

RISE OF ENGLAND

OLD WESTERN CULTURE READER

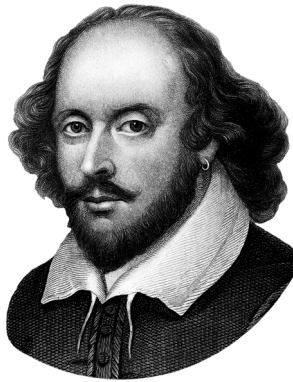
VOLUME 13

RISE OF ENGLAND

OLD WESTERN CULTURE READER

VOLUME 13

Companion to Early Moderns: Rise of England,
a great books curriculum by Roman Roads Press



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MOSCOW, IDAHO

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George Herbert

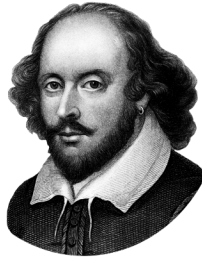
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SONNETS

William Shakespeare

SONNET 3

Look in thy glass and tell the face thou viewest
Now is the time that face should form another;
Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother. 4
For where is she so fair whose unear'd womb
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
Of his self-love, to stop posterity? 8
Thou art thy mother's glass and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime;
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time. 12
But if thou live, remembered not to be,
Die single and thine image dies with thee.

SONNET 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang. 4
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest. 8
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed, whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by. 12
 This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
 To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

SONNET 55

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time. 4
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory. 8
'Gainst death, and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom. 12
 So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
 You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

SONNET 60

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
 So do our minutes hasten to their end;
 Each changing place with that which goes before,
 In sequent toil all forwards do contend. 4
 Nativity, once in the main of light,
 Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
 Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
 And Time that gave doth now his gift confound. 8
 Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
 And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
 Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
 And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow: 12
 And yet to times in hope, my verse shall stand
 Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

SONNET 103

Alack! what poverty my Muse brings forth,
 That having such a scope to show her pride,
 The argument all bare is of more worth
 Than when it hath my added praise beside! 4
 O! blame me not, if I no more can write!
 Look in your glass, and there appears a face
 That over-goes my blunt invention quite,
 Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace. 8
 Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,
 To mar the subject that before was well?
 For to no other pass my verses tend
 Than of your graces and your gifts to tell; 12
 And more, much more, than in my verse can sit,
 Your own glass shows you when you look in it.

SONNET 106

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme,
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights, 4
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have expressed
Even such a beauty as you master now. 8
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And for they looked but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing: 12
 For we, which now behold these present days,
 Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

KING LEAR

William Shakespeare



CHARACTERS

Lear

King of Britain

Goneril

Lear's eldest daughter

Duke of Albany

Goneril's husband

Oswald

Goneril's steward

Regan

Lear's second daughter

Duke of Cornwall

Regan's husband

Cordelia

Lear's youngest daughter

King of France

*Cordelia's suitor and then her
husband*

Duke of Burgundy

Cordelia's suitor

Earl of Kent

Fool

Earl of Gloucester

Edgar

Earl of Gloucester's eldest son

Edmund

*Earl of Gloucester's younger and
illegitimate son*

Curan

*A gentleman of Gloucester's
household*

Old Man

A tenant of Gloucester's

**Various Knights, Gentlemen,
Captains, Herald,
Messengers, and Servants**

ACT I

SCENE I. King Lear's palace.

Enter KENT, GLOUCESTER, and EDMUND

Kent. I thought the king had more affected the
Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Gloucester. It did always seem so to us: but now, in the
division of the kingdom, it appears not which of
the dukes he values most; for equalities are so
weighed, that curiosity in neither can make choice
of either's moiety.

Kent. Is not this your son, my lord?

Gloucester. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge:
I have so often blushed to acknowledge him, 10
that now I am brazed to it.

Kent. I cannot conceive you.

Gloucester. Sir, this young fellow's mother could:
whereupon she grew round-womb'd, and had, indeed,
sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband
for her bed. Do you smell a fault?

Kent. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it
being so proper.

Gloucester. But I have, sir, a son by order of law,
some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in 20
my account: though this knave came something
saucily into the world before he was sent for,
yet was his mother fair; there was good sport
at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged.
—Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edmund. No, my lord.

Gloucester. My lord of Kent: remember him hereafter
as my honorable friend.

Edmund. My services to your lordship.

Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

30

Edmund. Sir, I shall study deserving.

Gloucester. He hath been out nine years,
and away he shall again. The king is coming.

*Sennet. Enter KING LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL,
REGAN, CORDELLA, and ATTENDANTS*

King Lear. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

Gloucester. I shall, my liege.

Exeunt GLOUCESTER and EDMUND

King Lear. Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.

Give me the map there. Know that we have divided
In three our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,
And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,

40

And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters—
 Since now we will divest us both of rule,
 Interest of territory, cares of state— 50
 Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
 That we our largest bounty may extend
 Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,
 Our eldest-born, speak first.

Goneril. Sir, I love you more than words can wield
 the matter;
 Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty;
 Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
 No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;
 As much as child e'er loved, or father found;
 A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable; 60
 Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

Cordelia. [*Aside*]
 What shall Cordelia do?
 Love, and be silent.

King Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
 With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
 With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
 We make thee lady: to thine and Albany's issue
 Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter,
 Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

Regan. Sir, I am made 70
 Of the self-same metal that my sister is,
 And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
 I find she names my very deed of love;
 Only she comes too short: that I profess
 Myself an enemy to all other joys,
 Which the most precious square of sense possesses;

And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love.

Cordelia. [*Aside*]

Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not so; since, I am sure, my love's 80
More ponderous than my tongue.

King Lear. To thee and thine hereditary ever
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom;
No less in space, validity, and pleasure,
Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least; to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interest'd; what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cordelia. Nothing, my lord. 90

King Lear. Nothing!

Cordelia. Nothing.

King Lear. Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

Cordelia. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
According to my bond; nor more nor less.

King Lear. How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a little,
Lest it may mar your fortunes.

Cordelia. Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I 100
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honor you.

Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
 They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
 That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
 Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
 Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
 To love my father all.

King Lear. But goes thy heart with this?

Cordelia. Ay, good my lord. 110

King Lear. So young, and so untender?

Cordelia. So young, my lord, and true.

King Lear. Let it be so; thy truth, then, be thy dower:
 For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
 The mysteries of Hecate, and the night;
 By all the operation of the orbs
 From whom we do exist, and cease to be;
 Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
 Propinquity and property of blood,
 And as a stranger to my heart and me 120
 Hold thee, from this, forever. The barbarous Scythian,
 Or he that makes his generation messes
 To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
 Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and relieved,
 As thou my sometime daughter.

Kent. Good my liege—

King Lear. Peace, Kent!
 Come not between the dragon and his wrath.
 I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
 On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight! 130
 So be my grave my peace, as here I give

Her father's heart from her! Call France; who stirs?
 Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,
 With my two daughters' dowers digest this third:
 Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
 I do invest you jointly with my power,
 Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
 That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,
 With reservation of an hundred knights,
 By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode 140
 Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
 The name, and all the additions to a king;
 The sway, revenue, execution of the rest,
 Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,
 This coronet part betwixt you. [*Giving the crown*]

Kent. Royal Lear,

Whom I have ever honor'd as my king,
 Loved as my father, as my master follow'd,
 As my great patron thought on in my prayers—

King Lear. The bow is bent and drawn,
 make from the shaft.

150

Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade

The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly,
 When Lear is mad. What wilt thou do, old man?
 Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak,
 When power to flattery bows? To plainness honor's bound,
 When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom;
 And, in thy best consideration, cheque
 This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment,
 Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
 Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound 160
 Reverbs no hollowness.

King Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more.

Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thy enemies; nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.

King Lear. Out of my sight!

Kent. See better, Lear; and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye.

King Lear. Now, by Apollo—

Kent. Now, by Apollo, king, 170
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

King Lear. O, vassal! miscreant! [*Laying his hand on his sword*]

Albany and Cornwall. Dear sir, forbear.

Kent. Do:
Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon thy foul disease. Revoke thy doom;
Or, whilst I can vent clamor from my throat,
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

King Lear. Hear me, recreant! 180
On thine allegiance, hear me!
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,
Which we durst never yet, and with strain'd pride
To come between our sentence and our power,
Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,
Our potency made good, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee, for provision
To shield thee from diseases of the world;
And on the sixth to turn thy hated back

Upon our kingdom: if, on the tenth day following
 Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions, 190
 The moment is thy death. Away! by Jupiter,
 This shall not be revoked.

Kent. Fare thee well, king: Sith thus thou wilt appear,
 Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.

[To CORDELLIA]

The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,
 That justly think'st, and hast most rightly said!

[To REGAN and GONERIL]

And your large speeches may your deeds approve,
 That good effects may spring from words of love.
 Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu;
 He'll shape his old course in a country new. 200

Exit

*Flourish. Re-enter GLOUCESTER, with KING of FRANCE,
 DUKE of BURGUNDY, and ATTENDANTS.*

Gloucester. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

King Lear. My lord of Burgundy.
 We first address towards you, who with this king
 Hath rival'd for our daughter: what, in the least,
 Will you require in present dower with her,
 Or cease your quest of love?

Burgundy. Most royal majesty,
 I crave no more than what your highness offer'd,
 Nor will you tender less.

King Lear. Right noble Burgundy, 210
 When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;

But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she stands:
 If aught within that little seeming substance,
 Or all of it, with our displeasure pieced,
 And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,
 She's there, and she is yours.

Burgundy. I know no answer.

King Lear. Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
 Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
 Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath, 220
 Take her, or leave her?

Burgundy. Pardon me, royal sir;
 Election makes not up on such conditions.

King Lear. Then leave her, sir;
 for, by the power that made me,
 I tell you all her wealth.

[To KING of FRANCE]

For you, great king,
 I would not from your love make such a stray,
 To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
 To avert your liking a more worthier way 230
 Than on a wretch whom nature is ashamed
 Almost to acknowledge hers.

King of France. This is most strange,
 That she, that even but now was your best object,
 The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
 Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time
 Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
 So many folds of favor. Sure, her offence
 Must be of such unnatural degree,
 That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection 240

Fall'n into taint: which to believe of her,
Must be a faith that reason without miracle
Could never plant in me.

Cordelia. I yet beseech your majesty—

If for I want that glib and oily art,
To speak and purpose not; since what I well intend,
I'll do't before I speak—that you make known
It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,
No unchaste action, or dishonor'd step,
That hath deprived me of your grace and favor; 250
But even for want of that for which I am richer,
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
As I am glad I have not, though not to have it
Hath lost me in your liking.

King Lear. Better thou

Hadst not been born than not to have pleased me better.

King of France. Is it but this—a tardiness in nature

Which often leaves the history unspoke
That it intends to do? My lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love's not love 260
When it is mingled with regards that stand
Aloof from the entire point. Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

Burgundy. Royal Lear,

Give but that portion which yourself proposed,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

King Lear. Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

Burgundy. I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father

That you must lose a husband. 270

Cordelia. Peace be with Burgundy!

Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

King of France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich,
being poor;

Most choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised!

Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:

Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.

Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect

My love should kindle to inflamed respect.

Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance, 280

Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:

Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy

Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.

Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:

Thou lovest here, a better where to find.

King Lear. Thou hast her, France: let her be thine; for we

Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see

That face of hers again. Therefore be gone

Without our grace, our love, our benison.

Come, noble Burgundy. 290

*Flourish. Exeunt all but KING of FRANCE, GONERIL,
REGAN, and CORDELIA*

King of France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cordelia. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes

Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you are;

And like a sister am most loath to call

Your faults as they are named. Use well our father:

To your professed bosoms I commit him

But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So, farewell to you both.

Regan. Prescribe not us our duties.

300

Goneril. Let your study

Be to content your lord, who hath received you
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

Cordelia. Time shall unfold what plaited cunning hides:

Who cover faults, at last shame them derides.
Well may you prosper!

King of France. Come, my fair Cordelia.

Exeunt KING of FRANCE and CORDELIA

Goneril. Sister, it is not a little I have to say of what

most nearly appertains to us both. I think our
father will hence tonight.

310

Regan. That's most certain, and with you; next month with us.

Goneril. You see how full of change his age is; the

observation we have made of it hath not been
little: he always loved our sister most; and
with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off
appears too grossly.

Regan. 'Tis the infirmity of his age: yet he hath ever

but slenderly known himself.

Goneril. The best and soundest of his time hath been

but rash; then must we look to receive from his age,

320

not alone the imperfections of long-engrafted
condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness
that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

Regan. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from
him as this of Kent's banishment.

Goneril. There is further compliment of leave-taking
between France and him. Pray you, let's hit
together: if our father carry authority with
such dispositions as he bears, this last
surrender of his will but offend us. 330

Regan. We shall further think on't.

Goneril. We must do something, and i' the heat.

Exeunt

SCENE II. The Earl of Gloucester's castle.

Enter EDMUND, with a letter

Edmund. Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-shines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base? 10
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition and fierce quality

Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
 Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
 Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well, then,
 Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
 Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
 As to the legitimate: fine word—legitimate!
 Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
 And my invention thrive, Edmund the base 20
 Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:
 Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter GLOUCESTER

Gloucester. Kent banish'd thus! And France in choler parted!
 And the king gone to-night! Subscribed his power!
 Confined to exhibition! All this done
 Upon the gad!—Edmund, how now! what news?

Edmund. So please your lordship, none. [*Putting up the letter*]

Gloucester. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

Edmund. I know no news, my lord. 30

Gloucester. What paper were you reading?

Edmund. Nothing, my lord.

Gloucester. No? What needed, then, that terrible dispatch
 of it into your pocket? The quality of nothing hath
 not such need to hide itself. Let's see: come,
 if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

Edmund. I beseech you, sir, pardon me: it is a letter
 from my brother, that I have not all o'er-read;

and for so much as I have perused, I find it not
fit for your o'er-looking.

40

Gloucester. Give me the letter, sir.

Edmund. I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The
contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

Gloucester. Let's see, let's see.

Edmund. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote
this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

Gloucester. [*Reads*]

'This policy and reverence of age makes
the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps
our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish
them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage
in the oppression of aged tyranny; who sways, not
as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to
me, that of this I may speak more. If our father
would sleep till I waked him, you should half his
revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your
brother, EDGAR.'

50

Hum—conspiracy!—'Sleep till I waked him—you
should enjoy half his revenue'—My son Edgar!
had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain
to breed it in?—When came this to you?
Who brought it?

60

Edmund. It was not brought me, my lord; there's the
cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the
casement of my closet.

Gloucester. You know the character to be your brother's?

Edmund. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear
it were his; but, in respect of that, I would
fain think it were not.

Gloucester. It is his.

Edmund. It is his hand, my lord; but I hope his heart is 70
not in the contents.

Gloucester. Hath he never heretofore sounded you in this
business?

Edmund. Never, my lord: but I have heard him oft
maintain it to be fit, that, sons at perfect age,
and fathers declining, the father should be as
ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

Gloucester. O villain, villain! His very opinion in the
letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested,
brutish villain! worse than brutish! Go, sirrah,
seek him; I'll apprehend him: abominable villain! 80
Where is he?

Edmund. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please
you to suspend your indignation against my
brother till you can derive from him better
testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain
course; where, if you violently proceed against
him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great
gap in your own honor, and shake in pieces the
heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life
for him, that he hath wrote this to feel my 90
affection to your honor, and to no further
pretence of danger.

Gloucester. Think you so?

Edmund. If your honor judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

Gloucester. He cannot be such a monster—

Edmund. Nor is not, sure.

Gloucester. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and earth! Edmund, seek him out: wind me into him, I pray you: frame the business after your own wisdom. I would unstate myself, to be in a due resolution. 100

Edmund. I will seek him, sir, presently: convey the business as I shall find means and acquaint you withal.

Gloucester. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects: love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked 'twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father: the king falls from bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time: machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his offence, honesty! 'tis strange. 110 120

Exit

Edmund. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that,
 when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeit
 of our own behavior—we make guilty of our
 disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as
 if we were villains by necessity; fools by
 heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and
 treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards, 130
 liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of
 planetary influence; and all that we are evil in,
 by a divine thrusting on: an admirable evasion
 of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish
 disposition to the charge of a star! My
 father compounded with my mother under the
 dragon's tail; and my nativity was under Ursa
 major; so that it follows, I am rough and
 lecherous. Tut, I should have been that I am,
 had the maidenliest star in the firmament 140
 twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar—

Enter EDGAR

And pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old
 comedy: my cue is villainous melancholy, with a
 sigh like Tom o' Bedlam.—O, these eclipses do
 portend these divisions! fa, sol, la, mi.

