' *forgive*=condone. *censure*=judge; see 948.

794. *fancy*, love, affection; a common meaning in Shakespeare.

Cf. *Merchant of V.*, "tell me where is fancy bred." So *fancy-free*=free from the power of love, *Midsummer N. D.* II. 1. 164.

794, 795. In *Judg.* xv. it is implied rather that the first wife left Samson (just as Milton's wife had left him), or was taken away by her father; cf., however, verse 2, "And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion." This argues inconstancy on the part of Samson such as Dalila charges him with.

796. *endear*, i.e. *myself*; but grammatically the object is *thee*.

800—2. Contrast *Judg.* xvi. 5, where the lords of the Philistines say to her, "Entice him (Samson).....that we may bind him to afflict him," or as the margin renders, "to humble him."

803. *made for me*, was to my advantage. "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace," *Romans*, xiv. 19. Cf. *Of Reformation*, "how little therefore those ancient times make for modern bishops hath been plainly discoursed," *P. W.* II. 378. So 'made to'=contributed to; cf. Bacon's *Hist. of Hen. VII.*, "a circumstance...very likely to have made somewhat to the matter," p. 105. M. often uses 'make against'; cf. the *Doctrine of Divorce*, "the example of usury makes against the allegation," *P. W.* III. 245.

808. *mine*; used for *my* when separated from its noun. Cf. *Hamlet*, v. 2. 341, "Mine and my father's death come not upon thee;" and *Much Ado*, v. 1. 249, "dead upon mine and my master's false accusation."

811. i.e. 'these reasons have been approved according to the code of right that love recognises.' Cf. 3 *Henry VI.* III. 2. 153, 154, "love forswore me.....for (i.e. because) I should not deal in her soft laws."

812. *fond*, foolish, as in 228 and 1682; see G. *to others*=in the eyes of others.

820. *upbraid me mine*. Commonly the idiom is 'to upbraid *with* a thing;' but cf. Bacon, *Of Envy*, "it doth upbraid unto them their own fortunes," i.e. fling in their teeth (Lat. *obicere*). *me* is here a dative.

824. Cf. "traitor to myself," l. 401.

825—6. i.e. 'only so far as I pardon my folly, shall you have pardon for your sin.'

826. *which*=*pardon*: as though he had used some word like *self-examination* or *self-judgment*.

833. *but may*='who may not.' In Shakespeare this use is confined to directly negative sentences; cf. *Tempest*, I. 2. 209, "not a soul but

felt a fever;" *Merry Wives*, I. 4. 15, "nobody but has his fault." Here the negative is *implied* by the question in 832.

834—5. Cf. *P. L.* IV. 856, "wicked and thence weak." *plea*, excuse, defence; see *G. remission*, forgiveness: "ask remission for my folly past," *Two G. of Verona*, I. 2. 65.

836. i.e. but you say that love; cf. 895.

837. *love seeks*. Percival illustrates from Seneca, *Ep.* ix., *si vis amari, ama*; and Martial *Epig.* VI. II. 10, *ut ameris, ama*. George Herbert says, "Love is the true price of love," *Jacula Prudentum*.

838. *hope*, i.e. hope *for*; in Elizabethan *E. hope* was often used without any preposition. Cf. *All's Well*, II. 1. 163, "honest thou my cure?"

840. *knowing...betrayed*, i.e. knowing *myself to be* betrayed. Cf. *P. L.* IX. 792, "And knew not eating death." An imitation (note how he omits the pronoun) of the Greek idiom of a participle after verbs of perception, knowing etc. Cf. Eurip. *Hecuba*, 397, οὐ γὰρ οἶδα δεσπότας κεκτημένους.

842. Understand *thou* from I. 841. Dr Abbott notes that the omission of the pronoun of the 2nd pers. sing. is facilitated by the inflection of the verb which shows who the subject must be. Some texts print "*for* by evasions," a change made by Newton; but it has no authority.

843. *determin'st for*=judged to be.

850—1. Cf. *Judg.* xvi. verses 5 (quoted in the note, I. 388) and 18.

854. *pressed*, urged, i.e. *impressed* upon me how just it was.

857—61. Cf. the picture of Satan surprised by the angels as he was tempting Eve in sleep, *P. L.* IV. 799—803. "The character of the priest...is the poet's own addition to the Scriptural account. It is obviously a satire on the ministers of the Church" (Dunster). For a similar sarcastic reference, cf. 1419—1420.

863. i.e. 'my love was slow to yield.' *debate*=consideration; cf. *debatement* in *Hamlet*, v. 2. 45, "without debatement," and *Measure for M.* v. 1. 99, "after much debatement." Shak. always uses *debate*=contest, quarrel; cf. 2 *Hen. IV.* IV. 4. 42, *Cymbeline*, I. 4. 173.

865. *grounded*, established; cf. the *Animadversions*, "to count that only praiseworthy, which is grounded upon thy divine precepts."

866. *rife*, prevailing, common; cf. *Of Reformation*, "even then heresies were sprung up, and rife everywhere," *P. W.* II. 378. So in *P. L.* I. 650, "new worlds, whereof so rife There went a fame in heaven." From Icelandic *rifr*, abundant, munificent.



868. *respects, considerations*; cf. *Merry Wives*, II. 1. 45, "if it were not for one trifling respect, I could come to such honour!" or *Hamlet*, III. 2. 193, "respects of thrift, but none of love."

871. *circling*, i.e. that beat about the matter, slow to come to the point. The noun *circle* was specially used of indirect, circumlocutory, speech; cf. Fletcher, *Queen of Corinth*, IV. 1, "Has he given the lye In circle or oblique?" and Jonson's *Alchemist*, III. 4.

875. *other...other*, i.e. better. M. has this peculiar trick of repetition more than once. Cf. *Lyc.* 174, "other groves and other streams along," *Com.* 612, and *P. L.* IV. 84, "with other promises and other vaunts." So in the Italian *Canzone*, ll. 7, 8, "*altri rivi, altri lidi l'aspettan, ed altre onde.*"

876—8. We must remember that Milton's first wife came of a Royalist family. Warton thought that the dissension between them arose from their opposite sympathies in politics.

877. *from among*. An awkward arrangement of words which he uses several times; cf. *L'Al.* 81, 82, *Com.* 46, *P. L.* IX. 74.

878. Cf. Othello's "one that loved not wisely but too well," v. 2. 344. We have retained the punctuation of the first ed. in which there is only a comma after *knew'st*; it makes *too well*, 879, qualify *loved*, 878. Some editors place a semicolon after *knew'st*, and treat *too well* as a repetition with which *loved* must be understood.

879. *unbosomed*. Cf. the verb *bosom*, 'to enclose in the heart,' 'guard carefully,' *Henry VIII.* I. 1. 112, "bosom up my counsel;" and Day's *Ile of Guls*, I. 3, "I'le bosome what I thinke," Bullen's ed. p. 25. So *Com.* 368.

880. *levity*. In the *Christian Doct.* XIII. M. defines gravity as "an habitual self-government of speech and action," adding, "opposed to this is levity." Samson is replying in these lines to Dalila's charge that he had betrayed the secret to her out of mere weakness (778—789).

884. i.e. the avowed enemy *then*, as since: the change has been with Dalila, not with *him*. For *professed*=declared, cf. *Much Ado*, I. 1. 170, "a professed tyrant to their sex."

885—6. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife," *Matt.* xix. 5, *Mark* x. 7.

891. He means that she should have ceased to regard the Philistines as her countrymen. *crew* is a favourite word with M., and almost always depreciatory. In *P. L.* it is often applied to Satan's rebellious angels. In *L'Al.* 38, "Mirth, admit me of thy crew," it has the neutral

sense 'company,' 'band;' cf. 'ship's crew.' From Icelandic *kría*, to swarm.

895. *but*; see 836. He gives her objection and then answers it.

897. *acquit themselves*, i.e. avenge themselves, from the notion of clearing themselves of their obligations. Keightley takes it 'act like gods,' comparing l. 1709.

901. Cf. the *Animadversions*, "painting his lewd and deceitful principles with a smooth and glossy varnish," *P. W.* III. 82.

*colours*, excuses; only here in *M.* with this sense; see *G.*

904. *goes by*=gets; cf. the more usual *come by*; "how camest thou by this ring?" *Two G. of Verona*, v. 4. 96. In these phrases *by* implies 'coming up with a thing,' i.e. overtaking and so getting possession of it.

906. *witness when*. An extension of the idiom in phrases like "witness Heaven" (cf. *P. L.* VI. 563, X. 914), where the order is inverted. Here we must supply *time*, i.e. "witness the *time* when I." This imperative or optative use of the subjunctive was more common in Elizabethan *E.* than now.

*peals*, cf. l. 235, and *P. L.* II. 920, "Nor was his ear less pealed with noises loud."

913. *sensibly*, sensitively. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV. 5. 150, "guiltless of your father's death.....most sensibly in grief for it;" where, however, the folios read *sensible* (with the same meaning). The adjective means 'sensitive' not infrequently in Shak.; cf. *Merchant of V.* II. 8. 48. So in Bacon; cf. *Of Marriage*, "humorous minds, which are so sensible of every restraint," and *Of Great Place*, "be not too sensible or too remembering of thy place in conversation."

915. *enjoyed*, that can be enjoyed.

919. *abroad*, out of door.

920—1. i.e. not doubting to obtain a favourable hearing. Cf. *Richard III.* III. 7. 101, "lend favourable ear to our request."

922. *this prison-house*. It was close at hand; cf. l. 949, and *The Argument*, "Samson...comes forth into the open air to a place *nigh*," i.e. *nigh* to his jail.

930. *accursed*, i.e. infatuate, as by some *ἄρῃ* or delusion.

932—3. *trains*, see 533. *gins*, snares; see *G.* *toils*, nets.

934—5. Alluding to the story of Circe and her "charmèd cup," *Com.* 51. Cf. *Apol. for Smect.*, "Love, I mean that which is truly so, whose charming cup is only virtue, which she bears in her hand to those who are worthy; (the rest are cheated with a thick intoxicating potion,

which a certain sorceress, the abuser of love's name, carries about)," *P. W.* III. pp. 119, 120. Keightley and others interpret "warbling charms" as a reference to the Sirens; cf. the description of their songs in *Com.* 253—261. But the "charms" may be the spells (cf. *enchanted*) spoken over the cup at its brewing. Cf. the "baneful cup" of Comus "with many murmurs mixed" (*Com.* 526), where editors quote from Statius, *Theb.* IX. 732—3, *cantusque sacros et conscia miscet | Murmura*. Cf. also the incantations of the witches over the cauldron in *Macbeth*, IV. 1.

935. *nulled*, cancelled; commonly *annulled* (l. 72); or *nullified*.

936. "Even like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears; which refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer: charm he never so wisely," *Psalms* lviii. 4, 5 (*Prayer-Book*). Cf. the *Tetrachordon*, "we are told here, if we be not as deaf as adders, that this union proceeds..." *P. W.* III. 340. So Shakespeare, *Sonnet* 112, and 2 *Hen.* VI. III. 2. 76.

938. Cf. *P. R.* I. 67, "youth's full flower." There is a pretty use of the image in *Pericles*, III. 2. 95, 96, the scene where Thaisa is uncoffined—"See how she gins to blow into life's flower again."

We may note that Samson speaks as though he were an old man. Dramatically this is a true touch of characterisation: for between his present and his past lay a space of such suffering as would make his youth seem remote. Historically, according to the accepted chronology, he had but reached his fortieth year, his life falling between 1156 B.C. and 1116. To some extent Milton's view of Samson is coloured in this as in other things by his own case.

939. *could*. So the first ed.; and the verb must be taken as a subjunctive after *if*. But *could* uninflected in the 2nd pers. sing. is remarkable.

942. *deceivable*, liable to be deceived; only here and l. 350 in *M. Shak.* has it twice, with the opposite sense 'deceiving'; cf. *Twelfth Night*, IV. 3. 21, "something in't that is deceivable," and *Rich.* II. II. 3. 84.

945—6. To be dependent on a woman was in Milton's opinion peculiarly odious. Cf. the *Defensio Secunda*, "For he in vain makes a vaunt of liberty in the senate or in the forum, who languishes under the vilest servitude, to an inferior at home," *P. W.* I. 259.

948. *gloss*, comment; see *G.* *censuring*, as they judge. *censure* with this meaning was very common; cf. Earle's *Characters*, "He scorneth to mix himselfe in men's actions...but sits aloft a censuring Spectator" (p. 65, Arber's ed.). Often the noun means judgement,

opinion; cf. Cowley, *Essays*, "Tis an unpleasant constraint to be always under the sight...and censure of others," p. 74 (Pitt Press ed.).

950. *to*=compared to; as often in Shak.; cf. *Tempest*, I. 2. 480, "To the most of men this is a Caliban, And they to him are angels."

951. It is easy to see the force of this appeal (cf. the song 'Ask me no more' in Tennyson's *Maud*), at which the emotion of Samson rises to its highest point.

954. *go with that*, i.e. content with that—his forgiveness.

958, 959. *hastened*, i.e. by her. *gold of*=gold gained by.

967. *with evil omen*; referring to Samson's sarcastic words in 955—9.

969. *concernments*, affairs; see G.

971—4. This description is partly adapted from Chaucer's *House of Fame*, bk. III. M. had borrowed from the same source in his poem *In Quintum Novembris*, where there is an elaborate account of the Goddess (obviously based on Chaucer), of her temple, and her flight to England, whither she is sent to give warning of the gunpowder plot. The poem (which echoes several phrases in Vergil's well-known description, *Æn.* IV. 173 et seq.) should be compared, from 172 to 216, with these verses.

971. *double-faced*. Cf. the similar reference in the *Arcopagitica* to "Janus with his two controversial faces," *P. W.* II. 96.

*double-mouthed*; cf. Chaucer, who represents Fame as attended by her trumpeter Æolus, god of the winds, bearing two trumpets:—one black, made of brass, and called *Sclaundre*, "with which he wonte is to diffame:" the other made of gold, entitled *Clere Laude*, and used to announce abroad good deeds (bk. III. ll. 485—492, 582—598). Cf. Barnabe Googe's *Cupido conquered*, "Marke these same three...Whose fayre attempts in every place The flying fame hath blowne," Arber's ed. p. 112. In the Latin poem (*In Quintum Nov.*) M. assigns only one trumpet to the Goddess—*dextra tubam gestat Temesæo ex ære sonoram*, 207.

972. *contrary*, i.e. opposite: Fame gives contradictory reports of the same thing: Dalila may be execrated by the Jews: she will be honoured by the Philistines. This also is from Chaucer, l. 539. Scan *contráry*: elsewhere in M. *contrary*, as in modern E.: *contráry* is rare in Shakespeare, but cf. *King John*, IV. 2. 198, *Ham.* III. 2. 221.

973. *his*. M. is alone among poets in making Fame masculine; he does so (says Dunster) because to some degree he connects her with *Rumor*. Contrast Shakespeare's "Lady Fame," *Much Ado*, II. 1. 221.

The distinction between the colours of the wings (at which there may be a hint in *In Quintum Nov.* 205—6) can be explained thus. Fame appears under two aspects in the world: as a beneficent goddess whose report is good, and as an unfriendly goddess whose report is evil: in the one case she is *Fama bona*, in the other *Fama mala*, or Infamy. *Fama bona* has white wings, white being the symbol of good; cf. Jonson's *Masque of Queens*, where one of the allegorical characters is "*Fama bona* . . . attired in white, with white wings." Later on in the same piece she is called the "white-winged maid." *Fama mala* would, of course, have black wings; and Dunster cites a passage from Silius Italicus (*Punica*, xv. 95 *et seq.*) in which she is so described, in contrast to Victory or Glory who, like Good Fame, is borne on white wings. Now the *Fama* of whom Dalila speaks is neither wholly *bona* nor wholly *mala*, but a capricious power who in one land reports deeds favourably, in another unfavourably: so Milton invests her with a white wing borrowed from Good Fame, and a black one borrowed from Infamy: and thus by difference of colours marks the different aspects of her character. Milton, like Ben Jonson, is very fond of this symbolism by colour, which the popularity of the *Masque* in England had tended to increase.

973—4. Cf. Chaucer, describing Fame, bk. III. 319—22:

"thys ilke noble quene  
On her shuldres gan sustene  
Bothe armes, and the name  
Of thoo that hadde large fame."

The meaning simply is, that Fame flies about the world, bearing men's names with her for good or ill report; cf. *In Quintum Nov.* 208—10, where the "aery flight" is described:

*Nec mora; jam pennis cedentes remigat auras,  
Atque parum est cursu celeres prævertere nubes;  
Iam ventos, jam solis equos, post terga reliquit.*

975—6. *the circumcised*, i.e. the Israelites: she speaks as a Philistine; see 144. *Dan*, Samson's own tribe.

977. *to all posterity*; cf. the *Animadversions*, "he...may then perhaps take up a harp, and sing thee an elaborate song to generations," *P. W.* III. 72. So in the colloquial phrase 'to all eternity.' In these cases *to* implies 'lasting, or reaching, to.'

981. Four out of the five chief towns of the Philistines, Askelon being the remaining one; see 1 *Sam.* vi. 17. In *P. L.* i. 464—6 Milton uses *Azotus*, the Greek form of Ashdod (cf. *Acts*, viii. 40);

and *Accaron* = Ekron (as in the Vulgate). Apparently those were the names by which the towns were severally known in the 17th cent.; cf. Sandys' *Relation*, p. 153, "Ten miles North of *Ascalon* along the shore stands *Azotus*: and eight miles beyond that *Acharon*." But in the mouth of Dalila, a Philistine, these forms would have sounded strange.

984. See l. 1661, and cf. Eurip. *Heracleidae*, 597:

πασῶν γυναικῶν, ἴσθι, τιμιωτάτῃ  
καὶ ζῶσ' ὑφ' ἡμῶν καὶ θανοῦσ' ἔσει πολὺ.

984—6. The sense is, 'who, *in order to* save her country, made a choice above the faith,' etc.; or we might take it, 'who chose to save her country in preference to keeping (*above*) her faith as wife.'

987. *odours*. It may have been usual among the Philistines, as among the Jews, to burn spices over the grave at a funeral. Cf., with Percival, 2 *Chron.* xvi. 14, xxi. 19, and *Jerem.* xxxiv. 5, "thou shalt die in peace, and with the burnings of thy fathers.....shall they burn odours for thee."

*annual*. Cf. *Judg.* xi. 40, where we read that "the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah." See l. 1738. Similar customs have prevailed among many nations; cf. the yearly offerings at tombs mentioned by Thucydides, III. 58.

988. *renowned*. Jael is celebrated in the Song of Deborah and Barak, and Deborah lived "between Ramah and Beth-el in Mount Ephraim," *Judg.* iv. 5.

990. See *Judg.* iv. 17—21.

993. *piety*; in the sense of Lat. *pietas* = dutious affection towards (i) parents and family, or (ii) one's country—so 'patriotism.' For (i) cf. 1 *Tim.* v. 4, "learn to show piety at home." Mr Aldis Wright quotes (*Bible Word Bk.*) from Polydore Vergil, "Eliodorus for this excedinge pietee towards his brother was surnamed afterward Pius." For (ii)—the sense here—cf. *Titus Andronicus*, I. 115, "if to fight for king and commonwealth Were piety in thine, it is in these."

995—6. Calton quotes Sophocles, *Ajax*, 1038:

ὅτῳ δὲ μὴ τὰδ' ἐστὶν ἐν γνῶμῃ φίλα,  
κεῖνός τ' ἐκείνα στεργέτω, κἀγὼ τὰδε.

For the idiom 'envy at,' cf. Bishop Hall's *Satires*, I. ix., "Envy, ye Muses, at your thriving mate;" and his *Defiance of Envy*, "Envying at your too disdainful height."

1000. *aggravate*, to increase, make it heavy (Lat. *gravis*). Cf. *P. L.* x. 549, "to aggravate their penance." This is its invariable sense in Shakespeare; cf. *Merry Wives*, II. 2. 296, *Rich. II.* I. 1. 43.

1003—5. Cf. Adam's reconciliation with Eve, *P. L.* x. 940. See 761, note, for the *personal* allusion. Cf. Fairfax, translation of Tasso (IV. 25):

"For mourning beauty hath much power, men say,  
The stubborn hearts with pity frail to move."

1006—7. *passion*, emotion; cf. 1758. *remorse*, pity; in Shakespeare the usual sense of *remorse* is pity, tenderness of heart.

1008. From Terence's line (*Andria* III. 3. 23) *Anantum ira amoris integratio est*. But *treachery*, says Samson, cannot end in concord.

1012. *inherit*, hold, keep; so often in Shakespeare, without any notion of heirship. Cf. *Rich. II.* II. 1. 83, "A grave, Whose hollow womb inherits nought but bones." Cf. *inheritor*=owner, possessor, *Hamlet*, v. 1. 121, *Love's L. L.* II. 5, "sole inheritor of all perfections."

1014. *hit*, guess; the metaphor of shooting at a target. Cf. *Com.* 286, "how easy my misfortune is to hit."

1015. *refer it*, i.e. whichever way men look at it.

