

Paradise Lost¹ (1667)
By John Milton

Paradise Lost: The Seventh Book

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

DESCEND from Heaven, Urania, by that name
If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegasean wing!
The meaning, not the name, I call; for thou 5
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st; but, heavenly—born,
Before the hills appeared or fountain flowed,
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play 10
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased
With thy celestial song. Up led by thee,
Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
Thy tempering. With like safety guided down, 15
Return me to my native element;
Lest, from this flying steed unreined (as once
Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)
Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,
Erroneous there to wander and forlorn. 20
Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
Within the visible Diurnal Sphere.
Standing on Earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days, 25
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues,
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when Morn

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Purples the East. Still govern thou my song, 30
 Urania, and fit audience find, though few.
 But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
 Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
 Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian Bard
 In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears 35
 To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned
 Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend
 Her son. So fail not thou who thee implores;
 For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream.
 Say, Goddess, what ensued when Raphael, 40
 The affable Archangel, had forewarned
 Adam, by dire example, to beware
 Apostasy, by what befell in Heaven
 To those apostates, lest the like befall
 In Paradise to Adam or his race, 45
 Charged not to touch the interdicted Tree,
 If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
 So easily obeyed amid the choice
 Of all tastes else to please their appetite,
 Though wandering. He, with his consorted Eve, 50
 The story heard attentive, and was filled
 With admiration and deep muse, to hear
 Of things so high and strange—things to their thought
 So unimaginable as hate in Heaven,
 And was so near the peace of God in bliss, 55
 With such confusion; but the evil, soon
 Driven back, redounded as a flood on those
 From whom it sprung, impossible to mix
 With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repealed
 The doubts that in his heart arose; and, now 60
 Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know
 What nearer might concern him—how this World
 Of heaven and earth conspicuous first began;
 When, and whereof, created; for what cause;
 What within Eden, or without, was done 65
 Before his memory—as one whose drouth,
 Yet scarce allayed, still eyes the current stream,
 Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites,
 Proceeded thus to ask his Heavenly Guest:—
 “Great things, and full of wonder in our ears, 70
 Far differing from this World, thou hast revealed,
 Divine Interpreter! by favour sent
 Down from the Empyrean to forewarn
 Us timely of what might else have been our loss,
 Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach; 75

For which to the infinitely Good we owe
 Immortal thanks, and his admonishment
 Receive with solemn purpose to observe
 Immutably his sovran will, the end
 Of what we are. But, since thou hast voutsafed 80
 Gently, for our instruction, to impart
 Things above Earthly thought, which yet concerned
 Our knowing, as to highest Wisdom seemed,
 Deign to descend now lower, and relate
 What may no less perhaps avail us known— 85
 How first began this Heaven which we behold
 Distant so high, with moving fires adorned
 Innumerable; and this which yields or fills
 All space, the ambient Air, wide interfused,
 Imbracing round this florid Earth; what cause 90
 Moved the Creator, in his holy rest
 Through all eternity, so late to build
 In Chaos; and, the work begun, how soon
 Absolved: if unforbid thou may'st unfold
 What we not to explore the secrets ask 95
 Of his eternal empire, but the more
 To magnify his works the more we know.
 And the great Light of Day yet wants to run
 Much of his race, though steep. Suspense in heaven
 Held by thy voice, thy potent voice he hears 100
 And longer will delay, to hear thee tell
 His generation, and the rising birth
 Of Nature from the unapparent Deep:
 Or, if the Star of Evening and the Moon
 Haste to thy audience, Night with her will bring 105
 Silence, and Sleep listening to thee will watch;
 Or we can bid his absence till thy song
 End, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine.”
 Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought;
 And thus the godlike Angel answered mild:— 110
 “This also thy request, with caution asked,
 Obtain; though to recount Almighty works
 What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,
 Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?
 Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve 115
 To glorify the Maker, and infer
 Thee also happier, shall not be withheld
 Thy hearing. Such commission from above
 I have received, to answer thy desire
 Of knowledge within bounds; beyond abstain 120
 To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope

Things not revealed, which the invisible King,
 Only Omniscient, hath suppressed in night,
 To none communicable in Earth or Heaven,
 Enough is left besides to search and know; 125
 But Knowledge is as food, and needs no less
 Her temperance over appetite, to know
 In measure what the mind may well contain;
 Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
 Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind. 130
 “Know then that, after Lucifer from Heaven
 (So call him, brighter once amidst the host
 Of Angels then that star the stars among)
 Fell with his flaming Legions through the Deep
 Into his place, and the great Son returned 135
 Victorious with his Saints, the Omnipotent
 Eternal Father from his Throne beheld
 Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake:—
 ““At least our envious foe hath failed, who thought
 All like himself rebellious; by whose aid 140
 This inaccessible high strength, the seat
 Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed,
 He trusted to have seized, and into fraud
 Drew many whom their place knows here no more.
 Yet far the greater part have kept, I see, 145
 Their station; Heaven, yet populous, retains
 Number sufficient to possess her realms,
 Though wide, and this high temple to frequent
 With ministeries due and solemn rites.
 But, lest his heart exalt him in the harm 150
 Already done, to have dispeopled Heaven—
 My damage fondly deemed—I can repair
 That detriment, if such it be to lose
 Self-lost, and in a moment will create
 Another world; out of one man a race 155
 Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
 Not here, till, by degrees of merit raised,
 They open to themselves at length the way
 Up hither, under long obedience tried,
 And Earth be changed to Heaven, and Heaven to Earth, 160
 One kingdom, joy and union without end.
 Meanwhile inhabit lax, ye Powers of Heaven;
 And thou, my Word, begotten Son, by thee
 This I perform; speak thou, and be it done!
 My overshadowing Spirit and might with thee 165
 I send along; ride forth, and bid the Deep
 Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth.

Boundless the Deep, because I am who fill
 Infinitude; nor vacuous the space,
 Though I, uncircumscribed, myself retire, *170*
 And put not forth my goodness, which is free
 To act or not. Necessity and Chance
 Approach not me, and what I will is Fate.’
 “So spake the Almighty; and to what he spake
 His Word, the Filial Godhead, gave effect. *175*
 Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
 Than time or motion, but to human ears
 Cannot without process’ of speech be told,
 So told as earthly notion can receive.
 Great triumph and rejoicing was in Heaven *180*
 When such was heard declared the Almighty’s will.
 Glory they sung to the Most High, goodwill
 To future men, and in their dwellings peace—
 Glory to Him whose just avenging ire
 Had driven out the ungodly from his sight *185*
 And the habitations of the just; to Him
 Glory and praise whose wisdom had ordained
 Good out of evil to create—instead
 Of Spirits malign, a better Race to bring
 Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse *190*
 His good to worlds and ages infinite.
 “So sang the Hierarchies. Meanwhile the Son
 On his great expedition now appeared,
 Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crowned
 Of majesty divine, sapience and love *195*
 Immense; and all his Father in him shon.
 About his chariot numberless were poured
 Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones,
 And Virtues, winged Spirits, and chariots winged
 From the armoury of God, where stand of old *200*
 Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged
 Against a solemn day, harnessed at hand,
 Celestial equipage; and now came forth
 Spontaneous, for within them Spirit lived,
 Attendant on their Lord. Heaven opened wide *205*
 Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound
 On golden hinges moving, to let forth
 The King of Glory, in his powerful Word
 And Spirit coming to create new worlds.
 On Heavenly ground they stood, and from the shore *210*
 They viewed the vast immeasurable Abyss,
 Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
 Up from the bottom turned by furious winds

And surging waves, as mountains to assault
 Heaven's highth, and with the centre mix the pole. 215
 "“Silence, ye troubled waves, and, thou Deep, peace!”
 Said then the omnific Word: ‘your discord end!’
 Nor stayed; but, on the wings of Cherubim
 Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
 Far into Chaos and the World unborn; 220
 For Chaos heard his voice. Him all his train
 Followed in bright procession, to behold
 Creation, and the wonders of his might.
 Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in his hand
 He took the golden compasses, prepared 225
 In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
 This Universe, and all created things.
 One foot he centred, and the other turned
 Round through the vast profundity obscure,
 And said, ‘Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds; 230
 This be thy just circumference, O World!
 Thus God the Heaven created, thus the Earth,
 Matter unformed and void. Darkness profound
 Covered the Abyss; but on the watery calm
 His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread, 235
 And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth,
 Throughout the fluid mass, but downward purged
 The black, tartareous, cold, infernal dregs,
 Adverse to life; then founded, then conglobed,
 Like things to like, the rest to several place 240
 Disparted, and between spun out the Air,
 And Earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung.
 ““Let there be Light!” said God; and forthwith Light
 Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
 Sprung from the Deep, and from her native East 245
 To journey through the aery gloom began,
 Sphered in a radiant cloud—for yet the Sun
 Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle
 Sojourned the while. God saw the Light was good;
 And light from darkness by the hemisphere 250
 Divided: Light the Day, and Darkness Night,
 He named. Thus was the first Day even and morn;
 Nor passed uncelebrated, nor unsung
 By the celestial quires, when orient light
 Exhaling first from darkness they beheld, 255
 Birth-day of Heaven and Earth. With joy and shout
 The hollow universal orb they filled,
 And touched their golden harps, and hymning praised
 God and his works; Creator him they sung,

Both when first evening was, and when first morn. 260
 “Again God said, ‘Let there be firmament
 Amid the waters, and let it divide
 The waters from the waters!’ And God made
 The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
 Transparent, elemental air, diffused 265
 In circuit to the uttermost convex
 Of this great round—partition firm and sure,
 The waters underneath from those above
 Dividing; for as Earth, so he the World
 Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide 270
 Crystallin ocean, and the loud misrule
 Of Chaos far removed, lest fierce extremes
 Contiguous might distemper the whole frame:
 And Heaven he named the Firmament. So even
 And morning chorus sung the second Day. 275
 “The Earth was formed, but, in the womb as yet
 Of waters, embryon immature, involved,
 Appeared not; over all the face of Earth
 Main ocean flowed, not idle, but, with warm
 Prolific humour softening all her globe, 280
 Fermented the great Mother to conceive,
 Sate with genial moisture; when God said,
 ‘Be gathered now, ye waters under heaven,
 Into one place, and let dry land appear!’
 Immediately the mountains huge appear 285
 Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
 Into the clouds; their tops ascend the sky.
 So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
 Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
 Capacious bed of waters. Thither they 290
 Hasted with glad precipitance, uprowled,
 As drops on dust conglobing, from the dry:
 Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,
 For haste; such flight the great command impressed
 On the swift floods. As armies at the call 295
 Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)
 Troop to their standard, so the watery throng,
 Wave rowling after wave, where way they found—
 If steep, with torrent rapture, if through plain,
 Soft-ebbing; nor withstood them rock or hill; 300
 But they, or underground, or circuit wide
 With serpent error wandering, found their way,
 And on the washy ooze deep channels wore:
 Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
 All but within those banks where rivers now 305

Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train.
 The dry land Earth, and the great receptacle
 Of congregated waters he called Seas;
 And saw that it was good, and said, 'Let the Earth
 Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed, 310
 And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,
 Whose seed is in herself upon the Earth!'