Edgar. How now, brother Edmund! what serious
 contemplation are you in?

Edmund. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read
 this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

Edgar. Do you busy yourself about that? 150

Edmund. I promise you, the effects he writes of succeed
 unhappily; as of unnaturalness between the child

and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of
ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and
maledictions against king and nobles; needless
diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation
of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edgar. How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

Edmund. Come, come; when saw you my father last?

Edgar. Why, the night gone by. 160

Edmund. Spake you with him?

Edgar. Ay, two hours together.

Edmund. Parted you in good terms? Found you no
displeasure in him by word or countenance?

Edgar. None at all.

Edmund. Bethink yourself wherein you may
have offended
him: and at my entreaty forbear his presence
till some little time hath qualified the heat of
his displeasure; which at this instant so rageth
in him, that with the mischief of your person it 170
would scarcely allay.

Edgar. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edmund. That's my fear. I pray you, have a continent
forbearance till the spied of his rage goes
slower; and, as I say, retire with me to my
lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to
hear my lord speak: pray ye, go; there's my key:
if you do stir abroad, go armed.

Edgar. Armed, brother!

Edmund. Brother, I advise you to the best; go armed: 180
I am no honest man if there be any good meaning
towards you: I have told you what I have seen
and heard; but faintly, nothing like the image
and horror of it: pray you, away.

Edgar. Shall I hear from you anon?

Edmund. I do serve you in this business.

Exit EDGAR.

A credulous father! and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none: on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy! I see the business. 190
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:
All with me's meet that I can fashion fit.

Exit

SCENE III. The Duke of Albany's palace.

Enter GONERIL and OSWALD, her STEWARD

Goneril. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding
of his fool?

Oswald. Yes, madam.

Goneril. By day and night he wrongs me; every hour
He flashes into one gross crime or other,

That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:
 His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
 On every trifle. When he returns from hunting,
 I will not speak with him; say I am sick:
 If you come slack of former services,
 You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer. 10

Horns within

Oswald. He's coming, madam; I hear him.

Goneril. Put on what weary negligence you please,
 You and your fellows; I'll have it come to question:
 If he dislike it, let him to our sister,
 Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,
 Not to be over-ruled. Idle old man,
 That still would manage those authorities
 That he hath given away!—Now, by my life,
 Old fools are babes again; and must be used
 With cheques as flatteries—when they are seen abused. 20
 Remember what I tell you.

Oswald. Well, madam.

Goneril. And let his knights have colder looks among you;
 what grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so:
 I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
 that I may speak: I'll write straight to my sister,
 to hold my very course. Prepare for dinner.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. A hall in the same.

Enter KENT, disguised

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech defuse, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I razed my likeness. Now, banish'd Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,
So may it come, thy master, whom thou lovest,
Shall find thee full of labours.

Horns within. Enter KING LEAR, KNIGHTS, and ATTENDANTS.

King Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go get it ready.

Exit an ATTENDANT

How now! what art thou?

Kent. A man, sir.

10

King Lear. What dost thou profess?
what wouldst thou with us?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve
him truly that will put me in trust: to love him
that is honest; to converse with him that is wise,
and says little; to fear judgment; to fight when I
cannot choose; and to eat no fish.

King Lear. What art thou?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

King Lear. If thou be as poor for a subject as he is for a
king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou?

20

Kent. Service.

King Lear. Who wouldst thou serve?

Kent. You.

King Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow?

Kent. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance
which I would fain call master.

King Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority.

King Lear. What services canst thou do?

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a
curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message
bluntly: that which ordinary men are fit for, I am
qualified in; and the best of me is diligence. 30

King Lear. How old art thou?

Kent. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor
so old to dote on her for any thing: I have years
on my back forty-eight.

King Lear. Follow me; thou shalt serve me—if I like thee
no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet.
Dinner, ho, dinner! Where's my knave? my fool? 40
Go you, and call my fool hither.

Exit an ATTENDANT. Enter OSWALD

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

Oswald. So please you—*[Exit]*

King Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back.

Exit a KNIGHT

Where's my fool, ho? I think the world's asleep.

Re-enter KNIGHT

How now! where's that mongrel?

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

King Lear. Why came not the slave back to me
when I called him?

Knight. Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner,
he would not.

50

King Lear. He would not!

Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter is; but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertained with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears as well in the general dependents as in the duke himself also and your daughter.

King Lear. Ha! sayest thou so?

Knight. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord,
if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent
when I think your highness wronged.

60

King Lear. Thou but rememberest me of mine own conception: I have perceived a most faint neglect of late;

which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity
than as a very pretense and purpose of unkindness:
I will look further into't. But where's my fool? I
have not seen him this two days.

Knight. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the
fool hath much pined away.

70

King Lear. No more of that; I have noted it well.—Go you, and
tell my daughter I would speak with her.

Exit an ATTENDANT

Go you, call hither my fool.

Exit an ATTENDANT

Re-enter OSWALD

O, you sir, you, come you hither, sir: who am I, sir?

Oswald. My lady's father.

King Lear. 'My lady's father'? my lord's knave:
you whoreson dog! you slave! you cur!

Oswald. I am none of these, my lord;
I beseech your pardon.

King Lear. [*Striking him*]
Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?

80

Oswald. I'll not be struck, my lord.

Kent. [*Tripping up his heels*]
Nor tripped neither, you base football player.

King Lear. I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me,
and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differences:
away, away! if you will measure your lubber's
length again, tarry: but away! go to; have you
wisdom? So. [*Pushes OSWALD out*]

King Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's
earnest of thy service. [*Giving KENT money*]

90

Enter FOOL

Fool. Let me hire him too: here's my coxcomb.

[*Offering KENT his cap*]

King Lear. How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. Why, for taking one's part that's out of favour:
nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits,
thou'lt catch cold shortly: there, take my coxcomb:
why, this fellow has banished two of his daughters,
and did the third a blessing against his will; if
thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb.
How now, nuncle! Would I had two coxcombs and two
daughters!

100

King Lear. Why, my boy?

Fool. If I gave them all my living, I'd keep my coxcombs
myself. There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

King Lear. Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

Fool. Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipped out, when the Lady Brach may stand by the fire and stink.

King Lear. A pestilent gall to me!

Fool. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

King Lear. Do.

110

Fool. Mark it, nuncle:

Have more than thou showest,
 Speak less than thou knowest,
 Lend less than thou owest,
 Ride more than thou goest,
 Learn more than thou trowest,
 Set less than thou throwest;
 Leave thy drink and thy whore,
 And keep in-a-door,
 And thou shalt have more
 Than two tens to a score.

120

Kent. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer; you gave me nothing for 't. Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

King Lear. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. [*To KENT*]

Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to: he will not believe a fool.

King Lear. A bitter fool!

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy,
between a bitter fool and a sweet fool? 130

King Lear. No, lad; teach me.

Fool. That lord that counsel'd thee
To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me,
Do thou for him stand:
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear;
The one in motley here,
The other found out there. 140

King Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that
thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool. No, faith, lords and great men will not let me; if
I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't:
and ladies too, they will not let me have all fool
to myself; they'll be snatching. Give me an egg,
nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

King Lear. What two crowns shall they be? 150

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle, and eat
up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou
clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away
both parts, thou borest thy ass on thy back o'er
the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown,
when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak
like myself in this, let him be whipped that first
finds it so.

[*Singing*]

Fools had ne'er less wit in a year;
 For wise men are grown foppish, 160
 They know not how their wits to wear,
 Their manners are so apish.

King Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs,
 sirrah?

Fool. I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy
 daughters thy mothers: for when thou gavest them
 the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,

[*Singing*]

Then they for sudden joy did weep,
 And I for sorrow sung,
 That such a king should play bo-peep,
 And go the fools among. 170

Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach
 thy fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie.

King Lear. An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped.

Fool. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are:
 they'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou'lt
 have me whipped for lying; and sometimes I am
 whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any
 kind o' thing than a fool: and yet I would not be
 thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides,
 and left nothing i' the middle: here comes one o' 180
 the parings.

Enter GONERIL

King Lear. How now, daughter! what makes
that frontlet on?
Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst
no need to
care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a
figure: I am better than thou art now; I am a fool,
thou art nothing.

[*To GONERIL*]

Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face
bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum,
He that keeps nor crust nor crumb,
Weary of all, shall want some.

190

[*Pointing to KING LEAR*]

That's a shelled peascod.

Goneril. Not only, sir, this your all-licensed fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be endured riots. Sir,
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,
To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done.
That you protect this course, and put it on
By your allowance; which if you should, the fault
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep,
Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,
Might in their working do you that offence,
Which else were shame, that then necessity
Will call discreet proceeding.

200

Fool. For, you trow, nuncle,
 The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
 That it's had it head bit off by it young.
 So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling. 210

King Lear. Are you our daughter?

Goneril. Come, sir,
 I would you would make use of that good wisdom,
 Whereof I know you are fraught; and put away
 These dispositions, that of late transform you
 From what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart
 draws the horse? Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

King Lear. Doth any here know me? This is not Lear:
 Doth Lear walk thus, speak thus? Where are his eyes?
 Either his notion weakens, his discernings 220
 Are lethargied—Ha! waking? 'tis not so.
 Who is it that can tell me who I am?

Fool. Lear's shadow.

King Lear. I would learn that; for, by the
 marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason,
 I should be false persuaded I had daughters.

Fool. Which they will make an obedient father.

King Lear. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Goneril. This admiration, sir, is much o' the savor
 Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you 230
 To understand my purposes aright:
 As you are old and reverend, you should be wise.

Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
Men so disorder'd, so debauch'd and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn. Epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern or a brothel
Than a graced palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy: be then desired
By her, that else will take the thing she begs, 240
A little to disquantity your train;
And the remainder, that shall still depend,
To be such men as may besort your age,
And know themselves and you.

King Lear. Darkness and devils!
Saddle my horses; call my train together:
Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee.
Yet have I left a daughter.

Goneril. You strike my people; and your
disorder'd rabble
Make servants of their betters. 250

Enter DUKE of ALBANY

King Lear. Woe, that too late repents—

[*To ALBANY*]

O, sir, are you come?
Is it your will? Speak, sir. Prepare my horses.
Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child
Than the sea-monster!

Albany. Pray, sir, be patient.

King Lear. [*To GONERIL*]

Detested kite! thou liest.

My train are men of choice and rarest parts,

That all particulars of duty know, 260

And in the most exact regard support

The worships of their name. O most small fault,

How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!

That, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature

From the fix'd place; drew from heart all love,

And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!

Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in, [*Striking his head*]

And thy dear judgment out! Go, go, my people.

Albany. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant

Of what hath moved you. 270

King Lear. It may be so, my lord.

Hear, nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!

Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend

To make this creature fruitful!

Into her womb convey sterility!

Dry up in her the organs of increase;

And from her derogate body never spring

A babe to honor her! If she must teem,

Create her child of spleen; that it may live,

And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her! 280

Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;

With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;

Turn all her mother's pains and benefits

To laughter and contempt; that she may feel

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is

To have a thankless child! Away, away!

Exit

Albany. Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

Goneril. Never afflict yourself to know the cause;

But let his disposition have that scope

That dotage gives it.

290

Re-enter KING LEAR

King Lear. What, fifty of my followers at a clap!

Within a fortnight!

Albany. What's the matter, sir?

King Lear. I'll tell thee:

[*To GONERIL*]

Life and death! I am ashamed

That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;

That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,

Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs

upon thee!

The untented woundings of a father's curse

Pierce every sense about thee! Old fond eyes,

300

Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,

And cast you, with the waters that you lose,

To temper clay. Yea, it is come to this?

Let it be so: yet have I left a daughter,

Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:

When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails

She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find

That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think

I have cast off for ever: thou shalt,

I warrant thee.

310

Exeunt KING LEAR, KENT, and ATTENDANTS

Goneril. Do you mark that, my lord?

Albany. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
To the great love I bear you—

Goneril. Pray you, content. What, Oswald, ho!

[*To the FOOL*]

You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master.

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry
and take the fool with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,
And such a daughter,
Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter:
So the fool follows after.

320

Exit

Goneril. This man hath had good counsel—
a hundred knights!
’Tis politic and safe to let him keep
At point a hundred knights: yes, that, on every dream,
Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
And hold our lives in mercy. Oswald, I say!

Albany. Well, you may fear too far.

Goneril. Safer than trust too far: 330
Let me still take away the harms I fear,
Not fear still to be taken: I know his heart.
What he hath utter’d I have writ my sister
If she sustain him and his hundred knights
When I have show’d the unfitness—

Re-enter OSWALD

How now, Oswald!

What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

Oswald. Yes, madam.

Goneril. Take you some company, and away to horse:

Inform her full of my particular fear; 340

And thereto add such reasons of your own

As may compact it more. Get you gone;

And hasten your return.

Exit OSWALD

No, no, my lord,

This milky gentleness and course of yours

Though I condemn not, yet, under pardon,

You are much more attack'd for want of wisdom

Than praised for harmful mildness.

Albany. How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell:

Striving to better, oft we mar what's well. 350

Goneril. Nay, then—

Albany. Well, well; the event.

Exeunt

SCENE V. Court before the same.

Enter KING LEAR, KENT, and FOOL

King Lear. Go you before to Gloucester with these letters. Acquaint my daughter no further with anything you know than comes from her demand out of the letter. If your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there afore you.

Kent. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered your letter.

Exit

Fool. If a man's brains were in his heels, were't not in danger of kibes?

King Lear. Ay, boy.

10

Fool. Then, I prithee, be merry; thy wit shall ne'er go slip-shod.

King Lear. Ha, ha, ha!

Fool. Shalt see thy other daughter will use thee kindly; for though she's as like this as a crab's like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

King Lear. Why, what canst thou tell, my boy?

Fool. She will taste as like this as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i' the middle of one's face?

20

King Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's nose;
that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

King Lear. I did her wrong—

Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

King Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

King Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case. 30

King Lear. I will forget my nature. So kind a father!
Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven is a pretty reason.

King Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes, indeed: thou wouldst make a good fool.

King Lear. To take 't again perforce!
Monster ingratitude!

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time. 40

King Lear. How's that?

Fool. Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.

KING LEAR—ACT II

King Lear. O, let me not be mad, not mad,
sweet heaven
Keep me in temper: I would not be mad!

Enter GENTLEMAN

How now! are the horses ready?

Gentleman. Ready, my lord.

King Lear. Come, boy.

Fool. She that's a maid now, and laughs at my departure,
Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter. 50

Exeunt

ACT II

SCENE I. Gloucester's castle.

Enter EDMUND, and CURAN meets him

Edmund. Save thee, Curan.

Curan. And you, sir. I have been with your father, and
given him notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan
his duchess will be here with him this night.

Edmund. How comes that?

Curan. Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news
abroad; I mean the whispered ones, for they are
yet but ear-kissing arguments?

Edmund. Not I pray you, what are they?

Curan. Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 10
'twixt the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

Edmund. Not a word.

Curan. You may do, then, in time. Fare you well, sir.

Exit

Edmund. The duke be here to-night? The better! best!
This weaves itself perforce into my business.
My father hath set guard to take my brother;
And I have one thing, of a queasy question,
Which I must act: briefness and fortune, work!
Brother, a word; descend: brother, I say!

Enter EDGAR

My father watches: O sir, fly this place; 20
Intelligence is given where you are hid;
You have now the good advantage of the night:
Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?
He's coming hither: now, i' the night, i' the haste,
And Regan with him: have you nothing said
Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany?
Advise yourself.

Edgar. I am sure on't, not a word.

Edmund. I hear my father coming: pardon me:
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you 30
Draw; seem to defend yourself;
Now quit you well.

Yield: come before my father. Light, ho, here!
Fly, brother. Torches, torches!
So, farewell.

Exit EDGAR

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion. [*Wounds his arm*]
Of my more fierce endeavour: I have seen drunkards
Do more than this in sport.
Father, father!
Stop, stop! No help?

40

Enter GLOUCESTER, and SERVANTS with torches

Gloucester. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

Edmund. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,
Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
To stand auspicious mistress—

Gloucester. But where is he?

