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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMATA : LATIN, GREEK AND ITALIAN POEMS
BY JOHN MILTON ***

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POEMATA: LATIN, GREEK AND ITALIAN POEMS BY JOHN MILTON
(Translated by William Cowper).

Digraphs, accents and italics have been omitted. Spelling has been modernized. Some notes and Titles have been slightly edited without comment. Notes follow the poem to which they refer.

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Complimentary Pieces Addressed to the Author.

1 Well as the author knows that the following testimonies are not so much about as above him, and that men of great ingenuity, as well as our friends, are apt, through abundant zeal, so to praise us as rather to draw their own likeness than ours, he was yet unwilling that the world should remain always ignorant of compositions that do him so much honour; and especially because he has other friends, who have, with much importunity, solicited their publication. Aware that excessive commendation awakens envy, he would with both hands thrust it from him, preferring just so much of that dangerous tribute as may of right belong to him; but at the same time he cannot deny that he sets the highest value on the suffrages of judicious and distinguished persons.

1 Milton's Preface, Translated.

1 These complimentary pieces have been sufficiently censured by a great authority, but no very candid judge either of Milton or his panegyrists. He, however, must have a heart sadly indifferent to the glory of his country, who is not gratified by the thought that she may exult in a son whom, young as he was, the Learned of Italy thus contended to honour.—W.C.

The Neapolitan, Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa,
to the Englishman, John Milton.

What features, form, mien, manners, with a mind
Oh how intelligent, and how refined!
Were but thy piety from fault as free,
Thou wouldst no Angle¹ but an Angel be.

1 The reader will perceive that the word "Angle" (i.e. Anglo- Saxon) is essential, because the epigram turns upon it.—W.C.

An Epigram Addressed to the Englishman, John Milton, a Poet
Worthy of the Three Laurels of Poesy, the Grecian, Latin, and
Etruscan, by Giovanni Salzilli of Rome

Meles¹ and Mincio both your urns depress!
Sebetus, boast henceforth thy Tasso less!
But let the Thames o'erpeer all floods, since he,
For Milton famed, shall, single, match the three.

1 Meles is a river of Ionia, in the neighborhood of Smyrna, whence
Homer is called Melesigenes.

The Mincio watered the city of Mantua famous as the birthplace
of Virgil.

Sebetus is now called the Fiume della Maddalena—it runs through
Naples.—W.C.

To John Milton.

Greece sound thy Homer's, Rome thy Virgil's name,
But England's Milton equals both in fame.
—Selvaggi.

To John Milton, English Gentleman.

An Ode.

Exalt Me, Clio,¹ to the skies,
That I may form a starry crown,
Beyond what Helicon supplies
In laureate garlands of renown;
To nobler worth be brighter glory given,
And to a heavenly mind a recompense from heaven.

Time's wasteful hunger cannot prey
On everlasting high desert,
Nor can Oblivion steal away
Its record graven on the heart;
Lodge but an arrow, Virtue, on the bow
That binds my lyre, and death shall be a vanquished foe.

In Ocean's blazing flood enshrined.
Whose vassal tide around her swells,
Albion. from other realms disjoined,
The prowess of the world excels;
She teems with heroes that to glory rise,
With more than human force in our astonished eyes.

To Virtue, driven from other lands,
Their bosoms yield a safe retreat;
Her law alone their deed commands,
Her smiles they feel divinely sweet;
Confirm my record, Milton, generous youth!
And by true virtue prove thy virtue's praise a truth.

Zeuxis, all energy and flaine,
Set ardent forth in his career,
Urged to his task by Helen's fame,
Resounding ever in his ear;
To make his image to her beauty true,
From the collected fair each sovereign charm he drew.²

The bee, with subtlest skill endued,
Thus toils to earn her precious juice,
From all the flowery myriads strewed
O'er meadow and parterre profuse;
Confederate voices one sweet air compound,
And various chords consent in one harmonious sound.

An artist of celestial aim,
Thy genius, caught by moral grace,
With ardent emulation's flame
The steps of Virtue toiled to trace,
Observed in every land who brightest shone,
And blending all their best, make perfect good thy own.

Front all in Florence born, or taught
Our country's sweetest accent there,
Whose works, with learned labor wrought,
Immortal honors justly share,
Then hast such treasure drawn of purest ore,
That not even Tuscan bards can boast a richer store.

Babel, confused, and with her towers
Unfinished spreading wide and plain,
Has served but to evince thy powers,
With all hot, tongues confused in vain,
Since not alone thy England's purest phrase,
But every polished realm thy various speech displays.

The secret things of heaven and earth,
By nature, too reserved. concealed
From other minds of highest worth,
To thee ate copiously revealed;
Thou knowest them clearly, and thy views attain
The utmost bounds prescribed to moral truth's domain.

Let Time no snore his wing display,
And boast his ruinous career,
For Virtue, rescued front his sway.
His injuries may cease to fear;
Since all events that claim remembrance find
A chronicle exact in thy capacious mind.

Give me, that I may praise thy song,
Thy lyre, by which alone I can,
Which, placing thee the stars among,
Already proves thee more than man;
And Thames shall seem Permessus,³ while his stream
Graced with a swan like thee. shall be my favorite theme.

I, who beside the Arno, strain
To match thy merit with my lays,
Learn, after many an effort vain,
To admire thee rather than to praise;
And that by mute astonishment alone,
Not by the fathering tongue, thy worth may best be shown.

—Signor Antonio Francini, Gentleman, of Florence.

1 The muse of History.

2 The portrait of Helen was painted at the request of the people of Crotna, who sent to the artist all their loveliest girls for models. Zeuxis selected five, and united their separate beauties in his picture.

3 A river in Boeotia which took its rise in Helicon. See Virgil Ecl. vi.64

To Mr. John Milton of London

A youth eminent from his country and his virtues,

Who in his travels has made himself acquainted with many nations, and in his studies, with all, that, life another Ulysses, lie might learn all that all could teach him;

Skilful in many tongues, on whose lips languages now mute so live again, that the idioms of all are insufficient to his praise; happy acquisition by which he understands the universal admiration and applause his talents trace excited;

Whose endowments of mind and person move us to wonder, but at the same time fix us immovable: whose works prompt us to extol him, but by their beauty strike us mute;

In whose memory the whole world is treasured; in whose intellect, wisdom; in whose heart, the ardent desire for glory; and in whose mouth, eloquence. Who with Astronomy for his conductor, hears the music of the spheres; with Philosophy for the teacher, deciphers the hand-writing of God, in those wonders of creation which proclaim His greatness; and with the most unwearied literary industry for his associate, examines, restores, penetrates with case the obscurities of antiquity, the desolations of ages, and the labyrinths of learning;

"But wherefore toil to reach these arduous heights?"

To him, in short, whose virtues the mouths of Fame are too few to celebrate, and whom astonishment

forbids us to praise a he deserves, this tribute due to his merits, and the offering of reverence and affection, is paid by Carlo Dati, a patrician Florentine. This great man's servant, and this good man's friend.

In Miltonum.¹

Tres tria, sed longe distantia, saecula vates
Ostentant tribus e gentibus eximios.
Graecia sublimem, cum majestate disertum
Roma tulit, felix Anglia utrique parem.
Partubus ex binis Natura exhausta, coacta est,
Tertis ut fieret, consociare duos.
—Joannem Dridenum.

1 Translation of Dryden's Lines Printed Under the Engraved Portrait of Milton in Tonson's Folio Edition of "Paradise Lost," 1688.

Stanzas on the Late Indecent Liberties Taken with the Remains of the Great Milton, by Wm. Cowper, Esq.¹

Me too, perchance, in future days,
The sculptur'd stone shall show,
With Paphian myrtle, or with bays
Parnessian, on my brow.

But I, before that season come,
Escap'd from ev'ry care,
Shall reach my refuge in the tomb,
And sleep securely there.

So sang in Roman tone and style
The youthful bard, ere long
Ordain'd to grace his native isle
With her sublimest song.

Who then but must conceive disdain,
Hearing the deed unblest
Of wretches who have dar'd profane
His dread sepulchral rest?

Ill fare the hands that heav'd the stones
Where Milton's ashes lay!
That trembled not to grasp his bones.
And steal his dust away!

Oh! ill-requited bard! Neglect
Thy living worth repaid,
And blind idolatrous respect
As much affronts thee dead.

1 This shocking outrage took place in 1790 whilst the Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, was repairing. The overseers (for the sake of gain) opened a coffin supposed to be Milton's, found a body, extracted its teeth, cut off its hair, and left the remains to the grave-diggers, who exhibited them for money to the public.

Forsitan & nostros ducat de marmore vultus,
Nectens aut Paphia myrti aut Parnasside lauri
Fronde comas, at ego segura pace quiescam.
—Milton. "Mansus" ("Manso")

Cowper's translation :

To honour me, and with the graceful wreath
Or of Parnassus or the Paphian isle
Shall bind my brows—but I shall rest the while."

POEMATA

1. ELEGIES

ELEGY I

To Charles Diodati.¹

At length, my friend, the far-sent letters come,
Charged with thy kindness, to their destin'd home,
They come, at length, from Deva's² Western side,
Where prone she seeks the salt Vergivian tide.³
Trust me, my joy is great that thou shouldst be,
Though born of foreign race, yet born for me,
And that my sprightly friend, now free to roam,
Must seek again so soon his wonted home.
I well content, where Thames with refluent tide
My native city laves, meantime reside, ¹⁰
Nor zeal nor duty, now, my steps impell
To reedy Cam,⁴ and my forbidden cell.⁵
Nor aught of pleasure in those fields have I,
That, to the musing bard, all shade deny.
Tis time, that I, a pedant's threats⁶ disdain,
And fly from wrongs, my soul will ne'er sustain.
If peaceful days, in letter'd leisure spent
Beneath my father's roof, be banishment,
Then call me banish'd, I will ne'er refuse
A name expressive of the lot I chuse. ²⁰
I would that exiled to the Pontic shore,
Rome's hapless bard⁷ had suffer'd nothing more!
He then had equall'd even Homer's lays,
And, Virgil! thou hadst won but second praise.
For here I woo the Muse with no control,
And here my books—my life—absorb me whole.
Here too I visit, or to smile, or weep,
The winding theatre's majestic sweep;
The grave or gay colloquial scene recruits
My spirits spent in Learning's long pursuits. ³⁰
Whether some Senior shrewd, or spendthrift heir,
Wooer, or soldier, now unarm'd, be there,
Or some coif'd brooder o'er a ten years' cause
Thunder the Norman gibb'rish of the laws.
The lacquey, there, oft dupes the wary sire,
And, artful, speeds th'enamour'd son's desire.
There, virgins oft, unconscious what they prove,
What love is, know not, yet, unknowing, love.
Or, if impassion'd Tragedy wield high
The bloody sceptre, give her locks to fly ⁴⁰
Wild as the winds, and roll her haggard eye,
I gaze, and grieve, still cherishing my grief.
At times, e'en bitter tears! yield sweet relief.
As when from bliss untasted torn away,
Some youth dies, hapless, on his bridal day,
Or when the ghost, sent back from shades below,
Fills the assassin's heart with vengeful woe,
When Troy, or Argos, the dire scene affords,
Or Creon's hall⁸ laments its guilty lords.
Nor always city-pent or pent at home ⁵⁰
I dwell, but when Spring calls me forth to roam
Expatiate in our proud suburban shades
Of branching elm that never sun pervades.
Here many a virgin troop I may descry,
Like stars of mildest influence, gliding by,
Oh forms divine! Oh looks that might inspire

E'en Jove himself, grown old, with young desire!
 Oft have I gazed on gem-surpassing eyes,
 Outsparkling every star that gilds the skies.
 Necks whiter than the iv'ry arm bestow'd 60
 By Jove on Pelops, or the Milky Road!
 Bright locks, Love's golden snares, these falling low,
 Those playing wanton o'er the graceful brow!
 Cheeks too, more winning sweet than after show'r,
 Adonis turn'd to Flora's fav'rite flow'r!
 Yield, Heroines, yield, and ye who shar'd th'embrace
 Of Jupiter in ancient times, give place;
 Give place ye turban'd Fair of Persia's coast,
 And ye, not less renown'd, Assyria's boast!
 Submit, ye nymphs of Greece! Ye once the bloom 70
 Of Ilion,⁹ and all ye of haughty Rome,
 Who swept of old her theatres with trains
 Redundant, and still live in classic strains!
 To British damsels beauty's palm is due,
 Aliens! to follow them is fame for you.
 Oh city,¹⁰ founded by Dardanian hands,
 Whose towering front the circling realm commands,
 Too blest abode! no loveliness we see
 In all the earth, but it abounds in thee.
 The virgin multitude that daily meets, 80
 Radiant with gold and beauty, in thy streets,
 Outnumbers all her train of starry fires
 With which Diana gilds thy lofty spires.
 Fame says, that wafted hither by her doves,
 With all her host of quiver-bearing Loves,
 Venus, preferring Paphian scenes no more,
 Has fix'd her empire on thy nobler shore.
 But lest the sightless boy inforce my stay,
 I leave these happy walls, while yet I may.
 Immortal Moly¹¹ shall secure my heart 90
 From all the sorc'ry of Circaean art,
 And I will e'en repass Cam's reedy pools
 To face once more the warfare of the Schools.
 Meantime accept this trifle; Rhymes, though few,
 Yet such as prove thy friend's remembrance true.

1 Diodati was a schoolfellow of Milton at St. Paul's, of Italian extraction, nephew of Giovanni Diodati, the translator of the Bible into Italian, and son of Theodore Diodati, a physician of eminence, who married and settled in England. Charles Diodati's early death formed the subject of The "Epitaphium Damonis" ("The Death of Damon").

2 The Dee of Chester.

3 The Vergivian Sea, so called by Ptolemy, was the Irish Sea between England and Ireland.

4 Cambridge.

5 Milton had been rusticated (suspended) on account of a quarrel with his tutor, Chappell.

6 Chappell.

7 Ovid.

8 In Thebes—the guilty lords are Eteocles and Polynices the brothers-sons of Oedipus and Jocasta, who fell in their unnatural strife.

9 Troy.

10 London. The Dardanian (i.e. Trojan) hands are those of Brutus, the legendary founder of London.

11 The magical plant by which Odysseus was enabled to escape from Circe. See Homer (Odyssey, x. 370-375).

ELEGY II

On the Death of the University Beadle at Cambridge.¹

Thee, whose refulgent staff and summons clear,
Minerva's flock longtime was wont t'obey,
Although thyself an herald, famous here,
The last of heralds, Death, has snatch'd away.
He calls on all alike, nor even deigns
To spare the office that himself sustains.

Thy locks were whiter than the plumes display'd
By Leda's paramour² in ancient time,
But thou wast worthy ne'er to have decay'd,
Or, Aeson-like,³ to know a second prime, ¹⁰
Worthy for whom some Goddess should have won
New life, oft kneeling to Apollo's son.⁴

Commission'd to convene with hasty call
The gowned tribes, how graceful wouldst thou stand!
So stood Cyllenius⁵ erst in Priam's hall,
Wing-footed messenger of Jove's command,
And so, Eurybates⁶ when he address'd
To Peleus' son Atrides' proud behest.

Dread Queen of sepulchres! whose rig'rous laws
And watchful eyes, run through the realms below, ²⁰
Oh, oft too adverse to Minerva's cause,
Too often to the Muse not less a foe,
Chose meaner marks, and with more equal aim
Pierce useless drones, earth's burthen and its shame!