1016—7. i.e. 'as hard to explain as your riddle was, though a man should think it over for seven days.' Samson's riddle ("out of the eater"... ) was to be declared "within the seven days of the feast," *Judg.* xiv. 12. See l. 1200. Note that riddles were held in high estimation in early ages, especially in the East, so that there was nothing remarkable in Samson's propounding one (*Lias*, p. 161).

1018. *these*, i.e. the qualities mentioned above, ll. 1010—11: if, say the Chorus, any of these could keep a woman's love, then Samson's wives would not have been false.

1019—20. *Judg.* xiv. 20, says, "But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend;" we may assume that she had shown a preference (l. 1019) for him. *paranymph*, see G.

1025. *for that*, because; frequent in Shakespeare. We find *for* by itself in the same sense; cf. *M. of Venice*, 1. 3. 43—5: "I hate him *for* he is a Christian, But more *for that*.....he lends out money gratis."

1030. *to affect*; strictly dependent on *raised* in 1028, from which we can supply some word like *inclined*. *affect*=love, prefer, is common in Elizabethan E.; cf. *Two G. of Verona*, III. 1. 82, "a lady in Verona here whom I affect;" or Bacon's *Hist. of Hen. VII.*, "naturally affecting much the King of Spain, as far as one King can affect another," p. 97. From Lat. *affectare*, to aim at, earnestly desire.

1031. *self-love*. Cf. Shakespeare's 62nd *Sonnet*—"Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye;" and *Twelfth Night*, 1. 5. 97, "O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio."

1035—6. *under virgin veil*...*modest*. In the *Doct. of Div.* he

speaks of "the sequestered and veiled modesty" of women, *P. W.* III. 266. Here there may be an allusion to the Oriental custom of the women (especially, among the Jews, maidens) being veiled.

1037. *once joined*, once wedded. *thorn*, used figuratively; cf. *Hamlet*, I. 5. 87, "those thorns that in her bosom lodge, To prick and sting her;" i.e. the stings of conscience. So *Ezek.* xxviii. 24, and *2 Cor.* xii. 7, "there was given to me a thorn in the flesh," where St Paul means that the flesh was a source of pain by reason of its weakness.

1038. *intestine*, i.e. inward; cf. *Christian Doct.* x., "why then should it be unlawful to deliver ourselves from so pressing an intestine evil?" the evil being ill-assorted wedlock, *P. W.* IV. 241.

*defensive*=serving, or meant, to protect (cf. *Rich.* II. II. 1. 48, 1 *Hen.* VI. II. 1. 49): *arms*=armour: and the idea is that of a 'mischief clinging to the body far underneath the coat of mail which keeps off the external, but not the more deadly internal, enemy:' outwardly the man is danger-proof, inwardly, beneath the armour, he is being consumed by the poison, *Nessi venenatus cruore* (*Sylvarum Liber*, I. 10—12).

1039. *cleaving*, clinging; a favourite word in his prose works; cf. *Of Reformation*, "he that seeks to break your union, a cleaving curse be his inheritance," *P. W.* II. 407. The allusion here (cf. the fuller reference in *P. L.* II. 542—6) is to the shirt dipped in the poisonous blood of the Centaur Nessus which Deianira sent to Hercules; see the *Trachiniæ* of Sophocles; and cf. Dryden's *Aurengzebe*, II. 1:

"When we lay next us what we hold most dear,  
Like Hercules, envenomed shirts we wear,  
And cleaving mischiefs."

1039—40. Todd compared Eurip. *Orest.* 605—6:

ἀεὶ γυναῖκες ἐμποδὼν ταῖς ξυμφοραῖς  
ἐφυσαν ἀνδρῶν πρὸς τὸ δυστυχεστέρον.

1043. *which ruin ends*, i.e. which end in ruin.

1044. Here, as perhaps in *Lyc.* 109, *pilot*=the master of the ship, distinguished from the steerer.

1046—7. *favoured of Heaven*. For the sentiment cf. *Proverbs*, xviii. 22, xix. 14, xxxi. 10—31. We may hope that Milton was thinking of his own third wife, "a genteel person, of a peaceful and agreeable humour" (Aubrey). She would sing for him while he accompanied her on the organ or bass-viol, and there is a tradition that she was careful to prepare the dishes he liked.

*rarely found*. In the *Alcestis*, 473—75, the Chorus say that "to meet with a wife like Alcestis (i.e. a good one) is in life a rare lot"—



ἐν βίῳ σπάνιον μέρος. But the thought is a commonplace of misogynists like Euripides. Cf. *P. L.* x. 899—906.

1048. *domestic good*; Milton's own view of a woman's duty is expressed in *P. L.* ix. 233, "nothing lovelier...In woman, than to study household good." He brought up his daughters on this principle.

*combines*, i.e. with her husband; acts in harmony with him. Cf. the *Doct. of Div.*, "what an injury is it after wedlock...to be contended with in point of house-rule," *P. W.* iii. 247.

1050—2. Cf. the last lines of *Com.* 1019—1021, "Love Virtue."

1053—60. Milton's conception of the relative position of man and woman is summed up in a sentence that occurs more than once in his prose works—viz. "woman was made for man." See the *Doct. of Div.* xv., and the *Tetrachordon*, *P. W.* iii. 325. Cf. also *P. L.* iv. 295—9, 635—8; ix. 1182—6; x. 145—56, 888—95. Throughout *P. L.* "the superiority of Adam is diligently sustained" (Johnson).

1057. *lour*, frown, look gloomy; see G.

1062. Samson takes *storm* literally. *contracted*=brought together (Lat. *contrahere*).

1064. *my riddling days*. The irony of the reference is clear; see 1016, note.

1065. *now*, i.e. this time the new-comer is no Dalila.

1069. *pile*, i.e. his huge body; *pile* is always used by M. of buildings, cf. *P. L.* i. 722, *P. R.* iv. 547. Here the metaphor is shown by *high-built*.

1070—2. Reverting to the metaphor in 1061—3.

1074—5. *or peace*, i.e. whether or no he brings peace; understand *carries* from 1073. *fraught*, the news or orders he bears; see G.

1076. *condole*, i.e. bemoan. In modern E. the use generally is 'to condole *with* a person' i.e. express sympathy with. "Let us condole the knight" occurs in *Henry V.* ii. i. 133, but the speaker is Pistol whose English was imperfect. It is the word over which Bottom blunders so, *Midsummer N. D.* i. 2. 29, 43.

1077. *yet wish*. Harapha pretends to wish that the misfortune (*chance*) had not befallen Samson, for then they might have met in combat.

1080—1. *Og*, see *Deut.* iii. 11, *Numb.* xxi. 33. *Anak*, cf. *Numb.* xiii. 33, "there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak." *Emims*, "a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; which also were accounted giants...; but the Moabites call them Emims," *Deut.* ii. 10—11. They dwelt in "the plain of Kiriathaim," *Gen.* xiv. 5,

margin. Note that *Emims* is an incorrect form, just as *Cherubims*, *Seraphims*, *Anakims*, *Rephaims*, and similar words are incorrect. In each case *im* is the Hebrew plural ending, but the translators of the Bible in 1611 treated the words as English, and added *s*, the sign of the plural. The Revised V. substitutes the correct forms—*Emim*, *Cherubim*, *Anakim*, etc. It is curious that Milton should here have adopted the wrong form; he was evidently a good Hebrew scholar, and in *P. L.* always writes *Cherubim* and *Seraphim*—a proof that he was aware of the error of the Bible-translators.

1082. Cf. *P. L.* IV. 830, "Not to know me argues yourselves unknown."

1087. i.e. either on the actual field of battle (*campus*), or in the lists of private combat. *listed*, i.e. set up with lists for a tournament; cf. Pope, *Iliad*, VII. 56, "To mortal combat on the listed plain."

1088. *noise*, i.e. fame, report; cf. the verb in *Luke*, i. 65, "all these sayings were noised abroad."

1091. *taste*, try; cf. *P. R.* II. 131, "have...viewed him, tasted him," where Satan is speaking of the temptation of Christ. *taste*, see G.

1092. *single*, pick out for single combat; cf. 3 *Henry VI.* II. 4. 1, "Now, Clifford, I have singled thee alone" (said on the battlefield).

1093. *gyves*, fetters. Keightley says that handcuffs are meant; but Shakespeare generally uses *gyves*=chains round the ankles; cf. *Romeo*, II. 2. 180, 1 *Hen. IV.* IV. 2. 44. Line 1235 shows that Samson's ankles were fettered, his hands free.

1096. *forced...wish*. i.e. I should have forced thee to wish *for*. Instead of *wish* some editors print *with*, explaining, 'I would have forced, i.e. overpowered, thee with.' The change (due, perhaps, originally to *with* in l. 1095) has no authority and spoils the point of the line.

1102. *mortal duel*, i.e. not a mere trial of skill, but a contest à *outrance* (cf. "to the utterance," *Macbeth*, III. 1. 72); that is, fought out until one or other was killed. Cf. 1175 and *P. L.* I. 765, "Defied the best of Panim chivalry To mortal combat." It is really an anachronism to use language which suggests the mediæval duello; see 1220, note.

1105. i.e. 'what (as you say) you would have done.' *in thy hand*=in thy power.

1107. *need*=need of; cf. *P. L.* II. 413, "here he had need all circumspection." M. treats 'to have need'=to need.

1109. *afford*, grant. *assassinated*, treacherously harmed; see G.

1113. *close-banded*, secretly leagued; cf. "close conveyed"=

secretly carried, *Taming of Shrew, Induct. I. 127*. *Close*=secret is common in Shakespeare.

1114. *a woman*; note the contemptuous description of his wife.

1116. *shifts*, i.e. excuses; Harapha pretended that he cannot fight with Samson because of his blindness. For *shift*=expedient, pretext, cf. *Eikonoklastes*, XVII. "to omit no shifts, he alleges that..."; *Areopagitica*, "the shifts and the defences that error uses," (*P. W.* I. 440, II. 96).

1117. *enclosed*, i.e. with barriers; see *listed*, 1087, and cf. "covered field" in *P. L.* I. 763, where Richardson says—"Covered' here signifies *inclosed*. *Champ clos*: the field for combat, the lists." So in *The Faerie Queene*, IV. 3. 4, "The field with listes was all about enclosed."

1118. *advantage on*, i.e. *over*. Cf. *Julius Caesar*, v. 3. 6, "having some advantage on Octavius." See 470, note.

1119—22. Suggested by the description of Goliath's armour, 1 *Sam.* xvii. 5—7, he having been a Philistine.

1120—1. The alliteration is probably meant to express contempt. For each piece of armour mentioned see G. under the several words.

1121. *thy spear, a weaver's beam*. Cf. 1 *Sam.* xvii. 7, "and the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam." So 2 *Sam.* xxi. 19. There is the same reference in *Merry Wives*, v. 1. 24, "I fear not Goliath with a weaver's beam." In *Troilus*, v. 5. 9, *beam*=a heavy spear. It is the wooden roller or cylinder in a loom on which the warp is wound before weaving: also called *fore-beam*, *yarn-beam*, *yarn-roll*.

1122. *seven-times-folded*, i.e. *semplex*, which applied to a shield means 'made of seven layers of skin'; here perhaps of metal. Cf. *Aeneid*, XII. 925 *clipei septemplex orbes*, an imitation of Homer's ἐπταβείων σάκος, *Il.* VII. 220.

1130—38. Note that this is not merely Harapha's personal opinion. It expresses the view of Samson's power which the Philistines held; they probably thought (says Lias, p. 169) that he possessed some sorcerer's charm by which he performed his feats.

1133. *art* was specially used of magic; Prospero applies it to his powers, *Tempest*, I. 2. 25, 28, 291.

1134. *armed...or charmed*. For the intentional jingle of sound, cf. 1278, or *P. L.* I. 642, "tempted our attempt," and II. 39, 40.

*which thou...feign'st*; supply a noun, e.g. *strength*, from *strong*.

1138. Cf. *Hamlet*, I. 5. 19, 20, "each particular hair to stand on end Like quills upon the fretful porpentine;" *porpentine* (from *porcus* and *spina*, a thorn) being the form Shakespeare often uses, e.g. in *Comedy of Errors*, III. 1. 116.

1139. Todd showed that this was "a direct allusion to the oath taken before the judges of the combat by the champions;" the oath being:—"I do swear that I have not upon me, nor on any of the arms I shall use, words, charms, or enchantments, to which I trust for help to conquer my enemy, but that I do only trust in God, in my right, and in the strength of my body and arms." In mediæval romances warriors are often represented as carrying a charm against magic and evil influences; cf. the reference to this custom in *Com.* 644—7.

1143. *while*, so long as.

1146. *invoke*, pray for; cf. 1 *Henry VI.* 1. 1. 52, "Henry the Fifth, thy ghost I invoke." See l. 575 ("oft-invoked death"), the only other place in *M.* where the word occurs.

1147. *spread*; the metaphor of laying a matter before a person. Keightley compares 2 *Kings*, xix. 14, "And Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it (i.e. the affair) before the Lord."

1151—5. Samson proposes the combat as a way of bringing on Dagon that discomfiture of which he spoke in 468—71.

1156. In the first ed. there is only a comma after *God*, so that the words *what'e'r he be* may be taken either with what precedes or with what follows; I think that the former gives a better rhythm, but Masson prefers the latter, placing a full stop at *God*.

1157. See l. 764.

1162. See 37, note. *comrades*; scan *comrâdes*, as in *Hamlet*, 1. 3. 65, "Of each new-hatch'd, unsledg'd comrade. Beware." In *Lear*, 11. 4. 213 it is *comrade*, as always in modern E.

1164. *M.* uses *boisterous* frequently in his prose-writings, always with the bad sense 'violent,' 'turbulent'; cf. the *Doct. of Div.*, "boisterous edicts tyrannizing the blessed ordinance of marriage," *P. W.* III. 260; and *Of Civil Power*, "how ineffectual and weak is outward force, with all her boisterous tools, to the shame of Christians," *P. W.* II. 535.

1165. *nor by*, i.e. 'nor best subdued by the sword of noble warrior, in such a way as to stain his honour.'

1169. *from thine*, i.e. coming from thine (viz. people); see 291.

1171—3. Cf. Manoa's words, 510—2.

1175—6. Alluding to the mediæval custom of trial by combat to determine the merits of a cause. See 1102, note.

1181. *tongue-doughty*, brave of tongue; cf. *θρασύστομος*, Æsch. *Agamem.* 1399. Todd quotes Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Pilgrim*, II. 3, "Leave your tongue-valour;" and the *French Lawyer*, "O brave, tongue-valiant and vain-glorious woman." *doughty*, see G.

1181. *prove me these*, i.e. prove me to be these, viz. a murderer, a revolter.

1182—5. See *Judg.* xv. 9—13; Samson referred to the same events, 251—61. The first question—"is not thy nation?"—is intended to prove Samson a *revolter*.

1185—8. Cf. *Judg.* xiv. 19. See 1203, note.

1194. *nuptial feast*, i.e. of his first marriage; *Judg.* xiv. 10.

1195. *politician*, intriguing, scheming. In Shakespeare the noun generally means 'plotter,' 'conspirator.' Cf. 1 *Hen. IV.* i. 3. 241, "this vile politician, Bolingbroke." The *Century Dict.* quotes Nash, *Pierce Penilesse*, "The Diuell was noted...to be a greedie pursuer of newes and famous as a politician." Cf. the contemptuous use of *politic* in *P. R.* III. 400.

1196. *bridal friends*. The Bible only says, "they brought thirty companions to be with him," *Judg.* xiv. 11; but M. is right in assuming that they were to be "children of the bridechamber," *Matt.* ix. 15, Samson having brought no friends or relations of his own.

1197. *spies*. Cf. 386. M. took the notion from Josephus. Quarles (*Hist. of Samson*) says that thirty "men of arms" were sent "under the mask of bridemen" to the wedding, "to prevent ensuing harms."

1198—1200. *threatening cruel death*. The *threat* was, "lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire:" the *riddle* (l. 1200), "Out of the eater..." See l. 386.

1199. *my secret*. See *Judg.* xiv. 5—9: when Samson slew the lion "he told not his father or his mother what he had done," verse 6; and afterwards when he gave them of the honey taken from the lion's carcase he did not say whence it came, verse 9. Clearly, he had kept *secret* the event on which his riddle turned.

1203. "And he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their *spoil*," *Judg.* xiv. 19, where the margin reads *apparel*, while the Septuagint has τὰ λυτρία αὐτῶν, and the Vulgate *ablatus vestes dedit*. Cf. *robes* in l. 1188.

1204. *my underminers*, i.e. the intriguers against me; the metaphor of sapping the walls of a fortress. Cf. Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse*, "There is more perill...in secret ambushe, then maine battels; in vndermining, then playne assaulting," Arber's ed. p. 38. Cf. *All's Well*, l. 1. 131, *P. R.* i. 179.

'To pay a person in his own coin' was a proverbial phrase=treat him as he has treated you, give tit for tat; cf. Ford, *'Tis Pity*, iv. 1,

"I was acquainted with the danger of her disposition; and now have fitted her a just payment in her own coin."

1205—10. Samson ironically quotes Harapha's charges and answers them.

1217. *I was to*, i.e. it was my duty to; cf. 885.

1218. *offence*, i.e. of having betrayed to Dalila the secret of his strength. *known*, because she had told the Philistines that Samson had showed her "all his heart," *Judg.* xvi. 18.

1220. *shifts*, see 1116. *appellant*, challenger. Strictly an *appellant* was one who *appealed* (i.e. charged) another man of treason or felony, and offered to prove the charge upon his body by single combat. Cf. 2 *Hen.* VI. II. 3. 48—9, "This is the day appointed for the combat... ready are the appellant and defendant." Cf. the third scene of *Rich.* II. (the dispute between Bolingbroke and Mowbray), where *appellant* (in folio, *appealant*) occurs twice in this sense, II. 4, 52.

1221. *maimed* was technically used of men disabled for fighting through loss of a limb. The notion of the verb is 'to render defective,' from Ital. *magagna*, a defect. Cf. *P. L.* I. 459, "maimed his brute image, head and hands lopt off." Cassio in *Othello*, v. I. 27 (when he has been wounded by Iago), says, "I am maim'd for ever." The *Manipulus*, 1570, has "to mayme, *mutilare*. a mayme, *mutilatio*."

*high attempts*; cf. Bishop Hall, "Let high attempts dread envy and ill tongues," *A Defiance of Envy*; and Harington's *Orlando Furioso*, I. I, "Of courtesies, of high attempts I speak." It would seem that the phrase was traditional; perhaps it was taken from the Italian. Cf. "high disdain"=*alto sdegno*, used by M. in *P. L.* I. 98, by Spenser, *F. Q.* I. I. 19, by Fletcher, *Purple Island*, XII. 64, and by other poets.

1222. *thrice*, for the third time; the previous challenges being at 1151 and 1174. Newton notes that it was "the custom and the law of arms, to give the challenge and to sound the trumpet thrice." He compares *Lear*, v. 3. 108—118, the scene of the duel between Edgar and Edmund. Throughout this part of the scene there are several anachronisms, the characters using terms and referring to rules which belonged to the mediæval code of duelling and chivalry. See 1222, 1226, 1237; cf. 1102, note.

1223. *enforce*, difficulty; not elsewhere in M. and not in Shak.

1224—6. Todd aptly referred to the treatise on the Duello by Vincentio Saviolo published in 1595, the second book of which treats "of Honor and honorable Quarrels," showing that the right of single combat is refused to men guilty of treason, to freebooters, "excom-

municate persons, hereticks, vsurers, and all other persons, not living as a gentleman or a souldier." This is the work of which Touchstone speaks in *As You Like It*, v. 4. 94, "we quarrel in print, by the book."

1225. *capital*, always dissyllabic in M. by elision of *i*; see 394.

1228. *descant*, to comment on; see G.

1230. i.e. 'you say you come to survey me: do not let my *hand* (since my eyes may not) survey *you*.'

1231. *Baal-zebul*, "the Fly-god," the idol of the Philistines at Ekron where he had a temple (2 *Kings* i. 2, 16). The supreme male deity of the Phœnician and Canaanitish nations was the sun-god, Baal, who "was worshipped under a great variety of forms and attributes, each of which became a separate god.....the number of Baalim was infinite; each state had its own peculiar ones, and there was a new Baal for each aspect under which the sun could be adored" (Sayce). Of these deities Baal-zebul was one. See *Nat. Ode*, 197.

1234. i.e. begin the fight: *van*=the first line of battle, *avant-garde*.

1237. *baffled*, disgraced; another term of chivalry; see G.

1238. *vast*, the epithet to *bulk*.

1242. The chief female divinity of the nations of Canaan was Ashtoreth or Baalith, who corresponded to Baal, being "the female reflection of the sun-god." She was identical with the Greek Astarte and Assyrian Istar. She presided over love, the chase and *war*: hence Harapha as a warrior swears by her. The name shows that she was an astral deity, since it is cognate with Sanskrit *tara* or *stara*, L. *stella*, E. *star*. *Ashtoreth* is the singular, *Ashtaroth* the plural, collective title for the different manifestations of the goddess. Cf. *Nat. Ode*, 200, P. L. 1. 422—38.