Edmund. Look, sir, I bleed.

Gloucester. Where is the villain, Edmund?

Edmund. Fled this way, sir.
When by no means he could—

Gloucester. Pursue him, ho! Go after.

50

Exeunt some SERVANTS

By no means what?

Edmund. Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;

But that I told him, the revenging gods
 'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;
 Spoke, with how manifold and strong a bond
 The child was bound to the father; sir, in fine,
 Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
 To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion,
 With his prepared sword, he charges home
 My unprovided body, lanced mine arm:
 But when he saw my best alarum'd spirits,
 Bold in the quarrel's right, roused to the encounter,
 Or whether ghastr'd by the noise I made,
 Full suddenly he fled.

60

Gloucester. Let him fly far:

Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;
 And found—dispatch. The noble duke my master,
 My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night:
 By his authority I will proclaim it,
 That he which finds him shall deserve our thanks,
 Bringing the murderous coward to the stake;
 He that conceals him, death.

70

Edmund. When I dissuaded him from his intent,

And found him pight to do it, with curst speech
 I threaten'd to discover him: he replied,
 "Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think,
 If I would stand against thee, would the reposal
 Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee
 Make thy words faith'd? No: what I should deny—
 As this I would: ay, though thou didst produce
 My very character—I'd turn it all
 To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice:
 And thou must make a dullard of the world,
 If they not thought the profits of my death

80

Were very pregnant and potential spurs
To make thee seek it.'

Gloucester. Strong and fasten'd villain

Would he deny his letter, said he? 90

I never got him. [*Tucket within*]

Hark, the duke's trumpets! I know not why he comes.

All ports I'll bar; the villain shall not 'scape;

The duke must grant me that: besides, his picture

I will send far and near, that all the kingdom

May have the due note of him; and of my land,

Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means

To make thee capable.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, and ATTENDANTS

Cornwall. How now, my noble friend!

Since I came hither, which I can call but now, 100

I have heard strange news.

Regan. If it be true, all vengeance comes too short

Which can pursue the offender.

How dost, my lord?

Gloucester. O, madam, my old heart is crack'd,

it's crack'd!

Regan. What, did my father's godson seek your life?

He whom my father named? your Edgar?

Gloucester. O, lady, lady, shame would have it hid!

Regan. Was he not companion with the riotous knights 110

That tend upon my father?

Gloucester. I know not, madam: 'tis too bad, too bad.

Edmund. Yes, madam, he was of that consort.

Regan. No marvel, then, though he were ill affected:

'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have the expense and waste of his revenues.
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well inform'd of them; and with such cautions,
That if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.

120

Cornwall. Nor I, assure thee, Regan.

Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A child-like office.

Edmund. 'Twas my duty, sir.

Gloucester. He did bewray his practice; and received
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

Cornwall. Is he pursued?

Gloucester. Ay, my good lord.

Cornwall. If he be taken, he shall never more

Be fear'd of doing harm: make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please. For you, Edmund,
Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours:
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;
You we first seize on.

130

Edmund. I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.

Gloucester. For him I thank your grace.

Cornwall. You know not why we came to visit you—

Regan. Thus out of season, threading dark-eyed night: 140
 Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some poise,
 Wherein we must have use of your advice:
 Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
 Of differences, which I least thought it fit
 To answer from our home; the several messengers
 From hence attend dispatch. Our good old friend,
 Lay comforts to your bosom; and bestow
 Your needful counsel to our business,
 Which craves the instant use.

Gloucester. I serve you, madam: 150
 Your graces are right welcome.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Before Gloucester's castle.

Enter KENT and OSWALD, severally

Oswald. Good dawning to thee, friend:
 art of this house?

Kent. Ay.

Oswald. Where may we set our horses?

Kent. I' the mire.

Oswald. Prithee, if thou lovest me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Oswald. Why, then, I care not for thee.

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold,
 I would make thee care for me. 10

Oswald. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Oswald. What dost thou know me for?

Kent. A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats;
a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited,
hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave;
a lily-livered, action-taking knave, a whoreson,
glass-gazing, super-serviceable finical rogue;
one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a
bawd, in way of good service, and art nothing but 20
the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pandar,
and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I
will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest
the least syllable of thy addition.

Oswald. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou,
thus to rail on one that is neither known of thee
nor knows thee!

Kent. What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou
knowest me! Is it two days ago since I tripped up
thy heels, and beat thee before the king? 30

[Drawing his sword]

Draw, you rogue: for, though it be night,
yet the moon shines; I'll make a sop o' the moonshine
of you, you whoreson cullionly barber-monger.
Draw.

Oswald. Away! I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the
king; and take vanity the puppet's part against the
royalty of her father: Draw, you rogue, or I'll so

carbonado your shanks: Draw, you rascal;
come your ways.

40

Oswald. Help, ho! murder! help!

Kent. Strike, you slave; stand, rogue, stand; you neat
slave, strike. [*Beating him*]

Oswald. Help, ho! murder! murder!

*Enter EDMUND, with his rapier drawn, CORNWALL, REGAN,
GLOUCESTER, and SERVANTS*

Edmund. How now! What's the matter?

Kent. With you, goodman boy, an you please:
come, I'll flesh ye; come on, young master.

Gloucester. Weapons! arms! What's the matter here?

Cornwall. Keep peace, upon your lives:
He dies that strikes again. What is the matter?

50

Regan. The messengers from our sister and the king.

Cornwall. What is your difference? Speak.

Oswald. I am scarce in breath, my lord.

Kent. No marvel, you have so bestirred your valor.
You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee: a
tailor made thee.

Cornwall. Thou art a strange fellow: a tailor make a man?

Kent. Ay, a tailor, sir:
a stone-cutter or painter could not have made him

so ill, though he had been but two hours
at the trade.

60

Cornwall. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

Oswald. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spared
at suit of his gray beard—

Kent. Thou whoreson zed! thou unnecessary letter!
My lord, if you will give me leave, I will tread
this unbolted villain into mortar, and daub the wall
of a jakes with him.
Spare my gray beard, you wagtail?

Cornwall. Peace, sirrah!
You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

70

Kent. Yes, sir; but anger hath a privilege.

Cornwall. Why art thou angry?

Kent. That such a slave as this should wear a sword,
Who wears no honesty.
Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords a-twain
Which are too intrinse t' unloose;
Smooth every passion
That in the natures of their lords rebel;
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters,
Knowing naught, like dogs, but following.
A plague upon your epileptic visage!
Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?
Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,
I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

80

Cornwall. Why, art thou mad, old fellow?

Gloucester. How fell you out? say that.

90

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy
Than I and such a knave.

Cornwall. Why dost thou call him a knave?
What's his offence?

Kent. His countenance likes me not.

Cornwall. No more, perchance, does mine,
nor his, nor hers.

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain:
I have seen better faces in my time
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

Cornwall. This is some fellow,
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb
Quite from his nature: he cannot flatter, he,
An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth!
An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
Harbor more craft and more corrupter ends
Than twenty silly ducking observants
That stretch their duties nicely.

100

Kent. Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,
Under the allowance of your great aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
On flickering Phoebus' front—

110

Cornwall. What mean'st by this?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you
discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no
flatterer: he that beguiled you in a plain
accent was a plain knave; which for my part
I will not be, though I should win your
displeasure to entreat me to 't. 120

Cornwall. What was the offence you gave him?

Oswald. I never gave him any:
It pleased the king his master very late
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;
When he, conjunct and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind; being down, insulted, rail'd,
And put upon him such a deal of man,
That worthied him, got praises of the king
For him attempting who was self-subdued;
And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit, 130
Drew on me here again.

Kent. None of these rogues and cowards
But Ajax is their fool.

Cornwall. Fetch forth the stocks!
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
We'll teach you—

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn:
Call not your stocks for me: I serve the king;
On whose employment I was sent to you:
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice 140
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

Cornwall. Fetch forth the stocks! As I have life
and honour,
There shall he sit till noon.

Regan. Till noon! till night, my lord; and all night too.

Kent. Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,
You should not use me so.

Regan. Sir, being his knave, I will.

Cornwall. This is a fellow of the self-same color
Our sister speaks of. Come, bring away the stocks! 150

Stocks brought out

Gloucester. Let me beseech your grace not to do so:
His fault is much, and the good king his master
Will cheque him for 't: your purposed low correction
Is such as basest and contemned'st wretches
For pilferings and most common trespasses
Are punish'd with: the king must take it ill,
That he's so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain'd.

Cornwall. I'll answer that.

Regan. My sister may receive it much more worse, 160
To have her gentleman abused, assaulted,
For following her affairs. Put in his legs.

KENT is put in the stocks

Come, my good lord, away.

Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER and KENT

Gloucester. I am sorry for thee, friend; 'tis the duke's pleasure,
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubb'd nor stopp'd: I'll entreat for thee.

Kent. Pray, do not, sir: I have watched and travel'd hard;
Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.
A good man's fortune may grow out at heels:
Give you good morrow!

170

Gloucester. The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill taken.

Exit

Kent. Good king, that must approve the common saw,
Thou out of heaven's benediction comest
To the warm sun!
Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter! Nothing almost sees miracles
But misery: I know 'tis from Cordelia,
Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
Of my obscured course; and shall find time
From this enormous state, seeking to give
Losses their remedies. All weary and o'erwatch'd,
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.
Fortune, good night: smile once more:
turn thy wheel! [*Sleeps*]

180

SCENE III. A wood.

Enter EDGAR

Edgar. I heard myself proclaim'd;
 And by the happy hollow of a tree
 Escaped the hunt. No port is free; no place,
 That guard, and most unusual vigilance,
 Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may 'scape,
 I will preserve myself: and am bethought
 To take the basest and most poorest shape
 That ever penury, in contempt of man,
 Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth;
 Blanket my loins: elf all my hair in knots; 10
 And with presented nakedness out-face
 The winds and persecutions of the sky.
 The country gives me proof and precedent
 Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
 Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
 Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
 And with this horrible object, from low farms,
 Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,
 Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
 Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor Tom! 20
 That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am.

Exit

SCENE IV. Before Gloucester's castle.

Kent in the stocks.

Enter KING LEAR, FOOL, and GENTLEMAN

King Lear. 'Tis strange that they should so depart
from home,
And not send back my messenger.

Gentleman. As I learn'd,
The night before there was no purpose in them
Of this remove.

Kent. Hail to thee, noble master!

King Lear. Ha!
Makest thou this shame thy pastime?

Kent. No, my lord.

Fool. Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters. Horses are tied 10
by the heads, dogs and bears by the neck,
monkeys by the loins, and men by the legs:
when a man's over-lusty at legs, then he wears
wooden nether-stocks.

King Lear. What's he that hath so much thy place mistook
To set thee here?

Kent. It is both he and she;
Your son and daughter.

King Lear. No.

Kent. Yes. 20

King Lear. No, I say.

Kent. I say, yea.

King Lear. No, no, they would not.

Kent. Yes, they have.

King Lear. By Jupiter, I swear, no.

Kent. By Juno, I swear, ay.

King Lear. They durst not do 't;
 They could not, would not do 't; 'tis worse
 than murder,
 To do upon respect such violent outrage:
 Resolve me, with all modest haste, which way 30
 Thou mightst deserve, or they impose, this usage,
 Coming from us.

Kent. My lord, when at their home
 I did commend your highness' letters to them,
 Ere I was risen from the place that show'd
 My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
 Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
 From Goneril his mistress salutations;
 Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,
 Which presently they read: on whose contents, 40
 They summon'd up their meiny, straight took horse;
 Commanded me to follow, and attend
 The leisure of their answer; gave me cold looks:
 And meeting here the other messenger,
 Whose welcome, I perceived, had poison'd mine—
 Being the very fellow that of late
 Display'd so saucily against your highness—
 Having more man than wit about me, drew:

He raised the house with loud and coward cries.
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth 50
The shame which here it suffers.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild-geese fly that way.
Fathers that wear rags
Do make their children blind;
But fathers that bear bags
Shall see their children kind.
Fortune, that arrant whore,
Ne'er turns the key to the poor.

But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours
for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year. 60

King Lear. O, how this mother swells up toward my heart!
Hysterica passio, down, thou climbing sorrow,
Thy element's below! Where is this daughter?

Kent. With the earl, sir, here within.

King Lear. Follow me not;
Stay here.

Exit

Gentleman. Made you no more offence but what you
speak of?

Kent. None.
How chance the king comes with so small a train?

Fool. And thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that 70
question, thou hadst well deserved it.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee
 there's no laboring i' the winter. All that follow
 their noses are led by their eyes but blind men; and
 there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him
 that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel
 runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with
 following it: but the great one that goes up the
 hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man
 gives thee better counsel, give me mine again:
 I would have none but knaves follow it, since a
 fool gives it. 80

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
 And follows but for form,
 Will pack when it begins to rain,
 And leave thee in the storm,
 But I will tarry; the fool will stay,
 And let the wise man fly:
 The knave turns fool that runs away;
 The fool no knave, perdy. 90

Kent. Where learned you this, fool?

Fool. Not i' the stocks, fool.

Re-enter KING LEAR with GLOUCESTER

King Lear. Deny to speak with me? They are sick?
 they are weary?
 They have travel'd all the night? Mere fetches;
 The images of revolt and flying off.
 Fetch me a better answer.

Gloucester. My dear lord,
 You know the fiery quality of the duke;

How unremoveable and fix'd he is
In his own course.

100

King Lear. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!
Fiery? what quality? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester,
I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

Gloucester. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

King Lear. Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me, man?

Gloucester. Ay, my good lord.

King Lear. The king would speak with Cornwall;
the dear father
Would with his daughter speak, commands her service:
Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood!
Fiery? the fiery duke? Tell the hot duke that— 110
No, but not yet: may be he is not well:
Infirmity doth still neglect all office
Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves
When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind
To suffer with the body: I'll forbear;
And am fall'n out with my more headier will,
To take the indisposed and sickly fit
For the sound man. Death on my state! wherefore [*Looking on*
KENT.]
Should he sit here? This act persuades me
That this remotion of the duke and her 120
Is practice only. Give me my servant forth.
Go tell the duke and 's wife I'd speak with them,
Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,
Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum
Till it cry sleep to death.

Gloucester. I would have all well betwixt you.

Exit

King Lear. O me, my heart, my rising heart! but, down!

Fool. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels
 when she put 'em i' the paste alive; she knapped 'em
 o' the coxcombs with a stick, and cried 'Down, 130
 wantons, down!' 'twas her brother that, in pure
 kindness to his horse, buttered his hay.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, and SERVANTS

King Lear. Good morrow to you both.

Cornwall. Hail to your grace!

KENT is set at liberty

Regan. I am glad to see your highness.

King Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason
 I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad,
 I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,
 Sepulch'ring an adult'ress.

[*To KENT*]

O, are you free? 140
 Some other time for that. Beloved Regan,
 Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied
 Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here: [*Points to his heart*]
 I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe
 With how depraved a quality—O Regan!

Regan. I pray you, sir, take patience: I have hope.
 You less know how to value her desert
 Than she to scant her duty.

King Lear. Say, how is that?

Regan. I cannot think my sister in the least 150
 Would fail her obligation: if, sir, perchance
 She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,
 'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,
 As clears her from all blame.

King Lear. My curses on her!

Regan. O, sir, you are old.
 Nature in you stands on the very verge
 Of her confine: you should be ruled and led
 By some discretion, that discerns your state
 Better than you yourself. Therefore, I pray you, 160
 That to our sister you do make return;
 Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

King Lear. Ask her forgiveness?
 Do you but mark how this becomes the house:
 'Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
 Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg [*Kneeling*]
 That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.'

Regan. Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks:
 Return you to my sister.

King Lear. [*Rising*]
 Never, Regan: 170
 She hath abated me of half my train;
 Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue,
 Most serpent-like, upon the very heart:
 All the stored vengeance of heaven fall

On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness!

Cornwall. Fie, sir, fie!

King Lear. You nimble lightnings, dart your
 blinding flames
Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun, 180
To fall and blast her pride!

Regan. O the blest gods! so will you wish on me,
When the rash mood is on.

King Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse:
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness: her eyes are fierce; but thine
Do comfort and not burn. 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
And in conclusion to oppose the bolt 190
Against my coming in: thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude;
Thy half o' the kingdom hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd.

Regan. Good sir, to the purpose.