Flow, therefore, tears for Him from ev'ry eye,
All ye disciples of the Muses, weep!
Assembling, all, in robes of sable dye,
Around his bier, lament his endless sleep,
And let complaining Elegy rehearse
In every School her sweetest saddest verse. ³⁰

1 Richard Redding of St. John's College, M.A. He died in October, 1626.

2 The Swan—Jove had turned himself into that bird.

3 i.e. Jason, who was restored to youth by his daughter Medea.

4 Esculapius, the god of medicine.

5 Hermes.

6 One of the heralds sent to Achilles by Agamemnon.

ELEGY III

Anno Aetates 17.1

On the Death of the Bishop of Winchester.²

Silent I sat, dejected, and alone,
Making in thought the public woes my own,
When, first, arose the image in my breast
Of England's sufferings by that scourge, the pest.³
How death, his fun'ral torch and scythe in hand,
Ent'ring the lordliest mansions of the land,
Has laid the gem-illumin'd palace low,
And level'd tribes of Nobles at a blow.
I, next, deplor'd the famed fraternal pair⁴
Too soon to ashes turn'd and empty air, ¹⁰
The Heroes next, whom snatch'd into the skies
All Belgia saw, and follow'd with her sighs;

But Thee far most I mourn'd, regretted most,
Winton's chief shepherd and her worthiest boast;
Pour'd out in tears I thus complaining said—
Death, next in pow'r to Him who rules the Dead!
Is't not enough that all the woodlands yield
To thy fell force, and ev'ry verdant field,
That lilies, at one noisome blast of thine,
And ev'n the Cyprian Queen's own roses, pine, 20
That oaks themselves, although the running rill
Suckle their roots, must wither at thy will,
That all the winged nations, even those
Whose heav'n-directed flight the Future shows,
And all the beasts that in dark forests stray,
And all the herds of Proteus⁵ are thy prey?
Ah envious! arm'd with pow'rs so unconfined
Why stain thy hands with blood of Human kind?
Why take delight, with darts that never roam,
To chase a heav'n-born spirit from her home? 30

While thus I mourn'd, the star of evening stood,
Now newly ris'n, above the western flood,
And Phoebus from his morning-goal again
Had reach'd the gulphs of the Iberian main.
I wish'd repose, and, on my couch reclined
Took early rest, to night and sleep resign'd,
When—Oh for words to paint what I beheld!
I seem'd to wander in a spacious field,
Where all the champain glow'd with purple light
Like that of sun-rise on the mountain height; 40
Flow'rs over all the field, of ev'ry hue
That ever Iris wore, luxuriant grew,
Nor Chloris,⁶ with whom amtrous Zephyrs play,
E'er dress'd Alcinous' gardens⁷ half so gay.
A silver current, like the Tagus, roll'd
O'er golden sands, but sands of purer gold,
With dewy airs Favonius fann'd the flow'rs,
With airs awaken'd under rosy bow'rs.
Such poets feign, irradiated all o'er
The sun's abode on India's utmost shore. 50

While I, that splendour and the mingled shade
Of fruitful vines, with wonder fixt survey'd,
At once, with looks that beam'd celestial grace,
The Seer of Winton stood before my face.
His snowy vesture's hem descending low
His golden sandals swept, and pure as snow
New-fallen shone the mitre on his brow.
Where'er he trod, a tremulous sweet sound
Of gladness shook the flow'ry scene around:
Attendant angels clap their starry wings, 60
The trumpet shakes the sky, all aether rings,
Each chaunts his welcome, folds him to his breast,
And thus a sweeter voice than all the rest.
"Ascend, my son! thy Father's kingdom share,
My son! henceforth be free'd from ev'ry care."

So spake the voice, and at its tender close
With psaltry's sound th'Angelic band arose.
Then night retired, and chased by dawning day
The visionary bliss pass'd all away.
I mourn'd my banish'd sleep with fond concern, 70
Frequent, to me may dreams like this return.

1 i.e. "In my seventeenth year," meaning at the age of sixteen.

2 Lancelot Andrewes, Fuller's "peerless prelate."

3 The plague which ravaged England in 1626.

4 Prince Christian of Brunswick, and Count Mansfelt. They were brothers in arms and the Protestant champions. They both died in 1626.

5 Marine creatures. Proteus was the shepherd of the seas.

6 Flora.

7 See the account of his gardens in the Odyssey.

ELEGY IV.

Anno Aetates 18.

To My Tutor, Thomas Young,¹

Chaplain of the English Merchants Resident at Hamburg.

Hence, my epistle—skim the Deep—fly o'er
Yon smooth expanse to the Teutonic shore!
Haste—lest a friend should grieve for thy delay—
And the Gods grant that nothing thwart thy way!
I will myself invoke the King² who binds
In his Sicilian echoing vault the winds,
With Doris³ and her Nymphs, and all the throng
Of azure Gods, to speed thee safe along.
But rather, to insure thy happier haste,
Ascend Medea's chariot,⁴ if thou may'st, 10
Or that whence young Triptolemus⁵ of yore
Descended welcome on the Scythian shore.
The sands that line the German coast descried,
To opulent Hamburg turn aside,
So call'd, if legendary fame be true,
From Hama,⁶ whom a club-arm'd Cimbrian slew.
There lives, deep-learn'd and primitively just,
A faithful steward of his Christian trust,
My friend, and favorite inmate of my heart—
That now is forced to want its better part! 20
What mountains now, and seas, alas! how wide!
From me this other, dearer self divide,
Dear, as the sage⁷ renown'd for moral truth
To the prime spirit of the Attic youth!
Dear, as the Stagyrite⁸ to Ammon's son,⁹
His pupil, who disdain'd the world he won!
Nor so did Chiron, or so Phoenix shine¹⁰
In young Achilles' eyes, as He in mine.
First led by him thro' sweet Aonian¹¹ shade
Each sacred haunt of Pindus I survey'd; 30
And favor'd by the muse, whom I implor'd,
Thrice on my lip the hallow'd stream I pour'd.
But thrice the Sun's resplendent chariot roll'd
To Aries, has new ting'd his fleece with gold,
And Chloris twice has dress'd the meadows gay,
And twice has Summer parch'd their bloom away,
Since last delighted on his looks I hung,
Or my ear drank the music of his tongue.
Fly, therefore, and surpass the tempest's speed!
Aware thyself that there is urgent need. 40
Him, ent'ring, thou shalt haply seated see
Beside his spouse, his infants on his knee,
Or turning page by page with studious look
Some bulky Father, or God's Holy Book,
Or minist'ring (which is his weightiest care)
To Christ's assembled flock their heav'nly fare.
Give him, whatever his employment be,
Such gratulation as he claims from me,
And with a down-cast eye and carriage meek
Addressing him, forget not thus to speak. 50

If, compass'd round with arms, thou canst attend
To verse, verse greets thee from a distant friend,
Long due and late I left the English shore,
But make me welcome for that cause the more.
Such from Ulysses, his chaste wife to cheer,
The slow epistle came, tho' late, sincere.
But wherefore This? why palliate I a deed,
For which the culprit's self could hardly plead?
Self-charged and self-condemn'd, his proper part
He feels neglected, with an aching heart; 60
But Thou forgive—Delinquents who confess,
And pray forgiveness, merit anger less;
From timid foes the lion turns away,
Nor yawns upon or rends a crouching prey,
Even pike-wielding Thracians learn to spare,
Won by soft influence of a suppliant's prayer;
And heav'n's dread thunderbolt arrested stands
By a cheap victim and uplifted hands.
Long had he wish'd to write, but was withheld,
And writes at last, by love alone compell'd, 70
For Fame, too often true when she alarms,
Reports thy neighbouring-fields a scene of arms; 12
Thy city against fierce besiegers barr'd,
And all the Saxon Chiefs for fight prepar'd.
Enyo¹³ wastes thy country wide around,
And saturates with blood the tainted ground;
Mars rests contented in his Thrace no more,
But goads his steeds to fields of German gore,
The ever-verdant olive fades and dies,
And peace, the trumpet-hating goddess, flies, 80
Flies from that earth which justice long had left,
And leaves the world of its last guard bereft.

Thus horror girds thee round. Meantime alone
Thou dwell'st, and helpless in a soil unknown,
Poor, and receiving from a foreign hand
The aid denied thee in thy native land.
Oh, ruthless country, and unfeeling more
Than thy own billow-beaten chalky shore!
Leav'st Thou to foreign Care the Worthies giv'n
By providence, to guide thy steps to Heav'n? 90
His ministers, commission'd to proclaim
Eternal blessings in a Saviour's name?
Ah then most worthy! with a soul unfed
In Stygian night to lie for ever dead.
So once the venerable Tishbite stray'd
An exil'd fugitive from shade to shade,
When, flying Ahab and his Fury wife,
In lone Arabian wilds he shelter'd life;
So, from Philippi wander'd forth forlorn
Cilician Paul, with sounding scourges torn; 100
And Christ himself so left and trod no more
The thankless Gergesenes' forbidden shore.

But thou take courage, strive against despair,
Quake not with dread, nor nourish anxious care.
Grim war indeed on ev'ry side appears,
And thou art menac'd by a thousand spears,
Yet none shall drink thy blood, or shall offend
Ev'n the defenceless bosom of my friend;
For thee the Aegis of thy God shall hide,
Jehova's self shall combat on thy side, 110
The same, who vanquish'd under Sion's tow'rs
At silent midnight all Assyria's pow'rs,
The same who overthrew in ages past,
Damascus' sons that lay'd Samaria waste;

Their King he fill'd and them with fatal fears
By mimic sounds of clarions in their ears,
Of hoofs and wheels and neighings from afar
Of clanging armour and the din of war.

Thou therefore, (as the most afflicted may)
Still hope, and triumph o'er thy evil day, 120
Look forth, expecting happier times to come,
And to enjoy once more thy native home!

1 Young was private tutor to Milton before he went to St. Paul's. (Milton's prose letter to Young is included in an appendix below.)

2 Aeolus, god of the east wind. Sicania was a name for Sicily.

3 Mother of the Nereids (sea-nymphs).

4 Drawn by winged dragons.

5 Triptolemus was presented by Ceres with a winged chariot.

6 A Saxon warrior slain by a giant.

7 Socrates. 8 Aristotle. 9 Alexander.

10 Chiron and Phoenix were the tutors of Achilles.

11 Helicon.

12 Alluding to the war between the Protestant League and the Imperialists.

13 The goddess of war.

ELEGY V.

Anno Aetates 20.

On the Approach of Spring.

Time, never wand'ring from his annual round,
Bids Zephyr breathe the Spring, and thaw the ground;
Bleak Winter flies, new verdure clothes the plain,
And earth assumes her transient youth again.
Dream I, or also to the Spring belong
Increase of Genius, and new pow'rs of song?
Spring gives them, and, how strange soere it seem,
Impels me now to some harmonious theme.
Castalia's fountain and the forked hill
By day, by night, my raptur'd fancy fill, 10
My bosom burns and heaves, I hear within
A sacred sound that prompts me to begin,
Lo! Phoebus comes, with his bright hair he blends
The radiant laurel wreath; Phoebus descends;
I mount, and, undepress'd by cumb'rous clay,
Through cloudy regions win my easy way;
Rapt through poetic shadowy haunts I fly:
The shrines all open to my dauntless eye,
My spirit searches all the realms of light,
And no Tartarean gulphs elude my sight. 20
But this ecstatic trance—this glorious storm
Of inspiration—what will it perform?
Spring claims the verse that with his influence glows,
And shall be paid with what himself bestows.

Thou, veil'd with op'ning foliage, lead'st the throng
Of feather'd minstrels, Philomel! in song;
Let us, in concert, to the season sing,
Civic, and sylvan heralds of the spring!

With notes triumphant spring's approach declare!
To spring, ye Muses, annual tribute bear! 30

The Orient left and Aethiopia's plains
The Sun now northward turns his golden reins,
Night creeps not now, yet rules with gentle sway,
And drives her dusky horrors swift away;
Now less fatigued on his aethereal plain
Bootes² follows his celestial wain;
And now the radiant centinels above
Less num'rous watch around the courts of Jove,
For, with the night, Force, Ambush, Slaughter fly,
And no gigantic guilt alarms the sky. 40
Now haply says some shepherd, while he views,
Recumbent on a rock, the redd'ning dews,
This night, this surely, Phoebus miss'd the fair,
Who stops his chariot by her am'rous care.
Cynthia,³ delighted by the morning's glow,
Speeds to the woodland, and resumes her bow;
Resigns her beams, and, glad to disappear,
Blesses his aid who shortens her career.
Come—Phoebus cries—Aurora come—too late
Thou linger'st slumb'ring with thy wither'd mate,⁴ 50
Leave Him, and to Hymettus' top repair,
Thy darling Cephalus expects thee there.
The goddess, with a blush, her love betrays,
But mounts, and driving rapidly obeys.
Earth now desires thee, Phoebus! and, t'engage
Thy warm embrace, casts off the guise of age.
Desires thee, and deserves; for who so sweet,
When her rich bosom courts thy genial heat?
Her breath imparts to ev'ry breeze that blows
Arabia's harvest and the Paphian rose. 60
Her lofty front she diadems around
With sacred pines, like Ops on Ida crown'd,
Her dewy locks with various flow'rs new-blown,
She interweaves, various, and all her own,
For Proserpine in such a wreath attired
Taenarian Dis⁵ himself with love inspired.
Fear not, lest, cold and coy, the Nymph refuse,
Herself, with all her sighing Zephyrs sues,
Each courts thee fanning soft his scented wing,
And all her groves with warbled wishes ring. 70
Nor, unendow'd and indigent, aspires
Th'am'rous Earth to engage thy warm desires,
But, rich in balmy drugs, assists thy claim
Divine Physician! to that glorious name.
If splendid recompense, if gifts can move
Desire in thee (gifts often purchase love),
She offers all the wealth, her mountains hide,
And all that rests beneath the boundless tide.
How oft, when headlong from the heav'nly steep
She sees thee plunging in the Western Deep 80
How oft she cries—Ah Phoebus! why repair
Thy wasted force, why seek refreshment there?
Can Tethys⁶ win thee? wherefore should'st thou lave
A face so fair in her unpleasant wave?
Come, seek my green retreats, and rather chuse
To cool thy tresses in my chrystal dews,
The grassy turf shall yield thee sweeter rest,
Come, lay thy evening glories on my breast,
And breathing fresh through many a humid rose,
Soft whisp'ring airs shall lull thee to repose. 90
No fears I feel like Semele⁷ to die,
Nor lest thy burning wheels⁸ approach too nigh,
For thou can'st govern them. Here therefore rest,
And lay thy evening glories on my breast.