1243. *these braveries*=this bravado. Cf. Bacon, *Of Great Place*, "Reform, therefore, without bravery or scandal of former times."

1244. *giantship*. Milton's contemporary Cowley coins words with the suffix *-ship* very freely; they are always depreciatory. Cf. *Of Greatness*, "Catching of flies, and killing them with a bodkin, as if his god-ship had been Beelzebub;" or "his almighty-ship" in the essay *Of Avarice*. The suffix *-ship*, identical with *-scape* as in *land-scape*, and *-skip* as in *land-skip* (cf. *L'Al.* 70), is simply the noun *shape*, form or fashion, from A.S. *sceapan*, *scippan*, to form.

*crest-fallen*. Cotgrave has, "Hallebrené: sad, crest-fallen, heavie-looking, drooping, cleane out of heart."

1245. *unconscionable*=huge, excessive; cf. *Church Gov.* II., "finding fault with their temporal dignities, their unconscionable wealth and

revenues," *P. W.* II. 505. The word got its meaning from the old sense of *conscience*=judgment or thoughts: an *unconscionable* thing was one which went beyond your *conscience*, i.e. which your thoughts could not grasp.

1246. *chafe*, fret, passion; see G.

1248. *divulge*, proclaim abroad. Cf. *P. R.* III. 62, "with approbation marks...and divulges him through Heaven." Usually it meant (as always in modern E.) 'to tell something secret;' cf. in this sense l. 201 and *P. L.* VIII. 73. The first ed. has *divulg'd*; corrected in *Errata*. *five sons*, see 2 *Sam.* xxi. 16—22, 1 *Chron.* xx. 4—6.

1250—2. It is implied that the summons which the officer brings to Samson later on, 1310 et seq., was due to Harapha; and in this way the scene which has just closed has marked a step towards the catastrophe.

1250. *he will*, i.e. *go*: *will* and *would*, combined with an adverb, or preposition, are often so used in Shakespeare; especially *will* in the abbreviations *I'll* and *we'll*. Cf. *Merry Wives*, "I'll in," III. 3. 145; "we'll a birding," III. 3. 246; "I'll to him," IV. 4. 76.

1253—54. i.e. 'will be afraid to mention my challenge.'

1262. Masson and Percival print, "But come what will; my deadliest foe will prove," making *come what will* a clause by itself—'let there come what will.' The original ed. however has, "But come what will, my deadliest foe" etc.; i.e. *come what will* is a subordinate, adverbial phrase meaning 'under any circumstances.' There is no need to change the punctuation and the sense. Cf. 1 *Hen. IV.* I. 2. 162, "come what will, I'll tarry at home;" and *Love's L. L.* V. 2. 112.

1263. *death*; *κακῶν μέγιστον φάρμακον*, says Eurip. *Heracleidæ*, 596.

1264. Some editors remove the comma after *give*, and understand it: 'the worst that he can give *is* to me the best.' But the original text has a comma at *give*, and we might quite well explain the verse as put in apposition to the previous line: 'my foe will rid me hence, the worst (i.e. thing) that he can give, the best that I can receive.'

1266—7. *with mine*, i.e. *ruin*. *draw their own ruin*; an instance of 'tragic irony.' It is not till after 1380 that he conceives the plan of bringing destruction on his enemies; yet here he uses words, *draw* and *ruin* (cf. 1515), literally descriptive of the catastrophe which the spectator or reader of the play expects from the outset.

1270. i.e. a 'deliverer' such as Cromwell; cf. the sonnet on him and that on Fairfax.



1277—82. Cf. the lines on Samson in Sylvester's *Du Bartas* (Grosart's ed. i. 205):

"O match-less Champion! Pearl of men-at-arms,  
That emptiest not an Arcenall of Arms,  
Nor needest shops of *Lemnian* Armourers,  
To furnish weapons for thy glorious Wars."

1278. *feat*=Fr. *fait*, Lat. *factum*, that which is *done*: *defeat*=*défaire*, to make *undone*. In 17th century E. *defeat* still preserved the notion 'to undo;' cf. *Othello*, IV. 2. 160, "defeat my life," or *Hamlet*, III. 3. 40. For the peculiar jingle *feats*—*defeats*, cf. 1134.

1281. *armouries*, see G.

1283. *expedition*, speed; as often in Shakespeare. Cf. *Rich. II.* IV. 3. 54, "Then fiery expedition be my wing."

1286. *amazed*, confounded; a much stronger word then than now. Cf. the noun in the *Animadversions*, "thou hast made our false prophets to be found a lie, and chased them with sudden confusion and amazement," *P. W.* III. 71.

1287—8. For the sentiment, cf. 654, and still more, the sonnet 'On His Blindness.' *saints* (1288), Percival notes that this was the name by which the Republican Independents called themselves; it is a favourite word with M. in the general sense 'holy men;' cf. *Lyc.* 178. Cf. its frequent use in the Epistles of St Paul, e.g. in 2 *Cor.* i. 1, *Ephes.* i. 1, *Philip.* i. 1.

1289. *deliverer*, referring back to 1270.

1292. i.e. Samson may be either the warrior or the patient saint, though probably the latter.

1294. *sight bereaved*=loss of sight; cf. *his message told*=the telling of his message, 1433. It is an imitation of the Latin idiom in phrases like *occisus Cæsar*=the death of Cæsar.

1296. *crown*, i.e. with the crown of victory and everlasting life; cf. *Rev.* ii. 10, "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

1302. *tending*, directing his course.

1303. *quaint*, fanciful, curious; implying perhaps that the staff was ornamented; see G.

1307. *voluble*, i.e. quickly delivered; in modern E. it implies long-winded fluency. More commonly used of persons than things; but cf. *Comedy of Errors*, II. 1. 92, "voluble and sharp discourse."

1308. Note the contemptuous abruptness of his address, verifying what the Chorus have just predicted. *Ebrews*; cf. 1319 and 1540, the

word being in each case a noun; in *P. R.* iv. 336 and *Psalm* cxxxvi. 50, where it is an adjective, M. writes *Hebrew*. So Masson notes, but it is not easy to see what distinction was meant. See G.

1309. *remark*, distinguish, make remarkable; an unusual sense, but cf. *remarked*=conspicuous in *Hen. VIII.* v. 1. 33, "the most remark'd (men) i' the kingdom."

1312. *triumph*, public show; see G. *pomp*, procession; cf. 436.

1313. *rate*; *race* in first ed., but corrected in *Errata*. *rate*=degree; cf. *M. of Venice*, I. I. 127.

1320. *forbids*, i.e. in the second Commandment, cf. *Exod.* xx. 4, 5; cf. also xxiii. 24, where the Israelites are commanded, with reference to the Canaanites and other nations, "Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works."

1323-4. Keightley says: "The following list, of course, belongs to the poet's own times, not to those of Samson. The 'sword-players' were the fencing masters who used to display their skill in public; the 'gymnic artists,' tumblers and such like; the 'riders and runners,' those who contended in horse- and foot-racing." Wrestling-matches were popular institutions in England, especially in Devonshire and Cumberland. Shakespeare was thinking of them, perhaps, when he wrote the first act of *As You Like It*.

1324. *gymnic*, used by Burton in the *Anatomy* as a noun: "every country (hath) some professional gymnics to exhilarate their minds."

1325. See G. under *juggler*, *antic*, etc. In the first ed. *mimics* was misprinted *mimirs*, which led Johnson to admit *mimir* into his *Dictionary*.

1333. i.e. 'look to yourself, consider your interest.'

1334. Cf. the second sonnet to Cyriack Skinner, 9, 10.

1339. *heart-grief*. Cf. *Hen. V.* II. 2. 27, "in heart-grief and uneasiness." Shakespeare also has *heart-ache* (which we still use), *heart-break*, *heart-heaviness*, *heart-sorrow*.

1342. *joined*, i.e. enjoined; an unusual sense, but cf. (with the *Century Dict.*) Tyndale, "and they join them penance, as they call it, to fast, to go pilgrimages," *Works*, I. 281.

1344. *brooks*, suffers, admits: strictly to *brook*=to use, cf. Germ. *brauchen*.

1346. *sorry what*, i.e. sorry to think what. *stoutness*=overbearing spirit, pride. Cf. *Coriolanus*, v. 6. 27, "Sir, his stoutness, When he did stand for consul." *Stout*=proud, cf. Germ. *stolz*, was common; Ascham says, "how manei haue beene...overwhelmed by stout wilful-

ness," *Scholemaster*, p. 103. But both noun and adjective could be used in a good sense, and this would not be unsuitable here: the officer has some sympathy with Samson and may admire his *courage*.

1347. Cf. 1267: in each case there is a hint, but no more, of his coming revenge. Observe how the notion gradually grows upon him.

1348—9. The metaphor may be from some mechanical contrivance, as in *Macbeth*, I. 7. 60, and *Coriolanus*, I. 8. 11, "wrench up thy power to the highest;" or from a bent bow.

1355. *again returning*. Cf. Manoa's words, 586—7, 1496—9; but this is the first time that Samson has directly expressed himself conscious of renewed strength. Hitherto he has spoken of himself as broken down by suffering, and impotent; cf. his first speech, and 536—72, 590—6, 938—44. The thought of revenge gives him new heart.

1360. *Vaunting*, displaying proudly.

1366. *deserve*, earn: to *de-serve* = to win by *servi*ng.

1368. A variation, perhaps, on the famous sentiment of Euripides, "the tongue hath sworn, but the mind is unpledged," *Hippol.* 612.

1369. *sentence*, i.e. maxim, Lat. *sententia*; he refers to what the Chorus have just said, viz. that acts done by us against our will involve no blame to us. For *sentence*, cf. *Much Ado*, II. 3. 249, "quips and sentences and paper bullets of the brain;" or Cowley, *Of Greatness*, "Senecio was a man...who could not endure to speak any but mighty words and sentences." *holds*, holds good.

1374—5. *prefer*, give precedence to. *in his jealousy*, cf. *Exod.* xx. 5, "for I...am a jealous God."

1377—9. The allusion here is clearly shown by the *Christian Doct.* v.: "a question arises whether it be lawful for a professor of the true religion to be present at idol-worship, in cases where it is necessary for the discharge of some civil duty. The affirmative seems to be established by the example of Naaman the Syrian, 2 *Kings* v. 17—19."

1377. i.e. 'pardon us if we are present.' *dispense with* = excuse, occurs several times in Shakespeare, but always of the thing, not the person, excused; cf. *Sonnet* 112, "mark how with my neglect I do dispense."

1382. Cf. the *Argument*, "persuaded inwardly that this was from God;" see 1426.

1383. Scan, "To sóme|thing éx|traór|diná|ry my thoughts." The verse has a trisyllabic foot in the fifth place which no device of elision can obviate: according to Mr Bridges, a similar case does not occur anywhere in *P. L.*, *P. R.* and *S. A.*: the sense has affected the rhythm.

1396. *engines*, instruments; see G.

1397. *hamper*, constrain; see G. *of force*=perforce.

1400. *pernicious*, full of destruction (Lat. *perniciosum*).

1406. This is said lest his sudden compliance should rouse suspicion.

1408. Connect with 1403: he goes, but not to comply in anything wrong. From 1404 to 1407 is a parenthesis. *this*, i.e. of this be sure.

1412. *perhaps to set thee free*, the officer is more right than he suspects; cf. 1572. It is verbal 'irony' as in l. 1267.

1413. *farewell*. Samson must leave the stage because in tragedy of this kind scenes of violent suffering or crime may not be enacted in the presence of the audience. Medea must not kill her children *coram populo*. The Chorus remain because their presence on the stage is necessary from the dramatist's point of view.

1418. The 'lords' meant are the courtiers of Charles II. Note the sarcastic use of *lordly*: they are most like lords, reveal the true character of a lord,—over their wine. There is the same quibble in 2 *Henry VI.* II. 2. 30, "An't like your lordly lord-protectorship"—on which Gloucester remarks, "England knows thine insolence."

1419—20. As before (857) M. is sneering at the clergy of the Established Church, *well-feasted* being a glance at what he considered their luxury of living. Cf. *Lyc.* 112—125, where he taunts them with greed, and with caring only for their endowments, nothing for the gospel. So repeatedly in his pamphlets on the Church; cf. the *Animadversions*, "O race of Capernaitans, senseless of divine doctrine and capable only of loaves and belly-cheer!...I would ask these men at whose hands they seek inferior things, as wealth, honour, their dainty fare, their lofty houses," *P. W.* III. 81. In *Of Reformation* he describes the bishops as "lords of stately palaces, rich furniture, delicious fare, and princely attendance," *P. W.* II. 382. It would be rash to accept Milton's opinion on anything that concerned the Anglican Church.

1421—22. These lines refer to the public sports in England held on festivals and on Sundays. Of the former kind the most celebrated were the May-day observances: see Chaucer's *Knights Tale*, Herrick's *Hesperides*, the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, II. 2, III. 5, with the description in Brand's *Pop. Antiq.*, I. 212 (Bohn's ed.), and Chambers' *Book of Days*, I. 570 *et seq.* These holiday sports led to great abuses, and had long been objected to by the stricter part of the people; cf. Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuses*, p. 149 (Furnivall's ed.). To the Puritans they were specially distasteful. M. (who was less censorious in *L'Al.* 91—101) says in *Church Gov.* (1641), "it were happy for the commonwealth, if our magistrates would take into their care...the managing of our public

sports and festival pastimes; that they might not be, such as were authorised a while since, the provocations of drunkenness," *P. W.* II. 480. Cf. also *Of Reformation*, where speaking of the observance of Sunday, M. writes, "at such a time (i.e. on Sundays) that men should be plucked from their soberest and saddest (i.e. most serious) thoughts, and by bishops, the pretended fathers of the Church, instigated by public edict, and with earnest endeavour pushed forward to gaming, jigging, wassailing, and mixed dancing (cf. *P. L.* IV. 402) is a horror to think," *P. W.* II. 402. James I. had issued the *Declaration* (or *Book*) of *Sports* in 1617, permitting amusements such as archery, dancing, leaping, on Sundays, "in due and convenient time, without impediment or neglect of divine service," and had ordered the clergy to read the *Declaration* from their pulpits. The injunction, meeting with opposition, was withdrawn; but in 1633 Charles republished the *Declaration*, and repeated the command as to its reading by the clergy, many of whom were fined for disobeying. See too *Eikonoklastes*, I, *P. W.* I. 323.

1422. Editors quote Horace, *A. P.* 224, *Spectator, functusque sacris et potus et exlex*.

1426. The sense is, 'I cannot say whether this is the last of me, i.e. whether or not you will see me again.' From these last lines, 1423—6, it seems clear that Samson has not yet conceived the plan which he afterwards carries out: divine impulse prompts him to go, and divine impulse will inspire him when the time for vengeance comes. In thus representing Samson as relying on sudden impulses from above, M. is true to the character of his hero that Scripture depicts. See 1435, note.

1431. *the Angel of thy birth*. Cf. 24, 361, 635. This idea of the Guardian Angel watching over men is often present to M. Cf. *Com.* 219—220, 455—69, 658; so *P. L.* II. 1033, "whom God and good angels guard by special grace." The *Christian Doct.* IX. deals with the ministry on earth of angelic beings.

1433. *after his message told*, i.e. after the telling of his message. Cf. *P. L.* V. 248 "nor delayed...after his charge received," or *Com.* 48, "After the Tuscan mariners transformed." It is an imitation of the Latin idiom in *post conditam urbem* and such like phrases, where the participle does the duty of a noun followed by a genitive case. So perhaps in *All's Well*, II. I. 6, "'Tis our hope...after well enter'd soldiers, to return;" i.e. after we have been entered as soldiers. See Abbott, *Shaksp. Gram.* p. 350.

1435—6. "And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan," *Judg.* xiii. 25; see also xiv. 6, "the Spirit

of the Lord came mightily upon him," where the Vulgate has *irruit*, which would exactly equal *rushed on*. Note that "all interior impulses are in the Bible ascribed to the agency of a good or evil spirit," and that "Samson seems to have been subject to sudden impulses to exert his strength" (Lias' *Commentary*, p. 158). See 1426, note.

1441—3. An intentional contrast to 336—8.

1445—1510. This portion of the drama is an excellent example of 'irony' in structure, Manoa being made to unfold his plans and hopes just when the catastrophe which will wreck them all is nearing. See especially 1494—1501.

1445. *peace*.... "The Hebrew and Arabic form of salutation" (Keightley); frequent in the Bible. Cf. *Judg.* vi. 23, xix. 20.

1447. *new parted*, just gone; cf. Fr. *parti*; see 1229.

1453. *ye*; a dative; cf. *Com.* 43, "I will tell ye." In O. E. *ye* was always used as a nom., *you* as a dat. or accus. In the Bible of 1611 the distinction is observed, but not in Shakespeare and the Elizabethan writers generally. See Morris' *Outlines*, p. 118.

1454. *good success*; in modern E. this would be repetition; but in 17th cent. E. *success* often means 'result:' so Shakespeare speaks of "bad success," *Troilus*, II. 2. 117, 3 *Hen. VI.*, II. 2. 46. For this neutral sense cf. *P. L.* II. 9, "by success untaught," and 123.

1457—72. Possibly an allusion to Milton's own position at the Restoration, and the efforts made on his behalf by Davenant (for whom M. is said to have interceded in 1650), Andrew Marvell, and others. M. was in hiding from May till August, 1660, was arrested in August, and released in December on payment of a fine (Masson's *Life*, vi. 163—195).

1457. *attempted*, i.e. petitioned, tried to win; cf. *Merry Wives*, IV. 2. 226, "he will never...attempt us again."

1461—71. If there be a general reference to Milton himself in Manoa's speech, then there may be a special one to the different parties in the State to whom he was opposed. Thus "*some* much averse" have been identified with the High Church party among the Royalists, who would have gladly seen M. punished as having in the *Tenure of Kings* apologised for regicide; and there had been great danger that M. would be included in the list of 20 persons excepted from the Act of Indemnity, on whom some penalty, short of death, was to be inflicted. Again, "*others* more moderate" may stand for the Presbyterian leaders, some of whom had joined the Court party. M. had long since quarrelled with them; cf. Johnson in the *Life*, "from this time (1644) he became

an enemy to the Presbyterians, whom he had favoured before." The *Areopagitica*, 1644, contains several bitter remarks such as—"it will soon put it out of controversy that Bishops and Presbyters are the same to us both name and thing." His poem "On the new Forcers of Conscience" made the breach with the Presbyterians complete.

1470. i.e. 'it would, *they said* (viz. the third party), be a magnanimous action to remit *the rest of the revenge* or punishment, Samson having suffered enough already.' This seems to me the meaning; but some editors take "the rest" to mean the remainder of the men whom Manoa petitioned, and interpret, 'the rest were so magnanimous as to remit.' This leaves *remit* without any accus. and makes *magnanimity* equivalent to an adjective, which is very awkward.

1472. *what...shout?* The shout raised by the people when Samson entered the theatre; see 1620. Cf. *P. L.* I. 542, *Richard II.*, III. 3. 57, "their thundering shock...tears the cloudy cheeks of heaven."

1480. *and he...left*, i.e. 'while he is left.' For this peculiar idiom cf. the *Animadversions*, "thy kingdom is now at hand, and thou standing at the door," i.e. while thou art standing, *P. W.* III. 72. Cf. *P. L.* II. 609.

1481. *fixed*, resolved. *not to part without him*; nor did Manoa: but it was with Samson's dead body (ll. 1730—3).

1483. *forgo*, sacrifice, give up; see G.

1487. *wont*, i.e. are wont; a present tense, 3rd pers. plur. The verb *won*, now used only in the p. p. *wonted* or *wont*, from A. S. *wunian*, was still conjugated when M. wrote, and had two senses—(i) to be used to, (ii) to dwell. For (i) cf. *Com.* 332, "fair moon, That wont'st to love;" and *Nat. Ode*, 10, "he wont...to sit," i.e. was wont. For (ii) cf. *P. L.* VII. 457, "he wons in forest wild;" so often in Spenser, e.g. *F. Q.* III. 5. 27, "In those same woods...A noble hunteresse did wonne."

1492. Cf. 525 and *P. L.* II. 111.

1494. Todd compares the description in Ovid, *Met.* VIII. 10, of Nisus *cui...crinis inhærebat, magni fiducia regni*. His life depended on his golden hair which Scylla pulled out in order that Minos, her lover, might gain possession of the kingdom.

1495—9. Manoa almost repeats the words he used in 586—9. Samson *is* about to do a great deed, but *very* different from anything Manoa expects.

1495. *had not*, i.e. would not have permitted; so the first ed. reads; the second prints "*hath not*."

1506. *agreeable to*, suitable to; cf. *Of Reformation*, "that which

is good and agreeable to Monarchy...by being good and agreeable to the true welfare of every Christian," *P. W.* II. 391.

1507. *next*, closely connected, i.e. as being of the same tribe.

1512. i.e. as if all the *inhabitants* had perished; cf. *Com.* 315, "if your stray *attendance* be yet lodged," i.e. attendants. Abstract for concrete is very common in Shakespeare; cf. *Lear*, III. 4. 26, "you houseless *poverty*, Poor naked wretches," i.e. houseless poor people. So *ancientry*=old people, *Winter's Tale*, III. 3. 63; *counsel*=counsellors, *Rich. III.*, II. 3. 20; *feast*=feasters, *Timon of Athens*, I. 2. 62; *sins*=sinners, *Hen. VIII.* III. 1. 104.