He scarce had said when the bare Earth, till then
 Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorned,
 Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad 315
 Her universal face with pleasant green;
 Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flowered,
 Opening their various colours, and made gay
 Her bosom, smelling sweet; and, these scarce blown,
 Forth flourished thick the clustering vine, forth crept 320
 The smelling gourd, up stood the corny reed
 Imbattled in her field: add the humble shrub,
 And bush with frizzled hair implicit: last
 Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread
 Their branches hung with copious fruit, or gemmed 325
 Their blossoms. With high woods the hills were crowned,
 With tufts the valleys and each fountain-side,
 With borders long the rivers, that Earth now
 Seemed like to Heaven, a seat where gods might dwell,
 Or wander with delight, and love to haunt 330
 Her sacred shades; though God had yet not rained
 Upon the Earth, and man to till the ground
 None was, but from the Earth a dewy mist
 Went up and watered all the ground, and each
 Plant of the field, which ere it was in the Earth 335
 God made, and every herb before it grew
 On the green stem. God saw that it was good;
 So even and morn recorded the third Day.

"Again the Almighty spake, 'Let there be Lights
 High in the expanse of Heaven, to divide 340
 The Day from Night; and let them be for signs,
 For seasons, and for days, and circling years;
 And let them be for lights, as I ordain
 Their office in the firmament of heaven,
 To give light on the Earth!' and it was so. 345
 And God made two great Lights, great for their use
 To Man, the greater to have rule by day,
 The less by night, alternor; and made the Stars,
 And set them in the firmament of heaven
 To illuminate the Earth, and rule the day 350
 In their vicissitude, and rule the night,

And light from darkness to divide. God saw,
 Surveying his great work, that it was good:
 For, of celestial bodies, first the Sun
 A mighty sphere he framed, unlightsome first, 355
 Though of ethereal mould; then formed the Moon
 Globose, and every magnitude of Stars,
 And sowed with stars the heaven thick as a field.
 Of light by far the greater part he took,
 Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed 360
 In the Sun's orb, made porous to receive
 And drink the liquid light, firm to retain
 Her gathered beams, great palace now of Light.
 Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
 Repairing, in their golden urns draw light, 365
 And hence the morning planet gilds her horns;
 By tincture or reflection they augment
 Their small peculiar, though, from human sight
 So far remote, with diminution seen.
 First in his east the glorious lamp was seen, 370
 Regent of day, and all the horizon round
 Invested with bright rays, jocond to run
 His longitude through heaven's high-road; the grey
 Dawn, and the Pleiades, before him danced,
 Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the Moon, 375
 But opposite in levelled west, was set,
 His mirror, with full face borrowing her light
 From him; for other light she needed none
 In that aspect, and still that distance keeps
 Till night; then in the east her turn she shines, 380
 Revolved on heaven's great axle, and her reign
 With thousand lesser lights dividual holds,
 With thousand thousand stars, that then appeared
 Spangling the hemisphere. Then first adorned
 With her bright luminaries, that set and rose, 385
 Glad evening and glad morn crowned the fourth Day.
 "And God said, 'Let the waters generate
 Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul;
 And let Fowl fly above the earth, with wings
 Displayed on the open firmament of Heaven!' 390
 And God created the great Whales, and each
 Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously
 The waters generated by their kinds,
 And every bird of wing after his kind,
 And saw that it was good, and blessed them, saying, 395
 'Be fruitful, multiply, and, in the seas,
 And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill;

And let the fowl be multiplied on the earth!
 Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay, 400
 With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
 Of fish that, with their fins and shining scales,
 Glide under the green wave in sculls that oft
 Bank the mid-sea. Part, single or with mate,
 Graze the sea-weed, their pasture, and through groves 405
 Of coral stray, or, sporting with quick glance,
 Shew to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold,
 Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
 Moist nutriment, or under rocks their food
 In jointed armour watch; on smooth the seal 410
 And bended dolphins play; part, huge of bulk,
 Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,
 Tempest the ocean. There Leviathan,
 Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
 Stretched like a promontory, sleeps or swims, 415
 And seems a moving land, and at his gills
 Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.
 Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores,
 Their brood as numerous hatch from the egg, that soon,
 Bursting with kindly rupture, forth disclosed 420
 Their callow young; but feathered soon and fledge
 They summed their pens, and, soaring the air sublime,
 With clang despised the ground, under a cloud
 In prospect. There the eagle and the stork
 On cliffs and cedar-tops their eyries build. 425
 Part loosely wing the Region; part, more wise,
 In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,
 Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
 Their aerie caravan, high over seas
 Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing 430
 Easing their flight: so steers the prudent crane
 Her annual voyage, borne on winds: the air
 Floats as they pass, fanned with unnumbered plumes.
 From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
 Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings, 435
 Till even; nor then the solemn nightingale
 Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays.
 Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed
 Their downy breast; the swan, with arched neck
 Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows 440
 Her state with oary feet; yet oft they quit
 The dank, and, rising on stiff pennons, tower
 The mid aerial sky. Others on ground
 Walked firm—the crested cock, whose clarion sounds

The silent hours, and the other, whose gay train
 Adorns him, coloured with the florid hue 445
 Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus
 With Fish replenished, and the air with Fowl,
 Evening and morn solemnized the fifth Day.
 “The sixth, and of Creation last, arose
 With evening harps and matin; when God said, 450
 ‘Let the Earth bring forth soul living in her kind,
 Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth,
 Each in their kind!’ The Earth obeyed, and, straight
 Opening her fertile womb, teemed at a birth
 Innumerable living creatures, perfect forms, 455
 Limbed and full-grown. Out of the ground up rose,
 As from his lair, the wild beast, where he wons
 In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den—
 Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walked;
 The cattle in the fields and meadows green: 460
 Those rare and solitary, these in flocks
 Pasturing at once and in broad herds, upsprung.
 The grassy clods now calved; now half appeared
 The tawny Lion, pawing to get free
 His hinder parts—then springs, as broke from bonds, 465
 And rampant shakes his brinded mane; the Ounce,
 The Libbard, and the Tiger, as the Mole
 Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
 In hillocks; the swift Stag from underground
 Bore up his branching head; scarce from his mould 470
 Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved
 His vastness; fleeced the flocks and bleating rose,
 As plants; ambiguous between sea and land,
 The River-horse and scaly Crocodile.
 At once came forth whatever creeps the ground, 475
 Insect or worm. Those waved their limber fans
 For wings, and smallest lineaments exact
 In all the liveries decked of summer’s pride,
 With spots of gold and purple, azure and green;
 These as a line their long dimension drew, 480
 Streaking the ground with sinuous trace: not all
 Minims of nature; some of serpent kind,
 Wondrous in length and corpulence, involved
 Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept
 The parsimonious Emmet, provident 485
 Of future, in small room large heart enclosed—
 Pattern of just equality perhaps
 Hereafter—joined in her popular tribes
 Of commonalty. Swarming next appeared

The female Bee, that feeds her husband drone 490
 Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells
 With honey stored. The rest are numberless,
 And thou their natures know'st, and gav'st them names
 Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown
 The Serpent, subtlest beast of all the field, 495
 Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes
 And hairy mane terrific, though to thee
 Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.
 "Now Heaven in all her glory shon, and rowled
 Her motions, as the great First Mover's hand 500
 First wheeled their course; Earth, in her rich attire
 Consummate, lovely smiled; Air, Water, Earth,
 By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walked
 Frequent; and of the sixth Day yet remained.
 There wanted yet the master-work, the end 505
 Of all yet done—a creature who, not prone
 And brute as other creatures, but endued
 With sanctity of reason, might erect
 His stature, and, upright with front serene
 Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence 510
 Magnanimous to correspond with Heaven,
 But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
 Descends; thither with heart, and voice, and eyes
 Directed in devotion, to adore
 And worship God Supreme, who made him chief 515
 Of all his works. Therefore the Omnipotent
 Eternal Father (for where is not He
 Present?) thus to his Son audibly spake:—
 'Let us make now Man in our image, Man
 In our Timilitude, and let them rule 520
 Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
 Beast of the field, and over all the earth,
 And every creeping thing that creeps the ground!'
 This said, he formed thee, Adam, thee, O Man,
 Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed 525
 The breath of life; in his own image he
 Created thee, in the image of God
 Express, and thou becam'st a living Soul.
 Male he created thee, but thy consort'
 Female, for race; then blessed mankind, and said, 530
 'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth;
 Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold
 Over fish of the sea and fowl of the air,
 And every living thing that moves on the Earth!
 Wherever thus created—for no place 535

Is yet distinct by name—thence, as thou know'st,
 He brought thee into this delicious grove,
 This Garden, planted with the tress of God,
 Delectable both to behold and taste,
 And freely all their pleasant fruit for food 540
 Gave thee. All sorts are here that all the earth yields,
 Variety without end; but of the tree
 Which tasted works knowledge of good and evil
 Thou may'st not; in the day thou eat'st, thou diest.
 Death is the penalty imposed; beware, 545
 And govern well thy appetite, least Sin
 Surprise thee, and her black attendant, Death.
 "Here finished He, and all that he had made
 Viewed, and behold! all was entirely good.
 So even and morn accomplished the sixth Day; 550
 Yet not till the Creator, from his work
 Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,
 Up to the Heaven of Heavens, his high abode,
 Thence to behold this new-created World,
 The addition of his empire, how it shewed 555
 In prospect from his Throne, how good, how fair,
 Answering his great Idea. Up he rode,
 Followed with acclamation, and the sound
 Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned
 Angelic harmonies. The Earth, the Air 560
 Resounded (thou remember'st, for thou heard'st),
 The heavens and all the constellations rung,
 The planets in their stations listening stood,
 While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.
 'Open, ye everlasting gates!' they sung; 565
 'Open, ye Heavens, your living doors! let in
 The great Creator, from his work returned
 Magnificent, his six days' work, a World!
 Open, and henceforth oft; for God will deign
 To visit oft the dwellings of just men 570
 Delighted, and with frequent intercourse
 Thither will send his winged messengers
 On errands of supernal grace.' So sung
 The glorious train ascending. He through Heaven,
 That opened wide her blazing portals, led 575
 To God's eternal house direct the way—
 A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold,
 And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear
 Seen in the Galaxy, that milky way
 Which nightly as a circling zone thou seest 580
 Powdered with stars. And now on Earth the seventh

Evening arose in Eden—for the sun
 Was set, and twilight from the east came on,
 Forerunning night—when at the holy mount
 Of Heaven’s high-seated top, the imperial throne 585
 Of Godhead, fixed for ever firm and sure,
 The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down
 With his great Father; for He also went
 Invisible, yet stayed (such privilege
 Hath Omnipresence) and the work ordained, 590
 Author and end of all things, and from work
 Now resting. Blessed and hallowed the seventh Day,
 As resting on that day from all his work;
 But not in silence holy kept: the harp
 Had work, and rested not; the solemn pipe 595
 And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,
 All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,
 Tempered soft tunings, intermixed with voice
 Choral or unison; of incense clouds,
 Fuming from golden censers, hid the Mount. 600
 Creation and the Six Days’ acts they sung:—
 ‘Great are thy works, Jehovah! infinite
 Thy power! what thought can measure thee, or tongue
 Relate thee—greater now in thy return
 Than from the Giant-angels? Thee that day 605
 Thy thunders magnified; but to create
 Is greater than created to destroy.
 Who can impair thee, mighty King, or bound
 Thy empire? Easily the proud attempt
 Of Spirits apostate, and their counsels vain, 610
 Thou hast repelled, while impiously they thought
 Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw
 The number of thy worshipers. Who seeks
 To lessen thee, against his purpose, serves
 To manifest the more thy might; his evil 615
 Thou usest, and from thence creat’st more good.
 Witness this new-made World, another Heaven
 From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view
 On the clear hyalin, the glassy sea;
 Of amplitude almost immense, with stars 620
 Numerous, and every star perhaps a world
 Of destined habitation—but thou know’st
 Their seasons; among these the seat of men,
 Earth, with her nether ocean circumfused,
 Their pleasant dwelling—place. Thrice happy men, 625
 And sons of men, whom God hath thus advanced,
 Created in his image, there to dwell