Thus breathes the wanton Earth her am'rous flame,
 And all her countless offspring feel the same;
 For Cupid now through every region strays
 Bright'ning his faded fires with solar rays,
 His new-strung bow sends forth a deadlier sound,
 And his new-pointed shafts more deeply wound, 100
 Nor Dian's self escapes him now untried,
 Nor even Vesta⁹ at her altar-side;
 His mother too repairs her beauty's wane,
 And seems sprung newly from the Deep again.
 Exulting youths the Hymenaeal¹⁰ sing,
 With Hymen's name roofs, rocks, and valleys ring;
 He, new attired and by the season dress'd
 Proceeds all fragrant in his saffron vest.
 Now, many a golden-cinctur'd virgin roves
 To taste the pleasures of the fields and groves, 110
 All wish, and each alike, some fav'rite youth
 Hers in the bonds of Hymenaeal truth.
 Now pipes the shepherd through his reeds again,
 Nor Phyllis wants a song that suits the strain,
 With songs the seaman hails the starry sphere,
 And dolphins rise from the abyss to hear,
 Jove feels, himself, the season, sports again
 With his fair spouse, and banquets all his train.
 Now too the Satyrs in the dusk of Eve
 Their mazy dance through flow'ry meadows weave, 120
 And neither God nor goat, but both in kind,
 Sylvanus,¹¹ wreath'd with cypress, skips behind.
 The Dryads leave the hollow sylvan cells
 To roam the banks, and solitary dells;
 Pan riots now; and from his amorous chafe
 Ceres¹² and Cybele seem hardly safe,
 And Faunus,¹³ all on fire to reach the prize,
 In chase of some enticing Oread¹⁴ flies;
 She bounds before, but fears too swift a bound,
 And hidden lies, but wishes to be found. 130
 Our shades entice th'Immortals from above,
 And some kind Pow'r presides o'er ev'ry grove,
 And long ye Pow'rs o'er ev'ry grove preside,
 For all is safe and blest where ye abide!
 Return O Jove! the age of gold restore—
 Why chose to dwell where storms and thunders roar?
 At least, thou, Phoebus! moderate thy speed,
 Let not the vernal hours too swift proceed,
 Command rough Winter back, nor yield the pole
 Too soon to Night's encroaching, long control. 140

1 Helicon.

2 The Great Bear, called also Charles's Wain (wagon). "Bootes" is the constellation called "The Waggoner," who is said to be "less fatigued" because he drives the wain higher in the sky.

3 Diana (the Moon).

4 Tithonus, mortal husband to Aurora (the dawn), granted immortality without eternal youth. See Homer's Hymn to Aphrodite (lines 218-238). Cephalus was her lover, unwillingly taken by her from his beloved wife Procris. See Ovid (Met. vii, 700-708).

5 Hades (Pluto).

6 A water goddess—mother of the river gods and wife of Oceanus.

7 The mother of Dionysus. Juno persuaded her to ask to see Jove in all his divine glory, the vision of which struck her dead. See Ovid (Met. iii, 308-309.)

8 The wheels of Apollo's chariot. See Ovid (Met. ii, I9-328.)

9 The goddess of chastity.

10 Hymn to Hymen, the goddess of marriage. 11 The wood god.

12 The goddess of agriculture. Cybele (Rhea) was called the mother of the gods and of men. See Virgil (Aen. x, 252-253.)

13 The god of shepherds. 14 A wood nymph.

ELEGY VI

To Charles Diodati,
When He Was Visiting in the Country

Who sent the Author a poetical epistle, in which he requested that his verses, if not so good as usual, might be excused on account of the many feasts to which his friends invited him, and which would not allow him leisure to finish them as he wished.

With no rich viands overcharg'd, I send
Health, which perchance you want, my pamper'd friend;
But wherefore should thy Muse tempt mine away
From what she loves, from darkness into day?
Art thou desirous to be told how well
I love thee, and in verse? Verse cannot tell.
For verse has bounds, and must in measure move;
But neither bounds nor measure knows my love.
How pleasant in thy lines described appear
December's harmless sports and rural cheer! 10
French spirits kindling with caerulean fires,
And all such gambols as the time inspires!

Think not that Wine against good verse offends;
The Muse and Bacchus have been always friends,
Nor Phoebus blushes sometimes to be found
With Ivy, rather than with Laurel, crown'd.
The Nine themselves oftimes have join'd the song
And revels of the Bacchanalian throng.
Not even Ovid could in Scythian air
Sing sweetly—why? no vine would flourish there. 20
What in brief numbers sang Anacreon's¹ muse?
Wine, and the rose, that sparkling wine bedews.
Pindar with Bacchus glows—his every line
Breathes the rich fragrance of inspiring wine,
While, with loud crash o'erturn'd, the chariot lies
And brown with dust the fiery courser flies.
The Roman lyrist steep'd in wine his lays
So sweet in Glycera's, and Chloe's praise.²
Now too the plenteous feast, and mantling bowl
Nourish the vigour of thy sprightly soul; 30
The flowing goblet makes thy numbers flow,
And casks not wine alone, but verse, bestow.
Thus Phoebus favours, and the arts attend
Whom Bacchus, and whom Ceres, both befriend.
What wonder then, thy verses are so sweet,
In which these triple powers so kindly meet.
The lute now also sounds, with gold inwrought,
And touch'd with flying Fingers nicely taught,
In tap'stried halls high-roof'd the sprightly lyre
Directs the dancers of the virgin choir. 40
If dull repletion fright the Muse away,
Sights, gay as these, may more invite her stay;
And, trust me, while the iv'ry keys resound,
Fair damsels sport, and perfumes steam around,
Apollo's influence, like ethereal flame
Shall animate at once thy glowing frame,
And all the Muse shall rush into thy breast,

By love and music's blended pow'rs possest.
 For num'rous pow'rs light Elegy befriend,
 Hear her sweet voice, and at her call attend; 50
 Her, Bacchus, Ceres, Venus, all approve,
 And with his blushing Mother, gentle Love.
 Hence, to such bards we grant the copious use
 Of banquets, and the vine's delicious juice.
 But they who Demigods and Heroes praise
 And feats perform'd in Jove's more youthful days,
 Who now the counsels of high heav'n explore,
 Now shades, that echo the Cerberean roar,³
 Simply let these, like him of Samos⁴ live,
 Let herbs to them a bloodless banquet give; 60
 In beechen goblets let their bev'rage shine,
 Cool from the chrystal spring, their sober wine!
 Their youth should pass, in innocence, secure
 From stain licentious, and in manners pure,
 Pure as the priest's, when robed in white he stands
 The fresh lustration ready in his hands.
 Thus Linus⁵ liv'd, and thus, as poets write,
 Tiresias, wiser for his loss of sight,⁶
 Thus exil'd Chalcas,⁷ thus the bard of Thrace,⁸
 Melodious tamer of the savage race! 70
 Thus train'd by temp'rance, Homer led, of yore,
 His chief of Ithaca⁹ from shore to shore,
 Through magic Circe's monster-peopled reign,
 And shoals insidious with the siren train;
 And through the realms, where griesly spectres dwell,
 Whose tribes he fetter'd in a gory spell;
 For these are sacred bards, and, from above,
 Drink large infusions from the mind of Jove.

Would'st thou (perhaps 'tis hardly worth thine ear)
 Would'st thou be told my occupation here? 80
 The promised King of peace employs my pen,
 Th'eternal cov'nant made for guilty men,
 The new-born Deity with infant cries
 Filling the sordid hovel, where he lies;
 The hymning Angels, and the herald star
 That led the Wise who sought him from afar,
 And idols on their own unhallow'd floor
 Dash'd at his birth, to be revered no more!

This theme¹⁰ on reeds of Albion I rehearse;
 The dawn of that blest day inspired the verse; 90
 Verse that, reserv'd in secret, shall attend
 Thy candid voice, my Critic and my Friend!

1 A poet native to Teios in Ionia.

2 See Horace's Odes (i, 19-23).

3 Cerberus, the guardian of Hades.

4 Pythagoras. 5 A son of Apollo.

6 Tiresias was gifted by Pallas with the power of understanding the language of birds to atone for his loss of sight.

7 The Grecian soothsayer at the siege of Troy. 8 Orpheus.

9 Odysseus.

10 "The Hymn" from "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity."

As yet a stranger to the gentle fires
That Amathusia's smiling Queen² inspires,
Not seldom I derided Cupid's darts,
And scorn'd his claim to rule all human hearts.
Go, child, I said, transfix the tim'rous dove,
An easy conquest suits an infant Love;
Enslave the sparrow, for such prize shall be
Sufficient triumph to a Chief like thee;
Why aim thy idle arms at human kind?
Thy shafts prevail not 'gainst the noble mind. 10

The Cyprian³ heard, and, kindling into ire,
(None kindles sooner) burn'd with double fire.

It was the Spring, and newly risen day
Peep'd o'er the hamlets on the First of May;
My eyes too tender for the blaze of light,
Still sought the shelter of retiring night,
When Love approach'd, in painted plumes arrayed;
Th'insidious god his rattling darts betray'd,
Nor less his infant features, and the sly
Sweet intimations of his threat'ning eye. 20

Such the Sigeian boy⁴ is seen above,
Filling the goblet for imperial Jove;
Such he, on whom the nymphs bestow'd their charms,
Hylas,⁵ who perish'd in a Naiad's arms.
Angry he seem'd, yet graceful in his ire,
And added threats, not destitute of fire.
"My power," he said, "by others pain alone,
'Twere best to learn; now learn it by thy own!
With those, who feel my power, that pow'r attest!
And in thy anguish be my sway confest! 30
I vanquish'd Phoebus, though returning vain
From his new triumph o'er the Python slain,
And, when he thinks on Daphne,⁶ even He
Will yield the prize of archery to me.
A dart less true the Parthian horseman⁷ sped,
Behind him kill'd, and conquer'd as he fled,
Less true th'expert Cydonian, and less true
The youth, whose shaft his latent Procris slew.⁸
Vanquish'd by me see huge Orion bend,
By me Alcides,⁹ and Alcides's friend.¹⁰ 40
At me should Jove himself a bolt design,
His bosom first should bleed transfix'd by mine.
But all thy doubts this shaft will best explain,
Nor shall it teach thee with a trivial pain,
Thy Muse, vain youth! shall not thy peace ensure,
Nor Phoebus' serpent yield thy wound a cure.¹¹

He spoke, and, waving a bright shaft in air,
Sought the warm bosom of the Cyprian fair.

That thus a child should bluster in my ear
Provok'd my laughter more than mov'd my fear. 50
I shun'd not, therefore, public haunts, but stray'd
Careless in city, or suburban shade,
And passing and repassing nymphs that mov'd
With grace divine, beheld where'er I rov'd.
Bright shone the vernal day, with double blaze,
As beauty gave new force to Phoebus' rays.
By no grave scruples check'd I freely eyed
The dang'rous show, rash youth my only guide,
And many a look of many a Fair unknown
Met full, unable to control my own. 60
But one I mark'd (then peace forsook my breast)
One—Oh how far superior to the rest!
What lovely features! Such the Cyprian Queen
Herself might wish, and Juno wish her mien.

The very nymph was she, whom when I dar'd
 His arrows, Love had even then prepar'd.
 Nor was himself remote, nor unsupplied
 With torch well-trimm'd and quiver at his side;
 Now to her lips he clung, her eye-lids now,
 Then settled on her cheeks or on her brow. 70
 And with a thousand wounds from ev'ry part
 Pierced and transpierced my undefended heart.
 A fever, new to me, of fierce desire
 Now seiz'd my soul, and I was all on fire,
 But she, the while, whom only I adore,
 Was gone, and vanish'd to appear no more.
 In silent sadness I pursue my way,
 I pause, I turn, proceed, yet wish to stay,
 And while I follow her in thought, bemoan
 With tears my soul's delight so quickly flown. 80
 When Jove had hurl'd him to the Lemnian coast¹²
 So Vulcan sorrow'd for Olympus lost,
 And so Oeclides, sinking into night,
 From the deep gulph look'd up to distant light.¹³
 Wretch that I am, what hopes for me remain
 Who cannot cease to love, yet love in vain?
 Oh could I once, once more, behold the Fair,
 Speak to her, tell her of the pangs I bear,
 Perhaps she is not adamant, would show
 Perhaps some pity at my tale of woe. 90
 Oh inauspicious flame—'tis mine to prove
 A matchless instance of disastrous love.
 Ah spare me, gentle Pow'r!—If such thou be
 Let not thy deeds, and nature disagree.
 Now I revere thy fires, thy bow, thy darts:
 Now own thee sov'reign of all human hearts.
 Spare me, and I will worship at no shrine
 With vow and sacrifice, save only thine.
 Remove! no—grant me still this raging woe!
 Sweet is the wretchedness, that lovers know: 100
 But pierce hereafter (should I chance to see
 One destined mine) at once both her and me.

14

Such were the trophies, that in earlier days,
 By vanity seduced I toil'd to raise,
 Studious yet indolent, and urg'd by youth,
 That worst of teachers, from the ways of Truth;
 Till learning taught me, in his shady bow'r,
 To quit love's servile yoke, and spurn his pow'r.
 Then, on a sudden, the fierce flame supprest,
 A frost continual settled on my breast, 110
 Whence Cupid fears his flames extinct to see,
 And Venus dreads a Diomed¹⁵ in me.

1 i.e. "In my nineteenth year."

2 Venus (Aphrodite), so called from Amethus in Cyprus, where she had a temple.

3 Cupid, called after his mother's title.

4 Ganymede, whom Jove, in the form of an eagle, spirited away to serve as his cup-bearer. See Ovid (Met. x, 155-161)

5 The friend of Hercules, stolen by nymphs who had fallen in love with him.

6 She fled from Apollo, and was transformed into a laurel.

7 The Roman Crassus was defeated in 53 B.C. by the Parthian cavalry when they fired backwards with devastating effect. The Cydonians were also famed for their skill in archery.

8 Cephalus, who shot his wife Procris by mistake.

9 Hercules. 10 Telemon.

11 Esculapius, who came to Rome in the form of a snake.

12 Vulcan (Hephaestus) was cast down from Olympus to the isle of Lemnos.

13 One of the Argonauts. He was swallowed up by the sea.

14 A later retraction by Milton. The line appears in the original to separate it from what came before it.

15 Diomedes wounded Venus (Aphrodite) at Troy. See Homer (Il. v, 335-343)

On the Gunpowder Plot.¹

Cum simul in regem nuper satrapasque Britannos
Ausus es infandum perfide Fauxe nefas,
Fallor? an & mitis voluisti ex parte videri,
Et pensare mala cum pietate scelus;
Scilicet hos alti missurus ad atria caeli,
Sulphureo curru flammivolisque rotis.
Qualiter ille feris caput inviolabile Parcis
Liquit Jordanios turbine raptus agros.

1 The Poems on the subject of the Gunpowder Treason² I have not translated, both because the matter of them is unpleasant, and because they are written with an asperity, which, however it might be warranted in Milton's day, would be extremely unseasonable now.—W.C.

2 This includes "On the Fifth of November" below.

Another on the Same.

Siccine tentasti caelo donasse Jacobum
Quae septemgemino Bellua monte lates?
Ni meliora tuum poterit dare munera numen,
Parce precor donis insidiosa tuis.
Ille quidem sine te consortia serus adivit
Astra, nec inferni pulveris usus ope.
Sic potius foedus in caelum pelle cucullos,
Et quot habet brutos Roma profana Deos,
Namque hac aut alia quemque adjuveris arte,
Crede mihi, caeli vix bene scandet iter. 10

Another on the Same.

Purgatorem animae derisit Jacobus ignem,
Et sine quo superum non adeunda domus.
Frenduit hoc trina monstrum Latiale corona
Movit & horrificum cornua dena minax.
Et nec inultus ait temnes mea sacra Britanne,
Supplicium spreta religione dabis.
Et si stelligeras unquam penetraveris arces,
Non nisi per flammas triste patebit iter.
O quam funesto cecinisti proxima vero,
Verbaque ponderibus vix caritura suis! 10
Nam prope Tartareo sublime rotatus ab igni
Ibat ad aethereas umbra perusta plagas.