1515. *ruin*. He understands *ruin* in its literal sense of the fall of buildings, Lat. *ruina*. It is used of the fall of the angels from heaven, *P. L.* I. 46, and elsewhere. Cf. *ruining*=falling, *P. L.* VI. 868, "Heaven ruining from heaven." *methought*, see G.

1521. "In this passage, as is constantly the practice of Sophocles and Euripides, a reason is assigned for the Chorus continuing on the stage" (Warton).

1522. *danger's mouth*; cf. "mouth of death," *Rich. III.* IV. 4. 2.

1526. In the first ed. the speech of the Chorus runs thus:

"From other hands we need not much to fear.

A little stay will bring some notice hither,

For evil news rides post, while good news baits.

And to our wish I see one hither speeding,

An *Ebrew*, as I guess, and of our Tribe."

That is to say, the nine verses of our text, 1527—1535, were wanting; also l. 1537, "of good or bad:" while l. 1536, "a little stay," was given to the Chorus instead of Manoa. At the end of the volume a page of *Omissa* was inserted, with the missing verses, l. 1536 being transferred to Manoa. In the second ed. the passage is printed in its present form. Either the printer (or copyist) was to blame, or (which is more probable) Milton added the lines as the poem was passing through the press. The point of them is obvious: to make the Chorus and Manoa hope that Samson may after all be winning victory over his enemies when (as the audience know) Samson has met his own doom is very effective irony. Or, to put it differently, Samson *has* won victory, only not such as they are thinking of.

1529. *dole*, grief, pain; cf. *Midsummer N. D.*, v. 283, and *Hamlet*, I. 2. 13, "In equal scale weighing delight and dole." From O. F. *doel* or *duel*, mod. F. *deuil*=Late Lat. *dolium*, from the stem of *dolere*,



to grieve. Some editors interpret *dole* in this line to be the Teutonic word *dole*=distribution or share, akin to *deal* and Germ. *theil*, a part. But 'deal a dealing' does not seem a very felicitous phrase, nor is it necessary to suppose that M. intended a quibble on the two words. He uses *dole* in only one other place, and there it means pain; cf. *P. L.* IV. 894, "recompense dole with delight." Cf. Tennyson, *Lancelot and Elaine*, "she died...that day there was dole in Astolat."

1535. Manoa means that he would like to agree with them, and think that it may be so. *subscribe*=assent, from the metaphor of signing a document; cf. *P. L.* XI. 182.

1537. i.e. 'of fortune or misfortune so great as this must be, news of the misfortune will come first.' Apparently *good* and *bad* are nouns, and *notice* must be understood from 1536.

1538. *baits*, travels slowly; from the notion of stopping on a journey to *bait* or feed horses. Cf. Evelyn's *Diary*, Sept. 13, 1677, "Thence baiting at Newmarket...I slept at Bishops Stortford, and the next day home." Though the first ed. has *baits* some modern text print *bates*=*abates*, an absurd change. See G.

1543. *erst*, lately; so *P. L.* VI. 187, 308.

1549. *knew remaining*; see 840, note.

1550. We might take *as*=though, and *so*=yet: '*though* far from the scene, *yet* concerned in the event.' But perhaps the sense is, that *as* they were at some distance off, and therefore could not tell what had happened, they would be *proportionately* (=so) concerned to hear the messenger's report.

1552. *and here*. The first ed. has "and heard."

1554. *needs*, is necessary: "there needs no ghost...to tell us this," *Hamlet*, I. 5. 125.

1556. *distract*. So Shakespeare several times, e.g. in *Hamlet*, IV. 5. 2, "she is importunate, indeed distract;" and in *Lear*, IV. 6. 288. See 363, note.

1557. *the sum*, i.e. what it all amounts to, the upshot; cf. *Henry V.* III. 6. 172; "the sum of all our answer is but this." *circumstance*, details; cf. 1 *Henry VI.* I. 1. 109, "the circumstance I'll tell you more at large," where the messenger who has just announced the death of Talbot proceeds to relate how it took place. So *Hamlet*, V. 2. 2, *Romeo*, V. 3. 181.

1562. Cf. the similar lines in *Two G. of Verona*, III. 1. 219—20.

1570. Todd compares the scene in the *Electra* of Sophocles in which the death of Orestes is announced, citing the words of the pæda-

gogue, 673, τέθνηκ' Ὀρέστης. In such cases the bare fact is more eloquent than speech.

1572—3. i.e. death has done for Samson all that Manoa intended to do—but in a different way. Note how Manoa is made to use the word *ransom* which has been so often on his lips (483, 604, 1460).

1574. *windy*, empty; cf. the *Tenure of Kings*, "these titles being false and windy," *P. W.* II. 37, or Dryden: "Exchanging solid quiet to obtain The windy satisfaction of the brain." Percival takes the metaphor to be that of ὑπηνέμια ᾠά, unfertile eggs from which no young are produced; if so, cf. the *Colasterion*, "From such a *wind-egg* of definition as this, they who expect any of his other arguments to be well *hatched*, let them enjoy the virtue of their worthy champion," *P. W.* III. 437. The context (cf. *conceived*, *abortive*, *delivery*) makes this probable.

1576—7. An echo, perhaps of *Love's L. L.* I. I. 100, 101, "like an envious sneaping frost That bites the first-born infants of the spring." Cf. the same play v. 2. 812, and Shakespeare's 21st *Sonnet*, 7 ("April's first-born flowers").

1585. i.e. 'what brought him among his foes so soon after his refusal to go?' Manoa had heard of Samson's unwillingness; see 1449.

1590—1595. Keightley would assign this speech to the Chorus; cf. "*we* know," 1592. But Manoa speaks for the Chorus as well as himself, and so uses the plural; cf. 1553, "what it was *we* hear not." The dialogue has been hitherto between him and the messenger, and nothing is gained by introducing a fresh speaker.

1590. The emphasis is on *thyself*: till then it had always been Samson's enemies who suffered from his superhuman strength: now that strength has been turned against himself.

1595. *relation*, report: "hee loues men better upon relation then experience," Earle's *Characters*, p. 58. Cf. the *Tempest*, v. 164, "a chronicle of day by day, Not a relation for a breakfast." So *Com.* 617. Fr. *relation* retains this meaning; cf. the verb *relate* in E.

1596. *occasions*, business; a common meaning, cf. *Cymbeline*, v. 5. 87, "diligent...tender over his occasions," i.e. careful in performing what he has to do.

1597. *with sun-rise*. This line and l. 11 (cf. "with *day-spring* born") enable us to fix the time of the commencement of the play.

1597—9. Cf. Samson's words at the outset, "retiring from the popular noise," l. 16.

1599. *little...dispatched*, little business had I done.

1603. *mind*ed, resolved; cf. *Matt.* i. 19, "Joseph...was minded to put her away;" and *Psalms* lv. 3 (*Prayer-Book*), "they are minded to do me some mischief." Cf. *mind*=propose, intend: "ye that mind to come to the holy Communion."

1604. *absent at*. Shakespeare once uses 'absence at,' *Merry Wives*, I. i. 273, but the speaker is the Welshman, Sir Hugh Evans.

1605. Milton's account of the catastrophe, and of the building, is peculiar. In *Judg.* xvi. 27—30 the building is a "house;" in Quarles' *Historie of Samson*, a 'common hall;' in *S. A.*, a 'theatre' (—this idea may have been taken from Sandys' *Relation*, see 1634, note—), built in a semi-circle and arranged with seats in tiers whereon sit only the lords and chief men of the Philistines. Opposite them, and clear of the roof, are collected the crowd. Samson stands in the space between the nobles and the crowd, with his back to the latter. In the middle, probably, of the diameter of the semi-circle are the two pillars supporting the roof: they must be close together, because Samson can embrace them in his arms. When the roof falls only the lords are destroyed: the people, being outside the building, escape: none are on the roof. Contrast *Judg.* xvi. 27, where the house is filled with the crowd, while the roof bears 3000. And Quarles' *Historie*: there the people crowd the hall, and "the Roofe retain'd A leash of thousand more," p. 138.

Now M. never deviates from the Scriptural narrative without a purpose: and his purpose here is this. The Philistine 'lords' represent the courtiers of Charles II.: the 'counsellors' are the statesmen or politicians who brought about and supported the Restoration: the 'priests' are the Anglican clergy. It is on these classes—not on the nation at large—that M. prophesies that vengeance will fall; and it is to make his meaning plainer that he ventures to vary the account in *Judges*.

1607—8. *degree...sort*. Cf. *Of True Religion*, "all sorts and degrees of men...may read it," *P. W.* II. 516. *sort*=rank, cf. *Much Ado*, I. i. 6, 7: "*Leon*. How many gentlemen? *Messenger*. But few of any sort, and none of name." So the same scene, 33. From *Fr. sorte*=Ital. *sorta*, condition, kind; Lat. *sors*.

1610. *banks*, i.e. benches; cf. Cotgrave, "Banc: A bench, banke, forme, seat." So perhaps in *Macbeth*, I. 7. 6, "this bank and school of time" (Folio reading). *Bench*=A. S. *benc*, is a derivative of *bank*: it is a Teutonic word, the cognate French *banc* being borrowed from Old High German.

1611. *aloof...stood*, and so escaped; cf. l. 1659.

1612. i.e. 'it was full noon and the feast was at its height.' Cf. *P. L.* iv. 564, "at highth of noon." This is a portion of the drama in which Mr Edmundson has been able to detect a resemblance to Vondel's *Samson*.

1616. Cf. the officer's words in 1317, 1318. *livery*; here in its common sense of a distinctive dress for servants; but M. often uses it of any kind of clothes, e.g. in *L'Al.* 62, *P. L.* iv. 599. Originally it signified whatever was given (i.e. *delivered*) by a lord to his officials, whether food, money, or garments. From Fr. *livrer*, Low Lat. *liberare*, to abandon.

1619. *cataphracts*, see G.; *spears*=spearmen.

1620—21. Cf. 1472. *rifted*, i.e. *rent* the air (as in *Hamlet*, II. 2. 509, "the dreadful thunder Doth rend the region"). Shakespeare uses *rift* both as a trans. and intrans. verb; for the former cf. *Tempest.* v. 45—for the latter, *Winter's Tale*, v. 1. 66.

1624—26. i.e. he performed every task set before him that did not need eye-sight for its accomplishment.

1624. *what was set*, i.e. *whatever* was set.

1626. *heave*, lift; see 197.

1627. *stupendious*, the form used by M. here and in *P. L.* x. 351. It follows the analogy of words like *copious*, *delicious* where *-ious*=French *-ieux*. But *stupendous*, like *tremendous*, is taken straight from the Latin (*stupendus*, *tremendus*), and in each *i* is incorrect.

1630—34. See *Judg.* xvi. 26.

1634. *arched*. Cf. *P. L.* i. 726, *Nat. Ode*, 175. It has been objected that the arch was not known at this time to the architects of Canaan. I suspect, however, that M. remembered the account of Gaza in Sandys' *Relation*. Speaking of the buildings that he saw Sandys writes, "The best but low, of rough stone; arched within, and flat on the top." And again: "On the North-east corner, and summite of the hill, are the ruines of huge arches sunke low in the earth, and other foundations of a stately building. From whence the last *Sanziac* conveyed marble pillars of an incredible bignesse, which he employed in adorning a certain Mosque below in the Valley. The *Jews* do fable this place to have bin the theater of *Samson*, pulled doune on the head of the Philistims," *Relation*, ed. 1632, p. 149. Tradition may have pointed to these marble pillars as those which Samson tugged. M. mentions Sandys in *Of Reformation*, *P. W.* II. 380, and, probably, borrowed from him the description of the rites of Moloch in

*Nat. Ode*, 207, *P. L.* I. 392. Cf. also Quarles' *Historie* (ed. 1631, p. 136):

"Into the common Hall they come: The Hall  
Was large and faire; Her arched roofe was all  
Builde with massie stone."

1637. *eyes fast fixed*. Cf. Homer's *κατὰ χθονὸς δμματα πῆξας*, *Il.* III. 217; or Vergil, *defixus lumina*, *Æn.* VI. 156. It is not a very appropriate description of the blind Samson.

*prayed*; cf. *Judg.* xvi. 28, "strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes."

1642. *not without*; a meiosis for 'with great'; Lat. *non sine*.

1645. *amaze*, see 1286. For *amaze* as noun, instead of *amazement*, cf. *Nat. Ode*, 69, "the stars, with deep amaze." Shakespeare has it once, *Love's L. L.* II. 246. *strike*; the quibble is intentional.

1646. *nerves*, see 639.

1647—8. The simile is repeated from *P. L.* VI. 195—8. Cf. also *P. L.* I. 230—2;

"As when the force

Of subterranean wind transports a hill."

Milton seems to have attributed earthquakes to the escape of winds pent-up underground.

1653. *or priests*. M. may have dictated 'and priests'; see 182.

1659. *the vulgar*, the crowd, Lat. *vulgus*. Quarles says:

"None was left to tell

The horrid shriekes, that fill'd the spacious Hall,

Whose ruines were impartiall, and slew all."

1660. Note that the speaking is left to the Chorus. We can understand how Manoa would be crushed for a while at what he had heard; he is silent till l. 1708. Cf. *Macbeth*, IV. 3. 210, 211, "grief that does not speak Whispers the o'er-fraught heart." The proverb said—*cura leves loquuntur, majores stupent*.

1661—3. *living or dying*, i.e. in his life and death alike. *fulfilled the work*; a natural reflection on the part of the Chorus at such a moment: they expected that the event would lead to the deliverance of Israel from the Philistine yoke, but we are not told that it did. Rather, we find the Israelites in 1 *Sam.* iv. hard pressed by the Philistines. Again, historically, it was not true that Samson had, in his life, freed his country: nor was it "foretold" of him that he should: the Angel only said, "he shall begin to deliver Israel," *Judg.* xiii. 5. See l. 38.

1665. *not willingly*. Cf. "inevitable cause," 1586; "inevitably pulled down," 1657; and *The Argument*, "what Samson had done to the Philistines, and *by accident* to himself." Had Samson premeditated his destruction the act would have been suicide: and Manoa could not have spoken, ll. 1718—20.

1666. *dire Necessity*; an allusion, as Percival notes, to the Greek 'Ανάγκη; see *Preface*, l. 3, note. This seems to me to be a case where Milton's desire to reproduce the form and conventions of classical tragedy has led him to use language which, if interpreted literally, would be inconsistent with his belief as a Christian: Christianity could never recognise the doctrine of 'Ανάγκη as the Greek tragedians and their audiences understood it.

1667—68. "So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life," *Judg.* xvi. 30.

1669. *sublime*, uplifted; the Lat. *sublimis* in its metaphorical sense 'upraised.' Cf. Horace, *A. P.* 165, *sublimis cupidoque*, where the meaning is 'ambitious.' Cf. *P. L.* II. 528, "on the plain, or in the air sublime," i.e. raised aloft.

1670. *drunk with idolatry*. Editors quote *Isaiah* xxix. 9, "they are drunken, but not with wine." For the form of the line, the abstract cause (*idolatry*) being combined with the literal, cf. *P. L.* I. 501, "flown with *insolence* and *wine*." There are many similar instances in M.; cf. *P. L.* I. 175, X. 345. *idolatry*; a trisyllable by elision of *a*; cf. 443, 1378.

1674. *Silo*=Shiloh (M. disliked the sound *sh*), where the ark remained from the time of Joshua (see *Josh.* xviii. 1), till it was brought into the camp of Israel by Eli's sons (1 *Sam.* iv. 4). *bright sanctuary*, cf. the *Animadversions*: "the redoubled brightness of thy descending cloud, that now covers thy tabernacle," *P. W.* III. 71. In each case the allusion is to "the glory of the Lord" that filled the Tabernacle, and the Temple; see *Exod.* xl. 34, 1 *Kings* viii. 10, 11, *Rev.* xv. 8.

1675. *spirit*, a monosyllable (as often in M.) by elision of one *i*—the question is which. If the first—*spirit*—cf. the form *sprite*; Mr Bridges, however, believes that M. suppressed the second *i*—*spirit*—"following the Italian use, which in poetry both writes and pronounces *spirito* and *spir'to* exactly as he does." Were *spirit* as a monosyllable peculiar to M. the argument would hold; but the scansion is common in writers (e.g. Shakespeare) certainly not affected by Italian, and like them, M. may have adopted it merely for convenience sake, without reference to the Italian word. *phrenzy*, see G.

1676. *hurt*. Cf. βλάπτω, specially said of the gods distracting, or deceiving, or perverting the minds of men; e.g. in *Odyssey*, XIV. 178, τοῦ δέ τις ἀθανάτων βλάβη φρένας. Cf. the compounds βλαψίφρων, φρενοβλαβής.

1680. *unweetingly*, see G.

1682—4. The sentiment summed up in the proverbial saying—*quos Deus perdere vult dementat prius*. *fond*, foolish; cf. 228, 812.

1685. i.e. 'either left altogether without sense, or left to a reprobate one'; that is, 'given up to perverse-thinking minds.' "Reprobate sense" occurs twice in his prose works; cf. the *Animadversions*, *P. W.* III. 78, and *Of True Religion*, "it cannot be imagined that God would desert such painful and zealous labourers in his Church to damnable errors and a reprobate sense," *P. W.* II. 512. So "reprobate conscience" in *Church Gov.* II. 111. The word is from *Romans* i. 28, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind," where the Greek word in the original, ἀδόκιμος, signifies 'tested and rejected as spurious.' The margin of the A. V. gives an alternative rendering—"a mind void of judgment"—and this is the idea that M. follows.

1687—1707. Masson interprets these lines as an allusion to Milton's own case. He too had been "given for lost:" when the Restoration came his enemies might have thought that his work was done: yet he had revived, and in three great poems proved himself still vigorous and uncrushed.

1689. Cf. 162, and *P. L.* III. 51—55.

1692. *dragon*, serpent.

1695. *but as*. Some texts print 'and not as.' The change spoils the intentional contrast: Samson's *coming* was like that of a snake, his *sudden onslaught* like an eagle's swoop (Thyer). The first simile applies also to the Philistines: *they* were ranged round the theatre like fowls on perches. *villatic*, see G.

1696. *cloudless thunder*. "It is prodigious," says Sir Thomas Browne, "to have thunder in a clear sky," *Vulgar Errors*, bk. II. v. The superstition is often alluded to in classical writers. Cf. Horace, *Odes* I. 34. 5, *namque Diespiter, Igni corusco nubila dividens Plerumque, per purum tonantes Egit equos volucremque currum*. So Vergil, *G.* I. 487, *Æn.* VII. 141. Lucretius disbelieved in such thunder, VI. 247, 400.

1697. *given for*, considered. Cf. *P. L.* II. 14, "I give not Heaven for lost;" and George Herbert, *The Church Porch*, "who say, 'I care not,' those I give for lost." See also the *Winter's Tale*, III. 2. 96, "your favour I do give lost" i.e. reckon it to be lost.

1699—1705. Pliny, x. 2, tells the story of the Phoenix in some detail; cf. Holland's translation, 1601: "when hee (the bird) groweth old, and begins to decay, he builds himselfe a nest with the twigs and branches of the Canell or Cinamon, and Frankincense trees: and when hee hath filled it with all sort of sweet aromaticall spices, yieldeth up his life thereupon...of his bones and marrow there breedeth at first as it were a little worme: which afterwards proveth to be a pretie bird. And the first thing that this yong new Fœnix doth, is to performe the obsequies of the former Phoenix late deceased," vol. 1. p. 271. This explains the references in *self-begotten*, 1699, and *ashy womb*, 1703. There are different versions of the legend. See Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors*, III. xii. Of course, the allusion is here an anachronism, such as we have had at l. 150 and ll. 500, 501.

1700. *woods*; see the *Epitaphium Damonis*, 186, 187 (quoted in next note). The commoner tradition speaks of a single tree. Cf. Lyly's *Euphues*, "as there is but one Phoenix in the world, so there is but one tree in Arabia, wherein she buyldeth;" and Florio: "Rasin, a tree in Arabia, whereof there is but one found, and upon it the Phoenix sits." Cf. "sole Arabian tree," *Phoenix and the Turtle*. *embost*, see G.

1701. *that no second knows*, because there is never more than one alive at a time. *Unica semper avis*, says Ovid, *Amor.* II. vi. 54, which M. imitates in the *Epitaphium*, 186, 187:

*Littora longa Arabum et sudantes balsama silvæ,  
Has inter Phœnix, divina avis, unica terris.*

Cf. "that *sole* bird," *P. L.* v. 272, and the *Tempest*, III. 3. 23.

1702. *holocaust*, see G.

1703. Note that the simile ends with 1702: in 1703, and thenceforth, Virtue is the subject, the structure being: 'Virtue though depressed, does, like the Phoenix, revive from her own ashes, being most vigorous when deemed most unactive; and though Virtue's body dies, her fame lives on as a secular bird.'