King Lear. Who put my man i' the stocks?

Tucket within

Cornwall. What trumpet's that?

Regan. I know't, my sister's: this approves her letter,
That she would soon be here.

200

Enter OSWALD

Is your lady come?

King Lear. This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.
Out, varlet, from my sight!

Cornwall. What means your grace?

King Lear. Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have
good hope
Thou didst not know on't. Who comes here? O heavens,

Enter GONERIL

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause; send down, and take my part!

210

[*To GONERIL*]

Art not ashamed to look upon this beard?
O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

Goneril. Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended?
All's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.

King Lear. O sides, you are too tough;
Will you yet hold? How came my man i' the stocks?

Cornwall. I set him there, sir: but his own disorders
Deserved much less advancement.

King Lear. You! did you?

220

Regan. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.
 If, till the expiration of your month,
 You will return and sojourn with my sister,
 Dismissing half your train, come then to me:
 I am now from home, and out of that provision
 Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

King Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
 No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
 To wage against the enmity o' the air;
 To be a comrade with the wolf and owl—
 Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her?
 Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
 Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
 To knee his throne, and, squire-like; pension beg
 To keep base life afoot. Return with her?
 Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
 To this detested groom. [*Pointing at OSWALD*]

230

Goneril. At your choice, sir.

King Lear. I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:
 I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:
 We'll no more meet, no more see one another:
 But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
 Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
 Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
 A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
 In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;
 Let shame come when it will, I do not call it:
 I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
 Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove:
 Mend when thou canst; be better at thy leisure:
 I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,
 I and my hundred knights.

240

250

Regan. Not altogether so:

I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister;
For those that mingle reason with your passion
Must be content to think you old, and so—
But she knows what she does.

King Lear. Is this well spoken?

Regan. I dare avouch it, sir: what, fifty followers?

260

Is it not well? What should you need of more?
Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,
Should many people, under two commands,
Hold amity? 'tis hard; almost impossible.

Goneril. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance

From those that she calls servants or from mine?

Regan. Why not, my lord? If then they chanced

to slack you,

We could control them. If you will come to me—

For now I spy a danger—I entreat you

270

To bring but five and twenty: to no more

Will I give place or notice.

King Lear. I gave you all—

Regan. And in good time you gave it.

King Lear. Made you my guardians, my depositaries;

But kept a reservation to be follow'd

With such a number. What, must I come to you

With five and twenty, Regan? said you so?

Regan. And speak't again, my lord; no more with me.

King Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do
 look well-favor'd, 280
 When others are more wicked: not being the worst
 Stands in some rank of praise.

[*To GONERIL.*]

I'll go with thee:
 Thy fifty yet doth double five and twenty,
 And thou art twice her love.

Goneril. Hear me, my lord;
 What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,
 To follow in a house where twice so many
 Have a command to tend you?

Regan. What need one? 290

King Lear. O, reason not the need: our basest beggars
 Are in the poorest thing superfluous:
 Allow not nature more than nature needs,
 Man's life's as cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;
 If only to go warm were gorgeous,
 Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
 Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need—
 You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!
 You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
 As full of grief as age; wretched in both! 300
 If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
 Against their father, fool me not so much
 To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
 And let not women's weapons, water-drops,
 Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags,
 I will have such revenges on you both,
 That all the world shall—I will do such things—
 What they are, yet I know not: but they shall be

The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep
 No, I'll not weep:
 I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
 Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
 Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!

310

Exeunt KING LEAR, GLOUCESTER, KENT, and FOOL

Storm and tempest

Cornwall. Let us withdraw; 'twill be a storm.

Regan. This house is little: the old man and his people
 Cannot be well bestow'd.

Goneril. 'Tis his own blame; hath put himself from rest,
 And must needs taste his folly.

Regan. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
 But not one follower.

320

Goneril. So am I purposed.
 Where is my lord of Gloucester?

Cornwall. Follow'd the old man forth: he is return'd.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER

Gloucester. The king is in high rage.

Cornwall. Whither is he going?

Gloucester. He calls to horse; but will I know not whither.

Cornwall. 'Tis best to give him way; he leads himself.

Goneril. My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

Gloucester. Alack, the night comes on,
and the bleak winds

Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about
There's scarce a bush. 330

Regan. O, sir, to willful men,
The injuries that they themselves procure
Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors:
He is attended with a desperate train;
And what they may incense him to, being apt
To have his ear abused, wisdom bids fear.

Cornwall. Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild night:
My Regan counsels well; come out o' the storm.

Exeunt

ACT III

SCENE I. A heath.

Storm still. Enter KENT and a GENTLEMAN, meeting

Kent. Who's there, besides foul weather?

Gentleman. One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

Kent. I know you. Where's the king?

Gentleman. Contending with the fretful element:
Bids the winds blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled water 'bove the main,

That things might change or cease; tears his white hair,
 Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
 Catch in their fury, and make nothing of;
 Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn 10
 The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
 This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,
 The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
 Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
 And bids what will take all.

Kent. But who is with him?

Gentleman. None but the fool; who labours to out-jest
 His heart-struck injuries.

Kent. Sir, I do know you;
 And dare, upon the warrant of my note, 20
 Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,
 Although as yet the face of it be cover'd
 With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;
 Who have—as who have not, that their great stars
 Throned and set high?—servants, who seem no less,
 Which are to France the spies and speculations
 Intelligent of our state; what hath been seen,
 Either in snuffs and packings of the dukes,
 Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
 Against the old kind king; or something deeper, 30
 Whereof perchance these are but furnishings;
 But, true it is, from France there comes a power
 Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,
 Wise in our negligence, have secret feet
 In some of our best ports, and are at point
 To show their open banner. Now to you:
 If on my credit you dare build so far
 To make your speed to Dover, you shall find

Some that will thank you, making just report
 Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow 40
 The king hath cause to plain.
 I am a gentleman of blood and breeding;
 And, from some knowledge and assurance, offer
 This office to you.

Gentleman. I will talk further with you.

Kent. No, do not.
 For confirmation that I am much more
 Than my out-wall, open this purse, and take
 What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia—
 As fear not but you shall—show her this ring; 50
 And she will tell you who your fellow is
 That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!
 I will go seek the king.

Gentleman. Give me your hand: have you no more to say?

Kent. Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet;
 That, when we have found the king—in which your pain
 That way, I'll this—he that first lights on him
 Holla the other.

Exeunt severally

SCENE II. Another part of the heath.

Storm Still. Enter KING LEAR and FOOL

King Lear. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
 You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
 Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!

You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,
 Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
 Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
 Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
 Crack nature's molds, all germens spill at once,
 That make ingrateful man!

Fool. O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry 10
 house is better than this rain-water out o' door.
 Good nuncle, in, and ask thy daughters' blessing:
 here's a night pities neither wise man nor fool.

King Lear. Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
 Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
 I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
 I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
 You owe me no subscription: then let fall
 Your horrible pleasure: here I stand, your slave,
 A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man: 20
 But yet I call you servile ministers,
 That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
 Your high engender'd battles 'gainst a head
 So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!

Fool. He that has a house to put head in has a good
 head-piece.

The cod-piece that will house
 Before the head has any,
 The head and he shall louse;
 So beggars marry many. 30
 The man that makes his toe
 What he his heart should make
 Shall of a corn cry woe,
 And turn his sleep to wake.

KING LEAR—ACT III

—for there was never yet fair woman but she made
mouths in a glass.

King Lear. No, I will be the pattern of all patience;
I will say nothing.

Enter KENT

Kent. Who's there?

Fool. Marry, here's grace and a cod-piece; 40
that's a wise man and a fool.

Kent. Alas, sir, are you here? things that love night
Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,
And make them keep their caves: since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard: man's nature cannot carry
The affliction nor the fear.

King Lear. Let the great gods, 50
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp'd of justice: hide thee, thou bloody hand;
Thou perjured, and thou simular man of virtue
That art incestuous: caitiff, to pieces shake,
That under covert and convenient seeming
Hast practiced on man's life: close pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents, and cry
These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man 60
More sinn'd against than sinning.

Kent. Alack, bare-headed!

Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest:
Repose you there; while I to this hard house—
More harder than the stones whereof 'tis raised;
Which even but now, demanding after you,
Denied me to come in—return, and force
Their scanted courtesy.

King Lear. My wits begin to turn.

70

Come on, my boy: how dost, my boy? art cold?
I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow?
The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious.
Come, your hovel.
Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.

Fool. [*Singing*]

He that has and a little tiny wit—
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain—
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
For the rain it raineth every day.

80

King Lear. True, my good boy. Come, bring us to
this hovel.

Exeunt KING LEAR and KENT

Fool. This is a brave night to cool a courtesan.

I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:

When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water;
When nobles are their tailors' tutors;

No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors;
 When every case in law is right;
 No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
 When slanders do not live in tongues;
 Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;
 When usurers tell their gold i' the field;
 And bawds and whores do churches build;
 Then shall the realm of Albion
 Come to great confusion:
 Then comes the time, who lives to see't,
 That going shall be used with feet.

90

This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live
 before his time.

Exit

SCENE III. Gloucester's castle.

Enter GLOUCESTER and EDMUND

Gloucester. Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this
 unnatural dealing. When I desire their leave that I
 might pity him, they took from me the use of mine
 own house; charged me, on pain of their perpetual
 displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for
 him, nor any way sustain him.

Edmund. Most savage and unnatural!

Gloucester. Go to; say you nothing. There's a division
 betwixt the dukes; and a worse matter than that:
 I have received a letter this night; 'tis dangerous to be
 spoken; I have locked the letter in my closet:
 these injuries the king now bears will be revenged

10

home; there's part of a power already footed: we
must incline to the king. I will seek him, and
privily relieve him: go you and maintain talk with
the duke, that my charity be not of him perceived:
if he ask for me. I am ill, and gone to bed.
Though I die for it, as no less is threatened me,
the king my old master must be relieved.
There is some strange thing toward, Edmund;
pray you, be careful.

20

Exit

Edmund. This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke
Instantly know; and of that letter too:
This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me
That which my father loses; no less than all:
The younger rises when the old doth fall.

Exit

SCENE IV. The heath. Before a hovel.

Enter KING LEAR, KENT, and FOOL

Kent. Here is the place, my lord; good my lord, enter:
The tyranny of the open night's too rough
For nature to endure.

Storm still

King Lear. Let me alone.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

King Lear. Wilt break my heart?

Kent. I had rather break mine own. Good my lord, enter.

King Lear. Thou think'st 'tis much that this
contentious storm
Invades us to the skin: so 'tis to thee;
But where the greater malady is fix'd, 10
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'ldst shun a bear;
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,
Thou'ldst meet the bear i' the mouth. When
the mind's free,
The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude!
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to 't? But I will punish home:
No, I will weep no more. In such a night 20
To shut me out! Pour on; I will endure.
In such a night as this! O Regan, Gonerill
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all—
O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;
No more of that.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

King Lear. Prithee, go in thyself: seek thine own ease:
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in.

[*To the FOOL*]

In, boy; go first. You houseless poverty— 30
Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.

FOOL goes in.

Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,

Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.

40

Edgar. [*Within*]

Fathom and half, fathom and half! Poor Tom!

The FOOL runs out from the hovel

Fool. Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit
Help me, help me!

Kent. Give me thy hand. Who's there?

Fool. A spirit, a spirit: he says his name's poor Tom.

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there i' the straw?
Come forth.

Enter EDGAR disguised as a mad man

Edgar. Away! the foul fiend follows me!
Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.
Hum! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

50

King Lear. Hast thou given all to thy two daughters?
And art thou come to this?

Edgar. Who gives anything to poor Tom? whom the foul
fiend hath led through fire and through flame, and
through ford and whirlpool o'er bog and quagmire;
that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters

in his pew; set ratsbane by his porridge; made film
proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over
four-inched bridges, to course his own shadow for a
traitor. Bless thy five wits! Tom's a-cold—O, do 60
de, do de, do de.—Bless thee from whirlwinds,
star-blasting, and taking! Do poor Tom some
charity, whom the foul fiend vexes: there could I
have him now—and there—and there again, and there.

Storm still

King Lear. What, have his daughters brought him
to this pass?
Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou give them all?

Fool. Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been
all shamed.

King Lear. Now, all the plagues that in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters!

Kent. He hath no daughters, sir. 70

King Lear. Death, traitor! nothing could have
subdued nature
To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.
Is it the fashion, that discarded fathers
Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?
Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot
Those pelican daughters.

Edgar. Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill:
Hallow, halloo, loo, loo!

Fool. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

Edgar. Take heed o' the foul fiend: obey thy parents; 80
 keep thy word justly; swear not; commit not with
 man's sworn spouse; set not thy sweet heart on
 proud array. 'Tom's a-cold.

King Lear. What hast thou been?

Edgar. A serving-man, proud in heart and mind;
 that curled my hair; wore gloves in my cap; served
 the lust of my mistress' heart, and did the act of
 darkness with her; swore as many oaths as I spake words,
 and broke them in the sweet face of heaven: one that 90
 slept in the contriving of lust, and waked to do it:
 wine loved I deeply, dice dearly: and in woman
 out-paramoured the Turk: false of heart, light of
 ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth,
 wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey.
 Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of
 silks betray thy poor heart to woman: keep thy foot
 out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets, thy pen
 from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend.
 Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind:
 Says suum, mun, nonny. Dolphin my boy,
 my boy, sessa! 100
 Let him trot by.

Storm still

King Lear. Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to
 answer with thy uncovered body this extremity
 of the skies. Is man no more than this? Consider
 him well. Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast
 no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume.
 Ha! here's three of us are sophisticated! Thou art
 the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more

but such a poor bare, forked animal as thou art.
Off, off, you lendings! come unbutton here. [*Tearing off
his clothes*]

110

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, be contented; 'tis a naughty night
to swim in. Now a little fire in a wild field were
like an old lecher's heart; a small spark, all the
rest on 's body cold. Look, here comes a walking fire.

Enter GLOUCESTER, with a torch

Edgar. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins
at curfew, and walks till the first cock; he gives
the web and the pin, squints the eye, and makes the
hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the
poor creature of earth.

Swithold footed thrice the old; 120
He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;
Bid her alight,
And her troth plight,
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!

Kent. How fares your grace?

King Lear. What's he?

Kent. Who's there? What is't you seek?

Gloucester. What are you there? Your names?

Edgar. Poor Tom; that eats the swimming frog,
the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt and the water; 130
that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages,
eats cow-dung for sallets; swallows the old rat and
the ditch-dog; drinks the green mantle of the

standing pool; who is whipped from tithing to
tithing, and stock-punished, and imprisoned; who
hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his body,

Horse to ride, and weapon to wear;
But mice and rats, and such small deer,
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.

Beware my follower. Peace, Smulkin; peace,
thou fiend!

140

Gloucester. What, hath your grace no better company?

Edgar. The prince of darkness is a gentleman:
Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.

Gloucester. Our flesh and blood is grown so vile, my lord,
That it doth hate what gets it.

Edgar. Poor Tom's a-cold.

Gloucester. Go in with me: my duty cannot suffer
To obey in all your daughters' hard commands:
Though their injunction be to bar my doors,
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,
Yet have I ventured to come seek you out,
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

150

King Lear. First let me talk with this philosopher.
What is the cause of thunder?

Kent. Good my lord, take his offer; go into the house.

King Lear. I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban.
What is your study?

Edgar. How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

King Lear. Let me ask you one word in private.

Kent. Importune him once more to go, my lord; 160
His wits begin to unsettle.

Storm still

Gloucester. Canst thou blame him?

His daughters seek his death: ah, that good Kent!
He said it would be thus, poor banish'd man!
Thou say'st the king grows mad; I'll tell thee, friend,
I am almost mad myself: I had a son,
Now outlaw'd from my blood; he sought my life,
But lately, very late: I loved him, friend;
No father his son dearer: truth to tell thee,
The grief hath crazed my wits. What a night's this! 170
I do beseech your grace—

King Lear. O, cry your mercy, sir.
Noble philosopher, your company.

Edgar. Tom's a-cold.

Gloucester. In, fellow, there, into the hovel:
keep thee warm.

King Lear. Come let's in all.

Kent. This way, my lord.

King Lear. With him;
I will keep still with my philosopher.

Kent. Good my lord, soothe him; let him take
the fellow. 180

Gloucester. Take him you on.