Another on the Same.

Quem modo Roma suis devoverat impia diris,
Et Styge damnarat Taenarique sinu,
Hunc vice mutata jam tollere gestit ad astra,
Et cupit ad superos evehere usque Deos.

On the Inventor of Gunpowder.

Praise in old time the sage Prometheus won,
Who stole ethereal radiance from the sun;
But greater he, whose bold invention strove
To emulate the fiery bolts of Jove.

To Leonora,¹ Singing in Rome.²

Angelus unicuique suus (sic credite gentes)
Obtigit aethereis ales ab ordinibus.
Quid mirum? Leonora tibi si gloria major,
Nam tua praesentem vox sonat ipsa Deum.
Aut Deus, aut vacui certe mens tertia coeli
Pertua secreto guttura serpit agens;
Serpit agens, facilisque docet mortalia corda
Sensim immortalis assuescere posse sono.
Quod si cuncta quidem Deus est, per cunctaque fusus,
In te una loquitur, caetera mutus habet. 10

1 Leonora Baroni, celebrated Neapolitan singer. Milton heard her perform at the palace of Cardinal Barberini in 1638.

2 I have translated only two of the three poetical compliments addressed to Leonora, as they appear to me far superior to what I have omitted.—W.C.

Another to the Same.

Another Leonora¹ once inspir'd
Tasso, with fatal love to frenzy fir'd,
But how much happier, liv'd he now, were he,
Pierced with whatever pangs for love of Thee!
Since could he hear that heavenly voice of thine,
With Adriana's lute² of sound divine,
Fiercer than Pentheus'³ tho' his eye might roll,
Or idiot apathy benumb his soul,
You still, with medicinal sounds, might cheer
His senses wandering in a blind career; 10
And sweetly breathing thro' his wounded breast,
Charm, with soul-soothing song, his thoughts to rest.

1 Leonora d'Este, supposed lover of Torquato Tasso.

2 Adriana Baroni, who accompanied her daughter on the lute.

3 A mad Theban king.

Another to the Same.

Naples, too credulous, ah! boast no more
The sweet-voiced Siren buried on thy shore,
That, when Parthenope¹ deceas'd, she gave
Her sacred dust to a Chalcidic² grave,
For still she lives, but has exchanged the hoarse
Pausilipo for Tiber's placid course,
Where, idol of all Rome, she now in chains,
Of magic song both Gods and Men detains.

1 One of the Sirens.

2 From Chalcis, whence the Greek colonies of South Italy came.

The Fable of the Peasant and his Landlord.¹

A Peasant to his lord yearly court,
Presenting pippins of so rich a sort

That he, displeas'd to have a part alone,
Removed the tree, that all might be his own.
The tree, too old to travel, though before
So fruitful, wither'd, and would yield no more.
The squire, perceiving all his labour void,
Curs'd his own pains, so foolishly employ'd,
And "Oh," he cried, "that I had liv'd content
With tribute, small indeed, but kindly meant! 10
My avarice has expensive prov'd to me,
Has cost me both my pippins and my tree."

1 Added to the Elegies in the 1673 edition.

2. POEMS IN VARIOUS METRES

On the Death of the Vice-Chancellor,
A Physician.¹

Learn ye nations of the earth
The condition of your birth,
Now be taught your feeble state,
Know, that all must yield to Fate!

If the mournful Rover, Death,
Say but once-resign your breath-
Vainly of escape you dream,
You must pass the Stygian stream.

Could the stoutest overcome
Death's assault, and baffle Doom, 10
Hercules had both withstood
Undis'eas'd by Nessus' blood.²

Ne'er had Hector press'd the plain
By a trick of Pallas slain,
Nor the Chief to Jove allied³
By Achilles' phantom died.

Could enchantments life prolong,
Circe, saved by magic song,
Still had liv'd, and equal skill
Had preserv'd Medea still.⁴ 20

Dwelt in herbs and drugs a pow'r
To avert Man's destin'd hour,
Learn'd Machaon⁵ should have known
Doubtless to avert his own.

Chiron had survived the smart
Of the Hydra-tainted dart,⁶
And Jove's bolt had been with ease
Foil'd by Asclepiades.⁷

Thou too, Sage! of whom forlorn
Helicon and Cirrha mourn, 30
Still had'st fill'd thy princely place,
Regent of the gown'd race,

Had'st advanc'd to higher fame
Still, thy much-ennobled name,
Nor in Charon's skiff explor'd
The Tartarean gulph abhorr'd.

But resentful Proserpine,
Jealous of thy skill divine,

Snapping short thy vital thread
Thee too number'd with the Dead. 40

Wise and good! untroubled be
The green turf that covers thee,
Thence in gay profusion grow
All the sweetest flow'rs that blow!

Pluto's Consort bid thee rest!
Oeacus pronounce thee blest!
To her home thy shade consign,
Make Elysium ever thine!

1 Dr. John Goslyn, Regius Professor of Medicine at Cambridge. He died on the 21st October, 1626.

2 A centaur whom Hercules shot with a poisoned arrow. Hercules was later poisoned by the centaur's blood-stained robe, which he was induced to put on.

3 Sarpedon. See Homer (Il. xvi, 477-491).

4 Circe and Medea were enchantresses.

5 Son of Esculapius. He was a healer to the Greeks during the siege of Troy. See Homer (Il. xi, 514).

6 The centaur Chiron was killed by Hercules's poisoned arrows.

7 Esculapius. He was killed by Jove's lightning for having saved too many from death.

On the Fifth of November.
Anno Aetates 17.

Am pius extrema veniens Jacobus ab arcto
Teucrigenas populos, lateque patentia regna
Albionum tenuit, jamque inviolabile foedus
Sceptra Caledoniis conjunxerat Anglica Scotis:
Pacificusque novo felix divesque sedebat
In solio, occultique doli securus & hostis:
Cum ferus ignifluo regnans Acheronte tyrannus,
Eumenidum pater, aethereo vagus exul Olympo,
Forte per immensum terrarum erraverat orbem,
Dinumerans sceleris socios, vernasque fideles, 10
Participes regni post funera moesta futuros;
Hic tempestates medio ciet aere diras,
Illic unanimes odium struit inter amicos,
Armat & invictas in mutua viscera gentes;
Regnaque olivifera vertit florentia pace,
Et quoscunque videt purae virtutis amantes,
Hos cupit adjicere imperio, fraudumque magister
Tentat inaccessum sceleri corrumpere pectus,
Insidiasque locat tacitas, cassesque latentes
Tendit, ut incautos rapiat, seu Caspia Tigris 20
Insequitur trepidam deserta per avia praedam
Nocte sub illuni, & somno nictantibus astris.
Talibus infestat populos Summanus & urbes
Cinctus caeruleae fumanti turbine flammae.
Jamque fluentisonis albertia rupibus arva
Apparent, & terra Deo dilecta marino,
Cui nomen dederat quondam Neptunia proles
Amphitryoniaden qui non dubitavit atrocem
Aequore tranato furiali poscere bello,
Ante expugnatae crudelia saecula Troiae. 30

At simul hanc opibusque & festa pace beatam
Aspicit, & pingues donis Cerealibus agros,
Quodque magis doluit, venerantem numina veri
Sancta Dei populum, tandem suspiria rupit
Tartareos ignes & luridum olentia sulphur.
Qualia Trinacria trux ab Jove clausus in Aetna

Efflat tabifico monstrosus ab ore Tiphoeus.
Ignescunt oculi, stridetque adamantinus ordo
Dentis, ut armorum fragor, ictaque cuspidis.
Atque pererrato solum hoc lacrymabile mundo 40
Inveni, dixit, gens haec mihi sola rebellis,
Contemtrixque jugi, nostraque potentior arte.
Illa tamen, mea si quicquam tentamina possunt,
Non feret hoc impune diu, non ibit inulta,
Hactenus; & piceis liquido natat aere pennis;
Qua volat, adversi praecursant agmine venti,
Densantur nubes, & crebra tonitrua fulgent.

Jamque pruinosas velox superaverat alpes,
Et tenet Ausoniae fines, a parte sinistra
Nimbifer Appenninus erat, priscique Sabini, 50
Dextra veneficiis infamis Hetruria, nec non
Te furtiva Tibris Thetidi videt oscula dantem;
Hinc Mavortigenae consistit in arce Quirini.
Reddiderant dubiam jam sera crepuscula lucem,
Cum circumgreditur totam Tricoronifer urbem,
Panificosque Deos portat, scapulisque virorum
Evehitur, praeaeunt summisso poplite reges,
Et mendicantum series longissima fratrum;
Cereaque in manibus gestant funalia caeci,
Cimmeriis nati in tenebris, vitamque trahentes. 60
Templa dein multis subeunt lucentia taedis
(Vesper erat sacer iste Petro) fremitoesque canentum
Saepe tholos implet vacuos, & inane locorum.
Qualiter exululat Bromius, Bromiique caterva,
Orgia cantantes in Echionio Aracyntho,
Dum tremit attonitus vitreis Asopus in undis,
Et procul ipse cava responsat rupe Cithaeron.

His igitur tandem solenni more peractis,
Nox senis amplexus Erebi taciturna reliquit,
Praecipitesque impellit equos stimulante flagello, 70
Captum oculis Typhlonta, Melanchaetemque ferocem,
Atque Acherontaeo prognatam patre Siopen
Torpidadam, & hirsutis horrentem Phrica capillis.
Interea regum domitor, Phlegetontius haeres
Ingreditur thalamos (neque enim secretus adulter
Producit steriles molli sine pellice noctes)
At vix compositos somnus claudebat ocellos,
Cum niger umbrarum dominus, rectorque silentium,
Praedatorque hominum falsa sub imagine tectus
Astitit, assumptis micuerunt tempora canis, 80
Barba sinus promissa tegit, cineracea longo
Syrmate verrit humum vestis, pendetque cucullus
Vertice de raso, & ne quicquam desit ad artes,
Cannabeo lumbos constrinxit fune salaces,
Tarda fenestratis figens vestigia calceis.
Talis uti fama est, vasta Franciscus eremo
Tetra vagabatur solus per lustra ferarum,
Sylvestrique tulit genti pia verba salutis
Impius, atque lupos domuit, Lybicosque leones.

Subdolos at tali Serpens velatus amictu 90
Solvit in has fallax ora execrantia voces;
Dormis nate? Etiamne tuos sopor opprimit artus?
Immemor O fidei, pecorumque oblite tuorum,
Dum cathedram venerande tuam, diadmaque triplex
Ridet Hyperboreo gens barbara nata sub axe,
Dumque pharetrati spernunt tua jura Britanni;
Surge, age, surge piger, Latius quem Caesar adorat,
Cui reserata patet convexi janua caeli,
Turgentes animos, & fastus frange procaces,
Sacrilegique sciant, tua quid maledictio possit, 100

Et quid Apostolicae possit custodia clavis;
Et memor Hesperiae disiectam ulciscere classem,
Mersaque Iberorum lato vexilla profundo,
Sanctorumque cruci tot corpora fixa probrosae,
Thermodoontea nuper regnante puella.
At tu si tenero mavis torpescere lecto
Crescentesque negas hosti contundere vires,
Tyrrhenum implebit numeroso milite Pontum,
Signaque Aventino ponet fulgentia colle:
Reliquias veterum franget, flammisque cremabit, 110
Sacraque calcabit pedibus tua colla profanis,
Cujus gaudebant soleis dare basia reges.
Nec tamen hunc bellis & aperto Marte lacesses,
Irritus ille labor, tu callidus utere fraude,
Quaelibet haereticis disponere retia fas est;
Jamque ad consilium extremis rex magnus ab oris
Patricos vocat, & procerum de stirpe creatos,
Grandaevosque patres trabea, canisque verendos;
Hos tu membratim poteris conspergere in auras,
Atque dare in cineres, nitrati pulveris igne 120
Aedibus injecto, qua convenere, sub imis.
Protinus ipse igitur quoscumque habet Anglia fidos
Propositi, factique mone, quisquamne tuorum
Audebit summi non jussa facessere Papae.
Perculososque metu subito, casumque stupentes
Invadat vel Gallus atrox, vel saevus Iberus
Saecula sic illic tandem Mariana redibunt,
Tuque in belligeros iterum dominaberis Anglos.
Et nequid timeas, divos divasque secundas
Accipe, quotque tuis celebrantur numina fastis. 130
Dixit & adscitos ponens malefidus amictus
Fugit ad infandam, regnum illaetabile, Lethen.

Jam rosea Eoas pandens Tithonia portas
Vestit inauratas redeunti lumine terras;
Maestaque adhuc nigri deplorans funera nati
Irrigat ambrosiis montana cacumina guttis;
Cum somnos pepulit stellatae janitor aulae
Nocturnos visus, & somnia grata revolvens.

Est locus aeterna septus caligine noctis
Vasta ruinosi quondam fundamina tecti, 140
Nunc torvi spelunca Phoni, Prodotaesque bilinguis
Effera quos uno peperit Discordia partu.
Hic inter caementa jacent praeruptaque saxa,
Ossa inhumata virum, & trajecta cadavera ferro;
Hic Dolus intortis semper sedet ater ocellis,
Jurgiaque, & stimulis armata Calumnia fauces,
Et Furor, atque viae moriendi mille videntur
Et Timor, exanguisque locum circumvolat Horror,
Perpetuoque leves per muta silentia Manes
Exululant, tellus & sanguine conscia stagnat. 150
Ipsi etiam pavidi latitant penetralibus antri
Et Phonos, & Prodotes, nulloque sequente per antrum
Antrum horrens, scopulosum, atrum feralibus umbris
Diffugiunt sontes, & retro lumina vortunt,
Hos pugiles Romae per saecula longa fideles
Evocat antistes Babylonius, atque ita fatur.
Finibus occiduis circumfusum incolit aequor
Gens exosa mihi, prudens natura negavit
Indignam penitus nostro conjungere mundo;
Illuc, sic jubeo, celeri contendite gressu, 160
Tartareoque leves diffilentur pulvere in auras
Et rex & pariter satrapae, scelerata propago
Et quotquot fidei caluere cupidine verae
Consilii socios adhibete, operisque ministros.

Finierat, rigidi cupide paruere gemelli.

Interea longo flectens curvamine caelos
Despicit aetherea dominus qui fulgurat arce,
Vanaque perversae ridet conamina turbae,
Atque sui causam populi volet ipse tueri.

Esse ferunt spatium, qua distat ab Aside terra 170

Fertilis Europe, & spectat Mareotidas undas;
Hic turris posita est Titanidos ardua Famae
Aerea, lata, sonans, rutilus vicinior astris
Quam superimpositum vel Athos vel Pelion Ossae
Mille fores aditusque patent, totidemque fenestrae,
Amplaque per tenues translucent atria muros;
Excitat hic varios plebs agglomerata susurros;
Qualiter instrepitant circum mulctralia bombis
Agmina muscarum, aut texto per ovilia junco,
Dum Canis aestivum coeli petit ardua culmen 180
Ipsa quidem summa sedet ultrix matris in arce,
Auribus innumeris cinctum caput eminent olli,
Queis sonitum exiguum trahit, atque levissima captat
Murmura, ab extremis patuli confinibus orbis.