*her*. In *P. L.* v. 273, 274, as in Pliny, the Phoenix is a male bird. Cf., however, the passage from *Euphues* in the note on 1700, and that from the *Epitaphium* at 1701. So sometimes in Shakespeare, e.g. *Sonnet* 19, "burn the long-lived Phoenix in her blood." Here the bird is feminine to suit the comparison with Virtue.

*teemed*, brought forth. For the active use of *teem* cf. *youngest-teem'd* in *Nat. Ode*, 240, and *P. L.* VII. 454. So *Macbeth*, IV. 3. 176, "*Mal*. What is the newest grief? *Rosse*. Each minute teems a new one."

1704—5. *then...when*. The demonstrative gives emphasis; cf.



*Com.* 188, "They left me then, when the grey-hooded even...." Pope uses the same device; cf. the *Epilogue to the Satires*, i. 97, "There where no passion, pride or shame transport."

1706—7. *her...her*, viz. Virtue's; see 1703, note. *secular*, lasting for *sæcula* or centuries. Pliny says, "hee (the Phoenix) liveth 660 yeares;" more commonly 500 years was the period assigned.

1709. i.e. just as there is no time, so there is scarcely any reason, for lamentation. *quit=acquitted*; cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 13, "quit you like men;" and *Lear*, II. i. 32, "Now quit you well."

1713. *sons of Caphtor*=Philistines; cf. *Amos*, ix. 7, "Have not I brought up...the Philistines from Caphtor?" Most scholars identify Caphtor with Crete because the Philistines are called Cherethites in 1 *Sam.* xxx. 14—16, *Zephaniah* ii. 5; and 'Cherethites' cannot well signify anything but Cretans. Cf. the Septuagint in *Zeph.* ii. 5, *πάροιχοι Κρητῶν*, and *Ezek.* xxv. 16, *ἐξολοθρεύσω Κρήτας*. We know also that the population and civilization of Crete were Semitic before Greek influence prevailed; and for the Semitic origin of the Philistines, see p. 67. Another view (based on *Gen.* x. 13, 14) is that Caphtor was somewhere in the Delta of Egypt. Ancient tradition confused Caphtor with Cappadocia.

1714—6. See 1661, note.

1719—20. See 1665, note.

1723. *nothing but well*, i.e. nothing but what is well.

1726—7. Cf. "laving stream," *P. R.* i. 280, and *Com.* 838, "to imbathe in nectared lavers." *lavers*, see G.

1728. *with what speed*; supply *I can*.

1729. *not in plight*, not in a condition to; *plight*, see G.

1730—3. See *Judges*, xvi. 31. *silent*, alluding to the custom at Jewish funerals by which "all the near relations of the deceased came to the house in their mourning dress, and sat down upon the ground in silence; whilst in another part of the house were heard the voices of mourners, and the sound of instruments, hired for the purpose" (Todd). Cf. what Sir Thomas Browne says of the funeral customs of the Jews, *Hydrotaphia*, chap. 1.

*obsequy*, funeral ceremony, see G.

1735. *laurel...palm*, as symbols of victory. The laurel, being "ever green," is also emblematic of undying fame; cf. *Lyc.* i.

1736. *trophies*, cf. *Il Pen.* 118, "Of turneys and of trophies hung." The custom of hanging trophies over the tomb of a warrior belonged to the age of Chivalry.

1737. *legend*, i.e. "narrative, history. So we have the *Legends of the Saints*, and Drayton and others named their poetic histories of eminent persons their *Legends*" (Keightley). Cf. Chaucer's *Legende of Goode Women*. But the sense 'false story' had become the usual one when M. wrote; cf. *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, "fragments of old martyrologies and legends, to distract and stagger the multitude," *P. W.* II. 422. From Lat. *legenda*, things worthy of being read.

*lyric song*, i.e. songs of victory such as we have in the Bible; e.g. that of Deborah and Barak, *Judg.* v., and David's in *2 Sam.* xx. 1—51. In the Revised V. the poetical character of these passages is more emphasized than in the A.V. Todd reminds us of Pindar's *Odes*.

1741—2. This is the honour that Dalila promised herself, 986—7.

1745. Compare the moralising verses—repeated from one play to the other—with which Euripides ends the *Bacchæ*, *Alceſtis*, *Andromache* and *Helena*, impressing on the audience that the ways of Providence are inscrutable. 'Inscrutable,' indeed, says M., 'but still always for the best.' It was the sum of Pope's philosophy in the *Essay on Man* that "One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right."

1746. *dispose*, dispensation; i.e. in the same sense as *disposition*, 373. Cf. *Church Gov.* II., "the arbitrary and illegal dispose of any one that may be called a king," *P. W.* II. 502. Shakespeare has "at thy dispose," *Two G. of Verona*, II. 7. 86, IV. 1. 76. Cf. *P. R.* III. 369.

1749. *to hide his face*, i.e. in sign of displeasure; cf. *Psalms* civ. 29, "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled;" and *Ps.* xxx. 7. We have the converse frequently: "God be merciful unto us, and bless us: and shew us the light of his countenance," *Ps.* lxxvii (*Prayer Book*).

1751. *in place*. Most editors say 'in this place,' 'here;' but the meaning might be 'by his presence:' God had been present to help Samson, (cf. 1719, 1720). Shakespeare uses the phrase several times, and always with the sense 'present,' e.g. "here's one in place I cannot pardon," *Measure for M.*, v. 504; "as firmly as you yourself were still in place," *Taming of the Shrew*, I. 2. 157.

1755. *his servants*, Manoa and the Chorus; but it should also be true of the audience, that they too are "purged" δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου. What M. had written in the *Preface* as to the aim of tragedy he here exemplifies by representing Manoa and the Chorus as submitting resignedly, after doubts and distress of mind, to the decrees of providence. Contrast the conventional view of the close of a tragedy: "the beginning," says Blount, *Glossographia*, "is calm and quiet, the end fearful and turbulent."

*acquist*, acquisition, something gained ; see G.

1758. *passion*, used of any strong agitation of the mind. In Shakespeare it much more often implies violent grief than, as now, violent anger. Cf. *Titus*, 1. 106, "A mother's tears in passion for her son."

*Excunt*. The final departure of the Chorus from the stage was called the *ἐξοδος* or *ἀφοδος*. That the concluding words should be spoken by them, and not by one of the characters, was a convention of Greek tragedies ; the only extant examples to the contrary being the *Agamemnon* and *Prometheus Vincit*.

## ADDENDUM.

*Preface*, 25—27. Since the note on this passage was written we have learnt, from a second inspection of the Milton MSS. at Trinity College, that the subject of Christ's Passion was one of those on which Milton contemplated building his great epic. The entry "*Christus Patiens*" occurs in the list of schemes, with two or three lines of comment roughly sketching out the events suitable for treatment.

With regard to the Greek tragedy which Milton, in accordance with the belief long entertained by scholars, attributed to Gregory Nazianzen, it would appear from Krumbacher's recently published *Geschichte der Byzantinischen Litteratur* (1891) that the German critics who have discussed the authorship of the play are agreed that it cannot possibly have been written so early as the third or fourth century: wherefore the claims of Apollinarius are no more valid than those of Gregory.

On the several grounds of language, metre and style the *Christus* is now assigned to the twelfth century, A.D.; but the problem of its authorship remains as insoluble as before. The editor of the play in Teubner's *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Medii Aevi*, Dr Brambs, argues in favour of the Byzantine writer, Theodorus Prodromus (1143—1180); and the same critic in an earlier treatise on the subject quoted a number of noteworthy parallels between the undoubted works of Prodromus and the *Christus*. But this view was afterwards shown to be untenable, for a variety of reasons, mainly metrical, by Professor Hilberg (*Wiener Studien*, 1886, pp. 282—314). Another Byzantine on whom the composition of the *Christus* has been gratuitously fathered is Joannes Tzetzes (born about 1110). All this, however, is mere guesswork: and the only thing which may be accepted with tolerable certainty is that the play was written in the twelfth century—by whom we know not, and amid the maze of Byzantine authors are never likely to know. Dr Krumbacher gives an interesting analysis of the piece (pp. 356—358); while the editor, Dr Brambs, traces the classical extracts to their different sources.

## GLOSSARY.

*abject*, 169, brought low in estate; a rare use, but cf. *P. L.* I. 312, "abject and lost lay these." The *New E. D.* quotes Tindale, 2 *Cor.* vii. 6, "He that comfortith the abiecte" = "those that are cast down" (in the A. V.). More commonly 'cast off,' i.e. degraded, is the sense.

*abyss*, 501; Lat. *abyssus*, Gk. ἄβυσσος—from *a*, neg. prefix, and βυσσός, depth (akin to E. *bathos*). The oldest forms in E. were *abime* and *abysme*, from Fr. *abisme* = Low Lat. *abyssimus*, 'the lowest depth,' an irregular superlative of *abyssus*. M. always uses *abyss*, Shak. always *abysm*; cf. *Tempest*, I. 2. 50, *Sonnet* 112. *Abyss*, like *abysm*, was specially said of "the great deep, believed in the old cosmogony to be beneath the earth;" thence applied vaguely to 'the infernal regions,' 'hell,' e.g. in *P. L.* I. 658, II. 405, 518. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. 13. 147, "the abysm of hell."

*accident*, 612, a medical term for "an occurring or unfavourable symptom." The *New E. D.* quotes from Gale's *Antidotarie*, 1563, "Thys Vnguent...dothe remoue diuers accidentes and sicknesses." Bacon describing an outbreak of the 'sweating sickness' in 1485 says, "there began...a disease then new; which by the accidents and manner thereof they call the sweating sickness," *Hist. of Hen. VII.* p. 12 (Pitt Press ed.). So in *Of Regimen of Health*, "despise no new accident in your body." Here the sense is more than 'symptom:' 'pain' or 'torture' is implied.

*acquist*, 1755, from Lat. *acquisitum* = mediæval Lat. *acquistum*; cf. Ital. *acquisto*. Commonly active in sense = the action of getting; cf. Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living*, 1650, "assist their endeavours in the acquist of vertues." For the passive use = a thing acquired (as here), cf. Barrow, 1677, "in the gifts of fortune, or in the acquists of industry." In the latter sense the form *acquest* is more usual; cf. Bacon's *History of Hen. VII.*, "new acquests are more burden than strength," p. 90, and

p. 172. Cf. also the participle *acquisite*=acquired, used by M. in the *Ready Way*, "good education and acquisite wisdom ought to correct the fault," *P. W.* II. 124. See the *New E. D.*

*adamantean*, 134, from Lat. *adamanteus*, hard as adamant. Gk. *ἀδάμας*, 'invincible,' from *α*, neg. prefix, and *δαμνέω*, to tame, was applied to the hardest iron, or steel, or stone. In E. *adamant* meant: (i) the diamond, (ii) the loadstone, magnet. For (i) cf. *Ezek.* iii. 9, "an adamant harder than flint," where the Hebrew word *shāmīr*=diamond; for (ii) cf. *Midsummer N. D.* II. 1. 195, "you draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;" and *Troilus*, III. 2. 186, "true...as iron to adamant." Commonly the adjective in E. is *adamantine*.

*address*, 729, lit. 'to make straight:' from "O.F. *adressier*, *adrecier*, Late Lat. *addrictiare*, from Lat. *directum*, straight" (Mayhew and Skeat). For the sense 'prepared,' 'ready,' cf. *Julius C.* III. 1. 29, "he is address'd; press near," and 2 *Hen. IV.* IV. 4. 5, "our navy is address'd."

*advise*, 328, consider; often reflexive, like the Fr. *s'aviser*; cf. the A. V. in 1 *Chron.* xxi. 12, "advise thyself what word I shall bring," where the Genevan Bible, 1562, has "advise thee," while the Revised V. substitutes "consider." Cf. *advisement*=consideration: "the lords of the Philistines upon advisement sent him away," 1 *Chron.* xii. 19; and 'to take advice'=to deliberate, e.g. in *Judg.* xix. 30, "consider of it, take advice."

*allay*, 550. Three separate verbs have become merged in *allay*, viz. (i) *allay*=A. S. *alegan*, 'to cause to lie down,' and so metaphorically 'to quell;' (ii) *allay*=O. E. *aleggen* 'to lighten,' from O. F. *aleger*=Lat. *alleviare*; (iii) *allay*, or *alloy*, 'to mix,' from O. F. *aleyer*, or *alayer*, Lat. *alligare*. Being similar in form—thus (ii) and (iii) were both spelt *aleggen* in the 14th cent.—and sense, they were gradually confounded; perhaps when M. wrote some distinction between them was still recognised.

*amain*, 637, 1304, is an intensive word, emphasising the verb: to 'shut amain,' as in *Lyc.* III, is to shut with force: to 'come amain' is to come with speed. Cf. 2 *Maccabees*, xii. 22, "The enemies, being smitten with fear...fled amain;" so often in Shak. e.g. in *Comedy of E.* I. 1. 93, "Two ships from far making amain to us." O. E. *mægn*=power; from the root whence *μέγας*, *magnus*.

*amber*, 720, ambergris; *amber* was applied to two distinct substances, viz. (i) a wax-like substance that is secreted in the sperm-whale, or found floating in tropical seas—the colour ashy or grey; (ii) a fossil resin—the colour yellow. To distinguish them the first was generally called *amber*

*gris*, the second *amber jaune*. *Ambergris* (as this verse shows) was used in perfumery: Cf. Cotgrave, "Amber gris: Amber greece, or gray-Amber; (the best kinde of Amber) used in perfumes." Also in cookery, cf. *P. R.* II. 344, and George Herbert, *The Odour*, "as amber-greese leaves a rich scent unto the taster." Even wines were perfumed with it; cf. Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Custom of the Country*, "Be sure the wines be...ambered all." The substance was most fragrant when heated. We often find the word written *amber-greese*, *amber-grease*, or even *greece of amber*; a "popular etymology" of *gris* which explains itself.

*annoy*, 578, a far stronger word in early E. than now. Cf. Wyclif, *Isai.* xi. 9, "Thei shuln not anoye in al myn hoeli mounteyn." Shak. always uses it in this emphatic sense, 'to molest,' 'to harm'; cf. *Julius C.* I. 3. 22, II. 1. 160. So *annoyance*=injury, *Macbeth*, v. 1. 84. O. F. *anoier* is from *anoi* (cf. mod. F. *ennui*), formed from Lat. *in odio*, as in the phrase *est mihi in odio*. In O. E. we also find *noye*=harm, *noyen*=to grieve, to harm; see Mayhew and Skeat, *Mid. E. D.*

*antics*, 1325, buffoons, so called because they practised odd gesticulations and antics, like clowns; or perhaps from their patch-work dresses which might be described as *antic*=fantastic. Bacon says, "let anti-masques not be long; they have commonly been of fools, satyrs...antics," *Of Masques*. So "antic Death" in 1 *Hen. VI.* IV. 7. 18.

*appoint*, 373. Some editors interpret *appoint* 'to blame, censure;' but there is no evidence that the word ever bore any such sense. The supposed illustration in Harington's *Nugæ Antiquæ*, I. 48—"If anye of theise wants be in me, I beseeche your lordshipp appoint them to my extreme state"—is no illustration at all. There *appoint* obviously means 'to lay to the account of, impute to.' The sense 'arrange, settle' seems to us to suit the context here, and to be supported by the passage from the *Areopagitica* quoted in the note.

*armoury*, 1281. Here in the usual sense of the place where arms are kept; but sometimes a collective noun signifying armour, e.g. in *P. L.* IV. 553, "celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears," and in *Of Reformation*, "this is all her armoury, her munition, her artillery," *P. W.* II. 414. So Spenser, *F. Q.* I. 1. 27. Perhaps originally from O. F. *armoyeries*, though treated as a derivative of *armour*, and spelt accordingly. Sometimes written *armary*, as if from Lat. *armarium*.

*ask*, 66; for the sense 'require,' 'need,' cf. *Areopagitica*, "it will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes;"

and again, "this work will ask as many more officials," *P. W.* II. 73, 76. So Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, II. 14, "it asketh some knowledge to demand a question not impertinent;" and Shak. *Rich. II.* II. 1. 159, *Midsummer N. D.* I. 2. 27. *Ask* is from a root signifying 'desire,' 'wish;' cf. cognate Germ. *heischen*, to demand.

*assassinate*, 1109, implies in modern E. actual murder; in earlier E. it sometimes bore the less emphatic sense 'to wound or harm grievously,' especially by treacherous means. Cf. *betrayed* in this line; cf. also *P. L.* XI. 218, 219, "who to *surprise* One man, assassin-like, had levied war." The *New E. D.* instances Massinger's *Roman Actor*, II. 1, "Sufficient For thee that dost assassinate my soul." Derived, says Skeat, "From Arab. *hashishin*, drinkers of hashish, the name of a Sect in the 13th century; the 'Old Man of the Mountain' roused his followers' spirits by help of this drink, and sent them to stab his enemies, esp. the leading crusaders." *Hashish*, the drug, is made from a kind of hemp.

*assay*, 392, 1625; M. always uses this form; and in Spenser and Shak. it is commoner than *essay*. In modern E. *assay* is only used of testing metals. O. F. *assai* was a variant of *essai*=Lat. *exagium*, a weighing, trial of exact weight. A medial *x* in Latin often became *ss* in French; cf. *essaim*=*examen*.

*assuage*, 627; cf. *swage*, 184. M. always writes them with *w*; so Spenser (e.g. *F. Q.* I. 3. 5), and Cowley, "the dog-star's thirst assuage" (*The Garden*). Cf. the A. V. in *Job* xvi. 5, "Though I speak, my grief is not asswaged." From O. F. *assouagier*, to make *sweet* (i.e. Lat. *suavis*), and so relieve, lighten.

*ay me*, 330, is the O. F. *aymi*, alas for me! Cf. Ital. *ahimé*, Span. *ay de mí*, Gk. *οἶμοι*. Cotgrave has, "Aj: oh; aye me; (an Interjection expressing sence of paine, or of smart)." In the *Manipulus*, 1570, the expression is treated as a noun: "ayme, *presagium*." Cf. *Lyc.* 56, 154.

*baffled*, 1237; Nares defines *baffling* as "originally a punishment of infamy, inflicted on recreant knights, one part of which was hanging them up by the heels." Cf. Spenser, *F. Q.* vi. where the motto of canto 6 says, "Turpine is baffuld," the process being described in st. 27, "He by the heeles him hung upon a tree, And baffuld so." Later it signified to treat contemptuously; cf. M. in *The Likeliest Means*, "men will not be gulled and baffled," *P. W.* III. 19. Skeat derives from Lowland Scotch *bauchle*, to vilify, a Scandinavian word: others from Fr. *bafouer*. See Trench's *English Past and Present*, s.v.

*bait*, 1538; from Icelandic *bíta*, to bite: the causal verb being *beita*,



to make to bite; so that 'to bait' horses is to make them eat. The Iceland. sound *ei* commonly appears as *ai* or *ay* in modern E. Cf. *hail!* from Iceland. *heill*, used in greetings. In modern E. *bait* is not a very dignified word, but a 17th cent. poet could use it; cf. Donne's *Progress of the Soul*, describing the passage of a soul to Heaven: "She stays not in the Air...she baits not at the Moon," i.e. does not stop there.

*bedrid*, 579; cf. Cotgrave, "Clinique: one that is bedred; or so sick that he cannot rise." From O. E. *bed-reda*, or *rida*, or *ryda* (see Stratmann, ed. Bradley), i.e. a *bed-rider*, 'one who can only ride on a bed, not on a horse:' hence an infirm person. The *Catholicon* (1483) has, "Bedered-man, or woman. *Decumbens, clinicus, clinica*." Cf. Chaucer, *Sompnoures Tale*, 261, "bedred upon a couche lowe he lay." In the *Animadversions* M. speaks of "an overworn and bedridden argument," *P. W.* III. 69. *Bedridden*, the usual form in prose, may have been treated as a p. p.; the *en* being the verbal suffix of the passive p. p. Philologists do not accept Max Muller's derivation from the Norse word, *be-drida*=enchanted.

*blandish*, 403; rare before the end of the last cent.; Johnson said that he had not noticed it in any place besides this line. But cf. Chaucer, *Persones Tale*, "eek if he flaterre or blaundisshe more than him oughte" (*Aldine* ed., III. 292). Cotgrave has, "Blandisseur: A blandisher, gloser, soother." Not used by Shakespeare. Middle E. *blaundissen*=O.F. *blandir*=Lat. *blandiri*.

*blank*, 471, confound; the *New E. D.* quotes Cotgrave, "Confuter un tesmoing, to disgrace, confound, puzle, blanke him." Cf. the adjective *blank*=dismayed, *P. L.* IX. 890, "astonied...and blank;" and the colloquial phrases 'blank confusion,' 'blank terror' etc. Etymologically the vb. *blank*=*blanch*, or *blench*, i.e. to make *white*, Fr. *blanc*. Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 230, "blanks the face of joy"=makes it pale.

*blaze*, 528, to proclaim abroad, as in *Arc.* 74. Cf. *Mark* i. 45, "to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter;" or *Romeo*, III. 3. 150, "Till we can find a time, To blaze your marriage." The notion of the word is 'announcing publicly,' as by blowing a trumpet; cf. A. S. *blasen*=to blow, Germ. *blasen*. Other cognates are *blare*, *blast*, *blason*=proclamation, *Hamlet*, I. 5. 21.