Kent. Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

King Lear. Come, good Athenian.

Gloucester. No words, no words: hush.

Edgar. Child Rowland to the dark tower came,
His word was still—Fie, foh, and fum,
I smell the blood of a British man.

Exeunt

SCENE V. Gloucester's castle.

Enter CORNWALL and EDMUND

Cornwall. I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

Edmund. How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature
thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

Cornwall. I now perceive, it was not altogether your
brother's evil disposition made him seek his death;
but a provoking merit, set a-work by a reprovable
badness in himself.

Edmund. How malicious is my fortune, that I must
repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which
approves him an intelligent party to the advantages
of France: O heavens! that this treason were not,
or not I the detector!

10

Cornwall. Go with me to the duchess.

Edmund. If the matter of this paper be certain, you have
mighty business in hand.

Cornwall. True or false, it hath made thee Earl of
Gloucester. Seek out where thy father is, that he
may be ready for our apprehension.

Edmund. [*Aside*]

If I find him comforting the king, it will
stuff his suspicion more fully.

20

[*To CORNWALL*]

I will persevere in my course of loyalty,
though the conflict be sore
between that and my blood.

Cornwall. I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt
find a dearer father in my love.

Exeunt

SCENE VI. A chamber in a farmhouse adjoining the castle.

Enter GLOUCESTER, KING LEAR, KENT, FOOL, and EDGAR

Gloucester. Here is better than the open air; take it
thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what
addition I can: I will not be long from you.

Kent. All the power of his wits have given way to his
impatience: the gods reward your kindness!

Exit GLOUCESTER

Edgar. Frateretto calls me; and tells me
Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness.
Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a
gentleman or a yeoman? 10

King Lear. A king, a king!

Fool. No, he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son;
for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman
before him.

King Lear. To have a thousand with red burning spits
Come hissing in upon 'em—

Edgar. The foul fiend bites my back.

Fool. He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf,
a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

King Lear. It shall be done; I will arraign them straight. 20

[*To EDGAR*]

Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer;

[*To the FOOL*]

Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you she foxes!

Edgar. Look, where he stands and glares!
Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?

[*Singing*]

Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me—

Fool. [*Singing*]

Her boat hath a leak,
And she must not speak
Why she dares not come over to thee.

Edgar. The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the
voice of a nightingale. Hopdance cries in Tom's belly 30
for two white herring. Croak not, black angel;
I have no food for thee.

Kent. How do you, sir? Stand you not so amazed:
Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

King Lear. I'll see their trial first. Bring in the evidence.

[*To EDGAR*]

Thou robed man of justice, take thy place;

[*To the FOOL*]

And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,
Bench by his side:

[*To KENT*]

You are o' the commission,
Sit you too. 40

Edgar. Let us deal justly.

[*Singing*]

Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?
Thy sheep be in the corn;
And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,
Thy sheep shall take no harm.
Purr! the cat is gray.

King Lear. Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here take my
oath before this honorable assembly, she kicked the
poor king her father.

Fool. Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?

50

King Lear. She cannot deny it.

Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

King Lear. And here's another, whose warp'd
looks proclaim
What store her heart is made of. Stop her there!
Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place!
False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

Edgar. Bless thy five wits!

Kent. O pity! Sir, where is the patience now,
That thou so oft have boasted to retain?

Edgar. [*Aside*]

My tears begin to take his part so much,
They'll mar my counterfeiting.

60

King Lear. The little dogs and all, Tray, Blanch, and
Sweet-heart, see, they bark at me.

Edgar. Tom will throw his head at them.

Avaunt, you curs!

Be thy mouth or black or white,
Tooth that poisons if it bite;
Mastiff, grey-hound, mongrel grim,
Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,
Or bobtail tike or trundle-tail,
Tom will make them weep and wail:

70

For, with throwing thus my head,
Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.

Do de, de, de. Sessa! Come, march to wakes and
fairs and market-towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

King Lear. Then let them anatomize Regan;
see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause
in nature that makes these hard hearts?

[*To EDGAR*]

You, sir, I entertain for one of my hundred; only I
do not like the fashion of your garments: you will
say they are Persian attire: but let them be changed. 80

Kent. Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.

King Lear. Make no noise, make no noise;
draw the curtains:
So, so, we'll go to supper i' the morning.

Fool. And I'll go to bed at noon.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER

Gloucester. Come hither, friend: where is the king my master?

Kent. Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are gone.

Gloucester. Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy arms;
I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him:
There is a litter ready; lay him in 't,
And drive towards Dover, friend, where thou
shalt meet 90
Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master:
If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,

With thine, and all that offer to defend him,
Stand in assured loss: Take up, take up;
And follow me, that will to some provision
Give thee quick conduct.

Kent. Oppressed nature sleeps:

This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken senses,
Which, if convenience will not allow,
Stand in hard cure.

100

[*To the FOOL*]

Come, help to bear thy master;
Thou must not stay behind.

Gloucester. Come, come, away.

Exeunt all but EDGAR

Edgar. When we our betters see bearing our woes,

We scarcely think our miseries our foes.

Who alone suffers, suffers most i' the mind,

Leaving free things and happy shows behind:

But then the mind much sufferance doth o'er skip,

When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.

How light and portable my pain seems now,

110

When that which makes me bend makes the king bow,

He childed as I father'd! Tom, away!

Mark the high noises; and thyself bewray,

When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,

In thy just proof, repeals and reconciles thee.

What will hap more to-night, safe 'scape the king!

Lurk, lurk.

Exit

SCENE VII. Gloucester's castle.

*Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND,
and SERVANTS*

Cornwall. [*To GONERIL*]

Post speedily to my lord your husband; show him
this letter: the army of France is landed.

[*To SERVANTS*]

Seek out the villain Gloucester.

Exeunt some of the SERVANTS

Regan. Hang him instantly.

Goneril. Pluck out his eyes.

Cornwall. Leave him to my displeasure.

Edmund, keep you our sister company:
the revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous
father are not fit for your beholding. Advise the Duke,
where you are going, to a most festinate preparation: 10
we are bound to the like. Our posts shall be swift
and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell, dear sister:
farewell, my lord of Gloucester.

Enter OSWALD

How now! where's the king?

Oswald. My lord of Gloucester hath convey'd him hence:
Some five or six and thirty of his knights,
Hot questrists after him, met him at gate;

Who, with some other of the lord's dependents,
Are gone with him towards Dover; where they boast
To have well-armed friends.

20

Cornwall. Get horses for your mistress.

Goneril. Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

Cornwall. Edmund, farewell.

Exeunt GONERIL, EDMUND, and OSWALD

Go seek the traitor Gloucester,
Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.

Exeunt other SERVANTS

Though well we may not pass upon his life
Without the form of justice, yet our power
Shall do a courtesy to our wrath, which men
May blame, but not control. Who's there? the traitor?

Enter GLOUCESTER, brought in by two or three SERVANTS

Regan. Ingrateful fox! 'tis he.

30

Cornwall. Bind fast his corky arms.

Gloucester. What mean your graces? Good my friends,
consider
You are my guests: do me no foul play, friends.

Cornwall. Bind him, I say.

KING LEAR—ACT III

SERVANTS bind him

Regan. Hard, hard. O filthy traitor!

Gloucester. Unmerciful lady as you are, I'm none.

Cornwall. To this chair bind him. Villain, thou shalt find—

REGAN plucks his beard

Gloucester. By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done
To pluck me by the beard.

Regan. So white, and such a traitor!

40

Gloucester. Naughty lady,
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,
Will quicken, and accuse thee: I am your host:
With robbers' hands my hospitable favors
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

Cornwall. Come, sir, what letters had you late
from France?

Regan. Be simple-answer'd, for we know the truth.

Cornwall. And what confederacy have you with
the traitors
Late footed in the kingdom?

Regan. To whose hands have you sent the lunatic king?
Speak.

50

Gloucester. I have a letter guessingly set down,
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,
And not from one opposed.

Cornwall. Cunning.

Regan. And false.

Cornwall. Where hast thou sent the king?

Gloucester. To Dover.

Regan. Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charged
at peril—

Cornwall. Wherefore to Dover? Let him first answer that.

Gloucester. I am tied to the stake, and I must
stand the course.

60

Regan. Wherefore to Dover, sir?

Gloucester. Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
In hell-black night endured, would have buoy'd up,
And quench'd the stelled fires:
Yet, poor old heart, he help the heavens to rain.
If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,
Thou shouldst have said 'Good porter, turn the key,'
All cruels else subscribed: but I shall see
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

70

Cornwall. See't shalt thou never. Fellows, hold the chair.
Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

Gloucester. He that will think to live till he be old,
Give me some help! O cruel! O you gods!

Regan. One side will mock another; the other too.

Cornwall. If you see vengeance—

1st Servant. Hold your hand, my lord:

I have served you ever since I was a child; 80
But better service have I never done you
Than now to bid you hold.

Regan. How now, you dog!

1st Servant. If you did wear a beard upon your chin,
I'd shake it on this quarrel. What do you mean?

Cornwall. My villain!

They draw and fight

1st Servant. Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger.

CORNWALL is wounded

Regan. [*To another SERVANT*]

Give me thy sword. A peasant stand up thus! [*Takes a sword, and
runs at him behind*]

1st Servant. O, I am slain! My lord, you have one eye left
To see some mischief on him. O! [*Dies*] 90

Cornwall. Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly!
Where is thy luster now?

Gloucester. All dark and comfortless.

Where's my son Edmund?
Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature,
To quit this horrid act.

Regan. Out, treacherous villain!

Thou call'st on him that hates thee: it was he
That made the overture of thy treasons to us;
Who is too good to pity thee.

Gloucester. O my follies! then Edgar was abused.

100

Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

Regan. Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell
His way to Dover.

[*To CORNWALL*]

How is't, my lord? how look you?

Cornwall. I have received a hurt: follow me, lady.

[*To SERVANTS*]

Turn out that eyeless villain; throw this slave
Upon the dunghill.

Exit one SERVANT with GLOUCESTER

Regan, I bleed apace:

Untimely comes this hurt: give me your arm.

Exit CORNWALL, led by REGAN

2nd Servant. I'll never care what wickedness I do,

110

If this man come to good.

3rd Servant. If she live long,

And in the end meet the old course of death,
Women will all turn monsters.

2nd Servant. Let's follow the old earl, and get the Bedlam
To lead him where he would: his roguish madness
Allows itself to anything.

3rd Servant. Go thou: I'll fetch some flax and
whites of eggs
To apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven help him!

Exeunt severally

ACT IV

SCENE I. The heath.

Enter EDGAR

Edgar. Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,
Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:
The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome, then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!
The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst
Owes nothing to thy blasts. But who comes here?

Enter GLOUCESTER led by an OLD MAN

My father, poorly led? World, world, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Lie would not yield to age.

10

Old Man. O, my good lord, I have been your tenant, and
your father's tenant, these fourscore years.

Gloucester. Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone:
Thy comforts can do me no good at all;
Thee they may hurt.

Old Man. Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

Gloucester. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;
I stumbled when I saw: full oft 't is seen, 20
Our means secure us, and our mere defects
Prove our commodities.—O dear son Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath!
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'd say I had eyes again!

Old Man. How now! Who's there?

Edgar. [*Aside*]
O gods! Who is't can say 'I am at the worst'?
I am worse than e'er I was.

Old Man. 'Tis poor mad Tom.

Edgar. [*Aside*]
And worse I may be yet: the worst is not 30
So long as we can say 'This is the worst.'

Old Man. Fellow, where goest?

Gloucester. Is it a beggar-man?

Old Man. Madman and beggar too.

Gloucester. He has some reason, else he could not beg.
I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw;

Which made me think a man a worm: my son
 Came then into my mind; and yet my mind
 Was then scarce friends with him: I have heard
 more since.

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;
 They kill us for their sport. 40

Edgar. [*Aside*]

How should this be?
 Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,
 Angering itself and others—Bless thee, master!

Gloucester. Is that the naked fellow?

Old Man. Ay, my lord.

Gloucester. Then, prithee, get thee gone: if, for my sake,
 Thou wilt o’ertake us, hence a mile or twain,
 I’ the way toward Dover, do it for ancient love;
 And bring some covering for this naked soul, 50
 Who I’ll entreat to lead me.

Old Man. Alack, sir, he is mad.

Gloucester. ’Tis the times’ plague, when madmen
 lead the blind.
 Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure;
 Above the rest, be gone.

Old Man. I’ll bring him the best ’parel that I have,
 Come on’t what will.

Exit

Gloucester. Sirrah, naked fellow—

Edgar. Poor Tom's a-cold.

[*Aside*]

I cannot daub it further.

50

Gloucester. Come hither, fellow.

Edgar. [*Aside*]

And yet I must.

[*To GLOUCESTER*]

Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

Gloucester. Know'st thou the way to Dover?

Edgar. Both stile and gate, horse-way and foot-path.

Poor Tom hath been scared out of his good wits:

bless thee, good man's son, from the foul fiend!

five fiends have been in poor Tom at once; of lust,

as Obidicut; Hobbididence, prince of dumbness;

Mahu, of stealing; Modo, of murder; Flibbertigibbet, 60

of mopping and mowing, who since possesses chambermaids

and waiting-women. So, bless thee, master!

Gloucester. Here, take this purse, thou whom the
heavens' plagues

Have humbled to all strokes: that I am wretched

Makes thee the happier: heavens, deal so still!

Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,

That slaves your ordinance, that will not see

Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly;

So distribution should undo excess,

And each man have enough. Dost thou know Dover? 70

Edgar. Ay, master.

Gloucester. There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep:
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear
With something rich about me: from that place
I shall no leading need.

Edgar. Give me thy arm:
Poor Tom shall lead thee.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Before Albany's palace.

Enter GONERIL and EDMUND

Goneril. Welcome, my lord: I marvel our mild husband
Not met us on the way.

Enter OSWALD

Now, where's your master'?

Oswald. Madam, within; but never man so changed.
I told him of the army that was landed;
He smiled at it: I told him you were coming:
His answer was 'The worse:' of Gloucester's treachery,
And of the loyal service of his son,
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot,
And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out:
What most he should dislike seems pleasant to him;
What like, offensive.

10

Goneril. [*To EDMUND*]

Then shall you go no further.
It is the cowish terror of his spirit,
That dares not undertake: he'll not feel wrongs
Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes on the way
May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother;
Hasten his musters and conduct his powers:
I must change arms at home, and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant 20
Shall pass between us: ere long you are like to hear,
If you dare venture in your own behalf,
A mistress's command. Wear this; spare speech; [*Giving a favor*]
Decline your head: this kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air:
Conceive, and fare thee well.

Edmund. Yours in the ranks of death.

Goneril. My most dear Gloucester!

Exit EDMUND

O, the difference of man and man!
To thee a woman's services are due: 30
My fool usurps my body.

Oswald. Madam, here comes my lord.

Exit STEWARD and enter ALBANY

Goneril. I have been worth the whistle.

Albany. O Goneril!

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face. I fear your disposition:
That nature, which contemns its origin,

Cannot be border'd certain in itself;
 She that herself will sliver and disbranch
 From her material sap, perforce must wither 40
 And come to deadly use.

Goneril. No more; the text is foolish.

Albany. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile:
 Filths savor but themselves. What have you done?
 Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?
 A father, and a gracious aged man,
 Whose reverence even the head-lugg'd bear would lick,
 Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madded.
 Could my good brother suffer you to do it?
 A man, a prince, by him so benefited! 50
 If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
 Send quickly down to tame these vile offenses,
 It will come,
 Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
 Like monsters of the deep.

Goneril. Milk-liver'd man!
 That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
 Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
 Thine honor from thy suffering; that not know'st 60
 Fools do those villains pity who are punish'd
 Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy drum?
 France spreads his banners in our noiseless land;
 With plumed helm thy slayer begins threats;
 Whiles thou, a moral fool, sit'st still, and criest
 'Alack, why does he so?'

Albany. See thyself, devil!
 Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
 So horrid as in woman.

Goneril. O vain fool!

Albany. Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame, 70
Be-monster not thy feature. Were it my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones: howe'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

Goneril. Marry, your manhood now—

Enter a MESSENGER

Albany. What news?

Messenger. O, my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall's dead:
Slain by his servant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloucester. 80

Albany. Gloucester's eyes!

Messenger. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Opposed against the act, bending his sword
To his great master; who, thereat enraged,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead;
But not without that harmful stroke, which since
Hath pluck'd him after.