And worship him, and in reward to rule
 Over his works, on earth, in sea, or air,
 And multiply a race of worshipers 630
 Holy and just! thrice happy, if they know
 Their happiness, and persevere upright!
 “So sung they, and the Empyrean rung
 With halleluiahs. Thus was Sabbath kept.
 And thy request think now fulfilled that asked 635
 How first this World and face of things began,
 And what before thy memory was done
 From the beginning, that posterity,
 Informed by thee, might know. If else thou seek’st
 Aught, not surpassing human measure, say.” 640

Paradise Lost: The Eighth Book

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

THE ANGEL ended, and in Adam’s ear
 So charming left his voice that he a while
 Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear;
 Then, as new-waked, thus gratefully replied:—
 “What thanks sufficient, or what recompense 5
 Equal, have I to render thee, divine
 Historian, who thus largely hast allayed
 The thirst I had of knowledge, and voutsafed
 This friendly condescension to relate
 Things else by me unsearchable—now heard 10
 With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,
 With glory attributed to the high
 Creator? Something yet of doubt remains,
 Which only thy solution can resolve.
 When I behold this goodly frame, this World, 15
 Of Heaven and Earth consisting, and compute
 Their magnitudes—this Earth, a spot, a grain,
 An atom, with the Firmament compared

And all her numbered stars, that seem to rowl
 Spaces incomprehensible (for such 20
 Their distance argues, and their swift return
 Diurnal) merely to officiate light
 Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,
 One day and night, in all their vast survey
 Useless besides—reasoning, I oft admire 25
 How Nature, wise and frugal, could commit
 Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
 So many nobler bodies to create,
 Greater so manifold, to this one use,
 For aught appears, and on their Orbs impose 30
 Such restless revolution day by day
 Repeated, while the sedentary Earth,
 That better might with far less compass move,
 Served by more noble than herself, attains
 Her end without least motion, and receives, 35
 As tribute, such a sumless journey brought
 Of incorporeal speed her warmth and light:
 Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails.”
 So spake our Sire, and by his countenance seemed
 Entering on studious thoughts abstruse; which Eve 40
 Perceiving, where, she sat retired in sight,
 With lowliness majestic from her seat,
 And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,
 Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,
 To visit how they prospered, bud and bloom, 45
 Her nursery; they at her coming sprung,
 And, touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.
 Yet went she not as not with such discourse
 Delighted, or not capable her ear
 Of what was high. Such pleasure she reserved, 50
 Adam relating, she sole auditress;
 Her husband the relater she preferred
 Before the Angel, and of him to ask
 Chose rather; he, she knew, would intermix
 Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute 55
 With conjugal caresses: from his lip
 Not words alone pleased her. Oh, when meet now
 Such pairs, in love and mutual honour joined?
 With goddess-like demeanour forth she went,
 Not unattended; for on her as Queen 60
 A pomp of winning Graces waited still,
 And from about her shot darts of desire
 Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.
 And Raphael now to Adam’s doubt proposed

Benevolent and facile thus replied:— 65
 “To ask or search I blame thee not; for Heaven
 Is as the Book of God before thee set,
 Wherein to read his wondrous works, and learn
 His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years.
 This to attain, whether Heaven move or Earth 70
 Imports not, if thou reckon right; the rest
 From Man or Angel the great Architect
 Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
 His secrets, to be scanned by them who ought
 Rather admire. Or, if they list to try 75
 Conjecture, he his fabric of the Heavens
 Hath left to their disputes—perhaps to move
 His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
 Hereafter, when they come to model Heaven,
 And calculate the stars; how they will wield 80
 The mighty frame; how build, unbuild, contrive
 To save appearances; how gird the Sphere
 With Centric and Eccentric scribbled o’er,
 Cycle and Epicycle, orb in orb.
 Already by thy reasoning this I guess, 85
 Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest
 That bodies bright and greater should not serve
 The less not bright, nor Heaven such journeys run,
 Earth sitting still, when she alone receives
 The benefit. Consider, first, that great 90
 Or bright infers not excellence. The Earth,
 Though, in comparison of Heaven, so small,
 Nor glistening, may of solid good contain
 More plenty than the Sun that barren shines,
 Whose virtue on itself works no effect, 95
 But in the fruitful Earth; there first received,
 His beams, unactive else, their vigour find.
 Yet not to Earth are those bright luminaries
 Officious, but to thee, Earth’s habitant.
 And, for the Heaven’s wide circuit, let it speak 100
 The Maker’s high magnificence, who built
 So spacious, and his line stretched out so far,
 That Man may know he dwells not in his own—
 An edifice too large for him to fill,
 Lodged in a small partition, and the rest 105
 Ordained for uses to his Lord best known.
 The swiftness of those Circles at’tribute,
 Though numberless, to his Omnipotence,
 That to corporeal substances could add
 Speed almost spiritual. Me thou think’st not slow, 110

Who since the morning-hour set out from Heaven
 Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived
 In Eden—distance inexpressible
 By numbers that have name. But this I urge,
 Admitting motion in the Heavens, to shew *115*
 Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved;
 Not that I so affirm, though so it seem
 To thee who hast thy dwelling here on Earth.
 God, to remove his ways from human sense,
 Placed Heaven from Earth so far, that earthly sight, *120*
 If it presume, might err in things too high,
 And no advantage gain. What if the Sun
 Be centre to the World, and other Stars,
 By his attractive virtue and their own
 Incited, dance about him various rounds? *125*
 Their wandering course, now high, now low, then hid,
 Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
 In six thou seest; and what if, seventh to these
 The planet Earth, so steadfast though she seem,
 Insensibly three different motions move? *130*
 Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe,
 Moved contrary with thwart obliquities,
 Or save the Sun his labour, and that swift
 Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,
 Invisible else above all stars, the wheel *135*
 Of Day and Night; which needs not they belief,
 If Earth, industrious of herself, fetch Day,
 Travelling east, and with her part averse
 From the Sun's beam meet Night, her other part
 Still luminous by his ray. What if that light, *140*
 Sent from her through the wide transpicious air,
 To the terrestrial Moon to be as a star,
 Enlightening her by day, as she by night
 This Earth—reciprocal, if land be there,
 Fields and inhabitants? Her spots thou seest *145*
 As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce
 Fruits in her softened soil, for some to eat
 Allotted there; and other Suns, perhaps,
 With their attendant Moons, thou wilt descry,
 Communicating male and female light— *150*
 Which to great sexes animate the World,
 Stored in each Orb perhaps with some that live.
 For such vast room in Nature unpossessed
 By living soul, desert and desolate,
 Only to shine, yet scarce to con'tribute *155*
 Each Orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far

Down to this habitable, which returns
 Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.
 But whether thus these things, or whether not—
 Whether the Sun, predominant in heaven, *160*
 Rise on the Earth, or Earth rise on the Sun;
 He from the east his flaming road begin,
 Or she from west her silent course advance
 With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
 On her soft axle, while she paces even, *165*
 And bears thee soft with the smooth air along—
 Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid:
 Leave them to God above; him serve and fear.
 Of other creatures as him pleases best,
 Wherever placed, let him dispose; joy thou *170*
 In what he gives to thee, this Paradise
 And thy fair Eve; Heaven is for thee too high
 To know what passes there. Be lowly wise;
 Think only what concerns thee and thy being;
 Dream not to other worlds, what creatures there *175*
 Live, in what state, condition, or dereed-
 Contented that thus far hath been revealed
 Not of Earth only, but of highest Heaven.”
 To whom thus Adam, cleared of doubt, replied:—
 “How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure *180*
 Intelligence of Heaven, Angel serene,
 And, freed from intricacies, taught to live
 The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts
 To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
 God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares, *185*
 And not molest us, unless we ourselves
 Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions vain!
 But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
 Unchecked; and of her roving is no end,
 Till, warned, or by experience taught, she learn *190*
 That not to know at large of things remote
 From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
 That which before us lies in daily life,
 Is the prime wisdom: what is more is fume,
 Or emptiness, or fond impertinence, *195*
 And renders us in things that most concern
 Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.
 Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
 A lower flight, and speak of things at hand
 Useful; whence, haply, mention may arise *200*
 Of something not unreasonable to ask,
 By sufferance, and thy wonted favour, deigned.

Thee I have heard relating what was done
 Ere my remembrance; now hear me relate
 My story, which perhaps, thou hast not heard. 205
 And day is yet not spent; till then thou seest
 How subtly to detain thee I devise,
 Inviting thee to hear while I relate—
 Fond, were it not in hope of thy reply.
 For, while I sit with thee, I seem in Heaven; 210
 And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
 Than fruits of palm-tree, pleasantest to thirst
 And hunger both, from labour, at the hour
 Of sweet repast. They satiate, and soon fill,
 Though pleasant; but thy words, with grace divine 215
 Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety.”
 To whom thus Raphael answered, heavenly meek:—
 “Nor are thy lips ungrateful, Sire of Men,
 Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
 Abundantly his gifts hath also poured, 220
 Inward and outward both, his image fair:
 Speaking, or mute, all comeliness and grace
 Attends thee, and each word, each motion, forms.
 Nor less think we in Heaven of thee on Earth
 Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire 225
 Gladly into the ways of God with Man;
 For God, we see, hath honoured thee, and set
 On Man his equal love. Say therefore on;
 For I that day was absent, as befell,
 Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure, 230
 Far on excursion toward the gates of Hell,
 Squared in full legion (such command we had),
 To see that none thence issued forth a spy
 Or enemy, while God was in his work,
 Lest he, incensed at such eruption bold, 235
 Destruction with Creation might have mixed.
 Not that they durst without his leave attempt;
 But us he sends upon his high behests
 For state, as sovran King, and to inure
 Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut, 240
 The dismal gates, and barricaded strong,
 But, long ere our approaching, heard within
 Noise, other than the sound of dance or song—
 Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.
 Glad we returned up to the coasts of Light 245
 Ere Sabbath-evening; so we had in charge.
 But thy relation now: for I attend,
 Pleased with thy words no less than thou with mine.”