Nec tot Aristoride servator inique juvencae
Isidos, immiti volvebas lumina vultu,
Lumina non unquam tacito nutantia somno,
Lumina subjectas late spectantia terras.
Istis illa solet loca luce carentia saepe
Perlustrare, etiam radianti impervia soli. 190
Millenisque loquax auditaque visaque linguis
Cuilibet effundit temeraria, veraque mendax
Nunc minuit, modo confictis sermonibus auget.

Sed tamen a nostro meruisti carmine laudes
Fama, bonum quo non aliud veracius ullum,
Nobis digna cani, nec te memorasse pigebit
Carmine tam longo, servati scilicet Angli
Officiis vaga diva tuis, tibi reddimus aequa.
Te Deus aeternos motu qui temperat ignes,
Fulmine praemisso alloquitur, terraque tremente: 200

Fama siles? an te latet impia Papistarum
Conjurata cohors in meque meosque Britannos,
Et nova sceptrigero caedes meditata Jacobo:
Nec plura, illa statim sensit mandata Tonantis,
Et satis ante fugax stridentes induit alas,
Induit & variis exilia corpora plumis;
Dextra tubam gestat Temesaeo ex aere sonoram.
Nec mora jam pennis cedentes remigat auras,
Atque parum est cursu celeres praevertere nubes,
Jam ventos, jam solis equos post terga reliquit: 210

Et primo Angliacas solito de more per urbes
Ambiguas voces, incertaque murmura spargit,
Mox arguta dolos, & detestabile vulgat
Proditionis opus, nec non facta horrida dictu,
Authoresque addit sceleris, nec garrula caecis
Insidiis loca structa silet; stupuere relatis,
Et pariter juvenes, pariter tremuere puellae,
Effaetique senes pariter, tanteaeque ruinae
Sensus ad aetatem subito penetraverat omnem
Attamen interea populi miserescit ab alto 220
Aethereus pater, & crudelibus obstitit ausis
Papiculum; capti poenas raptantur ad acres;
At pia thura Deo, & grati solvuntur honores;
Compita laeta focus genialibus omnia fumant;
Turba choros juvenilis agit: Quintoque Novembris
Null Dies toto occurrit celebratior anno.

My lids with grief were tumid yet,
 And still my sullied cheek was wet
 With briny dew's profusely shed
 For venerable Winton dead,²
 When Fame, whose tales of saddest sound
 Alas! are ever true'st found,
 The news through all our cities spread
 Of yet another mitred head
 By ruthless Fate to Death consign'd,
 Ely, the honour of his kind. 10
 At once, a storm of passion heav'd
 My boiling bosom, much I grieved
 But more I raged, at ev'ry breath
 Devoting Death himself to death.
 With less revenge did Naso³ teem
 When hated Ibis was his theme;
 With less, Archilochus,⁴ denied
 The lovely Greek, his promis'd bride.
 But lo! while thus I execrate,
 Incens'd, the Minister of Fate, 20
 Wondrous accents, soft, yet clear,
 Wafted on the gale I hear.
 Ah, much deluded! lay aside
 Thy threats and anger misapplied.
 Art not afraid with sounds like these
 T'offend whom thou canst not appease?
 Death is not (wherefore dream'st thou thus?)
 The son of Night and Erebus,
 Nor was of fel¹ Erynnis born⁵
 In gulphs, where Chaos rules forlorn, 30
 But sent from God, his presence leaves,
 To gather home his ripen'd sheaves,
 To call encumber'd souls away
 From fleshly bonds to boundless day,
 (As when the winged Hours excite,
 And summon forth the Morning-light)
 And each to convoy to her place
 Before th'Eternal Father's face.
 But not the wicked-Them, severe
 Yet just, from all their pleasures here 40
 He hurries to the realms below,
 Terrific realms of penal woe!
 Myself no sooner heard his call
 Than, scaping through my prison-wall,
 I bade adieu to bolts and bars,
 And soar'd with angels to the stars,
 Like Him of old, to whom 'twas giv'n
 To mount, on fiery wheels, to heav'n.
 Bootes' wagon,⁶ slow with cold
 Appall'd me not, nor to behold 50
 The sword that vast Orion draws,
 Or ev'n the Scorpion's horrid claws.⁷
 Beyond the Sun's bright orb I fly,
 And far beneath my feet descry
 Night's dread goddess, seen with awe,
 Whom her winged dragons draw.
 Thus, ever wond'ring at my speed
 Augmented still as I proceed,
 I pass the Planetary sphere,
 The Milky Way—and now appear 60
 Heav'n's crystal battlements, her door
 Of massy pearl, and em'rald floor.
 But here I cease. For never can

The tongue of once a mortal man
In suitable description trace
The pleasures of that happy place,
Suffice it that those joys divine
Are all, and all for ever, mine.

1 Nicholas Felton.

2 Dr. Felton died a few days after Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester. See Milton's Third Elegy.

3 Ovid.

4 A Greek poet. He was refused by Lycambes as a suitor to his daughters, and in revenge lampooned the entire family. Lycambes's daughters hanged themselves.

5 Erebus and Erynnis are Furies.

6 See Milton's Fifth Elegy, line 6, and the note thereto.

7 The constellation Scorpio.

That Nature is Not Subject to Decay.

Ah, how the Human Mind wearies herself
With her own wand'rings, and, involved in gloom
Impenetrable, speculates amiss!
Measuring, in her folly, things divine
By human, laws inscrib'd on adamant
By laws of Man's device, and counsels fix'd
For ever, by the hours, that pass, and die.
How?—shall the face of Nature then be plow'd
Into deep wrinkles, and shall years at last
On the great Parent fix a sterile curse? 10
Shall even she confess old age, and halt
And, palsy-smitten, shake her starry brows?
Shall foul Antiquity with rust and drought
And famine vex the radiant worlds above?
Shall Time's unsated maw crave and engulf
The very heav'ns that regulate his flight?
And was the Sire of all able to fence
His works, and to uphold the circling worlds,
But through improvident and heedless haste
Let slip th'occasion?—So then—All is lost— 20
And in some future evil hour, yon arch
Shall crumble and come thund'ring down, the poles
Jar in collision, the Olympian King
Fall with his throne, and Pallas, holding forth
The terrors of her Gorgon shield in vain,¹
Shall rush to the abyss, like Vulcan hurl'd
Down into Lemnos through the gate of heav'n.
Thou also, with precipitated wheels
Phoebus! thy own son's fall shalt imitate,
With hideous ruin shalt impress the Deep 30
Suddenly, and the flood shall reek and hiss
At the extinction of the Lamp of Day.
Then too, shall Haemus cloven to his base
Be shattered, and the huge Ceraunian hills,²
Once weapons of Tartarean Dis, immersed
In Erebus, shall fill Himself with fear.

No. The Almighty Father surer lay'd
His deep foundations, and providing well
For the event of all, the scales of Fate
Suspended, in just equipoise, and bade 40
His universal works from age to age
One tenour hold, perpetual, undisturb'd.

Hence the Prime Mover wheels itself about
 Continual, day by day, and with it bears
 In social measure swift the heav'ns around.
 Not tardier now is Saturn than of old,
 Nor radiant less the burning casque of Mars.
 Phoebus, his vigour unimpair'd, still shows
 Th'effulgence of his youth, nor needs the God
 A downward course that he may warm the vales; 50
 But, ever rich in influence, runs his road,
 Sign after sign, through all the heav'nly zone.
 Beautiful as at first ascends the star³
 From odorif'rous Ind, whose office is
 To gather home betimes th'ethereal flock,
 To pour them o'er the skies again at Eve,
 And to discriminate the Night and Day.
 Still Cynthia's changeful horn waxes and wanes
 Alternate, and with arms extended still
 She welcomes to her breast her brother's beams. 60
 Nor have the elements deserted yet
 Their functions, thunder with as loud a stroke
 As erst, smites through the rocks and scatters them,
 The East still howls, still the relentless North
 Invades the shudd'ring Scythian, still he breathes
 The Winter, and still rolls the storms along.
 The King of Ocean with his wonted force
 Beats on Pelorus,⁴ o'er the Deep is heard
 The hoarse alarm of Triton's sounding shell,
 Nor swim the monsters of th' Aegean sea 70
 In shallows, or beneath diminish'd waves.
 Thou too, thy antient vegetative pow'r
 Enjoy'st, O Earth! Narcissus still is sweet,
 And, Phoebus! still thy Favourite, and still
 Thy Fav'rite, Cytherea!⁵ both retain
 Their beauty, nor the mountains, ore-enrich'd
 For punishment of Man, with purer gold
 Teem'd ever, or with brighter gems the Deep.

Thus, in unbroken series all proceeds
 And shall, till, wide involving either pole, 80
 And the immensity of yonder heav'n,
 The final flames of destiny absorb
 The world, consum'd in one enormous pyre!

1 Pallas Athena (Minerva) had the head of the Gorgon Medusa in her shield; it turned all who looked upon it into stone.

2 Phaeton, who fled from the chariot of the Sun while driving it.

3 Venus.

4 The North-east promontory of Sicily.

5 The Hyacinth, favorite of Apollo. The Anemone, favorite of Venus.

On the Platonic 'Ideal' as it was Understood by Aristotle.

Ye sister Pow'rs who o'er the sacred groves
 Preside, and, Thou, fair mother of them all
 Mnemosyne,¹ and thou, who in thy grot
 Immense reclined at leisure, hast in charge
 The Archives and the ord'nances of Jove,
 And dost record the festivals of heav'n,
 Eternity!—Inform us who is He,
 That great Original by Nature chos'n
 To be the Archetype of Human-kind,
 Unchangeable, Immortal, with the poles 10
 Themselves coeval, One, yet ev'rywhere,

An image of the god, who gave him Being?
Twin-brother of the Goddess born from Jove,²
He dwells not in his Father's mind, but, though
Of common nature with ourselves, exists
Apart, and occupies a local home.
Whether, companion of the stars, he spend
Eternal ages, roaming at his will
From sphere to sphere the tenfold heav'ns, or dwell
On the moon's side that nearest neighbours Earth,
Or torpid on the banks of Lethe³ sit
Among the multitude of souls ordair'd
To flesh and blood, or whether (as may chance)
That vast and giant model of our kind
In some far-distant region of this globe
Sequester'd stalk, with lifted head on high
O'ertow'ring Atlas, on whose shoulders rest
The stars, terrific even to the Gods.
Never the Theban Seer,⁴ whose blindness proved
His best illumination, Him beheld
In secret vision; never him the son
Of Pleione,⁵ amid the noiseless night
Descending, to the prophet-choir reveal'd;
Him never knew th'Assyrian priest,⁶ who yet
The ancestry of Ninus⁷ chronicles,
And Belus, and Osiris far-renown'd;
Nor even Thrice-great Hermes,⁷ although skill'd
So deep in myst'ry, to the worshippers
Of Isis show'd a prodigy like Him.

And thou,⁸ who hast immortalized the shades
Of Academus, if the school received
This monster of the Fancy first from Thee,
Either recall at once the banish'd bards
To thy Republic, or, thyself evinc'd
A wilder Fabulist, go also forth.

1 Goddess of Memory and mother of the Muses.

2 Pallas Athena.

3 Waters of oblivion and forgetfulness.

4 Tiresins. See Milton's Sixth Elegy, line 68.

5 Hermes (Mercury).

6 Perhaps the legendary Phoenician sage, Sanchuniathon.

7 A legendary Assyrian king. Belus is the Assyrian god Bel.

7 Hermes Trismegistus, author of Neo-Platonic works must esteemed.

8 Plato.

To My Father.

Oh that Pieria's spring¹ would thro' my breast
Pour its inspiring influence, and rush
No rill, but rather an o'erflowing flood!
That, for my venerable Father's sake
All meaner themes renounced, my Muse, on wings
Of Duty borne, might reach a loftier strain.
For thee, my Father! howsoe'er it please,
She frames this slender work, nor know I aught,
That may thy gifts more suitably requite;
Though to requite them suitably would ask
Returns much nobler, and surpassing far
The meagre stores of verbal gratitude.

But, such as I possess, I send thee all.
This page presents thee in their full amount
With thy son's treasures, and the sum is nought;
Naught, save the riches that from airy dreams
In secret grottos and in laurel bow'rs,
I have, by golden Clio's² gift, acquir'd.

Verse is a work divine; despise not thou
Verse therefore, which evinces (nothing more) 20
Man's heav'nly source, and which, retaining still
Some scintillations of Promethean fire,
Bespokes him animated from above.
The Gods love verse; the infernal Pow'rs themselves
Confess the influence of verse, which stirs
The lowest Deep, and binds in triple chains
Of adamant both Pluto and the shades.
In verse the Delphic priestess, and the pale
Tremulous Sybil make the Future known,
And He who sacrifices, on the shrine 30
Hangs verse, both when he smites the threat'ning bull,
And when he spreads his reeking entrails wide
To scrutinize the Fates envelop'd there.
We too, ourselves, what time we seek again
Our native skies, and one eternal Now
Shall be the only measure of our Being,
Crown'd all with gold, and chanting to the lyre
Harmonious verse, shall range the courts above,
And make the starry firmament resound.
And, even now, the fiery Spirit pure 40
That wheels yon circling orbs, directs, himself,
Their mazy dance with melody of verse
Unutt'able, immortal, hearing which
Huge Ophiuchus³ holds his hiss suppress'd,
Orion, soften'd, drops his ardent blade,
And Atlas stands unconscious of his load.
Verse graced of old the feasts of kings, ere yet
Luxurious dainties destin'd to the gulph
Immense of gluttony were known, and ere
Lyaeus⁴ deluged yet the temp'rate board. 50
Then sat the bard a customary guest
To share the banquet, and, his length of locks
With beechen honours bound, proposed in verse
The characters of Heroes and their deeds
To imitation, sang of Chaos old,
Of Nature's birth, of Gods that crept in search
Of acorns fall'n, and of the thunderbolt
Not yet produc'd from Aetna's fiery cave.
And what avails, at last, tune without voice,
Devoid of matter? Such may suit perhaps 60
The rural dance, but such was ne'er the song
Of Orpheus, whom the streams stood still to hear
And the oaks follow'd. Not by chords alone
Well-touch'd, but by resistless accents more
To sympathetic tears the Ghosts themselves
He mov'd: these praises to his verse he owes.

Nor Thou persist, I pray thee, still to slight
The sacred Nine, and to imagine vain
And useless, Pow'rs by whom inspir'd, thyself
Art skillfill to associate verse with airs 70
Harmonious, and to give the human voice
A thousand modulations, heir by right
Indisputable of Arion's fame.⁵
Now say, what wonder is it, if a son
Of thine delight in verse, if so conjoin'd
In close affinity, we sympathize

In social arts and kindred studies sweet?
Such distribution of himself to us
Was Phoebus' choice; thou hast thy gift, and I
Mine also, and between us we receive, 80
Father and son, the whole inspiring God.