Albany. This shows you are above,
You justicers, that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge! But, O poor Gloucester! 90
Lost he his other eye?

Messenger. Both, both, my lord.
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;
'Tis from your sister.

Goneril. [*Aside*]

One way I like this well;
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,
May all the building in my fancy pluck
Upon my hateful life: another way,
The news is not so tart—I'll read, and answer.

Exit

Albany. Where was his son when they did take his eyes? 100

Messenger. Come with my lady hither.

Albany. He is not here.

Messenger. No, my good lord; I met him back again.

Albany. Knows he the wickedness?

Messenger. Ay, my good lord; 'twas he inform'd against him;
And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment
Might have the freer course.

Albany. Gloucester, I live
To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the king,
And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend: 110
Tell me what more thou know'st.

Exeunt

SCENE III. The French camp near Dover.

Enter KENT and a GENTLEMAN

Kent. Why the King of France is so suddenly gone back
know you the reason?

Gentleman. Something he left imperfect in the
state, which since his coming forth is thought
of; which imports to the kingdom so much
fear and danger, that his personal return was
most required and necessary.

Kent. Who hath he left behind him general?

Gentleman. The Marshal of France, Monsieur La Far.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the queen to any 10
demonstration of grief?

Gentleman. Ay, sir; she took them, read them in
my presence;
And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek: it seem'd she was a queen
Over her passion; who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it moved her.

Gentleman. Not to a rage: patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears 20
Were like a better way: those happy smilets,
That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,

Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved,
If all could so become it.

Kent. Made she no verbal question?

Gentleman. 'Faith, once or twice she heaved the name
of 'father'

Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart:
Cried 'Sisters! sisters! Shame of ladies! sisters! 30
Kent! father! sisters! What, i' the storm? i' the night?
Let pity not be believed!' There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamor moisten'd: then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

Kent. It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;
Else one self mate and mate could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?

Gentleman. No. 40

Kent. Was this before the king return'd?

Gentleman. No, since.

Kent. Well, sir, the poor distressed Lear's i' the town;
Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

Gentleman. Why, good sir?

Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him:
his own unkindness,
That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her

To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
 To his dog-hearted daughters, these things sting
 His mind so venomously, that burning shame
 Detains him from Cordelia. 50

Gentleman. Alack, poor gentleman!

Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard not?

Gentleman. 'Tis so, they are afoot.

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear,
 And leave you to attend him: some dear cause
 Will in concealment wrap me up awhile;
 When I am known aright, you shall not grieve 60
 Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go
 Along with me.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. The same. A tent.

Enter, with drum and colors, CORDELLA, DOCTOR, and SOLDIERS

Cordelia. Alack, 'tis he: why, he was met even now
 As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;
 Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow-weeds,
 With bur-docks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
 Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
 In our sustaining corn. A century send forth;
 Search every acre in the high-grown field,
 And bring him to our eye.

Exit an OFFICER

What can man's wisdom
 In the restoring his bereaved sense? 10
 He that helps him take all my outward worth.

Doctor. There is means, madam:
 Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
 The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,
 Are many simples operative, whose power
 Will close the eye of anguish.

Cordelia. All blest secrets,
 All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
 Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate
 In the good man's distress! Seek, seek for him; 20
 Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
 That wants the means to lead it.

Enter a MESSENGER

Messenger. News, madam;
 The British powers are marching hitherward.

Cordelia. 'Tis known before; our preparation stands
 In expectation of them. O dear father,
 It is thy business that I go about;
 Therefore great France
 My mourning and important tears hath pitied.
 No blown ambition doth our arms incite, 30
 But love, dear love, and our aged father's right:
 Soon may I hear and see him!

Exeunt

SCENE V. Gloucester's castle.

Enter REGAN and OSWALD

Regan. But are my brother's powers set forth?

Oswald. Ay, madam.

Regan. Himself in person there?

Oswald. Madam, with much ado:
Your sister is the better soldier.

Regan. Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?

Oswald. No, madam.

Regan. What might import my sister's letter to him?

Oswald. I know not, lady.

Regan. 'Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter. 10
It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,
To let him live: where he arrives he moves
All hearts against us: Edmund, I think, is gone,
In pity of his misery, to dispatch
His nighted life: moreover, to descry
The strength o' the enemy.

Oswald. I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

Regan. Our troops set forth to-morrow: stay with us;
The ways are dangerous.

Oswald. I may not, madam: 20
My lady charged my duty in this business.

Regan. Why should she write to Edmund?
 Might not you
 Transport her purposes by word? Belike,
 Something—I know not what: I'll love thee much,
 Let me unseal the letter.

Oswald. Madam, I had rather—

Regan. I know your lady does not love her husband;
 I am sure of that: and at her late being here
 She gave strange oeillades and most speaking looks
 To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom. 30

Oswald. I, madam?

Regan. I speak in understanding; you are; I know't:
 Therefore I do advise you, take this note:
 My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd;
 And more convenient is he for my hand
 Than for your lady's: you may gather more.
 If you do find him, pray you, give him this;
 And when your mistress hears thus much from you,
 I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.
 So, fare you well. 40
 If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
 Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

Oswald. Would I could meet him, madam! I should show
 What party I do follow.

Regan. Fare thee well.

Exeunt

SCENE VI. Fields near Dover.

Enter GLOUCESTER, and EDGAR dressed like a peasant

Gloucester. When shall we come to the top of
that same hill?

Edgar. You do climb up it now: look, how we labor.

Gloucester. Methinks the ground is even.

Edgar. Horrible steep.
Hark, do you hear the sea?

Gloucester. No, truly.

Edgar. Why, then, your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes' anguish.

Gloucester. So may it be, indeed:
Methinks thy voice is alter'd; and thou speak'st
In better phrase and matter than thou didst. 10

Edgar. You're much deceived: in nothing am I changed
But in my garments.

Gloucester. Methinks you're better spoken.

Edgar. Come on, sir; here's the place: stand still.
How fearful
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles: half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head: 20
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,

Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,
 Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy
 Almost too small for sight: the murmuring surge,
 That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
 Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more;
 Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
 Topple down headlong.

Gloucester. Set me where you stand.

Edgar. Give me your hand: you are now within a foot 30
 Of the extreme verge: for all beneath the moon
 Would I not leap upright.

Gloucester. Let go my hand.
 Here, friend, 's another purse; in it a jewel
 Well worth a poor man's taking: fairies and gods
 Prosper it with thee! Go thou farther off;
 Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

Edgar. Now fare you well, good sir.

Gloucester. With all my heart.

Edgar. Why I do trifle thus with his despair 40
 Is done to cure it.

Gloucester. [*Kneeling*]
 O you mighty gods!
 This world I do renounce, and, in your sights,
 Shake patiently my great affliction off:
 If I could bear it longer, and not fall
 To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,
 My snuff and loathed part of nature should
 Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him!
 Now, fellow, fare thee well. [*He falls forward*]

Edgar. Gone, sir: farewell.

And yet I know not how conceit may rob
The treasury of life, when life itself
Yields to the theft: had he been where he thought,
By this, had thought been past. Alive or dead?
Ho, you sir! friend! Hear you, sir! speak!
Thus might he pass indeed: yet he revives.
What are you, sir?

50

Gloucester. Away, and let me die.

Edgar. Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, feathers, air,
So many fathom down precipitating,
Thou'dst shiver'd like an egg; but thou dost breathe;
Hast heavy substance; bleed'st not; speak'st; art sound.
Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell:
Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again.

60

Gloucester. But have I fall'n, or no?

Edgar. From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.
Look up a-height; the shrill-gorged lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up.

Gloucester. Alack, I have no eyes.
Is wretchedness deprived that benefit,
To end itself by death? 'twas yet some comfort,
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage,
And frustrate his proud will.

70

Edgar. Give me your arm:
Up: so. How is 't? Feel you your legs? You stand.

Gloucester. Too well, too well.

Edgar. This is above all strangeness.

Upon the crown o' the cliff, what thing was that
Which parted from you?

Gloucester. A poor unfortunate beggar.

80

Edgar. As I stood here below, methought his eyes
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelk'd and waved like the enridged sea:
It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods, who make them honors
Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee.

Gloucester. I do remember now: henceforth I'll bear
Affliction till it do cry out itself
'Enough, enough,' and die. That thing you speak of,
I took it for a man; often 'twould say
'The fiend, the fiend:' he led me to that place.

90

Edgar. Bear free and patient thoughts. But who comes here?

Enter KING LEAR, fantastically dressed with wild flowers

The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

King Lear. No, they cannot touch me for coining;
I am the king himself.

Edgar. O thou side-piercing sight!

King Lear. Nature's above art in that respect. There's your
press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a
crow-keeper: draw me a clothier's yard. Look,
look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of toasted

100

cheese will do 't. There's my gauntlet; I'll prove
it on a giant. Bring up the brown bills. O, well
flown, bird! i' the clout, i' the clout: hewgh!
Give the word.

Edgar. Sweet marjoram.

King Lear. Pass.

Gloucester. I know that voice.

King Lear. Ha! Goneril, with a white beard! They flattered
me like a dog; and told me I had white hairs in my 110
beard ere the black ones were there. To say 'ay'
and 'no' to every thing that I said!—'Ay' and 'no'
too was no good divinity. When the rain came to
wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when
the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I
found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are
not men o' their words: they told me I was every
thing; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof.

Gloucester. The trick of that voice I do well remember:
Is 't not the king? 120

King Lear. Ay, every inch a king:
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.
I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause? Adultery?
Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:
The wren goes to 't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.
Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters
Got 'tween the lawful sheets.
To 't, luxury, pell-mell! for I lack soldiers. 130
Behold yond simpering dame,

Whose face between her forks presages snow;
 That minces virtue, and does shake the head
 To hear of pleasure's name;
 The fitchew, nor the soiled horse, goes to 't
 With a more riotous appetite.
 Down from the waist they are Centaurs,
 Though women all above:
 But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
 Beneath is all the fiends';
 There's hell, there's darkness, there's the
 sulph'rous pit,
 Burning, scalding, stench, consumption; fie,
 fie, fie! pah, pah! Give me an ounce of civet,
 good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination:
 there's money for thee.

140

Gloucester. O, let me kiss that hand!

King Lear. Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

Gloucester. O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world
 Shall so wear out to naught. Dost thou know me?

150

King Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough.
 Dost thou squint at me? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid!
 I'll not love. Read thou this challenge; mark but the
 penning of it.

Gloucester. Were all the letters suns, I could not see one.

Edgar. I would not take this from report; it is,
 And my heart breaks at it.

King Lear. Read.

Gloucester. What, with the case of eyes?

King Lear. O, ho, are you there with me? 160

No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse?
Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light;
yet you see how this world goes.

Gloucester. I see it feelingly.

King Lear. What, art mad? A man may see how
this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears:
see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief.
Hark, in thine ear: change places; and, handy-dandy,
which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen
a farmer's dog bark at a beggar? 170

Gloucester. Ay, sir.

King Lear. And the creature run from the cur?
There thou mightst behold the great image of
authority: a dog's obeyed in office.
Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;
Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind
For which thou whipp'st her. The usurer hangs
the cozener.
Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold, 180
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks:
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.
None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em:
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;
And like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now, now:
Pull off my boots: harder, harder: so.

Edgar. O, matter and impertinency mix'd!
Reason in madness!

King Lear. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes. 190
I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester:
Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:
Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,
We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee: mark.

Gloucester. Alack, alack the day!

King Lear. When we are born, we cry that we are come
To this great stage of fools: this a good block;
It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe
A troop of horse with felt: I'll put 't in proof;
And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law, 200
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

Enter a GENTLEMAN, with ATTENDANTS

Gentleman. O, here he is: lay hand upon him. Sir,
Your most dear daughter—

King Lear. No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even
The natural fool of fortune. Use me well;
You shall have ransom. Let me have surgeons;
I am cut to the brains.

Gentleman. You shall have anything.

King Lear. No seconds? all myself? 210
Why, this would make a man a man of salt,
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
Ay, and laying autumn's dust.

Gentleman. Good sir—

King Lear. I will die bravely, like a bridegroom. What!
I will be jovial: come, come; I am a king,
My masters, know you that.

Gentleman. You are a royal one, and we obey you.

King Lear. Then there's life in't. Nay, if you get it, you
shall get it with running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

Exit running: ATTENDANTS follow

Gentleman. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch, 220
Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one daughter,
Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.

Edgar. Hail, gentle sir.

Gentleman. Sir, speed you: what's your will?

Edgar. Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward?

Gentleman. Most sure and vulgar: everyone hears that,
Which can distinguish sound.

Edgar. But, by your favor,
How near's the other army? 240

Gentleman. Near and on speedy foot; the main descry
Stands on the hourly thought.

Edgar. I thank you, sir: that's all.

Gentleman. Though that the queen on special cause is here,
Her army is moved on.

Edgar. I thank you, sir.

Exit GENTLEMAN

Gloucester. You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me:
Let not my worser spirit tempt me again
To die before you please!

Edgar. Well pray you, father. 250

Gloucester. Now, good sir, what are you?

Edgar. A most poor man, made tame to fortune's blows;
Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,
I'll lead you to some biding.

Gloucester. Hearty thanks:
The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot!

Enter OSWALD

Oswald. A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!
That eyeless head of thine was first framed flesh 260
To raise my fortunes. Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember: the sword is out
That must destroy thee.

Gloucester. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to't.

EDGAR interposes

Oswald. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Darest thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence;
Lest that the infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

Edgar. Ch'll not let go, zir, without vurther 'casion. 270

Oswald. Let go, slave, or thou diest!

Edgar. Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor volk
pass. An chud ha' bin zwaggered out of my life,
'twould not ha' bin zo long as 'tis by a vortnight.
Nay, come not near th' old man; keep out, che vor
ye, or ise try whether your costard or my ballow be
the harder: ch'll be plain with you.

Oswald. Out, dunghill!

Edgar. Ch'll pick your teeth, zir: come; no matter
vor your foins. 280

They fight, and EDGAR knocks him down

Oswald. Slave, thou hast slain me: villain, take my purse:
If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body;
And give the letters which thou find'st about me
To Edmund, Earl of Gloucester; seek him out
Upon the British party: O, untimely death! [*Dies*]

Edgar. I know thee well: a serviceable villain;
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress
As badness would desire.

Gloucester. What, is he dead?

Edgar. Sit you down, father; rest you 290

Let's see these pockets: the letters that he speaks of
 May be my friends. He's dead; I am only sorry
 He had no other death's-man. Let us see:
 Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not:
 To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts;
 Their papers, is more lawful.

[*Reads*]

'Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You have
 many opportunities to cut him off: if your will
 want not, time and place will be fruitfully offered.
 There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror: 300
 then am I the prisoner, and his bed my goal; from
 the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply
 the place for your labour.
 'Your—wife, so I would say—
 'Affectionate servant,
 'GONERIL.'

O undistinguish'd space of woman's will!
 A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;
 And the exchange my brother! Here, in the sands,
 Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified 310
 Of murderous lechers: and in the mature time
 With this ungracious paper strike the sight
 Of the death practiced duke: for him 'tis well
 That of thy death and business I can tell.

Gloucester. The king is mad: how stiff is my vile sense,
 That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling
 Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract:
 So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,
 And woes by wrong imaginations lose
 The knowledge of themselves. 320

Edgar. Give me your hand:

Drum afar off

Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum:
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend.

Exeunt

SCENE VII. A tent in the French camp.

LEAR on a bed asleep, soft music playing; **GENTLEMAN,**
and others attending.

Enter CORDELLA, KENT, and DOCTOR

Cordelia. O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me.

Kent. To be acknowledged, madam, is o'erpaid.
All my reports go with the modest truth;
Nor more nor clipp'd, but so.

Cordelia. Be better suited:
These weeds are memories of those worser hours:
I prithee, put them off.

Kent. Pardon me, dear madam;
Yet to be known shortens my made intent:
My boon I make it, that you know me not
Till time and I think meet.

10

Cordelia. Then be't so, my good lord.

[*To the DOCTOR*]

How does the king?

Doctor. Madam, sleeps still.

Cordelia. O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
The untuned and jarring senses, O, wind up
Of this child-changed father!

20

Doctor. So please your majesty
That we may wake the king: he hath slept long.

Cordelia. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed
I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd?