So spake the godlike Power, and thus our Sire:—
 “For Man to tell how human life began 250
 Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?
 Desire with thee still longer to converse
 Induced me. As new-waked from soundest sleep,
 Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid,
 In balmy sweat, which with his beams the Sun 255
 Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed.
 Straight toward Heaven my wondering eyes I turned,
 And gazed a while the ample sky, till, raised
 By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,
 As thitherward endeavoring, and upright 260
 Stood on my feet. About me round I saw
 Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
 And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,
 Creatures that lived and moved, and walked or flew,
 Birds on the branches warbling: all things smiled; 265
 With fragrance and with joy my heart o’erflowed.
 Myself I then perused, and limb by limb
 Surveyed, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
 With supple joints, as lively vigour led;
 But who I was, or where, or from what cause, 270
 Knew not. To speak I tried, and forthwith spake;
 My tongue obeyed, and readily could name
 Whate’er I saw. ‘Thou Sun,’ said I, ‘fair light,
 And thou enlightened Earth, so fresh and gay,
 Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains, 275
 And ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell,
 Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here!
 Not of myself; by some great Maker then,
 tin goodness and in power præ-eminent.
 Tell me, how may I know him, how adore, 280
 From whom I have that thus I move and live,
 And feel that I am happier than I know!’
 While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither,
 From where I first drew air, and first beheld
 This happy light, when answer none returned, 285
 On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,
 Pensive I sat me down. There gentle sleep
 First found me, and with soft oppression seized
 My drowsèd sense, untroubled, though I thought
 I then was passing to my former state 290
 Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:
 When suddenly stood at my head a Dream,
 Whose inward apparition gently moved
 My fancy to believe I yet had being,

And lived. One came, methought, of shape divine, 295
 And said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise,
 First Man, of men innumerable ordained
 First father! called by thee, I come thy guide
 To the Garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.'
 So saying, by the hand he took me, raised, 300
 And over fields and waters, as in air
 Smooth sliding without step, last led me up
 A woody mountain, whose high top was plain,
 A circuit wide, enclosed, with goodliest trees
 Planted, with walks and bowers, that what I saw 305
 Of Earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each tree
 Loaden with fairest fruit, that hung to the eye
 Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite
 To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found
 Before mine eyes all real, as the dream 310
 Had lively shadowed. Here had new begun
 My wandering, had not He who was my guide
 Up hither from among the trees appeared,
 Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,
 In adoration at his feet I fell 315
 Submiss. He reared me, and, 'Whom thou sought'st I am,'
 Said mildly, 'Author of all this thou seest
 Above, or round about thee, or beneath.
 This Paradise I give thee; count it thine
 To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat. 320
 Of every tree that in the Garden grows
 Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth.
 But of the tree whose operation brings
 Knowledge of Good and Ill, which I have set,
 The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith, 325
 Amid the garden by the Tree of Life—
 Remember what I warn thee—shun to taste,
 And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
 The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
 Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die, 330
 From that day mortal, and this happy state
 Shalt lose, expelled from hence into a world
 Of woe and sorrow.' Sternly he pronounced
 The rigid interdiction, which resounds
 Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice 335
 Not to incur; but soon his clear aspect'
 Returned, and gracious purpose thus renewed:—
 'Not only these fair bounds, but all the Earth
 To thee and to thy race I give; as lords
 Possess it, and all things that therein live, 340

Or live in sea or air, beast, fish, and fowl.
 In sign whereof, each bird and beast behold
 After their kinds; I bring them to receive
 From thee their names, and pay thee fealty
 With low subjection. Understand the same 345
 Of fish within their watery residence,
 Not hither summoned, since they cannot change
 Their element to draw the thinner air.’
 As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold
 Approaching two and two—these cowering low 350
 With blandishment; each bird stooped on his wing.
 I named them as they passed, and understood
 Their nature; with such knowledge God endued
 My sudden apprehension. But in these
 I found not what methought I wanted still, 355
 And to the Heavenly Vision thus presumed:—
 “O, by what name—or Thou above all these,
 Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,
 Surpassest far my naming—how may I
 Adore thee, Author of this Universe, 360
 And all this good to Man, for whose well-being
 So amply, and with hands so liberal,
 Thou hast provided all things? But with me
 I see not who partakes. In solitude
 What happiness? who can enjoy alone, 365
 Or, all enjoying, what contentment find?’
 Thus I, presumptuous; and the Vision bright,
 As with a smile more brightened, thus replied:—
 “What call’st thou solitude? Is not the Earth
 With various living creatures, and the Air, 370
 Replenished, and all these at thy command
 To come and play before thee? Know’st thou not
 Their language and their ways? They also know,
 And reason not contemptibly; with these
 Find pastime, and bear rule; thy realm is large.’ 375
 So spake the Universal Lord and seemed
 So ordering. I, with leave of speech implored,
 And humble deprecation, thus replied:—
 “Let not my words offend thee, Heavenly Power;
 My Maker, be propitious while I speak. 380
 Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
 And these inferior far beneath me set?
 Among unequals what society
 Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
 Which must be mutual, in proportion due 385
 Given and received; but, in disparity,

The one intense, the other still remiss,
 Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
 Tedious alike. Of fellowship I speak
 Such as I seek, fit to participate 390
 All rational delight, wherein the brute
 Cannot be human consort. They rejoice
 Each with their kind, lion with lioness;
 So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined:
 Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl, 395
 So well converse, nor with the ox the ape;
 Worse, then, can man with beast, and least of all.’
 “Whereto the Almighty answered, not displeas’d:—
 ‘A nice and subtle happiness, I see,
 Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice 400
 Of thy associates, Adam, and wilt taste
 No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.
 What think’st thou, then, of Me, and this my state?
 Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed
 Of happiness, or not, who am alone 405
 From all eternity? for none I know
 Second to me or like, equal much less.
 How have I, then, with whom to hold converse,
 Save with the creatures which I made, and those
 To me inferior infinite descents 410
 Beneath what other creatures are to thee?’
 “He ceased. I lowly answered:—’To attain
 The highth and depth of thy eternal ways
 All human thoughts come short, Supreme of Things!
 Thou in thyself art perfect, and in Thee 415
 Is no deficiencie found. Not so is Man,
 But in degree—the cause of his desire
 By conversation with his like to help
 Or solace his defects. No need that thou
 Should’st propagate, already infinite, 420
 And through all numbers absolute, though One;
 But Man by number is to manifest
 His single imperfection, and beget
 Like of his like, his image multiplied,
 In unity defective; which requires 425
 Collateral love, and dearest amity.
 Thou, in thy secrecy although alone,
 Best with thyself accompanied, seek’st not
 Social communication—yet, so pleas’d,
 Canst raise thy creature to what highth thou wilt 430
 Of union or communion, deified;
 I, by conversing, cannot these erect

From prone, nor in their ways complacence find.
 Thus I emboldened spake, and freedom used
 Permissive, and acceptance found; which gained 435
 This answer from the gracious Voice Divine:—
 “‘Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased,
 And find thee knowing not of beasts alone,
 Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself—
 Expressing well the spirit within thee free, 440
 My image, not imparted to the brute;
 Whose fellowship, therefore, unmeet for thee,
 Good Reason was thou freely shouldst dislike.
 And be so minded still. I, ere thou spak’st,
 Knew it not good for Man to be alone, 445
 And no such company as then thou saw’st
 Intended thee—for trial only brought,
 To see how thou couldst judge of fit and meet.
 What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,
 Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, 450
 Thy wish exactly to thy heart’s desire.’
 “He ended, or I heard no more; for now
 My earthly, by his heavenly overpowered,
 Which it had long stood under, strained to the highth
 In that celestial colloquy sublime, 455
 As with an object that excels the sense,
 Dazzled and spent, sunk down, and sought repair
 Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, called
 By Nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.
 Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell 460
 Of fancy, my internal sight; by which,
 Abstract as in a trance, methought I saw,
 Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the Shape
 Still glorious before whom awake I stood;
 Who, stooping, opened my left side, and took 465
 From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,
 And life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,
 But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed.
 The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands;
 Under his forming hands a creature grew, 470
 Man-like, but different sex, so lovely fair
 That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now
 Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained
 And in her looks, which from that time infused
 Sweetness into my heart unfelt before, 475
 And into all things from her air inspired
 The spirit of love and amorous delight.
 She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked

To find her, or for ever to deplore
 Her loss, and other pleasures all adjure: 480
 When, out of hope, behold her not far off,
 Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned
 With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow
 To make her amiable. On she came,
 Led by her Heavenly Maker, though unseen 485
 And guided by his voice, nor uninformed
 Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.
 Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
 In every gesture dignity and love.
 I, overjoyed, could not forbear aloud:— 490
 ““This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfilled
 Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
 Giver of all things fair—but fairest this
 Of all thy gifts!—nor enviest. I now see
 Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, my Self 495
 Before me. Woman is her name, of Man
 Extracted; for this cause he shall forgo
 Father and mother, and to his wife adhere,
 And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.’
 “She heard me thus; and, though divinely brought, 500
 Yet innocence and virgin modesty,
 Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
 That would be wooed, and not unsought be won,
 Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired,
 The most desirable—or, to say all, 505
 Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought—
 Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turned.
 I followed her; she what was honour knew,
 And with obsequious majesty approved
 My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower 510
 I led her blushing like the Morn; all Heaven,
 And happy constellations, on that hour
 Shed their selectest influence; the Earth
 Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill;
 Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs 515
 Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings
 Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,
 Disporting, till the amorous bird of night
 Sung spousal, and bid haste the Evening-star
 On his hill-top to light the bridal lamp. 520
 “Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought
 My story to the sum of earthly bliss
 Which I enjoy, and must confess to find
 In all things else delight indeed, but such

As, use or not, works in the mind no change, 525
 Nor vehement desire—these delicacies
 I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flowers,
 Walks, and the melody of birds: but here,
 Far otherwise, transported I behold,
 Transported touch; here passion first I felt, 530
 Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
 Superior and unmoved, here only weak
 Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance.
 Or Nature failed in me, and left some part
 Not proof enough such object to sustain, 535
 Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps
 More than enough—at least on her bestowed
 Too much of ornament, in outward show
 Elaborate, of inward less exact.
 For well I understand in the prime end 540
 Of Nature her the inferior, in the mind
 And inward faculties, which most excel;
 In outward also her resembling less
 His image who made both, and less expressing
 The character of that dominion given 545
 O'er other creatures. Yet when I approach
 Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
 And in herself complete, so well to know
 Her own, that what she wills to do or say
 Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best. 550
 All higher Knowledge in her presence falls
 Degraded; Wisdom in discourse with her
 Loses, discountenanced, and like Folly shews;
 Authority and Reason on her wait,
 As one intended first, not after made 555
 Occasionally; and, to consum'mate all,
 Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
 About her, as a guard angelic placed.”
 To whom the Angel, with contracted brow:— 560
 “Accuse not Nature! she hath done her part;
 Do thou but thine! and be not diffident
 Of Wisdom; she deserts thee not, if thou
 Dismiss not her, when most thou need'st her nigh,
 By attribu'ting overmuch to things 565
 Less excellent, as thou thyself perceiv'st.
 For, what admir'st thou, what transports thee so?
 An outside—fair, no doubt, and worthy well
 Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love;
 Not thy subjection. Weigh with her thyself; 570