No. Howsoe'er the semblance thou assume
Of hate, thou hatest not the gentle Muse,
My Father! for thou never had'st me tread
The beaten path and broad that leads right on
To opulence, nor did'st condemn thy son
To the insipid clamours of the bar,
To laws voluminous and ill observ'd,
But, wishing to enrich me more, to fill
My mind with treasure, led'st me far away 90
From city-din to deep retreats, to banks
And streams Aonian,⁶ and, with free consent
Didst place me happy at Apollo's side.
I speak not now, on more important themes
Intent, of common benefits, and such
As Nature bids, but of thy larger gifts
My Father! who, when I had open'd once
The stores of Roman rhetoric, and learn'd
The full-ton'd language, of the eloquent Greeks,
Whose lofty music grac'd the lips of Jove, 100
Thyself did'st counsel me to add the flow'rs
That Gallia⁷ boasts, those too with which the smooth
Italian his degenerate speech adorns,
That witnesses his mixture with the Goth,
And Palestine's prophetic songs divine.⁸
To sum the whole, whate'er the Heav'n contains,
The Earth beneath it, and the Air between,
The Rivers and the restless deep, may all
Prove intellectual gain to me, my wish
Concurring with thy will; Science herself, 110
All cloud removed, inclines her beauteous head
And offers me the lip, if, dull of heart,
I shrink not and decline her gracious boon.

Go now, and gather dross, ye sordid minds
That covet it; what could my Father more,
What more could Jove himself, unless he gave
His own abode, the heav'n in which he reigns?
More eligible gifts than these were not
Apollo's to his son, had they been safe
As they were insecure, who made the boy 120
The world's vice-luminary, bade him rule
The radiant chariot of the day, and bind
To his young brows his own all dazzling-wreath.
I therefore, although last and least, my place
Among the Learned in the laurel-grove
Will hold, and where the conqu'ror's ivy twines,
Henceforth exempt from th'unletter'd throng
Profane, nor even to be seen by such.
Away then, sleepless Care, Complaint away,
And Envy, with thy "jealous leer malign" 130
Nor let the monster Calumny shoot forth
Her venom'd tongue at me. Detested foes!
Ye all are impotent against my peace,
For I am privileged, and bear my breast
Safe, and too high, for your viperean wound.

But thou my Father! since to render thanks
Equivalent, and to requite by deeds
Thy liberality, exceeds my power,
Suffice it, that I thus record thy gifts,
And bear them treasur'd in a grateful mind! 140

Ye too, the favourite pastime of my youth,
My voluntary numbers, if ye dare
To hope longevity, and to survive
Your master's funeral pile, not soon absorb'd
In the oblivious Lethaeon gulph
Shall to Futurity perhaps convey
This theme, and by these praises of my sire
Improve the Fathers of a distant age.

1 A fount sacred to the Muses. 2 The Muse of History.

3 The Serpent, a constellation.

4 Bacchus, or Wine.

5 John Milton Sr. was a fine musician. Arion was a lyric poet of Methymna, in Lesbos, who was saved from drowning by dolphins which he charmed with his song.

6 Aonia is a plain in Boeotia. 7 France.

8 The Old Testament Scriptures.

Psalm CXIV 1

When Israel by Jehovah call'd
From Egypt's hostile plain,
Pour'd forth in numbers as the Sand
And sought the adjacent main:
Then God descended from on high
To lead the favour'd Race
To rule o'er Jacob, & his Name
In Judah's Tribe to place.
The Sea at their approach alarm'd
In wild amazement fled 10
And Jordan's flood was driven back
Within it's fountainhead.
The Mountains from their basis shook
Confess'd the Parent God!
With sudden throws like Rams they skipp'd
And broken, fell abroad.
The little Hills by the same power
Were from their Center torn
Like Lambs resistless they gave way
In Tumult wild, upborn. 20
Ye Waves what strange amazement, say,
Seiz'd on you that you fled?
Thou Jordan too! On Israel's march,
Why driven to thy Head?
Ye Mountains whence this sudden fright
That shook you from your base?
And whence, ye little Hills, your flight
From Israel's chosen Race?
Tremble thou Earth! Jehovah leads,
And guards the might Host! 30
That God, who by his awful Word,
Commands the Stream to flow²
From flinty Rocks; & pouring thence,
To form the Lake below.

1 Translated from the Latin, and not Milton's Greek poem. Milton's own English version, presented below, was done, he tells us, "at fifteen years old."

2 See Exodus, chapter 17.

Psalm CXIV

When the blest seed of Terah's faithful Son,¹
After long toil their liberty had won,
And past from Pharian² fields to Canaan Land,
Led by the strength of the Almighty's hand,
Jehovah's wonders were in Israel shown,
His praise and glory was in Israel known.
That saw the troubl'd Sea, and shivering fled,
And sought to hide his froth-becurled head
Low in the earth, Jordan's clear streams recoil,
As a faint host that hath receiv'd the foil. 10
The high, huge-bellied Mountains skip like Rams
Amongst their Ewes, the little Hills like Lambs.
Why fled the Ocean? And why skip'd the Mountains?
Why turned Jordan toward his Crystal Fountains?
Shake earth, and at the presence be aghast
Of him that ever was, and ay shall last,
That glassy floods from rugged rocks can crush,
And make soft rills from the fiery flint-stones gush.

1 Abraham. 2 Egyptian.

The Philosopher and the King.

A Philosopher, included in the same sentence of condemnation with several guilty persons among whom he had been apprehended, sent the following lines, composed suddenly in the moment when he was going to death, to a certain King whom had ignorantly condemned him.

Know this, O King! that if thou shalt destroy
Me, no man's enemy and who have liv'd
Obedient to the Laws, thou may'st with ease
Strike off a wise man's head, but, taught the truth
Hereafter, shalt with vain regret deplore
Thy city's loss of One, her chief support.

On the Engraver of his Portrait.¹

Survey my Features—you will own it clear
That little skill has been exerted here.
My Friends, who know me not here smile to see
How ill the model and the work agree.

1 Greek lines placed by Milton beneath the engraved portrait of himself by William Marshall in the 1645 edition of his poems. The handsome Milton disliked Marshall's picture and took revenge with this epigram, which Marshall, ignorant of Greek, engraved beneath the portrait.

Another Translation of the Same.²

Look on myself—you will own at once
This Copy of me, taken by a Dunce.
My Friends, who gaze and guess not whom ye see,
Laugh! Would ye think it? He intended me!

To Giovanni Salzilli, a Roman Poet, in his Illness.
Scazons.¹

My halting Muse, that dragg'st by choice along
Thy slow, slow step, in melancholy song!
And lik'st that pace expressive of thy cares
Not less than Diopieia's² sprightlier airs
When in the dance she beats with measur'd tread
Heav'n's floor in front of Juno's golden bed,
Salute Salsillus, who to verse divine
Prefers, with partial love, such lays as mine.
Thus writes that Milton then, who wafted o'er

From his own nest on Albion's stormy shore 10
 Where Eurus, fiercest of th'Æolian band,
 Sweeps with ungovern'd rage the blasted land,
 Of late to more serene Ausonia came
 To view her cities of illustrious name,
 To prove, himself a witness of the truth,
 How wise her elders, and how learn'd her Youth.
 Much good, Salsillus! and a body free
 From all disease, that Milton asks for thee,
 Who now endur'st the languor, and the pains
 That bile inflicts diffus'd through all thy veins, 20
 Relentless malady! not mov'd to spare
 By thy sweet Roman voice, and Lesbian air!
 Health, Hebe's sister, sent us from the skies,
 And thou, Apollo, whom all sickness flies,
 Pythius, or Pæan, or what name divine
 Soe'er thou chuse, haste, heal a priest of thine!
 Ye groves of Faunus, and ye hills that melt
 With vinous dews, where meek Evander³ dwelt!
 If aught salubrious in your confines grow,
 Strive which shall soonest heal your poet's woe, 30
 That, render'd to the Muse he loves, again
 He may enchant the meadows with his strain.
 Numa, reclin'd in everlasting ease
 Amid the shade of dark embow'ring trees,
 Viewing with eyes of unabated fire
 His loved Aegeria, shall that strain admire:
 So sooth'd, the tumid Tiber shall revere
 The tombs of kings, nor desolate the year,
 Shall curb his waters with a friendly rein,
 And guide them harmless till they meet the main. 40

1 The original is written in a measure called Scazon, which signifies limping, and the measure is so denominated, because, though in other respects Iambic, it terminates with a Spondee, and has consequently a more tardy movement. The reader will immediately see that this property of the Latin verse cannot be imitated in English.—W.C.

2 Diopèia was one of Juno's nymphs.

3 The Aventine hill. Evander, great-grandson of Pallas, King of Arcadia, migrated to Italy about sixty years before the Trojan War.

To Giovanni Battista Manso,
 Marquis of Villa.

1 Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa, is an Italian Nobleman of the highest estimation among his countrymen, for Genius, Literature, and military accomplishments. To Him Torquato Tasso addressed his "Dialogue on Friendship," for he was much the friend of Tasso, who has also celebrated him among the other princes of his country, in his poem entitled "Jerusalem Conquered" (Book XX).

Among cavaliers magnanimous and courteous
 —Manso is resplendent.

During the Author's stay at Naples he received at the hands of the Marquis a thousand kind offices and civilities, and, desirous not to appear ungrateful, sent him this poem a short time before his departure from that city.

These verses also to thy praise the Nine²
 Oh Manso! happy in that theme design,
 For, Gallus and Maecenas³ gone, they see
 None such besides, or whom they love as Thee,
 And, if my verse may give the meed of fame,
 Thine too shall prove an everlasting name.
 Already such, it shines in Tasso's page
 (For thou wast Tasso's friend) from age to age,

And, next, the Muse consign'd, not unaware
How high the charge, Marini⁴ to thy care, 10
Who, singing, to the nymphs, Adonis' praise,
Boasts thee the patron of his copious lays.
To thee alone the Poet would entrust
His latest vows, to thee alone his dust,
And Thou with punctual piety hast paid
In labour'd brass thy tribute to his shade.
Nor this contented thee-but lest the grave
Should aught absorb of their's, which thou could'st save,
All future ages thou has deign'd to teach
The life, lot, genius, character of each, 20
Eloquent as the Carian sage,⁵ who, true
To his great theme, the Life of Homer drew.

I, therefore, though a stranger youth, who come
Chill'd by rude blasts that freeze my Northern home,
Thee dear to Clio confident proclaim,
And Thine, for Phoebus' sake, a deathless name.
Nor Thou, so kind, wilt view with scornful eye
A Muse scarce rear'd beneath our sullen sky,
Who fears not, indiscrete as she is young,
To seek in Latium hearers of her song. 30
We too, where Thames with his unsullied waves
The tresses of the blue-hair'd Ocean laves,
Hear oft by night, or, slumb'ring, seem to hear
O'er his wide stream, the swan's voice warbling clear,
And we could boast a Tityrus⁶ of yore,
Who trod, a welcome guest, your happy shore.

Yes, dreary as we own our Northern clime,
E'en we to Phoebus raise the polish'd rhyme,
We too serve Phoebus; Phoebus has receiv'd,
(If legends old may claim to be believ'd) 40
No sordid gifts from us, the golden ear,
The burnish'd apple, ruddiest of the year,
The fragrant crocus, and, to grace his fane,
Fair damsels chosen from the Druid train-
Druids, our native bards in ancient time,
Who Gods and Heroes prais'd in hallow'd rhyme.
Hence, often as the maids of Greece surround
Apollo's shrine with hymns of festive sound,
They name the virgins who arriv'd of yore
With British off'rings on the Delian shore, 50
Loxo, from Giant Corineus sprung,
Upis, on whose blest lips the Future hung,
And Hecaerge⁷ with the golden hair,
All deck'd with Pic'ish hues, and all with bosoms bare.
Thou therefore, happy Sage, whatever clime
Shall ring with Tasso's praise in after-time,
Or with Marini's, shalt be known their friend,
And with an equal flight to fame ascend.
The world shall hear how Phoebus and the Nine
Were inmates, once, and willing guests of thine. 60
Yet Phoebus, when of old constrain'd to roam
The earth, an exile from his heav'nly home,
Enter'd, no willing guest, Admetus'⁸ door,
Though Hercules had enter'd there before.
But gentle Chiron's⁹ cave was near, a scene
Of rural peace, clothed with perpetual green,
And thither, oft as respite he requir'd
From rustic clamours loud, the God retir'd.
There, many a time, on Peneus' bank reclin'd
At some oak's root, with ivy thick entwin'd, 70
Won by his hospitable friend's desire
He sooth'd his pains of exile with the lyre.

Then shook the hills, then trembled Peneus' shore,
Nor Oeta¹⁰ felt his load of forests more,
The upland elms descended to the plain,¹¹
And soften'd lynxes wonder'd at the strain.

Well may we think, O dear to all above!
Thy birth distinguish'd by the smile of Jove,
And that Apollo shed his kindest pow'r,
And Maia's son,¹² on that propitious hour, ⁸⁰
Since only minds so born can comprehend
A poet's worth, or yield that worth a friend.
Hence, on thy yet unfaded cheek appears
The ling'ring freshness of thy greener years,
Hence, in thy front, and features, we admire
Nature unwither'd, and a mind entire.
Oh might so true a friend to me belong,
So skill'd to grace the votaries of song,
Should I recall hereafter into rhyme
The kings, and heroes of my native clime, ⁹⁰
Arthur the chief, who even now prepares,
In subterraneous being, future wars,
With all his martial Knights, to be restor'd
Each to his seat around the fed'ral board,
And Oh, if spirit fail me not, disperse
Our Saxon plund'ers in triumphant verse!
Then, after all, when, with the Past content,
A life I finish, not in silence spent,
Should he, kind mourner, o'er my deathbed bend
I shall but need to say—"Be yet my friend!" ¹⁰⁰
He, faithful to my dust, with kind concern
Shall place it gently in a modest urn;
He too, perhaps, shall bid the marble breathe
To honour me, and with the graceful wreath¹³
Or of Parnassus or the Paphian isle
Shall bind my brows—but I shall rest the while.
Then also, if the fruits of Faith endure,
And Virtue's promis'd recompense be sure,
Borne to those seats, to which the blest aspire
By purity of soul, and virtuous fire,
These rites, as Fate permits, I shall survey
With eyes illumin'd by celestial day, ¹¹⁰
And, ev'ry cloud from my pure spirit driv'n,
Joy in the bright beatitude of Heav'n!

1 Milton's Account of Manso, translated.

2 The Muses.

3 Cornelius Gallus, Roman eleist. See Virgil (Eclogue vi, 64-66, and x).

Maecenas. Roman patron of letters. See Horace (Odes, i,1),

4 Author of the Adone, a poem on the story of Venus and Adonis.

5 Herodotus, to whom The Life of Homer is attributed.

6 Chaucer, called Tityrus in Spencer's Pastorals.

7 The maidens who brought offerings to Delos. Loxo, descended from the ancient British hero, Corineus; Upis, a prophetess; and Hecaerge.

8 Admetus was King of Thessaly. Apollo was for a year his shepherd.

9 See Homer (Il. xi, 830-831) and Ovid (Met. ii, 630).

10 Mt. Oeta, between Thessaly and Aetolia.

11 See Ovid (Met. x, 87-106), where the trees crowd the hear Orpheus sing.

12 Hermes.

13 The wreaths of victors, made from the laurel, which grew on Mt. Parnassus, sacred to the Muses, and the myrtle, sacred to Venus, a shrine to whom was at Paphos in Cyprus.

The Death of Damon.

The Argument.

Thyrsis and Damon, shepherds and neighbours, had always pursued the same studies, and had, from their earliest days, been united in the closest friendship. Thyrsis, while traveling for improvement, received intelligence of the death of Damon, and, after a time, returning and finding it true, deploras himself and his solitary condition, in this poem. By Damon is to be understood Charles Diodati, connected with the Italian city of Lucca by his Father's side, in other respects an Englishman; a youth of uncommon genius, erudition, and virtue.