Gentleman. Ay, madam; in the heaviness of his sleep
We put fresh garments on him.

Doctor. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;
I doubt not of his temperance.

Cordelia. Very well.

Doctor. Please you, draw near. Louder the music there!

30

Cordelia. O my dear father! Restoration hang
Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!

Kent. Kind and dear princess!

Cordelia. Had you not been their father, these white flakes
Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face
To be opposed against the warring winds?

To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
 In the most terrible and nimble stroke 40
 Of quick, cross lightning? to watch—poor perdu!—
 With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog,
 Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
 Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,
 To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,
 In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!
 'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
 Had not concluded all. He wakes; speak to him.

Doctor. Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

Cordelia. How does my royal lord?
 How fares your majesty? 50

King Lear. You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave:
 Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
 Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
 Do scald like molten lead.

Cordelia. Sir, do you know me?

King Lear. You are a spirit, I know: when did you die?

Cordelia. Still, still, far wide!

Doctor. He's scarce awake: let him alone awhile.

King Lear. Where have I been? Where am I?
 Fair daylight?
 I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity, 60
 To see another thus. I know not what to say.
 I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;
 I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured
 Of my condition!

Cordelia. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:
No, sir, you must not kneel.

King Lear. Pray, do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less; 70
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

Cordelia. And so I am, I am. 80

King Lear. Be your tears wet? yes, 'faith. I pray,
weep not:
If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
I know you do not love me; for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:
You have some cause, they have not.

Cordelia. No cause, no cause.

King Lear. Am I in France?

Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.

King Lear. Do not abuse me.

Doctor. Be comforted, good madam: the great rage, 90
You see, is kill'd in him: and yet it is danger

To make him even o'er the time he has lost.
Desire him to go in; trouble him no more
Till further settling.

Cordelia. Will't please your highness walk?

King Lear. You must bear with me:

Pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and foolish.

Exeunt all but KENT and GENTLEMAN

Gentleman. Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall
was so slain?

Kent. Most certain, sir.

Gentleman. Who is conductor of his people?

100

Kent. As 'tis said, the bastard son of Gloucester.

Gentleman. They say Edgar, his banished son, is with the Earl of
Kent in Germany.

Kent. Report is changeable. 'tis time to look about;
the powers of the kingdom approach apace.

Gentleman. The arbitrament is like to be bloody.
Fare you well, sir.

Exit

Kent. My point and period will be thoroughly wrought,
Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought.

Exit

ACT V

SCENE I. The British camp, near Dover.

*Enter, with drum and colors, EDMUND, REGAN, GENTLEMAN, and
SOLDIERS.*

Edmund. Know of the duke if his last purpose hold,
Or whether since he is advised by aught
To change the course: he's full of alteration
And self-reproving: bring his constant pleasure.

To a GENTLEMAN, who goes out

Regan. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

Edmund. 'Tis to be doubted, madam.

Regan. Now, sweet lord,
You know the goodness I intend upon you:
Tell me—but truly—but then speak the truth,
Do you not love my sister?

10

Edmund. In honor'd love.

Regan. But have you never found my brother's way
To the forfended place?

Edmund. That thought abuses you.

Regan. I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

Edmund. No, by mine honor, madam.

Regan. I never shall endure her: dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

Edmund. Fear me not:

20

She and the duke her husband!

Enter, with drum and colors, ALBANY, GONERIL, and SOLDIERS

Goneril. [*Aside*]

I had rather lose the battle than that sister
Should loosen him and me.

Albany. Our very loving sister, well be-met.

Sir, this I hear; the king is come to his daughter,
With others whom the rigor of our state
Forced to cry out. Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant: for this business,
It toucheth us, as France invades our land,
Not bolds the king, with others, whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy cause make oppose.

30

Edmund. Sir, you speak nobly.

Regan. Why is this reason'd?

Goneril. Combine together 'gainst the enemy;
For these domestic and particular broils
Are not the question here.

Albany. Let's then determine

With the ancient of war on our proceedings.

Edmund. I shall attend you presently at your tent.

40

Regan. Sister, you'll go with us?

Goneril. No.

Regan. 'Tis most convenient; pray you, go with us.

Goneril. [*Aside*]

O, ho, I know the riddle—I will go.

As they are going out, enter EDGAR disguised

Edgar. If e'er your grace had speech with man so poor,
Hear me one word.

Albany. I'll overtake you. Speak.

Exeunt all but ALBANY and EDGAR

Edgar. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.

If you have victory, let the trumpet sound

For him that brought it: wretched though I seem,

50

I can produce a champion that will prove

What is avouched there. If you miscarry,

Your business of the world hath so an end,

And machination ceases. Fortune love you.

Albany. Stay till I have read the letter.

Edgar. I was forbid it.

When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,

And I'll appear again.

Albany. Why, fare thee well: I will o'erlook thy paper.

Exit EDGAR

Re-enter EDMUND

Edmund. The enemy's in view; draw up your powers.

60

Here is the guess of their true strength and forces

By diligent discovery; but your haste

Is now urged on you.

Albany. We will greet the time.

Exit

Edmund. To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
Each jealous of the other, as the stung
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,
If both remain alive: to take the widow
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;
And hardly shall I carry out my side,
Her husband being alive. Now then we'll use
His countenance for the battle; which being done,
Let her who would be rid of him devise
His speedy taking off. As for the mercy
Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,
The battle done, and they within our power,
Shall never see his pardon; for my state
Stands on me to defend, not to debate.

70

Exit

SCENE II. A field between the two camps.

*Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colors, KING LEAR, CORDELIA,
and SOLDIERS, over the stage; and exeunt.*

Enter EDGAR and GLOUCESTER

Edgar. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
For your good host; pray that the right may thrive:
If ever I return to you again,
I'll bring you comfort.

Gloucester. Grace go with you, sir!

Exit EDGAR

Alarum and retreat within. Re-enter EDGAR

Edgar. Away, old man; give me thy hand; away!
King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en:
Give me thy hand; come on.

Gloucester. No farther, sir; a man may rot even here.

Edgar. What, in ill thoughts again? Men must endure 80
Their going hence, even as their coming hither;
Ripeness is all: come on.

Gloucester. And that's true too.

Exeunt

SCENE III. The British camp near Dover.

*Enter, in conquest, with drum and colors, EDMUND, KING LEAR and
CORDELLA, prisoners; CAPTAIN, SOLDIERS, etc.*

Edmund. Some officers take them away: good guard,
Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure them.

Cordelia. We are not the first
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.
Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?

King Lear. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:

We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage: 10
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;
And take upon 's the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon. 20

Edmund. Take them away.

King Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,

The gods themselves throw incense. Have I
caught thee?
He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes;
The good-years shall devour them, flesh and fell,
Ere they shall make us weep: we'll see 'em starve
first. Come.

Exeunt KING LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded

Edmund. Come hither, captain; hark.

Take thou this note; [*Giving a paper*] 30
Go follow them to prison:
One step I have advanced thee; if thou dost
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To noble fortunes: know thou this, that men
Are as the time is: to be tender-minded
Does not become a sword: thy great employment

Will not bear question; either say thou'lt do 't,
Or thrive by other means.

Captain. I'll do 't, my lord.

Edmund. About it; and write happy when thou
hast done.

40

Mark, I say, instantly; and carry it so
As I have set it down.

Captain. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats;
If it be man's work, I'll do 't.

Exit

*Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, another CAPTAIN,
and SOLDIERS*

Albany. Sir, you have shown to-day your valiant strain,
And fortune led you well: you have the captives
That were the opposites of this day's strife:
We do require them of you, so to use them
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.

50

Edmund. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention and appointed guard;
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosom on his side,
An turn our impress'd lances in our eyes
Which do command them. With him I sent the queen;
My reason all the same; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at further space, to appear
Where you shall hold your session. At this time

60

We sweat and bleed: the friend hath lost his friend;
And the best quarrels, in the heat, are cursed
By those that feel their sharpness:
The question of Cordelia and her father
Requires a fitter place.

Albany. Sir, by your patience,
I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.

Regan. That's as we list to grace him.
Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded, 70
Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers;
Bore the commission of my place and person;
The which immediacy may well stand up,
And call itself your brother.

Goneril. Not so hot:
In his own grace he doth exalt himself,
More than in your addition.

Regan. In my rights,
By me invested, he compeers the best.

Goneril. That were the most, if he should husband you. 80

Regan. Jesters do oft prove prophets.

Goneril. Holla, holla!
That eye that told you so look'd but a-squint.

Regan. Lady, I am not well; else I should answer
From a full-flowing stomach. General,
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony;
Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine:
Witness the world, that I create thee here
My lord and master.

Goneril. Mean you to enjoy him?

90

Albany. The let-alone lies not in your good will.

Edmund. Nor in thine, lord.

Albany. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

Regan. [*To EDMUND*]

Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.

Albany. Stay yet; hear reason. Edmund, I arrest thee

On capital treason; and, in thine attaint,

This gilded serpent [*Pointing to GONERIL*]

For your claim, fair sister,

I bar it in the interest of my wife:

’Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,

100

And I, her husband, contradict your banns.

If you will marry, make your loves to me,

My lady is bespoke.

Goneril. An interlude!

Albany. Thou art arm’d, Gloucester: let the trumpet sound:

If none appear to prove upon thy head

Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,

There is my pledge; [*Throwing down a glove*]

I’ll prove it on thy heart,

Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less

110

Than I have here proclaim’d thee.

Regan. Sick, O, sick!

Goneril. [*Aside*]

If not, I’ll ne’er trust medicine.

Edmund. There's my exchange: [*Throwing down a glove*]
What in the world he is
That names me traitor, villain-like he lies:
Call by thy trumpet: he that dares approach,
On him, on you, who not? I will maintain
My truth and honor firmly.

Albany. A herald, ho!

120

Edmund. A herald, ho, a herald!

Albany. Trust to thy single virtue; for thy soldiers,
All levied in my name, have in my name
Took their discharge.

Regan. My sickness grows upon me.

Albany. She is not well; convey her to my tent.

Exit REGAN, led

Enter a HERALD

Come hither, herald—Let the trumpet sound,
And read out this.

Captain. Sound, trumpet!

A trumpet sounds

Herald. [*Reads*]

'If any man of quality or degree within
the lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund,
supposed Earl of Gloucester, that he is a manifold
traitor, let him appear by the third sound of the
trumpet: he is bold in his defense.'

130

Edmund. Sound!

First trumpet

Herald. Again!

Second trumpet

Herald. Again!

Third trumpet

Trumpet answers within

Enter EDGAR at the third sound, armed, with a trumpet before him

Albany. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o' the trumpet.

Herald. What are you?

140

Your name, your quality? and why you answer
This present summons?

Edgar. Know, my name is lost;
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit:
Yet am I noble as the adversary
I come to cope.

Albany. Which is that adversary?

Edgar. What's he that speaks for Edmund,
Earl of Gloucester?

Edmund. Himself: what say'st thou to him?

Edgar. Draw thy sword, 150
 That, if my speech offend a noble heart,
 Thy arm may do thee justice: here is mine.
 Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,
 My oath, and my profession: I protest,
 Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,
 Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,
 Thy valor and thy heart, thou art a traitor;
 False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;
 Conspirant 'gainst this high-illustrious prince;
 And, from the extremest upward of thy head 160
 To the descent and dust below thy foot,
 A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou 'No,'
 This sword, this arm, and my best spirits, are bent
 To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
 Thou liest.

Edmund. In wisdom I should ask thy name;
 But, since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
 And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes,
 What safe and nicely I might well delay
 By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn: 170
 Back do I toss these treasons to thy head;
 With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart;
 Which, for they yet glance by and scarcely bruise,
 This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
 Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak!

Alarums. They fight. EDMUND falls.

Albany. Save him, save him!

Goneril. This is practice, Gloucester:
 By the law of arms thou wast not bound to answer

An unknown opposite; thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguiled.

180

Albany. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it: Hold, sir:
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil:
No tearing, lady: I perceive you know it.

Gives the letter to EDMUND

Goneril. Say, if I do, the laws are mine, not thine:
Who can arraign me for't.

Albany. Most monstrous! oh!
Know'st thou this paper?

Goneril. Ask me not what I know.

Exit

Albany. Go after her: she's desperate; govern her.

190

Edmund. What you have charged me with,
that have I done;
And more, much more; the time will bring it out:
'Tis past, and so am I. But what art thou
That hast this fortune on me? If thou'rt noble,
I do forgive thee.

Edgar. Let's exchange charity.
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;
If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices

200

Make instruments to plague us:
The dark and vicious place where thee he got
Cost him his eyes.

Edmund. Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true;
The wheel is come full circle: I am here.

Albany. Methought thy very gait did prophesy
A royal nobleness: I must embrace thee:
Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
Did hate thee or thy father!

Edgar. Worthy prince, I know't.

210

Albany. Where have you hid yourself?
How have you known the miseries of your father?

Edgar. By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;
And when 'tis told, O, that my heart would burst!
The bloody proclamation to escape,
That follow'd me so near—O, our lives' sweetness!
That we the pain of death would hourly die
Rather than die at once!—taught me to shift
Into a madman's rags; to assume a semblance
That very dogs disdain'd: and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost: became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, saved him from despair;
Never—O fault!—reveal'd myself unto him,
Until some half-hour past, when I was arm'd:
Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
Told him my pilgrimage: but his flaw'd heart,
Alack, too weak the conflict to support!
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly.

220

230

Edmund. This speech of yours hath moved me,
And shall perchance do good: but speak you on;
You look as you had something more to say.

Albany. If there be more, more woeful, hold it in;
For I am almost ready to dissolve,
Hearing of this.

Edgar. This would have seem'd a period
To such as love not sorrow; but another,
To amplify too much, would make much more, 240
And top extremity.
Whilst I was big in clamour came there in a man,
Who, having seen me in my worst estate,
Shunn'd my abhorr'd society; but then, finding
Who 'twas that so endured, with his strong arms
He fastened on my neck, and bellow'd out
As he'd burst heaven; threw him on my father;
Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him
That ever ear received: which in recounting
His grief grew puissant and the strings of life 250
Began to crack: twice then the trumpets sounded,
And there I left him tranced.

Albany. But who was this?

Edgar. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in disguise
Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service
Improper for a slave.

Enter a GENTLEMAN, with a bloody knife

Gentleman. Help, help, O, help!

Edgar. What kind of help?

Albany. Speak, man.

Edgar. What means that bloody knife?

260

Gentleman. 'Tis hot, it smokes;

It came even from the heart of—O, she's dead!

Albany. Who dead? speak, man.

Gentleman. Your lady, sir, your lady: and her sister

By her is poisoned; she hath confess'd it.

Edmund. I was contracted to them both: all three

Now marry in an instant.

Edgar. Here comes Kent.

Albany. Produce their bodies, be they alive or dead:

This judgment of the heavens, that makes
us tremble,

270

Touches us not with pity.

Exit GENTLEMAN

Enter KENT

O, is this he?

The time will not allow the compliment

Which very manners urges.

Kent. I am come

To bid my king and master aye good night:

Is he not here?

Albany. Great thing of us forgot!

Speak, Edmund, where's the king?

and where's Cordelia?
See'st thou this object, Kent? 280

The bodies of GONERIL and REGAN are brought in

Kent. Alack, why thus?

Edmund. Yet Edmund was beloved:
The one the other poison'd for my sake,
And after slew herself.

Albany. Even so. Cover their faces.

Edmund. I pant for life: some good I mean to do,
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send,
Be brief in it, to the castle; for my writ
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia:
Nay, send in time. 290

Albany. Run, run, O, run!

Edgar. To who, my lord? Who hath the office? send
Thy token of reprieve.

Edmund. Well thought on: take my sword,
Give it the captain.

Albany. Haste thee, for thy life.

Exit EDGAR

Edmund. He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid herself. 300

Albany. The gods defend her! Bear him hence awhile.

EDMUND is borne off

Re-enter KING LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his arms; EDGAR, CAPTAIN, and others following

King Lear. Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men
of stones:

Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever!
I know when one is dead, and when one lives;
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promised end?

Edgar. Or image of that horror?

310

Albany. Fall, and cease!

King Lear. This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent. [*Kneeling*]
O my good master!

King Lear. Prithee, away.

Edgar. 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

King Lear. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!
I might have saved her; now she's gone forever!
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!

320

What is't thou say'st? Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.