*bravery*, 717, finery; not elsewhere in M., but cf. *Taming of the Shrew*, IV. 3. 57, "scarfs and fans and double change of bravery." Cf. the wider sense 'ostentation:' "That know no other Content but wealth, brauery, and the Towne-Pleasures," Earle's *Characters* (Arber's

ed.), p. 71. *Brave* (verb)=make fine, *Taming of the Shrew*, IV. 3. 125, "thou hast braved many men" (said to the tailor).

*brigandine*, 1120, a coat of mail, formed of scales or plates of metal overlapping, sewed on canvas or linen; "very pliant unto, and easie for the body" (Cotgrave). See *Jeremiah* xlv. 4, and li. 3, "that lifteth himself up in his brigandine." Strictly O. F. *brigandine* meant armour for a *brigand*=a foot-soldier in O. F.

*brunt*, 583. Not elsewhere in his poems, and only once in Shak.; cf. *Coriol.* II. 2. 117, "in the brunt of seventeen battles." It implies the first shock or onslaught; cf. *Church Gov.*, "We know your manner of fight, when the quiver of your arguments...after the first brunt is quite empty," *P. W.* II. 464. So Sherwood's *Dict.*, "He abode the brunt of it. *Il en a enduré le hazard. Il en a passé les piques*;" and Palsgrave, "Brunt of a daunger, *escousse*." A Scandinavian word, allied to Danish *brynde*, heat, passion; cf. Gothic *brinnan*, to burn (Skeat, *Principles*, 1st ser. 242); *burn* itself is cognate, the *r* being misplaced by the metathesis so common with that letter.

*cataphracts*, 1619, cavalry, the horses as well as the men being clad in coats of mail, according to the description in *P. R.* III. 311—13; from *καταφράκτος*. Cf. the note by Servius on *Aeneid*, XI. 770, cited by Todd: *Cataphracti equites dicuntur, qui et ipsi ferro muniti sunt, et equos similiter munitos habent*. *Cataphract* could also mean 'a coat of mail,' as though from *καταφράκτης*, whence metaphorically 'a protection;' cf. Feltham's *Resolves*, "Virtue is a cataphract...in vain we arm one Limb, while the other is without a defence." Sometimes *cataphract* was confused with *cataract*; cf. Sidney's *Apologie*, "if you be borne so neere the dull-making *Cataphract* of Nilus," Arber's ed. p. 72.

*chafe*, 1246, fret, passion; rare as noun, but once in Shak.; cf. *Antony*, I. 3. 85. The verb, especially in the p. p., is common; cf. 2 *Sam.* xvii. 8, "they be chafed in their minds." So *Henry VIII.* I. 1. 123, III. 2. 206. From O. F. *chauser*=Late Lat. *calefare*, to heat. Its etymology is well illustrated in George Herbert's *Church Porch*, "he that lets Another chafe, may warm him at his fire."

*champion*, 556, 705, 1152, 1751. In each of these passages *champion* bears its old half-legal sense of the combatant who took part in a trial by battle to decide the justice of a cause. Cf. Cotgrave, "Champion: A Champion; one that fights a publick combat in his owne, or another mans, quarrell;" and Shak. *All's Well*, IV. 2. 50, "bring in the champion Honour on my part." In this play Samson is the champion of the cause of God against Dagon. O. F. *champion* is

from Low Lat. *campio*, the derivation of which is shown by Du Cange: *Campiones qui in campum descendunt et duello seu monomachia decertant.*

*colour*, 901, pretext. Cf. Shak., *Julius Caesar*, II. I. 29, and *Antony*, I. 3. 32, "seek no colour for your going." So Cowley, "can give no reason or colour...for what he does," *Of Avarice*.

*concernments*, 969, concerns, business; cf. *Church Gov.*, "I have determined to lay up...the honest liberty of free speech, where I shall think it available in so dear a concernment as the Church's good," *P. W.* II. 475. Dryden speaks of "under-plots or by-concernments," *Dram. Poesy*, 56. More often *concernment* is used in the singular, with the sense 'importance.' Cf. Cowley, "to receive an obligation of so near concernment without returning some marks of acknowledgment," *Essays*, p. 15; or Jeremy Taylor, *Rule of Conscience*, I. 1, "in things of great concernment we pray God to conduct our choice."

*connive*, 466, be long-suffering; cf. the *Winter's Tale*, IV. 4. 692, "the gods do this year connive at us." In modern E. it always has the bad sense of permitting something wrong. Cotgrave gives both meanings: "Conniver: To winke at; suffer, tolerate, beare with;" and "Connivence: A connivence, or winking at; a sufferance, toleration, permission, a seeing, and not seeing (by consent)." In *Of Reformation* M. praises "the constancy of our nobility and Commons of England, whose calm and temperate connivance could sit still and smile out the stormy bluster of men," *P. W.* II. 406. From Fr. *conniver*=Lat. *connivere*, to close the eyes at, overlook; cf. Lat. *conniventia*.

*craze*, 571; a strong word; cf. Cotgrave, "Accrazer: To break, burst, craze, bruise, crush." From Swedish *krasa*, to break in pieces, Fr. *écraser* coming from the same source; cognates are *crash*, *crack*, *creak*.

*crude*, 700, is always used by M. in some one of the senses of Lat. *crudus*: viz. undigested, cf. *Com.* 480; or unripe, cf. *Lyc.* 3, "berries harsh and crude;" or raw, cf. *P. L.* VI. 511, "the originals of nature in their crude conception," i.e. unwrought state. Etymologically *raw* and *crude* are akin, from the base *kpu*; cf. Lat. *cruor*.

*decrepit*, 69, Lat. *decrepitus*, noise-less, i.e. moving quietly like an old man, and so 'aged.' Cotgrave has "Decrepité: Decrepit, very old; whose candle is almost burnt out."

*demure*, 1036. More complimentary than now; cf. Sherwood's *Dict.* (1650), "*Demure. Modeste; honteux.*" In modern E. it rather implies self-conscious modesty. Derived from O. F. *de murs*=of

manners, i.e. good manners: *murs*, mod. F. *maurs*=Lat. *mores*. Cf. *debonaire*=*de bon air*.

*descant*, 1228. The musical term *descant* generally meant the variations added extempore to a plain song or given melody. Cf. Jeremy Taylor, "after the angel had told his message in plain song, the whole chorus joined in descant." Blount, *Glossographia*, defines the verb: "Descant, to run division, or variety with the voice, upon a musical ground, in true measure; to sing off on a ground. Transferred by Metaphor to paraphrasing ingeniously upon any affective subject." Samson thinks that Harapha has come to 'paraphrase' on his weakness.

*discomfit*, 469; more commonly *discomfiture*, as in 1 *Hen. VI.* I. 1. 59, "tidings...of slaughter and discomfiture." Cf. the *Apol. for Smect.*, "rebellion rages in our Irish province...but is daily discomfited and broken," *P. W.* III. 149. O. F. *desconfire*=Lat. *dis-conficere*, i.e. to un-make or dis-preserve a thing.

*doughty*, 1181; cf. *Church Gov.*, "we could easily...dissolve your doughtiest reasons in argument," *P. W.* II. 464. Cotgrave has, "Preux: Hardie, doughtie, valiant." In *Antony and C.* IV. 8. 5, *doughty-handed*=stout of hands. A. S. *dyhtig*, bold, is from *dugan*, to avail, be worth. For the original notion 'worth,' cf. the *Catholicon*, 1483, "Dugthy ubi, worthy;" with the German cognates *taugen*, *tüchtig*, *tugend*.

*draff*, 574, refuse food, especially food given to swine. Cf. Cotgrave "Mangeaille pour les porceaux: Swillings, washings, draffe." Used so in *Merry Wives*, IV. 2. 109, 1 *Hen. IV.* IV. 2. 38: thence figuratively in the sense 'outcast;' cf. the *Doct. of Div.*, "the brood of Belial, the draff of men," *P. W.* III. 173. *Draff* is cognate with *drab*, an untidy woman; cf. the adjective *drafty*=dirty, in Hall's *Satires*, v. 3—"all within is drafty sluttish geere."

*drone*, 567. Cf. Swedish *drönare*, 'hummer.' The Aryan base is seen in Greek *θρῆνος*, Sanskrit *dhran*, to sound.

*Ebrew*, 1308, 1319; this form is found in the Bible of 1611, and once in Shak., 1 *Hen. IV.* II. 4. 198, where, however, the speaker is Falstaff; in *Merchant of V.* I. 3. 58, 179, Shak. writes *Hebrew*. The ordinary form in Middle E. is *Ebreu*; cf. Wyclif, *Luke*, xxiii. 38, "And the superscripcioun was writun over hym with Greke lettris, and of Latyn, and of Ebreu." Cf. Ital. *ebreo*. The word comes to us through O. F. *ebreu*, later *hebreu* (cf. mod. E. *Hebrew*) from Lat. *hebraeus* (in Vulgate)=Gk. *ἑβραῖος* (in Septuagint)=Heb. 'ibri: 'ibri is from a root to cross, and the title was applied to Abraham (cf. *Gen.* xiv. 13) as the crosser of the Euphrates—or Jordan—into Canaan.

*embost*, 1700, enclosed; put for *embosket*, the p. p. of *embosk*. *Embosk* = Fr. *embusquer*, a borrowed word, from Ital. *imboscare*, to shut up in a bush or thicket; cf. cognates *ambuscade*, *ambush*, *bosky*, *bouquet*. We also find a parallel form *imbosk*, i.e. taken straight (not through the French) from Ital. *imboscare*; cf. M. in *Of Reformation*, "they seek the dark, the bushy, the tangled forest, they would imbosk" = hide themselves in the wood, *P. W.* II. 389. Possibly the form (note the loss of *k*) and meaning of *embosk*, or *imbosk*, may have been influenced by a false connection with O. F. *emboister*, from *boiste*, a box. Cf. Sherwood, 1650, "To imboss (shut or close up, as in a box) *Emboiter*, *emboister*: Imbossed, *Emboisté*, *emboisté*;" the same words being in Cotgrave. This would explain Spenser's "in mighty armes embost" (i.e. encased), *F. Q.* I. 3. 24, and *F. Q.* VI. 4. 40, 'ne lig (lie) in ease embost." It is useless to compare, as do some editors, the hunting-term *embossed*, or *embost*, said of an animal covered with foam from hard hunting, which occurs in the *F. Q.* III. 12. 17, *Antony and C.* IV. 13. 3.

*engines*, 1396, instruments; cf. *Church Gov.* II. 111, "such engines of terror God hath given into the hand of his minister," *P. W.* II. 498. In the early versions of the Bible *engine* is used of implements of war. Mayhew (*Select Gloss.*) quotes 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 15, in the Douay (1609) version, "He made in Jerusalem engines of diverse kind." So the A. V. in *Jerem.* vi. 6, *Ezek.* xxvi. 9; so Shakespeare, *Tempest*, II. 1. 161, and M. several times in *P. L.*, e.g. II. 923, VI. 484. From O. F. *engin*, Ital. *ingegno*, Lat. *ingenium*.

*fond*, 812, foolish. Middle E. *fonne* = foolish, or a fool; *fonnen* = to act foolishly; and the p. p. *fonned* was used adjectivally = foolish. Cf. Wyclif, *Job* i. 22, "Joob synnede not in hise lippis, nether spak ony fonned thing." By abbreviation *fonned* became *fond*, and the *d* in the latter represents the p. p. ending. The sense 'foolish' is usual in M. and Shak.; cf. *Lear*, IV. 7. 60, "a very foolish, fond old man." Of Scandinavian origin; cf. Old Swedish *fâne*, a fool, *fän-ig*, foolish.

*forfeit*, 508, originally meant a crime; cf. Minsheu, 1617, "forfet... *delictum, culpam denotat*." So the verb *forfeten* = to do wrong in *Piers the Plowman*. Later came the sense "penalty incurred by crime," as here; cf. "deadly forfeit" in *Nat. Ode*, 6, and "deadly forfeiture" in *P. L.* III. 221. O. F. *forfet* = Low Lat. *forefactum*; cf. the *Promptorium*, "Forfetyng, or forfeiture. *Forefaccio, forefactura*."

*forgery*, 131. Fr. *forger* is from Lat. *fabricare*, from the base *fa-*, to do, whence *facere*. The intermediate stage between *fabricare* and *forger* is seen in Provençal *saurgar*.

*forgo*, 1483; *for* is an intensive prefix=Germ. *ver*, as in *verlieren*; cf. *forsake*. *Forego*=precede is a separate word, *fore* being the A. S. prep. *fore*=before, Germ. *vor*, as in *vorgehen*.

*fraught*, 1075; for *fraught*=*freight* in Elizabethan E., cf. Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, I. 1, "Come ashore and see the fraught discharg'd;" and Cotgrave, s. v. *fret* "the fraught or freight of a ship." So M. in the *Apol. for Smect.*, "to read good authors...till memory have its full fraught," i.e. as much as it can bear, *P. W.* III. 112. *Fraught* is akin to Germ. *fracht*, cargo: *freight*=Fr. *fret*—cf. *fréter*, *frètement*: the *gh* in *freight* is due to confusion with *fraught*.

*gauntlet*, 1121, a glove of mail, to protect the hand; *gauntlet* being a diminutive from Fr. *gant*, a glove.

*genial*, 594, not in the modern sense 'cheerful,' but *genial*=that which pertains to the *genius*, i.e. familiar spirit of a man, and so to his disposition; cf. *Church Gov.*, "I should not choose this manner of writing...led by the genial power of nature to another task," *P. W.* II. 477. Cotgrave has, "Genial...belonging to a man's nature, disposition, inclination."

*gins*, 932, snares. Cf. *Psalm* cxl. 5, "they have set gins for me," and *Isai.* viii. 14; so *Macbeth*, IV. 2. 35. Etymologically short for Middle E. *cugin* from Lat. *ingenium*; but the meaning may have been due to some confusion with O. E. *grin*, a snare; cf. *Ps.* cxl. 5, in the Genevan Bible (1562), "the proude have set grennes for me."

*gloss*, 948. Originally Middle E. *glosen* meant 'to make glosses, explain,' from O. F. *glose*=Late Lat. *glossa*, Gk. γλῶσσα, which signified, (i) the tongue, (ii) a language, (iii) a word, (iv) a word needing explanation, (v) an explanation. But since many explanations are false, the verb *glosen* got the idea to interpret falsely=to deceive; cf. *glozing*=flattering, deceiving. A passage aptly illustrating the history of *gloss* occurs in Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*, I. 2 (Gifford's ed. II. 17):

"You construe my griefs to so hard a sense,

That where the *text* is argument of pity,

Matter of earnest love, your *gloss* corrupts it."

*greaves*, 1121, leg-armour; from O. F. *greues*, which Brachet connects with Arabic *djaurab*, while Skeat marks the origin unknown. Cf. Span. *grebas*=greaves.

*habergeon*, 1120, linked mail, covering the neck and breast; cf. *Job* xli. 26, "the spear, the dart...the habergeon," where the margin has *breast-plate*. Used by Coverdale of Goliath's coat of mail, I *Sam.* xvii. 5, "The weight of his habergeon was fyve thousande sicles of

stele." From O. F. *hauberjon*, a diminutive of *hauberc*=Old High G. *halsberc*, i.e. a neck-protection; *hals*=neck, *bergen*=protect. The Germanic element in French numbers a good many war and feudal terms.

*hamper*, 1397; not elsewhere in his poems, and rare in the *P. W.*; cf., however, *The Ready Way*, "our liberty shall not be hampered...by any engagement to such a potent family," II. 128. Only once in Shak., 2 *Hen. VI.* I. 3. 148 (a doubtful play), and not in the Bible. The original notion was 'to impede by mutilating;' from A. S. *hamelian*, to maim. A dog with maimed feet was 'hampered' in its movements: whence the general sense 'hindered' (Skeat).

*harbinger*, 721, forerunner. Cf. *Nut. Ode*, 49, *P. R.* I. 71 and 277, where John the Baptist is the harbinger of Christ. Bullokar's *Expositor*, 1616, explains, "Harbinger, one that taketh vp lodging for others;" i.e. the officer who bore this title went on in advance to procure the night's shelter (*harbourage*) for his master. So Florio, 1598, "Foriere, a harbinger for a camp or a prince." In Middle E. spelt *herbergeour*; cf. *Canterbury Tales*, 5417, "herbergeours that wenten him before." Middle E. *herberwe*=modern E. *harbour*, is from Icelandic *herbergi*, an army-shelter; cf. Germ. *heer*, an army, and Germ. *bergen*, to shelter. For the intrusive *n* in *harbinger*, cf. *messenger*=O. E. *messenger*, *passenger*=O. E. *passager*.

*harass*, 257; used, it would seem, in the strong sense 'devastation,' 'spoiling,' possibly through some confusion with *harry*, to ravage. The noun is peculiar to Milton, though we find *harassment*. Of the verb used with much the same meaning the *Century Dict.* quotes a good instance from Stillingfleet's *Sermons*, II. IV., "They had before been miserably harassed by the inroads of the Philistines." It also gives *harasser*=spoiler, citing from *Athelstan's Victory*, "Unnumbered harassers There made to flee were." From Fr. *harasser*, the origin of which is unknown.

*hainous*, 493, hateful, Fr. *haineux*; cf. the spelling *hainous* in the first ed. It was common in old writers: "he is exceedingly censur'd... for that hainous vice, being out of fashion," Earle's *Characters* (Arber's ed.), p. 41.

*highth*, 384, 683; always written thus in M. The form is common in Hakluyt's *Voyages*, and survives in New England (*Century Dict.*). The peculiarity of *high-th* is that it retains the voiceless *th* of the A. S. word *hēhþa*, represented in modern E. by *t*—*heigh-t*. For voiceless *th* (that is, *þ* in A. S.) changed to *t*, cf. A. S. *gesihþ*, later *gesiht*, *sight*, now *sight*.

*holocaust*, 1702, a sacrifice burnt whole; Gk. *δολκαυστον*, which in the Septuagint is the rendering of the Hebrew expression translated in the A. V. by 'whole burnt-offering,' *Psalm* li. 19; cf. *Genesis* xxii. 8. It was a form of sacrifice specially used by the Jews. Cotgrave has "Holocauste: A sacrifice killed, and layed whole on the Altar." Later came the general sense 'sacrifice;' cf. Joseph Beaumont's *Psyche*, xxiv. 194, "And shee might sooner prove The perfect holocaust of generous love."

*interlunar*, 89; either coined from Lat. *interlunium* = *luna silens*, or suggested by Fr. *interlunaire*. Cf. Cotgrave, "Interlunaire: The Season between the going out of the old, and comming in of the new, Moone." Blount's *Glossographia*, 1670, defines *interlunary*: "belonging to the season between the going out of the old and coming in of the new moon, when the moon gives no light." Cf. the note on l. 87.

*jugglers*, 1325; Middle E. *jogelour* = O. F. *jongleur*, Lat. *joculatorem*. Originally the juggler was much the same as the minstrel; cf. the *Romaunt of the Rose*, Morris' ed. 763, 764, "Mynstrales, and eke jogelours, That wel to synge did her peyne." Later juggler came to signify a performer of tricks, sleight of hand, tumbling, etc.; so in the early Latin *Dictionaries*, like the *Promptorium* and *Catholicon*, it is rendered by *prestigiator*, *minus*, *pantomimus*, *histrion*, *gesticulator*.

*laver*, 1727, a vessel for washing, Lat. *lavare*; cf. Chaucer, *Prologue of the Wyf of Bath*, 287, "basyns, lavours eek...and all such housbondrie," or Giles Fletcher, "it leapt with speede, And in the rosie laver seem'd to bleed," *Christs Victorie on Earth*, 48. The *laver* mentioned in the O. T. (see *Exod.* xxx. 18, xxxv. 16) was a large basin that stood in the court of the Jewish Tabernacle, and afterwards in the Temple itself, for the ablution of the priests and victims. M. alludes to it in *Church Gov.*, "did God take such delight in measuring out the pillars...of a material temple? Was he so punctual and circumspect in lavers, altars, and sacrifices?" *P. W.* II. 446.

*list*, 463, = O. F. *lisse* or *lice*, a tilt-yard; from Low Lat. *licia*, a barrier, especially used in the phrase *licia duelli* = the space enclosed by the barriers wherein the fight was held. *Licia* may be allied to *licium*, a girdle.

*lour*, 1057, to frown; a variant of *leer*, from A. S. *hlȳor*, the cheek, akin to Iceland. *hlýr*. Cf. Middle E. *lure*, the face, *luren*, to look sullen, *luring*, a looking sullen. The *Promptorium* has: "lowryrn, or scowlyn: *Oboculo*. Lowrynge: *Mestus*, *Tristis*."

*manacle*, 1309. Strictly a hand-fetter; from Fr. *manicle*, Lat. *manicula*, diminutive of *manica*, a glove, hand-cuff—Lat. *manus*, a



hand. Used in the general sense 'fetter,' 'shackle;' cf. the verb in the *Tempest*, I. 2. 461, "I'll manacle thy neck and feet together."