Ye Nymphs of Himera¹ (for ye have shed
Erewhile for Daphnis² and for Hylas dead,
And over Bion's long-lamented bier,
The fruitless meed of many a sacred tear)
Now, through the villas laved by Thames rehearse
The woes of Thyrsis in Sicilian verse,
What sighs he heav'd, and how with groans profound
He made the woods and hollow rocks resound
Young Damon dead; nor even ceased to pour
His lonely sorrows at the midnight hour. 10
The green wheat twice had nodded in the ear,
And golden harvest twice enrich'd the year,
Since Damon's lips had gasp'd for vital air
The last, last time, nor Thyrsis yet was there;
For he, enamour'd of the Muse, remain'd
In Tuscan Fiorenza long detain'd,
But, stored at length with all he wish'd to learn,
For his flock's sake now hasted to return,
And when the shepherd had resumed his seat
At the elm's root within his old retreat, 20
Then 'twas his lot, then, all his loss to know,
And, from his burthen'd heart, he vented thus his woe.
Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Alas! what Deities shall I suppose
In heav'n or earth concern'd for human woes,
Since, Oh my Damon! their severe decree
So soon condemns me to regret of Thee!
Depart'st thou thus, thy virtues unrepaid
With fame and honour, like a vulgar shade? 30
Let him forbid it, whose bright rod controls,
And sep'rates sordid from illustrious souls,
Drive far the rabble, and to Thee assign
A happier lot with spirits worthy thine!
Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Whate'er befall, unless by cruel chance
The wolf first give me a forbidding glance,
Thou shalt not moulder undeplor'd, but long
Thy praise shall dwell on ev'ry shepherd's tongue; 40
To Daphnis first they shall delight to pay,
And, after Him, to thee the votive lay,
While Pales³ shall the flocks and pastures love,
Or Faunus to frequent the field or grove,
At least if antient piety and truth
With all the learned labours of thy youth
May serve thee aught, or to have left behind
A sorrowing friend, and of the tuneful kind.
Go, seek your home, my lambs, my thoughts are due

To other cares than those of feeding you. 50
Yes, Damon! such thy sure reward shall be,
But ah, what doom awaits unhappy me?
Who, now, my pains and perils shall divide,
As thou wast wont, for ever at my side,
Both when the rugged frost annoy'd our feet,
And when the herbage all was parch'd with heat,
Whether the grim wolf's ravage to prevent
Or the huge lion's, arm'd with darts we went?
Whose converse, now, shall calm my stormy day,
With charming song who, now, beguile my way? 60
Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
In whom shall I confide? Whose counsel find
A balmy med'cine for my troubled mind?
Or whose discourse with innocent delight
Shall fill me now, and cheat the wint'ry night,
While hisses on my hearth the pulpy pear,
And black'ning chesnuts start and crackle there,
While storms abroad the dreary meadows overwhelm,
And the wind thunders thro' the neighb'ring elm? 70
Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Or who, when summer suns their summit reach,
And Pan sleeps hidden by the shelt'ring beech,
When shepherds disappear, Nymphs seek the sedge,
And the stretch'd rustic snores beneath the hedge,
Who then shall render me thy pleasant vein
Of Attic wit, thy jests, thy smiles again?
Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you. 80
Where glens and vales are thickest overgrown
With tangled boughs, I wander now alone
Till night descend, while blust'ring wind and show'r
Beat on my temples through the shatter'd bow'r.
Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Alas, what rampant weeds now shame my fields,
And what a mildew'd crop the furrow yields!
My rambling vines unwedded to the trees
Bear shrivel'd grapes, my myrtles fail to please, 90
Nor please me more my flocks; they, slighted, turn
Their unavailing looks on me, and mourn.
Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Aegon invites me to the hazel grove,
Amyntas, on the river's bank to rove,
And young Alphisiboeus to a seat
Where branching elms exclude the midday heat—
"Here fountains spring—here mossy hillocks rise—"
"Here Zephyr whispers and the stream replies—" 100
Thus each persuades, but deaf to ev'ry call
I gain the thickets, and escape them all.
Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Then Mopsus said (the same who reads so well
The voice of birds, and what the stars foretell,
For He by chance had noticed my return)
What means thy sullen mood, this deep concern?
Ah Thyrsis! thou art either crazed with love,
Or some sinister influence from above, 110
Dull Saturn's influence oft the shepherd rue,
His leaden shaft oblique has pierced thee through.
Go, go, my lambs, unpastur'd as ye are,

My thoughts are all now due to other care.
The Nymphs amazed my melancholy see,
And, Thyrsis! cry—what will become of thee?
What would'st thou, Thyrsis? such should not appear
The brow of youth, stern, gloomy, and severe,
Brisk youth should laugh and love—ah shun the fate
Of those twice wretched mopes who love too late! 120
Go, go, my lambs, unpastur'd as ye are,
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Aegle with Hyas came, to sooth my pain,
And Baucis' daughter, Dryope the vain,⁴
Fair Dryope, for voice and finger neat
Known far and near, and for her self-conceit,
Came Chloris too, whose cottage on the lands
That skirt the Idumanian current stands;
But all in vain they came, and but to see
Kind words and comfortable lost on me. 130
Go, go, my lambs, unpastur'd as ye are,
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Ah blest indiff'rence of the playful herd,
None by his fellow chosen or preferr'd!
No bonds of amity the flocks enthrall,
But each associates and is pleased with all;
So graze the dappled deer in num'rous droves,
And all his kind alike the zebra loves'
The same law governs where the billows roar
And Proteus' shoals o'erspread the desert shore; 140
The sparrow, meanest of the feather'd race,
His fit companion finds in ev'ry place,
With whom he picks the grain that suits him best,
Flits here and there, and late returns to rest,
And whom if chance the falcon make his prey,
Or Hedger with his well-aim'd arrow slay,
For no such loss the gay survivor grieves'
New love he seeks, and new delight receives.
We only, an obdurate kind, rejoice,
Scorning all others, in a single choice, 150
We scarce in thousands meet one kindred mind,
And if the long-sought good at last we find,
When least we fear it, Death our treasure steals,
And gives our heart a wound that nothing heals.
Go, go, my lambs, unpastur'd as ye are,
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Ah, what delusion lured me from my flocks,
To traverse Alpine snows, and rugged rocks!
What need so great had I to visit Rome
Now sunk in ruins, and herself a tomb? 160
Or, had she flourish'd still as when, of old
For her sake Tityrus forsook his fold,
What need so great had I t'incur a pause
Of thy sweet intercourse for such a cause,
For such a cause to place the roaring sea,
Rocks, mountains, woods, between my friend and me?
Else, I had grasp'd thy feeble hand, composed
Thy decent limbs, thy drooping eye-lids closed,
And, at the last, had said—Farewell—Ascend—
Nor even in the skies forget thy friend. 170
Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare,
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Although well-pleas'd, ye tuneful Tuscan swains!
My mind the mem'ry of your worth retains,
Yet not your worth can teach me less to mourn
My Damon lost—He too was Tuscan born,
Born in your Lucca, city of renown,

And Wit possess'd and Genius like your own.
Oh how elate was I, when, stretch'd beside
The murm'ring course of Arno's breezy tide, 180
Beneath the poplar-grove I pass'd my hours,
Now cropping myrtles, and now vernal flow'rs,
And hearing, as I lay at ease along,
Your swains contending for the prize of song!
I also dared attempt (and, as it seems
Not much displeas'd attempting) various themes,
For even I can presents boast from you,
The shepherd's pipe and osier basket too,
And Dati and Francini both have made
My name familiar to the beechen shade, 190
And they are learn'd, and each in ev'ry place
Renown'd for song, and both of Lydian Race.
Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare,
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
While bright the dewy grass with moon-beams shone,
And I stood hurdling in my kids alone,
How often have I said (but thou had'st found
Ere then thy dark cold lodgment under-ground)
Now Damon sings, or springes sets for hares,
Or wicker-work for various use prepares! 200
How oft, indulging Fancy, have I plann'd
New scenes of pleasure, that I hop'd at hand,
Call'd thee abroad as I was wont, and cried—
What hoa, my friend—come, lay thy task aside—
Haste, let us forth together, and beguile
The heat beneath yon whisp'ring shades awhile,
Or on the margin stray of Colne's⁵ clear flood,
Or where Cassivelan's grey turrets stood!
There thou shalt cull me simples, and shalt teach
Thy friend the name and healing pow'rs of each, 210
From the tall blue-bell to the dwarfish weed,
What the dry land and what the marshes breed,
For all their kinds alike to thee are known,
And the whole art of Galen⁶ is thy own.
Ah, perish Galen's art, and wither'd be
The useless herbs that gave not health to thee!
Twelve evenings since, as in poetic dream
I meditating sat some statelier theme,
The reeds no sooner touch'd my lip, though new
And unassay'd before, than wide they flew, 220
Bursting their waxen bands, nor could sustain
The deep-ton'd music of the solemn strain;
And I am vain perhaps, but will tell
How proud a theme I choose—ye groves farewell!
Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare,
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Of Brutus, Dardan Chief, my song shall be,⁷
How with his barks he plough'd the British sea,
First from Rutupia's tow'ring headland seen,
And of his consort's reign, fair Imogen; 230
Of Brennus and Belinus, brothers bold,⁸
And of Arviragus, and how of old
Our hardy sires th'Armorican controll'd,
And the wife of Gorlois, who, surprised
By Uther in her husband's form disguised,
(Such was the force of Merlin's art) became
Pregnant with Arthur of heroic fame.⁹
These themes I now revolve—and Oh—if Fate
Proportion to these themes my lengthen'd date,
Adieu my shepherd's-reed—yon pine-tree bough 240
Shall be thy future home, there dangle Thou

Forgotten and disus'd, unless ere long
Thou change thy Latin for a British song.
A British?—even so—the pow'rs of Man
Are bounded; little is the most he can,
And it shall well suffice me, and shall be
Fame and proud recompense enough for me,
If Usa¹⁰ golden-hair'd my verse may learn,
If Alain, bending o'er his chrystal urn,
Swift-whirling Abra, Trent's o'ershadow'd stream, 250
Thames, lovelier far than all in my esteem
Tamar's ore-tinctur'd flood, and, after these,
The wave-worn shores of utmost Orcades
Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare,
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
All this I kept in leaves of laurel-rind
Enfolded safe, and for thy view design'd,
This—and a gift from Manso's hand beside,
(Manso, not least his native city's pride)
Two cups, that radiant as their giver shone, 260
Adorn'd by sculpture with a double zone.
The spring was graven there; here, slowly wind
The Red-Sea shores with groves of spices lined;
Her plumes of various hues amid the boughs
The sacred, solitary Phoenix shows,
And, watchful of the dawn, reverts her head
To see Aurora¹¹ leave her wat'ry bed.
In other part, th'expansive vault above,
And there too, even there, the God of love;
With quiver arm'd he mounts, his torch displays 270
A vivid light, his gem-tip'd arrows blaze,
Around, his bright and fiery eyes he rolls,
Nor aims at vulgar minds or little souls
Nor deigns one look below, but aiming high
Sends every arrow to the lofty sky,
Hence, forms divine, and minds immortal learn
The pow'r of Cupid, and enamour'd burn.
Thou also Damon (neither need I fear
That hope delusive) thou art also there;
For whither should simplicity like thine 280
Retire, where else such spotless virtue shine?
Thou dwell'st not (thought profane) in shades below,
Nor tears suit thee—cease then my tears to flow,
Away with grief on Damon ill-bestow'd,
Who, pure himself, has found a pure abode,
Has pass'd the show'ry arch, henceforth resides
With saints and heroes, and from flowing tides
Quaffs copious immortality and joy
With hallow'd lips. Oh! blest without alloy,
And now enrich'd with all that faith can claim, 290
Look down entreated by whatever name,
If Damon please thee most (that rural sound)
Shall oft with ecchoes fill the groves around)
Or if Diodatus, by which alone
In those ethereal mansions thou art known.
Thy blush was maiden, and thy youth the taste
Of wedded bliss knew never, pure and chaste,
The honours, therefore, by divine decree
The lot of virgin worth are giv'n to thee;
Thy brows encircled with a radiant band, 300
And the green palm-branch waving in thy hand
Thou immortal Nuptials shalt rejoice
And join with seraphs thy according voice,
Where rapture reigns, and the ecstatic lyre
Guides the blest orgies of the blazing quire.

1 A river in Sicily.

2 Subject of Theocritus's Lament for Daphnis (Idyl i) in which Thyrsis is the mourning shepherd. Hylas was taken away by nymphs who admired his beauty and Bion is the subject of Moschus's Epitaph of Bion (Idyl iii).

3 Goddess who was protector of the flocks. Faunus is god of the plains and hills around Rome.

4 Characters in Ovid's Metamorphoses.

5 A river near St. Albans. Cassivellaunus was a British chieftan who opposed Caesar. See Gallic War (v, xi.)

6 Medicine. Diodati took medical training at Cambridge.

7 Milton's planned epic opened with the Dardanian (i.e. Trojan) fleet, under Brutus, approaching England.

8 Brennus and Belinus were kings of Brittany who, according to Spencer's Fairie Queen, "rasackt Greece" and conquered France and Germany. Arviragus led the Britons against Claudius.

9 See Malory's Morte d'Arthur.

10 A river in Oxford.

11 Goddess of the Dawn.

To Mr. John Rouse,
Librarian of the University of Oxford,

An Ode¹ on a Lost Volume of my Poems Which He
Desired Me to Replace that He Might Add
Them to My Other Works Deposited in the Library.

Strophe I

My two-fold Book! single in show
But double in Contents,
Neat, but not curiously adorn'd
Which in his early youth,
A poet gave, no lofty one in truth
Although an earnest wooer of the Muse—
Say, while in cool Ausonian² shades
Or British wilds he roam'd,
Striking by turns his native lyre,
By turns the Daunian lute¹⁰
And stepp'd almost in air,—

Antistrophe

Say, little book, what furtive hand
Thee from thy fellow books convey'd,
What time, at the repeated suit
Of my most learned Friend,
I sent thee forth an honour'd traveller
From our great city to the source of Thames,
Caerulean sire!
Where rise the fountains and the raptures ring,
Of the Aonian choir,^{3 20}
Durable as yonder spheres,
And through the endless lapse of years
Secure to be admired?

Strophe II

Now what God or Demigod
For Britain's ancient Genius mov'd
(If our afflicted land
Have expiated at length the guilty sloth

Of her degen'rate sons)
Shall terminate our impious feuds,
And discipline, with hallow'd voice, recall? 30
Recall the Muses too
Driv'n from their antient seats
In Albion, and well-nigh from Albion's shore,
And with keen Phoebian shafts
Piercing th'unseemly birds,
Whose talons menace us
Shall drive the harpy race from Helicon afar?

Antistrophe

But thou, my book, though thou hast stray'd,
Whether by treach'ry lost
Or indolent neglect, thy bearer's fault, 40
From all thy kindred books,
To some dark cell or cave forlorn,
Where thou endur'st, perhaps,
The chafing of some hard untutor'd hand,
Be comforted—
For lo! again the splendid hope appears
That thou may'st yet escape
The gulphs of Lethe, and on oary wings
Mount to the everlasting courts of Jove,

Strophe III

Since Rouse desires thee, and complains 50
That, though by promise his,
Thou yet appear'st not in thy place
Among the literary noble stores
Giv'n to his care,
But, absent, leav'st his numbers incomplete.
He, therefore, guardian vigilant
Of that unperishing wealth,
Calls thee to the interior shrine, his charge,
Where he intends a richer treasure far
Than Ion kept—(Ion, Erectheus' son 60
Illustrious, of the fair Creusa born)—
In the resplendent temple of his God,
Tripods of gold and Delphic gifts divine.