Then value. Oft-times nothing profits more
 Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right
 Well managed. Of that skill the more thou know'st,
 The more she will acknowledge thee her head,
 And to realities yield all her shows— 575
 Made so adorn for thy delight the more,
 So awful, that with honour thou may'st love
 Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise
 But, if the sense of touch, whereby mankind
 Is propagated, seem such dear delight 580
 Beyond all other, think the same voutsafed
 To cattle and each beast; which would not be
 To them made common and divulged, if aught
 Therein enjoyed were worthy to subdue
 The soul of Man, or passion in him move. 585
 What higher in her society thou find'st
 Attractive, human, rational, love still;
 In loving thou dost well; in passion not,
 Wherein true Love consists not. Love refines
 The thoughts, and heart enlarges—hath his seat 590
 In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale
 By which to Heavenly Love thou may'st ascend,
 Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause
 Among the beasts no mate for thee was found.”
 To whom thus, half abashed, Adam replied:— 595
 “Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught
 In procreation, common to all kinds
 (Though higher of the genial bed by far,
 And with mysterious reverence, I deem),
 So much delights me as those graceful acts, 600
 Those thousand decencies, that daily flow
 From all her words and actions, mixed with love
 And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned
 Union of mind, or in us both one soul—
 Harmony to behold in wedded pair 605
 More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.
 Yet these subject not; I to thee disclose
 What inward thence I feel, not therefore foiled,
 Who meet with various objects, from the sense
 Variously representing, yet, still free, 610
 Approve the best, and follow what I approve.
 To love thou blam'st me not—for Love, thou say'st,
 Leads up to Heaven, is both the way and guide;
 Bear with me, then, if lawful what I ask.
 Love not the Heavenly Spirits, and how their love 615
 Express they—by looks only, or do they mix

Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?"
 To whom the Angel, with a smile that glowed
 Celestial rosy-red, Love's proper hue,
 Answered:—"Let it suffice thee that thou know'st 620
 Us happy, and without Love no happiness.
 Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
 (And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
 In eminence, and obstacle find none
 Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars. 625
 Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,
 Total they mix, union of pure with pure
 Desiring, nor restrained conveyance need
 As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.
 But I can now no more: the parting Sun 630
 Beyond the Earth's green Cape and verdant Isles
 Hesperian sets, my signal to depart.
 Be strong, live happy, and love! but first of all
 Him whom to love is to obey, and keep
 His great command; take heed lest passion sway 635
 Thy judgment to do aught which else free—will
 Would not admit; thine and of all thy sons
 The weal or woe in thee is placed; beware!
 I in thy persevering shall rejoice,
 And all the Blest. Stand fast; to stand or fall 640
 Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.
 Perfet within, no outward aid require;
 And all temptation to transgress repel."
 So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus
 Followed with benediction:—"Since to part, 645
 Go, Heavenly Guest, Ethereal Messenger,
 Sent from whose sovran goodness I adore!
 Gentle to me and affable hath been
 Thy condescension, and shall be honoured ever
 With grateful memory. Thou to Mankind 650
 Be good and friendly still, and oft return!"
 So parted they, the Angel up to Heaven
 From the thick shade, and Adam to his bower.

Paradise Lost: The Ninth Book

THE ARGUMENT.—Satan, having compassed the Earth, with meditated guile returns as a mist by night into Paradise; enters into the Serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the morning

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

NO MORE of talk where God or Angel Guest
 With Man, as with his friend, familiar used
 To sit indulgent, and with him partake
 Rural repast, permitting him to while
 Venial discourse unblamed. I now must change 5
 Those notes to tragic—foul distrust, and breach
 Disloyal, on the part of man, revolt
 And disobedience; on the part of Heaven,
 Now alienated, distance and distaste,
 Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given, 10
 That brought into this World a world of woe,
 Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,
 Death's harbinger. Sad task! yet argument
 Not less but more heroic than the wrath
 Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued 15
 Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
 Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused;
 Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's that so long
 Perplexed the Greek, and Cytherea's son:
 If answerable style I can obtain 20
 Of my celestial Patroness, who deigns
 Her nightly visitation unimplored,
 And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
 Easy my unpremeditated verse,
 Since first this subject for heroic song 25
 Pleas'd me, long choosing and beginning late,
 Not sedulous by nature to indite
 Wars, hitherto the only argument

Heroic deemed, chief maistrise to dissect
 With long and tedious havoc fabled knights 30
 In battles feigned (the better fortitude
 Of patience and heroic martyrdom
 Unsung), or to describe races and games,
 Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,
 Impreses quaint, caparisons and steeds, 35
 Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
 At joust and tournament; then marshalled feast
 Served up in hall with sewers and seneshals:
 The skill of artifice or office mean;
 Not that which justly gives heroic name 40
 To person or to poem! Me, of these
 Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument
 Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
 That name, unless an age too late, or cold
 Climat, or years, damp my intended wing 45
 Depressed; and much they may if all be mine,
 Not Hers who brings it nightly to my ear.
 The Sun was sunk, and after him the Star
 Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring
 Twilight upon the Earth, short arbiter 50
 'Twixt day and night, and now from end to end
 Night's hemisphere had veiled the horizon round,
 When Satan, who late fled before the threats
 Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved
 In meditated fraud and malice, bent 55
 On Man's destruction, maugre what might hap
 Of heavier on himself, fearless returned.
 By night he fled, and at midnight returned
 From compassing the Earth—cautious of day
 Since Uriel, Regent of the Sun, descried 60
 His entrance, and forwarned the Cherubim
 That kept their watch. Thence, full of anguish, driven,
 The space of seven continued nights he rode
 With darkness—thrice the equinoctial line
 He circled, four times crossed the car of Night 65
 From pole to pole, traversing each colure—
 On the eighth returned, and on the coast averse
 From entrance or cherubic watch by stealth
 Found unsuspected way. There was a place
 (Now not, though Sin, not Time, first wraught the change) 70
 Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise,
 Into a gulf shot under ground, till part
 Rose up a fountain by the Tree of Life.
 In with the river sunk, and with it rose,

Satan, involved in rising mist; then sought 75
 Where to lie hid. Sea he had searched and land
 From Eden over Pontus, and the Pool
 Mæotis, up beyond the river Ob;
 Downward as far Antartic; and, in length,
 West from Orontes to the ocean barred 80
 At Darien, thence to the land where flows
 Ganges and Indus. Thus the orb he roamed
 With narrow search, and with inspection deep
 Considered every creature, which of all
 Most opportune might serve his wiles, and found 85
 The Serpent subtlest beast of all the field.
 Him, after long debate, irresolute
 Of thoughts revolved, his final sentence chose
 Fit vessel, fittest Imp of fraud, in whom
 To enter, and his dark suggestions hide 90
 From sharpest sight; for in the wily snake
 Whatever sleights none would suspicious mark
 As from his wit and native subtlety
 Proceeding, which, in other beasts observed,
 Doubt might beget of diabolic power 95
 Active within beyond the sense of brute.
 Thus he resolved, but first from inward grief
 His bursting passion into plaints thus poured:—
 “O Earth, how like to Heaven, if not preferred
 More justly, seat worthier of Gods, as built 100
 With second thoughts, reforming what was old!
 For what God, after better, worse would build?
 Terrestrial Heaven, danced round by other Heavens,
 That shine, yet bear their bright officious lamps,
 Light above light, for thee alone, as seems, 105
 In thee concentrating all their precious beams
 Of sacred influence! As God in Heaven
 Is centre, yet extends to all, so thou
 Centring receiv’st from all those orbs; in thee,
 Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears, 110
 Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth
 Of creatures animate with gradual life
 Of growth, sense, reason, all summed up in Man.
 With what delight could I have walked thee round,
 If I could joy in aught—sweet interchange 115
 Of hill and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,
 Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crowned,
 Rocks, dens, and caves! But I in none of these
 Find place or refuge; and the more I see
 Pleasures about me, so much more I feel 120

Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
 Of contraries; all good to me becomes
 Bane, and in Heaven much worse would be my state.
 But neither here seek I, nor in Heaven,
 To dwell, unless by maistring Heaven's Supreme; *125*
 Nor hope to be myself less miserable
 By what I seek, but others to make such
 As I, though thereby worse to me redound.
 For only in destroying I find ease
 To my relentless thoughts; and him destroyed, *130*
 Or won to what may work his utter loss,
 For whom all this was made, all this will soon
 Follow, as to him linked in weal or woe:
 In woe then, that destruction wide may range!
 To me shall be the glory sole among *135*
 The Infernal Powers, in one day to have marred
 What he, Almighty styled, six nights and days
 Continued making, and who knows how long
 Before had been contriving? though perhaps
 Not longer than since I in one night freed *140*
 From servitude inglorious well nigh half
 The Angelic Name, and thinner left the throng
 Of his adorers. He, to be avenged,
 And to repair his numbers thus impaired—
 Whether such virtue, spent of old, now failed *145*
 More Angels to create (if they at least
 Are his created), or to spite us more—
 Determined to advance into our room
 A creature formed of earth, and him endow,
 Exalted from so base original, *150*
 With heavenly spoils, our spoils. What he decreed
 He effected; Man he made, and for him built
 Magnificent this World, and Earth his seat,
 Him Lord pronounced, and, O indignity!
 Subjected to his service Angel-wings *155*
 And flaming ministers, to watch and tend
 Their earthly charge. Of these the vigilance
 I dread, and to elude, thus wrapt in mist
 Of midnight vapour, glide obscure, and pry
 In every bush and brake, where hap may find *160*
 The Serpent sleeping, in whose mazy folds
 To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.
 O foul descent! that I, who erst contended
 With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
 Into a beast, and, mixed with bestial slime, *165*
 This essence to incarnate and imbrute,

That to the highth of Deity aspired!
 But what will not ambition and revenge
 Descend to? Who aspires must down as low
 As high he soared, obnoxious, first or last, 170
 To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
 Bitter ere long back on itself recoils.
 Let it; I reck not, so it light well aimed,
 Since higher I fall short, on him who next
 Provokes my envy, this new favourite 175
 Of Heaven, this Man of Clay, son of despite,
 Whom, us the more to spite, his Maker raised
 From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid.”
 So saying, through each thicket, dank or dry,
 Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on 180
 His midnight search, where soonest he might find
 The Serpent. Him fast sleeping soon he found,
 In labyrinth of many a round self-rowled,
 His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles:
 Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den: 185
 Nor nocent yet, but on the grassy herb,
 Fearless, unfeared, he slept. In at his mouth
 The Devil entered, and his brutal sense.
 In heart or head, possessing soon inspired
 With act intelligential; but his sleep 190
 Disturbed not, waiting close the approach of morn.
 Now, whenas sacred light began to dawn
 In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed
 Their morning incense, when all things that breathe
 From the Earth’s great altar send up silent praise 195
 To the Creator, and his nostrils fill
 With grateful smell, forth came the human pair,
 And joined their vocal worship to the quire
 Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake
 The season, prime for sweetest scents and airs; 200
 Then com’ mune how that day they best may ply
 Their growing work—for much their work outgrew
 The hands’ dispatch of two gardening so wide:
 And Eve first to her husband thus began:—
 “Adam, well may we labour still to dress 205
 This Garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flower,
 Our pleasant task enjoined; but, till more hands
 Aid us, the work under our labour grows,
 Luxurious by restraint: what we by day
 Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind, 210
 One night or two with wanton growth derides,
 Tending to wild. Thou, therefore, now advise,

Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present.
 Let us divide our labours—thou where choice
 Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind 215
 The woodbine round this arbour, or direct
 The clasping ivy where to climb; while I
 In yonder spring of roses intermixed
 With myrtle find what to redress till noon.
 For, while so near each other thus all day 220
 Our task we choose, what wonder if so near
 Looks intervene and smiles, or objects new
 Casual discourse draw on, which intermits
 Our day's work, brought to little, though begun
 Early, and the hour of supper comes unearned!" 225
 To whom mild answer Adam thus returned:—
 "Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond
 Compare above all living creatures dear!
 Well hast thou motioned, well thy thoughts implored
 How we might best fulfil the work which here 230
 God hath assigned us, nor of me shalt pass
 Unpraised; for nothing lovelier can be found
 In woman than to study household good,
 And good works in her husband to promote.
 Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed 235
 Labour as to debar us when we need
 Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
 Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
 Of looks and smiles; for smiles from reason flow
 To brute denied, and are of love the food— 240
 Love, not the lowest end of human life.
 For not to irksome toil, but to delight,
 He made us, and delight to reason joined.
 These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint hands
 Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide 245
 As we need walk, till younger hands ere long
 Assist us. But, if much converse perhaps
 Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield;
 For solitude sometimes is best society,
 And short retirement urges sweet return. 250
 But other doubt possesses me, lest harm
 Befall thee, severed from me; for thou know'st
 What hath been warned us—what malicious foe,
 Envyng our happiness, and of his own
 Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame 255
 By sly assault and somewhere nigh at hand
 Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find
 His wish and best advantage, us asunder,

Hopeless to circumvent us joined, where each
 To other speedy aid might lend at need. 260
 Whether his first design be to withdraw
 Our fealty from God, or to disturb
 Conjugal love—than which perhaps no bliss
 Enjoyed by us excites his envy more—
 Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side 265
 That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.
 The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
 Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
 Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.”
 To whom the virgin majesty of Eve, 270
 As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,
 With sweet austere composure thus replied:—
 “Offspring of Heaven and Earth, and all Earth’s lord!
 That such an Enemy we have, who seeks
 Our ruin, both by thee informed I learn, 275
 And from the parting Angel overheard,
 As in a shady nook I stood behind,
 Just then returned at shut of evening flowers.
 But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
 To God or thee, because we have a foe 280
 May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
 His violence thou fear’st not, being such
 As we, not capable of death or pain,
 Can either not receive, or can repel.
 His fraud is, then, thy fear; which plain infers 285
 Thy equal fear that my firm faith and love
 Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced:
 Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy breast,
 Adam! misthought of her to thee so dear?”
 To whom, with healing words, Adam replied:— 290
 “Daughter of God and Man, immortal Eve!—
 For such thou art, from sin and blame entire—
 Not diffident of thee do I dissuade
 Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid
 The attempt itself, intended by our Foe. 295
 For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
 The tempted with dishonour foul, supposed
 Not incorruptible of faith, not proof
 Against temptation. Thou thyself with scorn
 And anger wouldst resent the offered wrong, 300
 Though ineffectual found; misdeem not, then,
 If such affront I labour to avert
 From thee alone, which on us both at once
 The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare;

Or, daring, first on me the assault shall light. 305
 Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn—
 Subtle he needs must be who could seduce
 Angels—nor think superfluous others' aid.
 I from the influence of thy looks receive
 Access in every virtue—in thy sight 310
 More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
 Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
 Shame to be overcome or overreached,
 Would utmost vigour raise, and raised unite.
 Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel 315
 When I am present, and thy trial choose
 With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?"
 So spake domestic Adam in his care
 And matrimonial love; but Eve, who thought
 Less attributed to her faith sincere, 320
 Thus her reply with accent sweet renewed:—
 "If this be our condition, thus to dwell
 In narrow circuit straitened by a Foe,
 Subtle or violent, we not endued
 Single with like defence wherever met, 325
 How are we happy, still in fear of harm?
 But harm precedes not sin: only our Foe
 Tempting affronts us with his foul esteem
 Of our integrity: his foul esteem
 Sticks no dishonour on our front, but turns 330
 Foul on himself; then wherefore shunned or feared
 By us, who rather double honour gain
 From his surmise proved false, find peace within,
 Favour from Heaven, our witness, from the event?
 And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed 335
 Alone, without exterior help sustained?
 Let us not then suspect our happy state
 Left so imperfect by the Maker wise
 As not secure to single or combined.
 Frail is our happiness, if this be so; 340
 And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed."
 To whom thus Adam fervently replied:—
 "O Woman, best are all things as the will
 Of God ordained them; his creating hand
 Nothing imperfect or deficient left 345
 Of all that he created—much less Man,
 Or aught that might his happy state secure,
 Secure from outward force. Within himself
 The danger lies, yet lies within his power;
 Against his will he can receive no harm. 350

But God left free the Will; for what obeys
 Reason is free; and Reason he made right,
 But bid her well beware, and still erect,
 Lest, by some fair appearing good surprised,
 She dictate false, and misinform the Will 355
 To do what God expressly hath forbid.
 Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins
 That I should mind thee oft; and mind thou me,
 Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve,
 Since Reason not impossibly may meet 360
 Some specious object by the foe suborned,
 And fall into deception unaware,
 Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warned.
 Seek not temptation, then, which to avoid
 Were better, and most likely if from me 365
 Thou sever not: trial will come unsought.
 Wouldst thou approve thy constancy, approve
 First thy obedience; the other who can know,
 Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?
 But, if thou think trial unsought may find 370
 Us both securer than thus warned thou seem'st,
 Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more.
 Go in thy native innocence; rely
 On what thou hast of virtue; summon all;
 For God towards thee hath done his part: do thine." 375
 So spake the Patriarch of Mankind; but Eve
 Persisted; yet submissive, though last, replied:—
 "With thy permission, then, and thus forewarned,
 Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
 Touched only, that our trial, when least sought, 380
 May find us both perhaps far less prepared,
 The willinger I go, nor much expect
 A Foe so proud will first the weaker seek;
 So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse."
 Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand 385
 Soft she withdrew, and, like a wood—nymph light,
 Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train,
 Betook her to the groves, but Delia's self
 In gait surpassed and goddess-like deport,
 Though not as she with bow and quiver armed, 390
 But with such gardening tools as Art, yet rude,
 Guiltless of fire had formed, or Angels brought.
 To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorned,
 Likest she seemed—Pomona when she fled
 Vertumnus—or to Ceres in her prime, 395
 Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.

Her long with ardent look his eye pursued
 Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
 Oft he to her his charge of quick return
 Repeated; she to him as oft engaged 400
 To be returned by noon amid the bower,
 And all things in best order to invite
 Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.
 O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve,
 Of thy presumed return! event perverse! 405
 Thou never from that hour in Paradise
 Found'st either sweet repast or sound repose;
 Such ambush, hid among sweet flowers and shades,
 Waited, with hellish rancour imminent,
 To intercept thy way, or send thee back 410
 Despoiled of innocence, of faith, of bliss.
 For now, and since first break of dawn, the Fiend,
 Mere Serpent in appearance, forth was come,
 And on his quest where likeliest he might find
 The only two of mankind, but in them 415
 The whole included race, his purposed prey.
 In bower and field he sought, where any tuft
 Of grove or garden-plot more pleasant lay,
 Their tendance or plantation for delight;
 By fountain or by shady rivulet 420
 He sought them both, but wished his hap might find
 Eve separate; he wished, but not with hope
 Of what so seldom chanced, when to his wish,
 Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
 Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood, 425
 Half-spied, so thick the roses bushing round
 About her glowed, oft stooping to support
 Each flower of tender stalk, whose head, though gay
 Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold,
 Hung drooping unsustained. Them she upstays 430
 Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while
 Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,
 From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.
 Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed
 Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm; 435
 Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen
 Among thick-woven arborets, and flowers
 Imbordered on each bank, the hand of Eve:
 Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned
 Or of revived Adonis, or renowned 440
 Alcinoüs, host of old Laertes' son,
 Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king

Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.
 Much he the place admired, the person more.
 As one who, long in populous city pent, 445
 Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
 Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
 Among the pleasant villages and farms
 Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight—
 The smell of grain, or teded grass, or kine, 450
 Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound—
 If chance with nymph-like step fair virgin pass,
 What pleasing seemed for her now pleases more,
 She most, and in her look sums all delight:
 Such pleasure took the Serpent to behold 455
 This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve
 Thus early, thus alone. Her heavenly form
 Angelic, but more soft and feminine,
 Her graceful innocence, her every air
 Of gesture or least action, overawed 460
 His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved
 His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought.
 That space the Evil One abstracted stood
 From his own evil, and for the time remained
 Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed, 465
 Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.
 But the hot hell that always in him burns,
 Though in mid Heaven, soon ended his delight,
 And tortures him now more, the more he sees
 Of pleasure not for him ordained. Then soon 470
 Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts
 Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites:—
 “Thoughts, whither have ye led me? with what sweet
 Compulsion thus transported to forget
 What hither brought us? hate, not love, nor hope 475
 Of Paradise for Hell, here to taste
 Of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy,
 Save what is in destroying; other joy
 To me is lost. Then let me not let pass
 Occasion which now smiles. Behold alone 480
 The Woman, opportune to all attempts—
 Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
 Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
 And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
 Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould; 485
 Foe not formidable, exempt from wound—
 I not; so much hath Hell debased, and pain
 Infeebled me, to what I was in Heaven.

She fair, divinely fair, fit love for Gods,
 Not terrible, though terror be in love, 490
 And beauty, not approached by stronger hate,
 Hate stronger under show of love well feigned—
 The way which to her ruin now I tend.”
 So spake the Enemy of Mankind, enclosed
 In serpent, inmate bad, and toward Eve 495
 Addressed his way—not with indented wave,
 Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
 Circular base of rising folds, that towered
 Fold above fold, a surging maze; his head
 Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes; 500
 With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
 Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
 Floated redundant. Pleasing was his shape
 And lovely; never since the serpent kind
 Lovelier—not those that in Illyria changed 505
 Hermione and Cadmus, or the God
 In Epidaurus; nor to which transformed
 Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline, was seen,
 He with Olympias, this with her who bore
 Scipio, the highth of Rome. With tract oblique 510
 At first, as one who sought access but feared
 To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.
 As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought
 Nigh river’s mouth or foreland, where the wind
 Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail, 515
 So varied he, and of his tortuous train
 Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
 To lure her eye. She, busied, heard the sound
 Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used
 To such disport before her through the field 520
 From every beast, more duteous at her call
 Than at Circean call the herd disguised.
 He, bolder now, uncalled before her stood,
 But as in gaze admiring. Oft he bowed
 His turret crest and sleek enamelled neck, 525
 Fawning, and licked the ground whereon she trod.
 His gentle dumb expression turned at length
 The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad
 Of her attention gained, with serpent-tongue
 Organic, or impulse of vocal air, 530
 His fraudulent temptation thus began:—
 “Wonder not, sovran mistress (if perhaps
 Thou canst who art sole wonder), much less arm
 Thy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain,

Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze 535
 Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feared
 Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.
 Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
 Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
 By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore, 540
 With ravishment beheld—there best beheld
 Where universally admired. But here,
 In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
 Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
 Half what in thee is fair, one man except, 545
 Who sees thee (and what is one?) who shouldst be seen
 A Goddess among Gods, adored and served
 By Angels numberless, thy daily train?”
 So glozed the Tempter, and his proem tuned.
 Into the heart of Eve his words made way, 550
 Though at the voice much marvelling; at length,
 Not unamazed, she thus in answer spake:—
 “What may this mean? Language of Man pronounced
 By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed!
 The first at least of these I thought denied 555
 To beasts, whom God on their creation-day
 Created mute to all articulate sound;
 The latter I demur, for in their looks
 Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.
 Thee, Serpent, subtlest beast of all the field 560
 I knew, but not with human voice endued;
 Redouble, then, this miracle, and say,
 How cam’st thou speakable of mute, and how
 To me so friendly grown above the rest
 Of brutal kind that daily are in sight: 565
 Say, for such wonder claims attention due.”
 To whom the guileful Tempter thus replied:—
 “Empress of this fair World, resplendent Eve!
 Easy to me it is to tell thee all
 What thou command’st, and right thou shouldst be obeyed. 570
 I was at first as other beasts that graze
 The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,
 As was my food, nor aught but food discerned
 Or sex, and apprehended nothing high:
 Till on a day, roving the field, I chanced 575
 A goodly tree far distant to behold,
 Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mixed,
 Ruddy and gold. In nearer drew to gaze;
 When from the boughs a savoury odour blown,
 Grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense 580