*methinks*, 368; *methought*, 1515. The lit. meaning of these phrases is, "it seems—or seemed—to me." That is, *me* is a dative, and the vb. is the pres. or pret. of the Middle E. impersonal vb. *þinken*, to seem = A. S. *þyncan*: *me-thinks* = A. S. *me þynceð*, it appears to me. Akin, but distinct, is the A. S. personal vb. *þencan*, to think, Middle *þencen*. Being similar in form and sense the words were much confused, and gradually the impersonal vb. gave way to the personal, except in these phrases *methinks*, *methought*. We can still see the distinction in their German cognates *denken*, used personally, and the impersonal *dünkt*, 'it seems;' and the difference was recognised when M. wrote. Cf. *P. R.* II. 266, "Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood," i.e. it seemed to him. Observe that in Old E. the dative was much used with impersonal verbs; cf. Spenser, *Prothal.* 60, "Them seem'd they never saw a sight so fayre." Earle (*Philology*, 539) notes that Rossetti revived the idiom: "Her seem'd she scarce had been a day One of God's choristers," *The Blessed Damosel*.

*mimics*, 1325, players, as in *Midsummer N. D.* III. 2. 19, "and forth my mimic comes," where Q1 has *minnick*, Q2 *minnock*. Malone quoted from Dekker, *Guls Hornebooke*, "draw what troop you can from the stage after you; the mimicks are beholden to you for allowing them elbow room." From Gk. *μυμικός*, imitative, from *μῦμος*, an actor.

*mischief*, 1039; from O. F. *meschief*, or *meschef* = Middle E. *meschief*, misfortune, the opposite word being *bonchief*. Stratinann gives a verb *mescheuen*, to come to harm. Cf. Middle E. *cheuen*, to succeed, *cheuesance*, success, from O. F. *chevir*, *chevisance*. The source of all these words is O. F. *chef* or *cheve* = Lat. *caput*, or rather Late Lat. *capum* (accus.); cf. the Provençal form of *meschef*, viz. *mescap*. The prefix *mis-*, better written *mes-*, is the modern Fr. *mé*, Lat. *minus*, implying 'bad:' it has been greatly confused with the Teutonic *mis-*, implying 'wrong,' seen in *mis-behave*, *mis-guide*, *mis-lead*, etc.

*mummers*, 1325, masqueraders; specially those who went about at Christmas time from house to house, fancifully dressed, to perform pieces like the 'Nine Worthies' (see *Love's L. L.* v.). "Mumming, in a masquing pied-suit, with a vizard" is a character in Jonson's *Masque of Christmas*. Derived through O. F. *momneur*, "a mummer, one that goes amumming" (Cotgrave), from Old Dutch *mommen*. It is an imitative word, "from the sound *mum* or *mom*, used by nurses to

frighten or amuse children, at the same time pretending to cover their faces" (Skeat).

*muster*, 402; cf. *P. L.* II. 268. Middle E. *moustre*, a muster of men, meant literally a display; from O. F. *mostre*, or *monstre*, a pattern, Lat. *monstrum*.

*mystery*, 378; cf. the Scriptural use: "By the mystery of thy holy Incarnation," *The Litany*: "to exhort you in the mean season to consider the dignity of that holy mystery," *The Communion*. From Lat. *mysterium* (as used in the Vulgate)=Gk. *μυστήριον* which in the *New Test.* means a hidden truth specially revealed to men. In classical writers *μυστήριον*=a secret rite, wherein only the initiated could join, from *μύω*, to close the eyes or mouth. See *Com.* 785, "sublime notion and high mystery."

*nerve*, 639, muscle, Lat. *nervus*; cf. *Com.* 797 or the *Tetrachordon*, "the nerves and sinews thereof are love," *P. W.* III. 336. This is the usual sense in Shak.; cf. *Coriol.* I. I. 142, "the strongest nerves and small inferior veins."

*obnoxious*, 106; M. always uses *obnoxious*= 'liable to'=Lat. *obnoxius*. Cf. *Tenure of Kings*, "obnoxious to the doom of law," *P. W.* II. 32, and *Church Gov.*, "from that time his creature, and obnoxious to comply with his ends in state," II. 461. So in *P. L.* IX. 170 and 1094. Cf. Bacon, *Of Ambition*, "as for the having of them obnoxious to ruin, if they be of fearful natures, it may do well." Bacon also uses it in the allied sense 'indebted': "obnoxious to him for his favours and benefits," *Hist. of Hen. VII.* p. 43. In modern E. 'offensive' is the meaning.

*obvious*, 95; generally used by M. in one of the senses of Lat. *obvius*. Cf. *P. L.* VI. 69, "obvious hill"=hill that lies in the way; VIII. 504, "not obvious, not obtrusive," i.e. that does not come to meet you; and XI. 374, "to the evil turn my obvious breast."

*obsequy*, 1732; for the rare sing. cf. the *Phoenix and the Turtle*, 12, "keep the obsequy so strict," and the *Glosse* to the *Shep. Cal.*, *November*; so the *F. Q.* II. I. 60. Usually we find the plural, from Lat. *obsequia*.

*paranymph*, 1020, Gk. *παράνυμφος*, "the friend of the bridegroom" (*John* iii. 29), who accompanied him when he brought home the bride. He also arranged the details of the wedding-ceremony on behalf of the bridegroom; cf. Cotgrave, "Paranymphe...an overseer, or an assistant in the oversight, or ordering, of Bridall businesses." The word was used figuratively of any 'supporter,' 'assistant'; the *Century Dict.*

quotes Jeremy Taylor's *Worthy Communicant*, "Sin hath got a paranymp and solicitor, a warrant and an advocate." It could also signify 'bridesmaid'; cf. Taylor's *Holy Dying*, I. 1, "many brides have died under the hands of paranymps and maidens, dressing them, for uneasy joy." In French *paranymphe* was the title of the person who presented candidates for a degree at the University of Paris.

*phrenzy*, 1675; a common spelling, cf. Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse*, "I will craue pardon for my Phrenzie," Arber's ed. p. 16; or Cowley, "What shall we call this? rashness, or phrensie?" *Essays*, p. 58 (Pitt Press ed.). The *ph* was due to Lat. *phrenesis*, Late Gk. φρένησις: *frenzy*=Middle E. *frenesye*, came through O. F. *frenaisie*.

*plea*, 834, defence. Cf. Minshew (1617), "It signifieth in our Common Law that which either partie alleageth for himself in Court." In Shakespeare *plea* is used of what the *plaintiff* in a suit claims, or says in support of his claim: in modern E. *plea* usually signifies the *defendant's* case. O. F. *plaid*=the proceedings in a law-court, a trial; from Late Lat. *placitum*, a decision.

*plight*, 1729, condition; cf. *II Pen.* 57, "In her sweetest saddest plight." In modern E. *plight*=an unfortunate state: in Shakespeare and M. it means no more than "state," whether good or bad, according to the context. From Lat. *plicare*, cf. πλέκειν; cognate with Fr. *pli*, *plier*, E. *ply*, *plait*, and identical with *plight*=a fold. See *Com.* 301.

*proof*, 134; from Fr. *preuve*=Low Lat. *proba*, a test, from Lat. *probare*; it was specially used of impenetrable armour, meaning (i) the armour itself, or (ii) its resisting power. For (i) cf. *Macbeth*, I. 2. 54, "lapp'd in proof," and *Romeo*, I. 1. 216, "in strong proof of chastity well arm'd;" for (ii) cf. *Rich. II.* I. 3. 73, "add proof unto mine armour with thy prayers."

*quaint*, 1303; its successive meanings are roughly: (i) 'knowing,' 'skilful'; cf. Hampole's *Psalter*, Ps. cxix. 98, "Abouen myn enmys quaynt thou me made," where the A. V. has *uiser*: in the same work *quayntis*=*prudencia*, i.e. cunning, "quayntis of the deuel" (Bramley's ed. pp. 9, 425). (ii) 'done with skill,' and so 'neat, pretty, dainty'; cf. *Tempest*, I. 2. 317, "my quaint Ariel;" and *Much Ado*, III. 4. 22, "a gown more quaint, more pleasing." (iii) 'odd, eccentric,' as always in modern E., but never in Shak. M. seems to combine meanings (ii) and (iii), using *quaint* of things which are fantastic, yet pretty; cf. *Arc.* 47, *Com.* 157, *P. L.* IX. 35. Derived from *cognitus*—cf. *acquaint* from *ad cognitare*—through O. F. *coint*; but *coint* was wrongly supposed to come from Lat. *comptus*, the p. p. of *comere*, to adorn, and this, no

doubt, influenced the English word, and accounts partly for the change in sense from (i) to (ii).

*quarrel*, 60, complain; the noun *quarrel*, from O. F. *querelle*=Lat. *querela*, a complaint, accusation, was used in the technical legal sense of 'a complaint or plea in a law-court.' Cf. *Psalm* xxxv. 23, "stand up to judge my quarrel," *Prayer-Book*; and *Rich. II.* 1. 3. 33, "against whom comest thou? and what's thy quarrel?" Cotgrave has, "Querelle: A quarell...debate, Suit, Action, Processe against."

*quell*, 286, 563, 1272, to crush: the word has rather weakened in sense. Middle E. *quellen*=A. S. *cwellan*, meant 'to kill.' Cf. *quell*=murder, *Macbeth*, 1. 7. 72, and *manqueller*=murderer in 2 *Hen. IV.* 11. 1. 58; also in More's *Rich. III.*, "mannequellers, whome Godde badde to...kyll yf theyr murther were wyfull," p. 32 (Pitt Press ed.). Wyclif uses *manqueller* for 'executioner,' *Mark* vi. 27; and Mätzner gives Middle E. *quellere* in the same sense.

*quit*, 509. Originally *quit*—short for *quiet*—was an adj., from O.F. *quite*, Lat. *quietus*= 'at rest,' whence in Late Lat. the sense 'discharged, clear:' especially 'clear of a debt.' Cf. modern F. *quittance*, a receipt: Middle E. *guyten* or *quiten*, to repay, settle=Late Lat. *quietare*; and the legal term *quietus*, or *quietus est*, 'the settlement of an account.' See Shak., *Sonnet*, 126, "Her audit, though delay'd, answer'd must be, And her *quietus* is to render thee;" also *Hamlet*, III. 1. 75.

*ramp*, 139, spring; cf. the verb, *Faerie Q.* v. 12, 30, "he ramp't upon him with his ravenous pawes." So M. in the *Remonstrant's Defence*, "the prelates would have St Paul's words ramp one over another, as they use to climb into their livings," *P. W.* III. 73. Often it meant to tear, snatch, or to rage; cf. the *F. Q.* 1. v. 28, and *Psalm* xxii. 13, "a ramping and a roaring lion," *Prayer-Book*. The original sense of Fr. *raumper*, or *rampier*, was 'to climb;' it survives in Fr. *rampe*, 'a flight of stairs.'

*at random*, 118, carelessly, at haphazard. Cotgrave has, "à la volée: Rashly, unadvisedly, inconsiderately; at random, at rovers, at all adventures." O. F. *random* is a Teutonic word, akin to Germ. *rand*, a brim, edge; it was used of the swift current of a river full to the brim. Middle E. *randoun*=swiftness: *in a randoun*=in great haste: and *at random*, Fr. *à randon*, from meaning 'with haste,' signified the carelessness which comes of haste.

*sad*, serious; the original sense was 'sated,' A. S. *sad* being akin to Lat. *satis*; then came the notion 'serious, sober, grave.' Cf. the *Apol. for Smect.*, "to be severe and ever of a sad gravity," *P. W.* III. 129,

and the *Hist. of Brit.*, "this story, though seeming otherwise too light in the midst of a sad narration." Cf. *Com.* 189, and *II Pen.* 43.

*salve*, 184, A. S. *sealf* (cf. Germ. *salbe*) meant a medicinal ointment; so said of anything 'healing,' 'alleviating.' Used several times by Costard and Armado in *Love's L. L.* III. 73—81, and not elsewhere in Shakespeare's undoubted plays, from which perhaps we may infer that it was rather an affected, euphuistic word. Only once elsewhere in M.; cf. *P. R.* IV. 12, where it is a verb, "to salve his credit."

*scandal*, 453, offence, "occasion of stumbling," as the Greek is translated in 1 *John*, ii. 10. Cf. *Of Civil Power*, "as for scandals, if any man be offended at the conscientious liberty of another, it is a taken scandal, not a given," *P. W.* II. 543. In modern E. *scandal* = *slander* in meaning, as it does in etymology: each comes from Gk. *σκανδαλον* through O. F. *escandle*, later *esclandre*.

*scent*, 390, printed *sent* in the early eds. M. always used this form; so Spenser, cf. *F. Q.* III. 4. 46, "hunter swifte and sent of houndes trew." It is correct, as the word comes from Lat. *sentio*. Various words have been spelt with *sc* instead of *s* from the false analogy of French words like *scene*, *science*: e.g. *scythe* instead of *sithe* (which M. wrote in *L'Al.* 66), and the 17th cent. form *scite* = *site*, Lat. *situs*.

*score*, 433, debt; cf. *Macbeth*, v. 8. 52, "they say he parted well and paid his score." Properly a *score* meant 'a notch cut on a tally:' then 'an account kept by notches,' especially at a tavern; cf. Earle's *Characters*, p. 46, "he leaues twenty shillings on the score, which my Hostesse looses;" afterwards used of any bill or reckoning. From a base *skar* meaning 'to cut:' cognates are *shear* Icel. *skor*, an incision, Germ. *scheren*.

*secure*, 55, in the sense of Lat. *securus* was not uncommon. Bullokar's *Expositor*, 1616, has, "Secure, carelesse, voyde of feare." So M. in *Eikonoklastes*, chap. XVIII., "he follows...and with a bloody *surprise* falls on our *secure* forces," *P. W.* I. 442. Cf. Shak. *Hen. V.* IV. prol. 17, "proud of their numbers and secure in soul," and Fletcher's quibble on the two senses: "To secure yourselves from these, Be not too secure in ease." *Security* = carelessness in *Macbeth*, III. 5. 32.

*shipwracked*, 198; the usual form till late in the 17th cent. Cf. George Herbert, *The Church-Porch*, "as all in a shipwrack shift their severall way;" and the Bible of 1611 in two passages, 2 *Cor.* xi. 25, and 1 *Tim.* i. 19, each of which is changed in the A. V. to *shipwreck*. *Wrack*, never *wreck*, is the spelling of noun and verb in the first Folio of Shak.; cf. places where the rhyme has prevented modernising, e.g.

*Lucrece*, 841, 965, *Venus and A.* 558, and *Macbeth*, v. 5. 51, "Blow, wind! come, wrack! At least we'll die with harness on our back." Cf. M. in *Of Civil Tower*, "the land groans, and justice goes to wrack," *P. W.* II. 536. We still use "to rack and ruin," where we mean *wrack*. From A. S. *wreacan*, to drive, the *wreck*, or *wrack*, being that which is driven ashore; *wreak* is cognate.

*surcease*, 464, to cease; cf. *Coriolanus*, III. 2. 121, "lest I surcease to honour mine own truth." So the *Prayer-Book*, "the Bishop shall surcease from ordering that person" (*Making of Deacons, rubric*). Originally a *surcease*, O. F. *sursis* (for the noun, cf. *Macbeth*, I. 7. 4), was the arrest or stoppage of a legal suit. Derived from O. F. *surseoir*, to pause = Lat. *supersedere*, to forbear; so that *surcease* is quite distinct from *cease* = Fr. *cesser*, Lat. *cessare*.

*taste*, 1091, try, make trial of; cf. *Psalms* xxxiv. 8, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." The ordinary sense of Middle E. *tasten* was 'to feel,' i.e. to try a thing by touching or handling it. O. F. *taster* (modern *tâter*) had the same meaning, being derived from Late Lat. *taxitare*, frequentative of *taxare*; cf. Germ. *tasten*, borrowed from the French. The original of all these words is *tangere*.

*thrall*, 370, 1622; Icelandic *þrall*, a serf; Danish *træl*; no doubt, *thrall* came into England through the Danes. Strictly it meant a 'runner'—i.e. on messages, the original base being that seen in Gk. *τρέχω*, to run. The notion that *thrall* is derived from *thrill*, because the ears of serfs were *thrilled* or *drilled*, i.e. pierced, involves an impossible vowel-change.

*trains*, 533, 932; cf. *Com.* 151, "my charms and...wily trains." Shak. has the noun once, *Macbeth*, IV. 3. 118, the verb several times, e.g. in 1 *Hen.* IV. v. 2. 21, "we did train him on." From Fr. *trafner* = *traho*, which in Late Lat. meant 'to betray:' the metaphor (says Du Cange) of alluring birds into snares. Cf. the *Animadversions*, "he trains on the easy Christian insensibly within the close ambushment," *P. W.* II. 43.

*triumph*, 1312, "a public festivity or exhibition of any kind," Schmidt, *Lexicon*; cf. *Midsummer N. D.* I. 1. 19, "with pomp, with triumph and with revelling." The title-page of Heywood's *Londini Speculum* runs: "London's Mirror, Exprest in sundry Triumphs, Pageants and Showes." So often in Bacon, e.g. in *Hist. of Hen. VII.*, p. 98 ("he kept great triumphs of jousting and tourney"), p. 187, and p. 219, Pitt Press ed.; and in his essay *Of Masques and Triumphs*. See *L'Al.* 120. Lat. *triumphus* = Gk. *θπλαυβος*, a hymn to Bacchus.

*trivial*, 142, 263, Lat. *trivialis*, "belonging to three cross-roads, that which may be picked up anywhere, common"—Skeat. *Trivial* was also used in an entirely different sense, viz. 'initiatory;' from *trivium*, the initiatory course of studies in schools, comprising three subjects, grammar, rhetoric, dialectic.

*unweetingly*, 1680; M. always writes *unweeting*, never *unwilling*; cf. *Com.* 539, "that pass unweeting by the way," and *P. L.* x. 335. So Spenser, *F. Q.* I. 2. 45, III. 3. 57. The *ee* represented the sound of the long Saxon *i*, in *witan*, to know; cf. *fleece* = A. S. *flis*. *Wit* and *wise* are cognates from the same base as *ōðā*, *lōēiv*, and Lat. *videre*.

*vambrace*, 1121, Fr. *avant-bras*; cf. Cotgrave, "Avant-bras: A vambrace; armour for an arme." In *Troilus and Cressida*, I. 3. 297, the Quartos read *vambrace*, the Folio *vantbrace*, and these, the 'aphetic' forms, were usual. Of the earlier, uncontracted form the *New E. D.* gives only one instance, from the *Morte d'Arthur*, "the avaymbrace vrayllde with silver." For other words in which *avant* has been aphetised cf. *vanguard*, *vaunt-courier* (in *Lear*, III. 2. 5).

*villatic*, 1695, from Lat. *villaticus*, 'belonging to a villa or country-house.' Keightley quotes *villaticas alites* from Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* XXIII. 17. Cf. Cowley, *Of Agriculture*, "Rural Oeconomy, which would contain the government of Bees, Swine, Poultry, Decoys, Ponds, and all that which Varro calls *villaticas pastiones*," where the reference is to Varro, *R. R.* III. 2. 13, the same phrase being used by Columella, VII. 13. 3.

*weed*, 122, from A. S. *wēd*, garment, was used in 17th cent. E., both in sing. and plur., of any kind of dress. Cf. *Midsummer N. D.* II. 1. 256, "weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in." M. translates *uvida vestimenta* in Horace, *Odes*, I. 5. 15, by "dank and dropping weeds." Tennyson has revived the use; cf. the *In Memoriam*, v. "in words like weeds I'll wrap me o'er."

*without all hope*, 82. Cf. *Coriolanus*, III. 1. 144, "without all reason;" *Hen. VIII.* IV. 1. 113, "without all doubt;" and *Macbeth*, III. 2. 11, "without all remedy." So the A. V. and Genevan Bible, 1562, in *Heb.* vii. 7, "without all contradiction." It has been explained as a Latinism: "without all hope" = *sine omni spe*. But *all* = *any* is confined to this special idiom, and it is possible that in the first instance *without* meant 'beyond,' 'outside,' as it does in *Midsummer N. D.* IV. 1. 158; so that "without all doubt" signified "beyond all doubt." See Abbott, *Gram.* pp. 22, 23.

## APPENDIX.

### MILTON AND VONDEL.

WE have mentioned in the *Introduction* the view that Milton in writing *Samson Agonistes* was under great obligations to the Dutch poet, Vondel. Personally we are unable to accept that view; but since the publication (in 1885) of Mr Edmundson's work, *Milton and Vondel*, it cannot well be passed over in silence by an editor of the play. For the claims which Mr Edmundson puts forward, in the most positive manner, on behalf of Vondel are of the most uncompromising character: to admit them is to condemn Milton as a slavish imitator—rather, as an unscrupulous plagiarist. And this admission we are loth to make.