Antistrophe

Haste, then, to the pleasant groves,
The Muses' fav'rite haunt;
Resume thy station in Apollo's dome,
Dearer to him
Than Delos, or the fork'd Parnassian hill.
Exulting go,
Since now a splendid lot is also thine, 70
And thou art sought by my propitious friend;
For There thou shalt be read
With authors of exalted note,
The ancient glorious Lights of Greece and Rome.

Epode

Ye, then my works, no longer vain
And worthless deem'd by me!
Whate'er this steril genius has produc'd
Expect, at last, the rage of Envy spent,
An unmolested happy home,
Gift of kind Hermes and my watchful friend, 80
Where never flippant tongue profane
Shall entrance find,

And whence the coarse unletter'd multitude
Shall babble far remote.
Perhaps some future distant age
Less tinged with prejudice and better taught
Shall furnish minds of pow'r
To judge more equally.
Then, malice silenced in the tomb,
Cooler heads and sounder hearts, 90
Thanks to Rouse, if aught of praise
I merit, shall with candour weigh the claim.

1 This Ode consists of three strophes and the same of antistrophes, concluding with an epode. Although these units do not perfectly correspond in their number of verses or in divisions which are strictly parallel, nevertheless I have divided them in this fashion with a view to convenience or the reader, rather than conformity with the ancient rules of versification. In other respects a poem of this kind should, perhaps, more correctly be called monostrophic. The metres are in part regularly patterned and in part free. There are two Phaleucian verses which admit a spondee in the third foot, a practice often followed by Catullus in the second foot. [Milton's Note, translated—W.C.]

1 This Ode is rendered without rhyme, that it might more adequately represent the original, which, as Milton himself informs us, is of no certain measure. It may possibly for this reason disappoint the reader, though it cost the writer more labour than the translation of any other piece in the whole collection.—W.C.

2 Italian.

3 The Muses, who dwelt on Mount Helicon in Aonia.

4 See Euripides' Ion.

Paradisum Amissam, Lib. II 1

Quales aërii montis de vertice nubes
Cum surgunt, et jam Boreae tumida ora quierunt,
Caelum hilares abdit spissa caligine vultus,
Nimbosumque nives aut imbres cogitat aether:
Tum si jucundo tandem sol prodeat ore, 5
Et croceo montes et pascua lumine tingat,
Gaudent omnia, aves mulcent concentibus agros,
Balatuque ovium colles vallesque resultant.

1 Translation of a simile in Paradise Lost,
"As when, from mountaintops, the dusky clouds
Ascending, &c.—"(ii. 488)—W.C.

3. TRANSLATIONS OF THE ITALIAN POEMS

I

Fair Lady, whose harmonious name the Rheno
Through all his grassy vale delights to hear,
Base were, indeed, the wretch, who could forbear
To love a spirit elegant as thine,
That manifests a sweetness all divine, 5
Nor knows a thousand winning acts to spare,
And graces, which Love's bow and arrows are,
Temp'ring thy virtues to a softer shine.
When gracefully thou speak'st, or singest gay
Such strains as might the senseless forest move, 10
Ah then—turn each his eyes and ears away,
Who feels himself unworthy of thy love!
Grace can alone preserve him, e'er the dart

Of fond desire yet reach his inmost heart.

II

As on a hill-top rude, when closing day
Imbrowns the scene, some past'ral maiden fair
Waters a lovely foreign plant with care,
That scarcely can its tender bud display
Borne from its native genial airs away, 5
So, on my tongue these accents new and rare
Are flow'rs exotic, which Love waters there,
While thus, o sweetly scornful! I essay
Thy praise in verse to British ears unknown,
And Thames exchange for Arno's fair domain; 10
So Love has will'd, and oftimes Love has shown
That what He wills he never wills in vain.
Oh that this hard and steril breast might be
To Him who plants from heav'n, a soil as free.

III

Canzone.

They mock my toil—the nymphs and am'rous swains—
And whence this fond attempt to write, they cry,
Love-songs in language that thou little know'st?
How dar'st thou risque to sing these foreign strains?
Say truly. Find'st not oft thy purpose cross'd, 5
And that thy fairest flow'rs, Here, fade and die?
Then with pretence of admiration high—
Thee other shores expect, and other tides,
Rivers on whose grassy sides
Her deathless laurel-leaf with which to bind 10
Thy flowing locks, already Fame provides;
Why then this burthen, better far declin'd?
Speak, Canzone! for me.—The Fair One said who guides
My willing heart, and all my Fancy's flights,
"This is the language in which Love delights." 15

IV

To Charles Diodati.

Charles—and I say it wond'ring—thou must know
That I who once assum'd a scornful air,
And scoff'd at love, am fallen in his snare
(Full many an upright man has fallen so)
Yet think me not thus dazzled by the flow 5
Of golden locks, or damask cheek; more rare
The heart-felt beauties of my foreign fair;
A mien majestic, with dark brows, that show
The tranquil lustre of a lofty mind;
Words exquisite, of idioms more than one, 10
And song, whose fascinating pow'r might bind,
And from her sphere draw down the lab'ring Moon,
With such fire-darting eyes, that should I fill
My ears with wax, she would enchant me still.

V.

Lady! It cannot be, but that thine eyes
Must be my sun, such radiance they display
And strike me ev'n as Phoebus him, whose way
Through torrid Libya's sandy desert lies.
Meantime, on that side steamy vapours rise 5
Where most I suffer. Of what kind are they,
New as to me they are, I cannot say,
But deem them, in the Lover's language—sighs.

Some, though with pain, my bosom close conceals,
Which, if in part escaping thence, they tend 10
To soften thine, they coldness soon congeals.
While others to my tearful eyes ascend,
Whence my sad nights in show'rs are ever drown'd,
'Till my Aurora comes, her brow with roses bound.

VI.1

Enamour'd, artless, young, on foreign ground,
Uncertain whither from myself to fly,
To thee, dear Lady, with an humble sigh
Let me devote my heart, which I have found
By certain proofs not few, intrepid, sound, 5
Good, and addicted to conceptions high:
When tempests shake the world, and fire the sky,
It rests in adamant self-wrapt around,
As safe from envy, and from outrage rude,
From hopes and fears, that vulgar minds abuse, 10
As fond of genius, and fix'd fortitude,
Of the resounding lyre, and every Muse.
Weak you will find it in one only part,
Now pierc'd by Love's immedicable dart.

1 It has ever been thought difficult for an author to speak gracefully of himself, especially in commendation; but Milton, who was gifted with powers to overcome difficulties, of every kind, is eminently happy in this particular. He has spoken frequently of himself both in verse and prose, and he continually shows that he thought highly of his own endowments; but if he praises himself, he does it with that dignified frankness and simplicity of conscious truth, which renders even egotism respectable and delightful: whether he describes the fervent and tender emotions of his juvenile fancy, or delineates his situation in the decline of life, when he had to struggle with calamity and peril, the more insight he affords us into his own sentiments and feelings, the more reason we find both to love, and revere him.—W.C.

Appendix: Cowper's translation of Andrew Marvell's "To Christina,
Queen of Sweden," &c.

To Christina, Queen of Sweden, with Cromwell's Picture.1

Christina, maiden of heroic mien!
Star of the North! of northern stars the queen!
Behold, what wrinkles I have earn'd, and how
The iron cask still chafes my vet'ran brow,
While following fate's dark footsteps, I fulfill
The dictates of a hardy people's will.
But soften'd, in thy sight, my looks appear,
Not to all Queens or Kings alike severe.

1 Written on Cromwell's behalf, this poem was originally attr. to Milton, hence Cowper's inclusion of it. It has since been recognized as the work of Marvell.

Appendix: Poems from the Latin Prose Works. Translated by various
hands.

Epigram From "Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio" (I650).
Translated by Joseph Washington (I692).

On Salmasius's "Hundreda."

Who taught Salmasius, the French chatt'ring Pye,1
To try at English, and "Hundreda"2 cry?
The starving Rascal, flush'd with just a Hundred
English Jacobusses,3 "Hundreda" blunder'd.

An outlaw'd King's last stock.—a hundred more,
Would make him pimp for th'Antichristian Whore;⁴
And in Rome's praise employ his poison'd Breath,
Who once threatn'd to stink the Pope to death.

1 i.e. The Magpie. 2 Salmasius attempted to do certain English words in his Latin. a "Hundred" was a division of an English shire. 3 The Jacobus was a gold coin named for James I. 4 Salmasius attacked the Pope in "De Primatu Papae" in 1645.

Epigrams from the "Defensio Secunda" (1654).
Translated by Robert Fellowes (1878?).

On Salmasius.

Rejoice, ye herrings, and ye ocean fry,
Who, in cold winter, shiver in the sea;
The knight, Salmasius,¹ pitying your hard lot,
Bounteous intends your nakedness to clothe,
And, lavish of his paper, is preparing
Chartaceous jackets to invest you all,
Jackets resplendent with his arms and fame,
Exultingly parade the fishy mart,
And sing his praise with checquered, livery,
That well might serve to grace the letter'd store
Of those who pick their noses and ne'er read.

1 A play on "Salmon."

[Lines Concerning Alexander More.]¹

O Pontia, teeming with More's Gallic seed,
You have been Mor'd² enough, and no More need.

1 Wrongly attr. to Milton, who prefaced these lines with, "Ingenii, hoc distochon" [Some ingenious person wrote this distich]. Milton wrongly believed More to be the author of a libel against him.

2 It is impossible to give a literally exact rendering of this. I have played upon the name as well as I could in English.—R.F.

Appendix: Translation of a Letter to Thomas Young,
Translated by Robert Fellowes (1878?).

To My Tutor, Thomas Young.

Though I had determined, my excellent tutor, to write you an epistle in verse, yet I could not satisfy myself without sending also another in prose, for the emotions of my gratitude, which your services so justly inspire, are too expansive and too warm to be expressed in the confined limits of poetical metre; they demand the unconstrained freedom of prose, or rather the exuberant richness of Asiatic phraseology: thought it would far exceed my power accurately to describe how much I am obliged to you, even if I could drain dry all the sources of eloquence, or exhaust all the topics of discourse which Aristotle or the famed Parisian logician has collected. You complain with truth that my letters have been very few and very short; but I do not grieve at the omission of so pleasurable a duty, so much as I rejoice at having such a place in your regard as makes you anxious often to hear from me. I beseech you not to take it amiss, that I have not now written to you for more than three years; but with you usual benignity to impute it rather to circumstances than to inclination. For Heaven knows that I regard you as a parent, that I have always treated you with the utmost respect, and that I was unwilling to tease you with my compositions. And I was anxious that if my letters had nothing else to recommend them, they might be recommended by their rarity. And lastly, since the ardour of my regard makes me imagine that you are always present, that I hear your voice and contemplate your looks; and as thus... I charm away my grief by the illusion of your presence, I was afraid when I wrote to you the idea of your distant separation should forcibly rush upon my mind; and that the pain of your absence, which was almost soothed into quiescence, should revive and disperse the pleasurable dream. I long since received your desirable present of the Hebrew Bible. I wrote this at my lodgings in the city, not, as usual, surrounded by my books. If, therefore, there be anything in this letter which either fails to give pleasure, or which frustrates expectation, it shall be compensated by a more elaborate composition as soon as I return to the dwelling of the muses.¹ —London, March 26, 1625.

1 i.e. Cambridge.

I.

O lady fair, whose honoured name doth grace
Green vale and noble ford of Rheno's stream—
Of all worth void the man I surely deem
Whom thy fair soul enamoureth not apace,
When softly self-revealed in outer space 5
By actions sweet with which thy will doth teem,
And gifts—Love's bow and shafts in their esteem
Who tend the flowers one day shall crown thy race.
When thou dost lightsome talk or gladsome sing,—
A power to draw the hill-trees, rooted hard— 10
The doors of eyes and ears let that man keep,
Who knows himself unworthy thy regard.
Grace from above alone him help can bring,
That passion in his heart strike not too deep.

II.

As in the twilight brown, on hillside bare,
Useth to go the little shepherd maid,
Watering some strange fair plant, poorly displaced,
Not thriving in unwonted soil and air,
Far from its native springtime's genial care; 5
So on my ready tongue hath Love assayed
Of a strange speech to wake new flower and blade,
While I of thee, in scorn so debonair,
Sing songs whose sense is to my people lost-
Yield the fair Thames, and the fair Arno gain. 10
Love willed it so, and I, at others' cost,
Already knew Love never willed in vain.
Ill would slow mind, hard heart reward the toil
Of him who plants from heaven so good a soil,

III.

Canzone.

Ladies, and youths that in their favour bask,
With mocking smiles come round me: Prithee, why,
Why dost thou with an unknown language cope,
Love-riming? Whence the courage for the task?
Tell us—so never frustrate be thy hope, 5
And the best thoughts still to thy thinking fly!
Thus mocking they: Thee other streams, they cry,
Thee other shores, another sea demands,
Upon whose verdant strands
Are budding, every moment, for thy hair, 10
Immortal guerdon, leaves that will not die;
An over-burden on thy back why bear?—
Song,¹ I will tell thee; thou for me reply:
My lady saith—and her word is my heart—
This is Love's mother-tongue, and fits his part. 15

1 Ital. "Canzone."

IV.

To Charles Diodati.

Diodati—and I muse to tell the tale—
This stubborn I, that Love was wont despise,
And made a laughter of his snares, unwise,
Am fallen, where honest feet will sometimes fail.
Not golden tresses, not a cheek vermeil, 5

Bewitched me thus; but, in a new-world guise,
A beauty that the heart beatifies;
A mien where high-souled modesty I hail;
Eyes softly splendent with a darkness dear;
A speech that more than one tongue vassal hath; 10
A voice that in the middle hemisphere
Might make the tired moon wander from her path;
While from her eyes such potent flashes shoot,
That to stop hard my ears would little boot.

V.

Truly,¹ my lady sweet, your blessed eyes—
It cannot be but that they are my sun;
As strong they smite me as he smites upon
The man whose way o'er Libyan desert lies,
The while a vapour hot doth me surprise, 5
From that side springing where my pain doth won;
Perchance accustomed lovers—I am none,
And know not—in their speech call such things sighs;
A part shut in, itself, sore vexed, conceals,
And shakes my bosom; part, undisciplined, 10
Breaks forth, and all about in ice congeals;
But that which to mine eyes the way doth find,
Makes all my nights in silent showers abound,
Until my Dawn² returns, with roses crowned.

1 Correcting MacDonald's "Certes" (Ital. "Per Certo"). 2 [Ital.] "Alba"—I suspect a hint at the lady's name.—G.M.

VI.

A modest youth, in love a simpleton,
When to escape myself I seek and shift,
Lady, I of my heart the humble gift
Vow unto thee. In trials many a one,
True, brave, it has been, firm to things begun, 5
By gracious, prudent, worthy thoughts uplift.
When roars the great world, in the thunder-rift,
Its own self, armour adamant, it will don,
From chance and envy as securely barred,
From hopes and fears that still the crowd abuse, 10
As inward gifts and high worth coveting,
And the resounding lyre, and every Muse.
There only wilt thou find it not so hard
Where Love hath fixed his ever cureless sting.

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