Than smell of sweetest fennel, or the teats
 Of ewe or goat dropping with milk at even,
 Unsucked of lamb or kid, that tend their play.
 To satisfy the sharp desire I had
 Of tasting those fair Apples, I resolved 585
 Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once,
 Powerful persuaders, quickened at the scent
 Of that alluring fruit, urged me so keen.
 About the mossy trunk I wound me soon;
 For, high from ground, the branches would require 590
 Thy utmost reach, or Adam's; round the Tree
 All other beasts that saw, with like desire
 Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.
 Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung
 Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill 595
 I spared not; for such pleasure till that hour
 At feed or fountain never had I found.
 Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
 Strange alteration in me, to degree
 Of Reason in my inward powers, and Speech 600
 Wanted not long, though to this shape retained.
 Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
 I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind
 Considered all things visible in Heaven,
 Or Earth, or Middle, all things fair and good. 605
 But all that fair and good in thy Divine
 Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray,
 United I beheld—no fair to thine
 Equivalent or second; which compelled
 Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come 610
 And gaze, and worship thee of right declared
 Sovran of creatures, universal Dame!"
 So talked the spirited sly Snake; and Eve,
 Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied:—
 "Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt 615
 The virtue of that Fruit, in thee first proved.
 But say, where grows the Tree? from hence how far?
 For many are the trees of God that grow
 In Paradise, and various, yet unknown
 To us; in such abundance lies our choice 620
 As leaves a greater store of fruit untouched,
 Still hanging incorruptible, till men
 Grow up to their provision, and more hands
 Help to disburden Nature of her bearth."
 To whom the wily Adder, blithe and glad;— 625
 "Empress, the way is ready, and not long—

Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,
 Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past
 Of blowing myrrh and balm. If thou accept
 My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon.” 630
 “Lead, then,” said Eve. He, leading, swiftly rowled
 In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
 To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
 Brightens his crest. As when a wandering fire,
 Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night 635
 Condenses, and the cold invirons round,
 Kindled through agitation to a flame
 (Which oft, they say, some evil Spirit attends),
 Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
 Misleads the amazed night-wanderer from his way 640
 To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,
 There swallowed up and lost, from succour far:
 So glistered the dire Snake, and into fraud
 Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the Tree
 Of Prohibition, root of all our woe; 645
 Which when she saw, thus to her guide she spake:—
 “Serpent, we might have spared our coming hither,
 Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,
 The credit of whose virtue rest with thee—
 Wondrous, indeed, if cause of such effects! 650
 But of this tree we may not taste nor touch;
 God so commanded, and left that command
 Sole daughter of his voice: the rest, we live
 Law to ourselves; our Reason is our Law.”
 To whom the Tempter guilefully replied:— 655
 “Indeed! Hath God then said that of the fruit
 Of all these garden-trees ye shall not eat,
 Yet lords declared of all in Earth or Air?”
 To whom thus Eve, yet sinless:—“Of the fruit
 Of each tree in the garden we may eat; 660
 But of the fruit of this fair Tree, amidst
 The Garden, God hath said, ‘Ye shall not eat
 Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die.’“
 She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold
 The Tempter, but, with shew of zeal and love 665
 To Man, and indignation at his wrong,
 New part puts on, and, as to passion moved,
 Fluctuates disturbed, yet comely, and in act
 Raised, as of some great matter to begin.
 As when of old some orator renowned 670
 In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence
 Flourished, since mute, to some great cause addressed,

Stood in himself collected, while each part,
 Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue
 Sometimes in highth began, as no delay 675
 Of preface brooking through his zeal of right:
 So standing, moving, or to highth upgrown,
 The Tempter, all impassioned, thus began:—
 “O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving Plant,
 Mother of science! now I feel thy power 680
 Within me clear, not only to discern
 Things in their causes, but to trace the ways
 Of highest agents, deemed however wise.
 Queen of this Universe! do not believe
 Those rigid threats of death. Ye shall not die. 685
 How should ye? By the Fruit? it gives you life
 To knowledge. By the Threatener? look on me,
 Me who have touched and tasted, yet both live,
 And life more perfect have attained than Fate
 Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot. 690
 Shall that be shut to Man which to the Beast
 Is open? or will God incense his ire
 For such a petty trespass, and not praise
 Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
 Of death denounced, whatever thing Death be, 695
 Deterred not from achieving what might lead
 To happier life, knowledge of Good and Evil?
 Of good, how just! of evil—if what is evil
 Be real, why not known, since easier shunned?
 God, therefore, cannot hurt ye and be just; 700
 Not just, not God; not feared then, nor obeyed:
 Your fear itself of death removes the fear.
 Why, then, was this forbid? Why but to awe,
 Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
 His worshipers? He knows that in the day 705
 Ye eat thereof your eyes, that seem so clear,
 Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
 Opened and cleared, and ye shall be as Gods,
 Knowing both good and evil, as they know.
 That ye should be as Gods, since I as Man, 710
 Internal Man, is but proportion meet—
 I, of brute, human; ye, of human, Gods.
 So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off
 Human, to put on Gods—death to be wished,
 Though threatened, which no worse than this can bring! 715
 And what are Gods, that Man may not become
 As they, participating godlike food?
 The Gods are first, and that advantage use

On our belief, that all from them proceeds.
 I question it; for this fair Earth I see, 720
 Warmed by the Sun, producing every kind;
 Them nothing. If they all things, who enclosed
 Knowledge of Good and Evil in this Tree,
 That whoso eats thereof forthwith attains
 Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies 725
 The offence, that Man should thus attain to know?
 What can your knowledge hurt him, or this Tree
 Impart against his will, if all be his?
 Or is it envy? and can envy dwell
 In Heavenly breasts? These, these and many more 730
 Causes import your need of this fair Fruit.
 Goddess humane, reach, then, and freely taste!”
 He ended; and his words, replete with guile,
 Into her heart too easy entrance won.
 Fixed on the Fruit she gazed, which to behold 735
 Might tempt alone; and in her ears the sound
 Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd
 With reason, to her seeming, and with truth.
 Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
 An eager appetite, raised by the smell 740
 So savoury of that Fruit, which with desire,
 Inclined now grown to touch or taste,
 Solicited her longing eye; yet first,
 Pausing a while, thus to herself she mused:—
 “Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of Fruits, 745
 Though kept from Man, and worthy to be admired,
 Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay
 Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
 The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise.
 Thy praise he also who forbids thy use 750
 Conceals not from us, naming thee the Tree
 Of Knowledge, knowledge both of Good and Evil;
 Forbids us then to taste. But his forbidding
 Commends thee more, while it infers the good
 By thee communicated, and our want; 755
 For good unknown sure is not bad, or, had
 And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
 In plain, then, what forbids he but to know?
 Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise!
 Such prohibitions bind not. But, if Death 760
 Bind us with after-bands, what profits then
 Our inward freedom? In the day we eat
 Of this fair Fruit, our doom is we shall die!
 How dies the Serpent? He hath eaten, and lives,

And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns, 765
 Irrational till then. For us alone
 Was death invented? or to us denied
 This intellectual food, for beasts reserved?
 For beasts it seems; yet that one beast which first
 Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy 770
 The good befallen him, author unsuspect,
 Friendly to Man, far from deceit or guile.
 What fear I, then? rather, what know to fear
 Under this ignorance of Good and Evil,
 Of God or Death, of law or penalty? 775
 Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,
 Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
 Of virtue to make wise. What hinders, then,
 To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?"
 So saying, her rash hand in evil hour 780
 Forth-reaching to the Fruit, she plucked, she eat.
 Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,
 Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
 That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
 The guilty Serpent, and well might, for Eve, 785
 Intent now only her taste, naught else
 Regarded; such delight till then, as seemed,
 In fruit she never tasted, whether true,
 Or fancied so through expectation high
 Of knowledge; nor was Godhead from her thought. 790
 Greedily she ingorged without restraint,
 And knew not eating death. Sate at length,
 And lightened as with wine, jocond and boon,
 Thus to herself she pleasingly began:—
 "O sovran, virtuous, precious of all trees 795
 In Paradise! of operation blest
 To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed,
 And thy fair Fruit let hang, as to no end
 Created! but henceforth my early care,
 Not without song, each morning, and due praise, 800
 Shall tend thee, and the fertil burden ease
 Of thy full branches, offered free to all;
 Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature
 In knowledge, as the Gods who all things know,
 Though others envy what they cannot give— 805
 For, had the gift been theirs, it had not here
 Thus grown! Experience, next to thee I owe,
 Best guide: not following thee, I had remained
 In ignorance; thou open'st Wisdom's way,
 And giv'st access, though secret she retire. 810

And I perhaps am secret: Heaven is high—
 High, and remote to see from thence distinct
 Each thing on Earth; and other care perhaps
 May have diverted from continual watch
 Our great Forbidder, safe with all his Spies 815
 About him. But to Adam in what sort
 Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known
 As yet my change, and give him to partake
 Full happiness with me, or rather not,
 But keep the odds of knowledge in my power 820
 Without copartner? so to add what wants
 In female sex, the more to draw his love,
 And render me more equal, and perhaps—
 A thing not undesirable—sometime
 Superior; for, inferior, who is free? 825
 This may be well; but what if God have seen,
 And death ensue? Then I shall be no more;
 And Adam, wedded to another Eve,
 Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct!
 A death to think! Confirmed, then, I resolve 830
 Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe.
 So dear I love him that with him all deaths
 I could endure, without him live no life.”
 So saying, from the Tree her step she turned,
 But first low reverence done, as to the Power 835
 That dwelt within, whose presence had infused
 Into the plant sciential sap, derived
 From nectar, drink of Gods. Adam the while,
 Waiting desirous her return, had wove
 Of choicest flowers a garland, to adorn 840
 Her tresses, and her rural labours crown,
 As reapers oft are wont their harvest-queen.
 Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new
 Solace in her return, so long delayed;
 Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill, 845
 Misgave him. He the faltering measure felt,
 And forth to meet her went, the way she took
 That morn when first they parted. By the Tree
 Of Knowledge he must pass; there he her met,
 Scarce from the Tree returning; in her hand 850
 A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smiled,
 New gathered, and ambrosial smell diffused.
 To him she hasted; in her face excuse
 Came prologue, and apology to prompt,
 Which, with bland words at will, she thus addressed:— 855
 “Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay?