Vondel, be it premised, ranks among the great poets of the seventeenth century. Born in 1587, when Marlowe's Tamburlaine was scourging his "pampered jades" in dithyrambic triumph over the Elizabethan stage, Vondel lived till 1679, when Dryden was turning from heroic tragedy to political satire: a vast span, during the greater portion of which his pen was ceaselessly active. Amongst his works were various dramas, classical in style and Scriptural in subject: notably four whereof much account is made by those who catch in Milton's epics ever-recurring refrains of the long-drawn Alexandrines of the Dutch Laureate. These poems are *Lucifer*, 1654 (a drama in five acts with choral interludes), the theme of which is indicated by the title: *Samson*, 1660; *John the Messenger*, (1662); and *Adam in Banishment*, (1664).

That Milton had read these works—or some of them—and that he owed something to them, is no new conjecture. Southey, for instance, raised the point in the *Quarterly Review* in 1825. Successive editors



of Milton have touched on it, without discussing its likelihood in any detail. Mr Edmund Gosse devoted an essay in his *Studies in the Literature of Northern Europe*<sup>1</sup> to a comparison of *Lucifer* with *Paradise Lost*, instancing certain similarities between the two poems, especially in their several accounts of the fall of the rebellious Angels from Heaven. Mr Gosse desired to show that Milton was acquainted with *Lucifer*, and that its influence may occasionally be traced in *Paradise Lost*: even as we find reminiscences of Shakespeare in Milton—and in most English poets of the three last centuries. Milton was not accused of plagiarism. That charge it remained for Mr Edmundson to bring.

The quest whereon he fared adventurous was to prove that Milton had borrowed from Vondel's works—not merely from *Lucifer*, to which Mr Gosse had limited his investigations, but from the other fore-mentioned pieces—to an extent hitherto unsuspected. He sought to forge (displaying great skill) a chain of resemblances between *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and Vondel's *John the Messenger*; between *Paradise Lost*, *Lucifer* and *Adam in Banishment*; with yet further parallels betwixt *Samson Agonistes* and Vondel's *Samson*. Mr Edmundson, in fact, extended the comparison so as to include Milton's three epics (not *Paradise Lost* alone), and Vondel's four dramas (not *Lucifer* alone). It is a sweeping indictment: and we are not quite sure whether the impeacher, if he proves aught at all, doth not prove too much.

But first, or ere we consider whether the Dutch *Samson* be sire of his English namesake, it were agreeable to the subject to ask what external proof there is that Milton ever studied Vondel. External proof there is none: only probability *plus* the internal similarities revealed to Mr Edmundson. There is probability because Vondel was a poet whose repute white-winged Fame had borne afar; and Milton, with his keen instinct for whatsoever was good in letters, was not likely to leave unnoticed work whereof rumour spoke so widely and so well. For it should be recollected that a knowledge of the Dutch language and literature was at that time by no means uncommon. Religious and political ties—religious especially—together with trade, had fostered intercourse between this country and the Netherlands. Milton, too, from his official position as secretary, no less than from his controversies with Salmasius and Morus, must have had his thoughts constantly directed towards Holland: indeed, his pamphlets, as Mr Edmundson observes, reveal considerable familiarity with contemporary

<sup>1</sup> Second edition, 1883, pp. 278—312.

life and society at Amsterdam. Further, we learn from the Puritan divine, Roger Williams<sup>1</sup>, that during a visit to England in 1651—4 he gave Milton lessons in Dutch. It is therefore a perfectly reasonable assumption that Milton was acquainted with the name of Vondel: and he had a knowledge of the tongue in which Vondel wrote.

But could he apply that knowledge? By the year 1652 he was blind. Edward Phillips, in his brief memoir of his uncle, says that Milton had his daughters read to him in a number of languages (whereof they comprehended not a syllable). The list is extensive: it includes Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Italian, Spanish and French: and it does not include Dutch. This omission (which is not repaired by Toland, who gives us information to the same effect) is at least unfortunate: since if Mr Edmundson be right in his general view of Milton's indebtedness, if wherever a line of the English poet bears the faintest resemblance—some of the resemblances traced by Mr Edmundson are very faint—to his Dutch contemporary, we are to hold that plagiarism, not the eternal coincidence of literature, is the sole and sovereign explanation, why, then, Milton must have devoted to the study of *Lucifer* and *John the Messenger* and their brethren an amount of attention which was sure to strike his friends and enemies. Would either have omitted to mention it? There is, to our mind, something significant in the silence on this matter of Phillips, and Aubrey, and Toland, and Antony à Wood, and Oldys (that busy "thirsty fly" of letters) and all the later rout of hostile detractors of Milton. Some tradition had been likely to survive: a veritable boon to the William Lauders of an age when Milton the poet was lost in Milton the politician. We are confronted therefore at the outset by this difficulty: that there is no external evidence to show that Milton ever studied Vondel: and that if he did, such evidence, or some hearsay legend, would probably have been forthcoming.

In default of external testimony Mr Edmundson falls back on internal. He relies on similarities of thought, description and expression: in a word, on the test of the parallel passage. That test is never satisfactory. It is most difficult to establish the charge of plagiarism even when the issue lies between writers who use the same instrument of expression, a common language. Similarity of thought counts for little because novelty of thought is well-nigh impossible. And even similarity of expression is inconclusive, because from a

<sup>1</sup> Of Pembroke Hall, in Cambridge University; founder of the Settlement of Providence, Rhode Island, North America.

multiplicity of unconscious influences poets, like other men, are moved to say the same thing in much the same way. They draw instinctively, in a greater or lesser degree, on the verbal currency peculiar to their time, and the individuality of each lies in those peculiar *nuances* of expression, those curious strokes of deft felicity, whereof the trafficker in parallel passages, with his keen eye for merely general resemblances, makes little reckoning. But when you have to deal with writers sundered whole continents by difference of tongue, then, in place of the criterion of verbal identity, you have nothing more convincing than those indefinite points of collision which for one critic (eager to establish his case) mean everything, while for another they are only a fresh illustration of the truth that there is naught new under the sun.

Mr Edmundson, it is just to concede, surmounts these difficulties with much address. To begin with, it was a happy conceit to translate Vondel, whose metre is the Alexandrine, into blank verse of the most Miltonic type: lines which sound like a mocking echo of the music and manner—Milton's manner is not hard to parody—now of *Paradise Lost*, now of *Samson Agonistes*. This, at the outset, invests the Vondelian extracts with a fictitious, but effective, Miltonic colouring. The just medium of translation would, we think, be prose. Then, Mr Edmundson not only counterfeits Milton's metre—he draws largely on Milton's diction: a perilous process, as the ensuing example<sup>1</sup> makes plain.

There is in *John the Messenger* a description of the abyss into which Lucifer and his host descend on their fall from Heaven. The lake, says Vondel, "whereon Lucifer lay weltering...gapes wide. Here one drives in (*men vaart er in*) easily (or roomily) with chariot and horses." This recalled to Mr Edmundson the account of the wide passage leading through Hell-gates, in *Paradise Lost*, II. 884—887:

"the gates wide open stood,

That with extended wings a bannered host,

Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through

With horse and chariots rank'd in loose array."

Now there is a certain similarity between the two passages, but one, as we judge, that might well arise from pure accident; the image might occur to poets working quite independently. But Mr Edmundson puts the connection out of all doubt, and summarily converts what may be merely fortuitous resemblance into what must be sheer and shocking

<sup>1</sup> Pointed out by Mr Gosse in his review of Mr Edmundson's book in the *Academy*, October 24, 1885.

plagiarism And this he effects by his translation, which reads thus<sup>1</sup>:

"The lake whereon Lucifer lay weltering,  
Sunk to his neck, gapes wide with yawning mouth  
Set open. Here a host might freely pass  
With horse and chariots in loose array."

This is a Miltonic paraphrase, not a translation. Vondel knows no 'host:' Milton does: so the paraphraser invents one for *Lucifer*. Vondel says that people 'drive in:' this is softened into Milton's 'might pass.' Vondel says 'easily:' and 'easily' becomes 'in loose array.' Mr Edmundson's book is built up mainly of these 'parallels:' if they have all been composed in the spirit of assimilation to which we owe the example just cited, what value can we attach to his theory? Surely the quality of adaptive ingenuity has been strained, and must fail to extort our confidence.

But time is that we heard what Mr Edmundson has to say concerning *Samson Agonistes*. He starts<sup>2</sup> by denying to Milton any originality in respect of his choice either of theme or of dramatic form. But for Vondel, we are to understand, Milton had never hit on the subject of *Samson*: but for Vondel he had never revived in English the methods of Greek tragedy: in each matter Vondel's example determined Milton's selection. These are assumptions: and assumptions, as we believe, demonstrably false.

First, as to the classical form of the play. Evidence is not lacking of Milton's deep love of the drama<sup>3</sup>. Ambition to win success as a dramatist is the last infirmity of poetic minds. Milton, we are glad to think, was not exempt from this touch of weakness which links the brotherhood of poets. But only one type of drama lay open to him—the classical. Personal tastes and the part he had played in the political and religious broils of the time pointed that way. Years before, in *Il Penseroso*, he had shown how slight was his sympathy with the romantic stage of the Elizabethans; and if he was out of touch with the great masters of the golden age of the English theatre, it was not to be

<sup>1</sup> *Milton and Vondel*, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> p. 159. By the end of the essay he has discovered convincing evidence that Milton "borrowed from the same poem (i.e. Vondel's *Samson*) the dramatic form he has adopted," p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., for example, the first *Elegy*, one of the most interesting because one of the most personal and autobiographic of Milton's Latin poems. He speaks there of visits—evidently almost as numerous as those of Pepys himself—to the London play-houses, sketching different *genres* of drama, and happily combining types of character drawn from the classical stage with others from the modern.

expected that he should feel much admiration for their degenerate successors, the dramatic *decadents* of the reign and Court of Charles I. Whenever he speaks (and he speaks not infrequently) in his earlier pamphlets of the contemporary drama it is to use terms of dislike and disdain. Nor was this asperity softened by the dramatic revival under Charles II. His private predilections made it impossible that he should fall in with the prevailing vogue of his contemporaries: the heroics of Dryden and the pseudo-Molièresque frivolities of the school of 'easy Etheredge' were equally distasteful. And, had he been minded to rival these writers, he was not a free agent. His life-long connection with Puritanism barred the way. He could not, without offending his friends and doing violence to his own professions, write anything which should have any affinity with the acted drama of the moment. But there would be no occasion of offence in a work which, free from the associations of the contemporary playhouses, frankly took shelter under the authority of classical tragedy: an authority which none but the most bitter of bigots could care or dare to question.

A work of that kind Milton had contemplated years before Vondel had penned a line of *Lucifer* or *Samson*. This we know from the passage<sup>1</sup> in the *Reason of Church Government* wherein Milton tells us with a clearness which admits not of misinterpretation, that he had already (i.e. before 1641) considered whether the poem which was to be the crown and consummation of his life should be framed on the model of the tragic masterpieces—the "dramatic constitutions" as he calls them—of Sophocles and Euripides. And from the same period, 1641—2, must date those rough drafts of his proposed treatment of the Fall of Man, now among the Milton MSS. at Trinity College. All four point to the dramatic handling of the theme: while the two last<sup>2</sup>, by far the most detailed, show that the special type of drama to which he inclined was that of which *Samson Agonistes* is the sole great exemplar in English literature, the drama of the "lofty grave tragedians" of Greece.

Each of the plays, as sketched in bare outline, contains a Chorus: each begins with a prologue similar to that of *Samson Agonistes*. In the fourth—and fullest—*Adam Un-Paradised*, the 'Unity of time' is preserved: part of the action takes place off the stage: the incident of the Fall through the seduction of the Serpent is described to the Chorus by an Angel, who thus fulfils the part of the Messenger: and the division into acts is avoided. Had *Adam Un-Paradised* been com-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in the *Notes* on the *Preface*; see p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> See *Introduction*.

pleted on the lines adumbrated in this scheme it must have borne the closest resemblance to *Samson Agonistes*.

With what justice, then, can it be pretended, in the face of this twofold testimony, that the impulse to adopt the classical manner followed in *Samson Agonistes* first came from Vondel? Surely the drafts in Milton's own handwriting, coupled with the passage in the treatise on *Church Government*, are adequate evidence that the play did but mark Milton's reversion to an earlier and well-weighed project.

Mr Edmundson's second contention is that Milton owed his subject to Vondel. Vondel, whose position in 1660—the year of the publication of his *Samson*—resembled, to some extent, that of Milton, had found in the story of Samson's misfortunes and revenge an effective means for the expression of personal feeling. Like Milton, he struck covertly at his enemies, and under the guise of depicting Samson's case lamented his own. In Vondel's drama, as in Milton's, there was throughout an undercurrent of personal allusion. And it was not (says Mr Edmundson) till Vondel had taken the theme in hand, and revealed the full measure of its possibilities, that Milton realised the appropriateness of the *Dagonalia* to his own condition. Had Vondel not preceded him Milton would never have composed this tragedy on the title-page of which might stand the words '*Aus meinem Leben:*' these dramatic confessions wherein the *Wahrheit* casts into shadow the *Dichtung*.

Well, here again we must appeal to the MSS. at Trinity. We have quoted elsewhere<sup>1</sup> extracts from them which prove that Milton had studied the subject of Samson's life under almost every aspect. Four, or five, several episodes in the career of the Israelitish hero had occupied his attention: and the last of them—"Dagonalia, *Judg.* xvi."—forms the subject-matter of *Samson Agonistes*. It is therefore on record that as early as 1641—2 Milton had contemplated handling this theme. But would Milton have recurred to it? Or would he have informed it with this peculiar strain of personal emotion and veiled political invective? No, argues Mr Edmundson: "We...venture confidently to assert that it was Vondel's poem which first suggested to him the fitness of the theme<sup>2</sup>." I suspect—at least, I like to think—that Milton had at least as much penetration as his critics. They have perceived, from the very first, the close analogy between the last days of Samson and those of Milton. They have not failed to see the many

<sup>1</sup> See *Introduction*.

<sup>2</sup> p. 161.

points of contact betwixt the champion who fought—in vain—for the liberties of Israel, and the poet who fought—in vain—for the liberties of England: the blindness of each, the unhappy marriage of each, and those other resemblances which dawn on the dullest wit. And was all this hidden from Milton? Had he no glimmering of that which to us is so dazzling clear? Did he never suspect to what issues the story of Samson might be tuned until the Dutch Laureate had led the way? Let us not impute such blearness of vision to him: let us rather believe that he saw for himself, uninspired by Vondel, how the theme which had filled his thoughts many years before might now be, as no other theme in sacred history could, a channel whereby to pour forth all that intensity of pent-up emotion which hitherto had never found an outlet, though it had seldom been far from the surface of his verse.

Milton belongs to the class of poets whose work is penetrated with their personality. He lacks the creativeness of Shakespeare—the teeming inventive power which works outside the range of the poet's own emotions. Milton draws habitually on his own feelings and projects himself into his verse. In the early masterpieces of his lyric effort, *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso* and *Lycidas*, we catch continually the echo of his voice; and his strong bent in dramatic work to use his *dramatis personæ* as the mouthpiece of his own views weakens the characterisation of *Comus*. Even in his epics the personal note is not unsounded. So that for a poet circumstanced as Milton was in his outward life, and ruled by this instinctive tendency to self-revelation, to body forth the grim last scene of all in Samson's life and not make himself the true protagonist of the drama, and his own experiences the background against which the action should be thrown into relief: to do this had been a sheer impossibility.

Mr Edmundson lays stress on some minor resemblances between the two plays. In examining the structure of each he finds it remarkable that:—(i) “each deals solely with the events of the last day of Samson's life;” (ii) “each<sup>1</sup> commences with a Euripidean prologue;” (iii) in each “the Chorus are represented as standing at some distance from the scene of the catastrophe, and the tidings are brought by an escaped spectator.” But these points of similarity are explained by the initial fact that the two plays are framed on a common model. Acting, as we believe, independently Vondel and Milton chose a peculiar type of drama: and so far as they obeyed its laws and conventions, their poems were bound to be alike. It stands not with reason or justice to

<sup>1</sup> In Vondel's play the speaker of the prologue is Dagon.

suppose that Milton, a scholar and student of antiquity, if ever there was such a one, needed to consult Vondel to learn what manner of work was a Greek tragedy. In the preface to *Samson Agonistes* he refers openly to the authority of Aristotle, whose *Poetics* are a digest of the principles on which the play is based. No one suggests that Corneille was a mere echo of his Dutch contemporary: yet the author of *Horace*—like Milton, like Vondel—subordinated his genius to the tyranny of the treatise *De Arte Poetica*, and thereby produced plays just as akin, in many respects, to *Samson Agonistes* as that is akin to Vondel's drama.

If therefore each dramatist limited the events of his play to a single day it is because each observed the 'Unity of Time:' if each represented the catastrophe as taking place at a distance, and employed the traditional device of reporting action that could not pass on the scene by the mouth of a Messenger—an artifice approved by Ben Jonson, by Corneille, by Dryden, to say nothing of the Greek tragedians with whom it originated—it is because each observed the 'Unity of Place.' And when you are told of the Euripidean prologues, and left to infer that Milton, as ever, was the imitator of Vondel, you shall do wisely to recollect that Euripides was Milton's favourite poet; that the opening scene of *Comus* is an exact counterpart of the commencement of *Samson*; and that in those forecited drafts of the drama on the subject of *Paradise Lost* a prologue or introductory speech was included in Milton's scheme. No theory of plagiarism holds there: why should we admit one here? The two plays<sup>1</sup> have the characteristics of their class. Similarities of structure are accounted for by identity of type.

It would not be possible to go through the long list of parallel passages which compose the greater portion of the chapter<sup>2</sup> in which Mr Edmundson compares Vondel's *Samson* with Milton's. Of the value of this test something has been said. Assuming the accuracy of Mr Edmundson's renderings (still into Miltonic verse and Miltonic English), we are nonetheless unable to find in them anything approaching proof of Milton's acquaintance with Vondel's play.

What, for example, is to be made of a coincidence like the following for which Mr Edmundson claims especial notice? Vondel's Chorus

<sup>1</sup> If they are alike, they are also unlike; Vondel's, for instance, has a number of characters unknown to the reader of *Samson Agonistes*; e.g. a prince and princess of Gaza, Dagon, the high-priest of the Philistines, and the angel of Samson's birth.

<sup>2</sup> *Milton and Vondel*, pp. 158—190.



(consisting of Jewish maidens) say to Samson, "No brute's so shameless as a thankless man." This is meant as an explanation why they have come to visit him: *they* are not forgetful—whatever others may be—of his past services. Milton represents Samson as thanking the Chorus (of Jewish elders), when he first addresses them, for their fidelity to him: whence follow some natural reflections on the ordinary ingratitude incident to man. And Mr Edmundson ventures<sup>1</sup> to "draw special attention to this, because we have here not only similarity of expression, but the same chain of thought;" indeed "the answers of Samson contain two passages which are paraphrases on the Vondelian line which condemns ingratitude;" these being ll. 190—193, and ll. 273—276. Now had Vondel written a panegyric on ingratitude, and had there been a similar encomium in *Samson Agonistes*, Milton might have been suspect of 'conveyance,' by reason of the novelty of the conceit. But dispraise of the mind ingrate—was not this enrolled, a few thousand years ago, in the book of the commonplaces of mankind?

And the 'chain of thought'? Samson is alone, friendless, forsaken of all those for whom his life had been spent: and then, of a sudden, there come some of his own people, to cheer him with sympathy and reminiscence of the past. What marvel that 'gratitude' and 'ingratitude' should be on their lips and his? Is there any conceivable subject more appropriate to the occasion? If Milton is to be convicted on such evidence as this, whose fame is safe?

Parallels of equal import ensue. For example, "regret at yielding to a deceitful woman" is a theme common to the two poets. The Samson of Milton laments his blindness in words which have seemed to most readers instinct with the spirit of sheerest pathos: a cry wrung from the poet's own lips by his many years of sightless sorrow, and recognisable as such no less clearly than the opening lines of the third book of *Paradise Lost*. Alas! 'tis all plagiarism: the magnificent "O dark, dark, dark" "seems<sup>2</sup> a reminiscence of Vondel's *een nacht van duisternissen*—a night of darknesses."

One more coincidence wherewith to conclude. There is in Vondel's *Samson* a hymn of praise in honour of Dagon, sung as the sacred procession to his temple advances: and its third and fourth lines run thus:

"Great is Dagon, Chief of Powers,  
 . . . . .  
 At whose might each giant cowers."

<sup>1</sup> p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> To Mr Edmundson; p. 179.

On this<sup>1</sup> Mr Edmundson comments: "Even the line, 'At whose might each giant cowers', has its representative<sup>2</sup> in the episode of Harapha, of whom the Chorus say—'his giantship has gone somewhat crest-fallen.'"

We are far from saying that all the 'resemblances' are of this quality. Here and there Mr Edmundson cites passages from Vondel which may be made, quite legitimately, the subject of comparison with *Samson Agonistes*: but they illustrate no more than the truth that writers who treat the same theme in much the same style are sure to meet in periodic points of similarity: and all Mr Edmundson's expenditure of critical ingenuity has failed, in our judgment, to furnish any valid reason whatsoever why we should believe that in *Samson Agonistes* the hand indeed is Milton's, but the voice that of Vondel.

<sup>1</sup> pp. 185—8.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. in *Samson Agonistes*.

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