Thee I have missed, and thought it long, deprived
 Thy presence—agony of love till now
 Not felt, nor shall be twice; for never more
 Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought, 860
 The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange
 Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear.
 This Tree is not, as we are told, a Tree
 Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
 Opening the way, but of divine effect 865
 To open eyes, and make them Gods who taste;
 And hath been tasted such. The Serpent wise,
 Or not restrained as we, or not obeying,
 Hath eaten of the Fruit, and is become
 Not dead, as we are threatened, but thenceforth 870
 Endued with human voice and human sense,
 Reasoning to admiration, and with me
 Persuasively hath so prevailed that I
 Have also tasted, and have also found
 The effects to correspond—opener mine eyes, 875
 Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart,
 And growing up to Godhead; which for thee
 Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise.
 For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss;
 Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon. 880
 Thou, therefore, also taste, that equal lot
 May join us, equal joy, as equal love;
 Lest, thou not tasting, different degree
 Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce
 Deity for thee, when fate will not permit.” 885
 Thus Eve with countenance blithe her story told;
 But in her cheek distemper flushing glowed.
 On the other side, Adam, soon as he heard
 The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,
 Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill 890
 Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed.
 From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
 Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed.
 Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length
 First to himself he inward silence broke:— 895
 “O fairest of Creation, last and best
 Of all God’s works, creature in whom excelled
 Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,
 Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!
 How art thou lost! how on a sudden lost, 900
 Defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote!
 Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress

The strict forbiddance, how to violate
 The sacred Fruit forbidden? Some cursed fraud 905
 Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,
 And me with thee hath ruined; for with thee
 Certain my resolution is to die.
 How can I live without thee? how forgo
 Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly joined, 910
 To live again in these wild woods forlorn?
 Should God create another Eve, and I
 Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
 Would never from my heart. No, no! I feel
 The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
 Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state 915
 Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.”
 So having said, as one from sad dismay
 Recomforted, and, after thoughts disturbed,
 Submitting to what seemed remediless,
 Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turned:— 920
 “Bold deed thou hast presumed, adventurous Eve,
 And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared
 Had it been only coveting to eye
 That sacred Food, sacred to abstinence;
 Much more to taste it, under ban to touch. 925
 But past who can recall, or done undo?
 Not God Omnipotent, nor Fate! Yet so
 Perhaps thou shalt not die; perhaps the fact
 Is not so hainous now-foretasted Fruit,
 Profaned first by the Serpent, by him first 930
 Made common and unhallowed ere our taste,
 Nor yet on him found deadly. He yet lives—
 Lives, as thou saidst, and gains to live, as Man,
 Higher degree of life: inducement strong
 To us, as likely, tasting, to attain 935
 Proportional ascent; which cannot be
 But to be Gods, or Angels, Demi-gods.
 Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,
 Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy
 Us, his prime creatures, dignified so high, 940
 Set over all his works; which, in our fall,
 For us created, needs with us must fail,
 Dependent made. So God shall uncreate,
 Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour lose—
 Not well conceived of God; who, though his power 945
 Creation could repeat, yet would be loth
 Us to abolish, lest the Adversary
 Triumph and say: ‘Fickle their state whom God

Most favours; who can please him long? Me first
 He ruined, now Mankind; whom will he next?'— 950
 Matter of scorn not to be given the Foe.
 However, I with thee have fixed my lot,
 Certain to undergo like doom. If death
 Consort with thee, death is to me as life;
 So forcible within my heart I feel 955
 The bond of Nature draw me to my own—
 My own is thee; for what thou art is mine.
 Our state cannot be severed; we are one,
 One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself.”
 So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied:— 960
 “O glorious trial of exceeding love,
 Illustrious evidence, example high!
 Ingaging me to emulate; but, short
 Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
 Adam? from whose dear side I boast me sprung, 965
 And gladly of our union hear thee speak,
 One heart, one soul in both; whereof good proof
 This day affords, declaring thee resolved,
 Rather than death, or aught than death more dread,
 Shall separate us, linked in love so dear, 970
 To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,
 If any be, of tasting this fair Fruit;
 Whose virtue (for of good still good proceeds,
 Direct, or by occasion) hath presented
 This happy trial of thy love, which else 975
 So eminently never had been known.
 Were it I thought death menaced would ensue
 This my attempt, I would sustain alone
 The worst, and not persuade thee—rather die
 Deserted than oblige thee with a fact 980
 Pernicious to thy peace, chiefly assured
 Remarkably so late of thy so true,
 So faithful love unequalled. But I feel
 Far otherwise the event—not death, but life
 Augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys, 985
 Taste so divine that what of sweet before
 Hath touched my sense flat seems to this and harsh.
 On my experience, Adam, freely taste,
 And fear of death deliver to the winds.”
 So saying, she embraced him, and for joy 990
 Tenderly wept, much won that he his love
 Had so ennobled as of choice to incur
 Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.
 In recompense (for such compliance bad

Such recompense best merits), from the bough 995
 She gave him of that fair enticing Fruit
 With liberal hand. He scrupled not to eat,
 Against his better knowledge, not deceived,
 But fondly overcome with female charm.
 Earth trembled from her entrails, as again 1000
 In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan;
 Sky loured, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
 Wept at completing of the mortal Sin
 Original; while Adam took no thought,
 Eating his fill, nor Eve to iterate 1005
 Her former trespass feared, the more to soothe
 Him with her loved society; that now,
 As with new wine intoxicated both,
 They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
 Divinity within them breeding wings 1010
 Wherewith to scorn the Earth. But that false Fruit
 Far other operation first displayed,
 Carnal desire inflaming. He on Eve
 Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him
 As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn, 1015
 Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move:—
 “Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste
 And elegant—of sapience no small part;
 Since to each meaning savour we apply,
 And palate call judicious. I the praise 1020
 Yield thee; so well this day thou hast purveyed.
 Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstained
 From this delightful Fruit, nor known till now
 True relish, tasting. If such pleasure be
 In things to us forbidden, it might be wished 1025
 For this one Tree had been forbidden ten.
 But come; so well refreshed, now let us play,
 As meet is, after such delicious fare;
 For never did thy beauty, since the day
 I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned 1030
 With all perfections, so enflame my sense
 With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now
 Than ever-bounty of this virtuous Tree!”
 So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
 Of amorous intent, well understood 1035
 Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.
 Her hand he seized, and to a shady bank,
 Thick overhead with verdant roof imbowered,
 He led her, nothing loth; flowers were the couch,
 Pansies, and violets, and asphodel, 1040

And hyacinth—Earth's freshest, softest lap.
 There they their fill of love and love's disport
 Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,
 The solace of their sin, till dewy sleep
 Oppressed them, wearied with their amorous play. 1045
 Soon as the force of that fallacious Fruit,
 That with exhilarating vapour bland
 About their spirits had played, and inmost powers
 Made err, was now exhaled, and grosser sleep,
 Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams 1050
 Incumbered, now had left them, up they rose
 As from unrest, and, each the other viewing,
 Soon found their eyes how opened, and their minds
 How darkened. Innocence, that as a veil
 Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone; 1055
 Just confidence, and native righteousness,
 And honour, from about them, naked left
 To guilty Shame: he covered, but his robe
 Uncovered more. So rose the Danite strong,
 Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap 1060
 Of Philistean Dalilah, and waked
 Shorn of his strength; they destitute and bare
 Of all their virtue. Silent, and in face
 Confounded, long they sat, as stricken mute;
 Till Adam, though not less than Eve abashed, 1065
 At length gave utterance to these words constrained:—
 "O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear
 To that false Worm, of whomsoever taught
 To counterfeit Man's voice—true in our fall,
 False in our promised rising; since our eyes 1070
 Opened we find indeed, and find we know
 Both good and evil, good lost and evil got:
 Bad Fruit of Knowledge, if this be to know,
 Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,
 Of innocence, of faith, of purity, 1075
 Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained,
 And in our faces evident the signs
 Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store,
 Even shame, the last of evils; of the first
 Be sure then. How shall I behold the face 1080
 Henceforth of God or Angel, erst with joy
 And rapture so oft beheld? Those Heavenly Shapes
 Will dazzle now this earthly with their blaze
 Insufferably bright. Oh, might I here
 In solitude live savage, in some glade 1085
 Obscured, where highest woods, impenetrable

To star or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad,
 And brown as evening. Cover me, ye pines!
 Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
 Hide me, where I may never see them more! *1090*
 But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
 What best may, for the present, serve to hide
 The parts of each other that seem most
 To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen—
 Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves, together sewed, *1095*
 And girded on our loins, may cover round
 Those middle parts, that this new comer, Shame,
 There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.”
 So counselled he, and both together went
 Into the thickest wood. There soon they choose *1100*
 The fig tree—not that kind for fruit renowned,
 But such, as at this day, to Indians known,
 In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms
 Braunching so broad and long that in the ground
 The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow *1105*
 About the mother tree, a pillared shade
 High overarched, and echoing walks between:
 There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
 Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
 At loop-holes cut through thickest shade. Those leaves *1110*
 They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe,
 And with what skill they had together sewed,
 To gird their waist—vain covering, if to hide
 Their guilt and dreaded shame! O how unlike
 To that first naked glory! Such of late *1115*
 Columbus found the American, so girt
 With feathered cincture, naked else and wild,
 Among the trees on isles and woody shores.
 Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part
 Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind, *1120*
 They sat them down to weep. Nor only tears
 Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within
 Began to rise, high passions—anger, hate,
 Mistrust, suspicion, discord—and shook sore
 Their inward state of mind, calm region once *1125*
 And full of peace, now tost and turbulent:
 For Understanding ruled not, and the Will
 Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
 To sensual Appetite, who, from beneath
 Usurping over sovran Reason, claimed *1130*
 Superior sway. From thus distempered breast
 Adam, estranged in look and altered style,

Speech intermitted thus to Eve renewed:—
 “Would thou hadst hearkened to my words, and stayed
 With me, as I besought thee, when that strange *1135*
 Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn,
 I know not whence possessed thee! We had then
 Remained still happy—not, as now, despoiled
 Of all our good, shamed, naked, miserable!
 Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve *1140*
 The faith they owe; when earnestly they seek
 Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail.”
 To whom, soon moved with touch of blame, thus Eve:—
 “What words have passed thy lips, Adam severe?
 Imput’st thou that to my default, or will *1145*
 Of wandering, as thou call’st it, which who knows
 But might as ill have happened thou being by,
 Or to thyself perhaps? Hadst thou been there,
 Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discerned
 Fraud in the Serpent, speaking as he spake; *1150*
 No ground of enmity between us known
 Why he should mean me ill or seek to harm;
 Was I to have never parted from thy side?
 As good have grown there still, a lifeless rib.
 Being as I am, why didst not thou, the Head, *1155*
 Command me absolutely not to go,
 Going into such danger, as thou saidst?
 Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay,
 Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
 Hadst thou been firm and fixed in thy dissent, *1160*
 Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me.”
 To whom, then first incensed, Adam replied:—
 “Is this the love, is this the recompense
 Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, expressed
 Immutable when thou wert lost, not I— *1165*
 Who might have lived, and joyed immortal bliss,
 Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?
 And am I now upbraided as the cause
 Of thy transgressing? not enough severe,
 It seems, in thy restraint! What could I more? *1170*
 I warned thee, I admonished thee, foretold
 The danger, and the lurking Enemy
 That lay in wait; beyond this had been force,
 And force upon free will hath here no place.
 But confidence then bore thee on, secure *1175*
 Either to meet no danger, or to find
 Matter of glorious trial; and perhaps
 I also erred in overmuch admiring

What seemed in thee so perfect that I thought
No evil durst attempt thee, But I rue *1180*
That error now, which is become my crime,
And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befall
Him who, to worth in women overtrusting,
Lest her will rule: restraint she will not brook;
And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue, *1185*
She first his weak indulgence will accuse.”
Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self—condemning;
And of their vain contest’ appeared no end.