Captain. 'Tis true, my lords, he did.

King Lear. Did I not, fellow?

I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion
I would have made them skip: I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you?
Mine eyes are not o' the best: I'll tell you straight.

Kent. If fortune brag of two she loved and hated, 330
One of them we behold.

King Lear. This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?

Kent. The same,
Your servant Kent: Where is your servant Caius?

King Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;
He'll strike, and quickly too: he's dead and rotten.

Kent. No, my good lord; I am the very man—

King Lear. I'll see that straight.

Kent. That, from your first of difference and decay, 340
Have follow'd your sad steps.

King Lear. You are welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else: all's cheerless, dark, and deadly.
Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,
And desperately are dead.

King Lear. Ay, so I think.

Albany. He knows not what he says: and vain it is
That we present us to him.

Edgar. Very bootless.

Enter a CAPTAIN

Captain. Edmund is dead, my lord.

Albany. That's but a trifle here. 350

You lords and noble friends, know our intent.
What comfort to this great decay may come
Shall be applied: for us we will resign,
During the life of this old majesty,
To him our absolute power:

[*To EDGAR and KENT*]

You, to your rights:
With boot, and such addition as your honors
Have more than merited. All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings. O, see, see! 360

King Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!
Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.
Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,
Look there, look there! [*Dies*]

Edgar. He faints! My lord, my lord!

Kent. Break, heart; I prithee, break!

Edgar. Look up, my lord.

370

Kent. Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass!

He hates him much

That would upon the rack of this tough world

Stretch him out longer.

Edgar. He is gone, indeed.

Kent. The wonder is, he hath endured so long:

He but usurp'd his life.

Albany. Bear them from hence. Our present business

Is general woe.

[*To KENT and EDGAR*]

Friends of my soul, you twain

Rule in this realm, and the gored state sustain.

380

Kent. I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;

My master calls me, I must not say no.

Albany. The weight of this sad time we must obey;

Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

The oldest hath borne most: we that are young

Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

Exeunt, with a dead march.

RICHARD III

William Shakespeare



CHARACTERS

Richard

Duke of Gloucester, later King Richard III

Lady Anne

*widow of Prince Edward, son to the late King Henry VI;
later wife to Richard III*

King Edward IV

brother to Richard III

Queen Elizabeth

wife of King Edward IV, formerly the Lady Grey

Prince Edward & Richard, Duke of York

King Edward and Queen Elizabeth's sons

George, Duke of Clarence

brother to Edward and Richard

Clarence's boy

Clarence's daughter

Duchess of York

mother of Richard, Edward, and Clarence

Queen Margaret

widow of King Henry VI

Duke of Buckingham

William, Lord Hastings

Lord Chamberlain

Lord Stanley

Earl of Derby

Earl Rivers

brother to Queen Elizabeth

Lord Grey & Marquess of Dorset
sons of Queen Elizabeth by her former marriage

Sir Thomas Vaughan

Earl of Richmond
Henry Tudor, later King Henry VII

SUPPORTERS OF RICHARD III

Sir William Catesby

Sir Richard Ratcliffe

Lord Lovell

Duke of Norfolk

Earl of Surrey

SUPPORTERS OF THE EARL OF RICHMOND

Earl of Oxford

Sir James Blunt

Sir Walter Herbert

Sir William Brandon

~

Sir Christopher
a priest

Archbishop

Cardinal

John Morton
Bishop of Ely

Sir Robert Brakenbury
Lieutenant of the Tower in London

James Tyrrel

gentleman

Gentleman

attending Lady Anne

Two Murderers

Keeper in the Tower

Three Citizens

Lord Mayor of London

Pursuivant

Sir John

a priest

Scrivener

Page

Sheriff

Seven Messengers

**Various Councillors, Aldermen, Guards, Soldiers,
Attendants, and Citizens**

ACT I

SCENE I. London. A street.

Enter RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER, solus.

Richard. Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;
And now, instead of mounting barded steeds 10
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time 20
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity:
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,

I am determined to prove a villain 30
 And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
 Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
 By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,
 To set my brother Clarence and the king
 In deadly hate the one against the other:
 And if King Edward be as true and just
 As I am subtle, false, and treacherous,
 This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up,
 About a prophecy, which says that 'G'
 Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be. 40
 Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here
 Clarence comes.

Enter GEORGE, DUKE of CLARENCE, guarded, and BRAKENBURY

Brother, good day; what means this armed guard
 That waits upon your grace?

Clarence. His majesty
 Tendering my person's safety, hath appointed
 This conduct to convey me to the Tower.

Richard. Upon what cause?

Clarence. Because my name is George.

Richard. Alack, my lord, that fault is none of yours; 50
 He should, for that, commit your godfathers:
 O, belike his majesty hath some intent
 That you shall be new-christen'd in the Tower.
 But what's the matter, Clarence? may I know?

Clarence. Yea, Richard, when I know; for I protest
 As yet I do not: but, as I can learn,
 He hearkens after prophecies and dreams;

And from the cross-row plucks the letter G.
 And says a wizard told him that by G
 His issue disinherited should be; 60
 And, for my name of George begins with G,
 It follows in his thought that I am he.
 These, as I learn, and such like toys as these
 Have moved his highness to commit me now.

Richard. Why, this it is, when men are ruled by women:
 'Tis not the king that sends you to the Tower:
 My Lady Grey his wife, Clarence, 'tis she
 That tempers him to this extremity.
 Was it not she and that good man of worship, 70
 Anthony Woodville, her brother there,
 That made him send Lord Hastings to the Tower,
 From whence this present day he is deliver'd?
 We are not safe, Clarence; we are not safe.

Clarence. By heaven, I think there's no man is secure
 But the queen's kindred and night-walking heralds
 That trudge betwixt the king and Mistress Shore.
 Heard ye not what an humble suppliant
 Lord Hastings was to her for his delivery?

Richard. Humbly complaining to her deity
 Got my lord chamberlain his liberty 80
 I'll tell you what; I think it is our way,
 If we will keep in favor with the king,
 To be her men and wear her livery:
 The jealous o'erworn widow and herself,
 Since that our brother dubb'd them gentlewomen,
 Are mighty gossips in this monarchy.

Brakenbury. I beseech your graces both to pardon me;
 His majesty hath straitly given in charge

That no man shall have private conference,
Of what degree soever, with his brother. 90

Richard. Even so; an't please your worship, Brakenbury,
You may partake of anything we say:
We speak no treason, man: we say the king
Is wise and virtuous, and his noble queen
Well struck in years, fair, and not jealous;
We say that Shore's wife hath a pretty foot,
A cherry lip, a bonny eye, a passing pleasing tongue;
And that the queen's kindred are made gentle-folks:
How say you sir? Can you deny all this?

Brakenbury. With this, my lord, myself have
nought to do. 100

Richard. Nought to do with Mistress Shore! I tell thee,
fellow,
He that doth nought with her, excepting one,
Were best he do it secretly, alone.

Brakenbury. What one, my lord?

Richard. Her husband, knave: wouldst thou betray me?

Brakenbury. I beseech your grace to pardon me, and withal
Forbear your conference with the noble duke.

Clarence. We know thy charge, Brakenbury, and will obey.

Richard. We are the queen's abjects, and must obey.
Brother, farewell: I will unto the king; 110
And whatsoever you will employ me in,
Were it to call King Edward's widow sister,
I will perform it to enfranchise you.
Meantime, this deep disgrace in brotherhood
Touches me deeper than you can imagine.

Clarence. I know it pleaseth neither of us well.

Richard. Well, your imprisonment shall not be long;
Meantime, have patience.

Clarence. I must perforce. Farewell.

*Exeunt GEORGE, DUKE of CLARENCE, BRAKENBURY,
and GUARD*

Richard. Go, tread the path that thou shalt ne'er return. 120
Simple, plain Clarence! I do love thee so,
That I will shortly send thy soul to heaven,
If heaven will take the present at our hands.
But who comes here? the new-deliver'd Hastings?

Enter LORD HASTINGS

Hastings. Good time of day unto my gracious lord!

Richard. As much unto my good lord chamberlain!
Well are you welcome to the open air.
How hath your lordship brook'd imprisonment?

Hastings. With patience, noble lord, as prisoners must: 130
But I shall live, my lord, to give them thanks
That were the cause of my imprisonment.

Richard. No doubt, no doubt; and so shall Clarence too;
For they that were your enemies are his,
And have prevail'd as much on him as you.

Hastings. More pity that the eagle should be mew'd,
While kites and buzzards prey at liberty.

Richard. What news abroad?

Hastings. No news so bad abroad as this at home;
 The King is sickly, weak, and melancholy,
 And his physicians fear him mightily. 140

Richard. Now, by Saint Paul, this news is bad indeed.
 O, he hath kept an evil diet long,
 And overmuch consumed his royal person:
 'Tis very grievous to be thought upon.
 What, is he in his bed?

Hastings. He is.

Richard. Go you before, and I will follow you.

Exit LORD HASTINGS

He cannot live, I hope; and must not die
 Till George be pack'd with post-horse up to heaven.
 I'll in, to urge his hatred more to Clarence, 150
 With lies well steel'd with weighty arguments;
 And, if I fall not in my deep intent,
 Clarence hath not another day to live:
 Which done, God take King Edward to his mercy,
 And leave the world for me to bustle in!
 For then I'll marry Warwick's youngest daughter.
 What though I kill'd her husband and her father?
 The readiest way to make the wench amends
 Is to become her husband and her father:
 The which will I; not all so much for love 160
 As for another secret close intent,
 By marrying her which I must reach unto.
 But yet I run before my horse to market:
 Clarence still breathes; Edward still lives and reigns:
 When they are gone, then must I count my gains.

Exit

SCENE II. The same. Another street.

Enter the corpse of KING HENRY VI, GENTLEMEN with halberds to guard it; LADY ANNE being the mourner.

Lady Anne. Set down, set down your honorable load,
 If honor may be shrouded in a hearse,
 Whilst I awhile obsequiously lament
 The untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster.
 Poor key-cold figure of a holy king!
 Pale ashes of the house of Lancaster!
 Thou bloodless remnant of that royal blood!
 Be it lawful that I invoke thy ghost,
 To hear the lamentations of Poor Anne,
 Wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughter'd son, 10
 Stabb'd by the selfsame hand that made these wounds!
 Lo, in these windows that let forth thy life,
 I pour the helpless balm of my poor eyes.
 Cursed be the hand that made these fatal holes!
 Cursed be the heart that had the heart to do it!
 Cursed the blood that let this blood from hence!
 More direful hap betide that hated wretch,
 That makes us wretched by the death of thee,
 Than I can wish to adders, spiders, toads,
 Or any creeping venom'd thing that lives! 20
 If ever he have child, abortive be it,
 Prodigious, and untimely brought to light,
 Whose ugly and unnatural aspect
 May fright the hopeful mother at the view;
 And that be heir to his unhappiness!
 If ever he have wife, let her be made
 As miserable by the death of him
 As I am made by my poor lord and thee!
 Come, now towards Chertsey with your holy load,
 Taken from Paul's to be interred there; 30

And still, as you are weary of the weight,
Rest you, whiles I lament King Henry's corpse.

Enter RICHARD

Richard. Stay, you that bear the corpse, and set it down.

Lady Anne. What black magician conjures up this fiend,
To stop devoted charitable deeds?

Richard Villains, set down the corpse; or, by Saint Paul,
I'll make a corpse of him that disobeys.

Gentleman. My lord, stand back, and let the coffin pass.

Richard. Unmanner'd dog! stand thou, when I command:

Advance thy halbert higher than my breast, 40
Or, by Saint Paul, I'll strike thee to my foot,
And spurn upon thee, beggar, for thy boldness.

Lady Anne. What, do you tremble? are you all afraid?

Alas, I blame you not; for you are mortal,
And mortal eyes cannot endure the devil.
Avaunt, thou dreadful minister of hell!
Thou hadst but power over his mortal body,
His soul thou canst not have; therefore be gone.

Richard. Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.

Lady Anne. Foul devil, for God's sake, hence,
and trouble us not; 50

For thou hast made the happy earth thy hell,
Fill'd it with cursing cries and deep exclaims.
If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,
Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.
O, gentlemen, see, see! dead Henry's wounds

Open their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh!
 Blush, Blush, thou lump of foul deformity;
 For 'tis thy presence that exhales this blood
 From cold and empty veins, where no blood dwells;
 Thy deed, inhuman and unnatural, 60
 Provokes this deluge most unnatural.
 O God, which this blood madest, revenge his death!
 O earth, which this blood drink'st revenge his death!
 Either heaven with lightning strike the murderer dead,
 Or earth, gape open wide and eat him quick,
 As thou dost swallow up this good king's blood
 Which his hell-govern'd arm hath butchered!

Richard. Lady, you know no rules of charity,
 Which renders good for bad, blessings for curses.

Lady Anne. Villain, thou know'st no law of God nor man: 70
 No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.

Richard. But I know none, and therefore am no beast.

Lady Anne. O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!

Richard. More wonderful, when angels are so angry.
 Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman,
 Of these supposed-evils, to give me leave,
 By circumstance, but to acquit myself.

Lady Anne. Vouchsafe, defused infection of a man,
 For these known evils, but to give me leave,
 By circumstance, to curse thy cursed self. 80

Richard. Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have
 Some patient leisure to excuse myself.

Lady Anne. Foulter than heart can think thee, thou canst make
 No excuse current, but to hang thyself.

Richard. By such despair, I should accuse myself.

Lady Anne. And, by despairing, shouldst thou stand excused;
For doing worthy vengeance on thyself,
Which didst unworthy slaughter upon others.

Richard. Say that I slew them not?

Lady Anne. Why, then they are not dead: 90
But dead they are, and devilish slave, by thee.

Richard. I did not kill your husband.

Lady Anne. Why, then he is alive.

Richard. Nay, he is dead; and slain by Edward's hand.

Lady Anne. In thy foul throat thou liest: Queen Margaret saw
Thy murderous falchion smoking in his blood;
The which thou once didst bend against her breast,
But that thy brothers beat aside the point.

Richard. I was provoked by her slanderous tongue,
which laid their guilt upon my guiltless shoulders. 100

Lady Anne. Thou wast provoked by thy bloody mind.
Which never dreamt on aught but butcheries:
Didst thou not kill this king?

Richard. I grant ye.

Lady Anne. Dost grant me, hedgehog? then, God grant me too
Thou mayst be damned for that wicked deed!
O, he was gentle, mild, and virtuous!

Richard. The fitter for the King of heaven, that hath him.

Lady Anne. He is in heaven, where thou shalt never come.

Richard. Let him thank me, that holp to send him thither; 110
For he was fitter for that place than earth.

Lady Anne. And thou unfit for any place but hell.

Richard. Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it.

Lady Anne. Some dungeon.

Richard. Your bed-chamber.

Lady Anne. Ill rest betide the chamber where thou liest!

Richard. So will it, madam till I lie with you.

Lady Anne. I hope so.

Richard. I know so. But, gentle Lady Anne,
To leave this keen encounter of our wits, 120
And fall somewhat into a slower method:
Is not the causer of the timeless deaths
Of these Plantagenets, Henry and Edward,
As blameful as the executioner?

Lady Anne. Thou art the cause, and most accursed effect.

Richard. Your beauty was the cause of that effect;
Your beauty: which did haunt me in my sleep
To undertake the death of all the world,
So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom.

Lady Anne. If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide, 130
These nails should rend that beauty from my cheeks.

Richard. These eyes could never endure sweet beauty's wreck;
You should not blemish it, if I stood by:
As all the world is cheered by the sun,
So I by that; it is my day, my life.

Lady Anne. Black night o'ershade thy day,
and death thy life!

Richard. Curse not thyself, fair creature thou art both.

Lady Anne. I would I were, to be revenged on thee.

Richard. It is a quarrel most unnatural,
To be revenged on him that loveth you. 140

Lady Anne. It is a quarrel just and reasonable,
To be revenged on him that slew my husband.

Richard. He that bereft thee, lady, of thy husband,
Did it to help thee to a better husband.

Lady Anne. His better doth not breathe upon the earth.

Richard. He lives that loves thee better than he could.

Lady Anne. Name him.

Richard. Plantagenet.

Lady Anne. Why, that was he.

Richard. The selfsame name, but one of better nature. 150

Lady Anne. Where is he?

Richard. Here.

She spits at him

Why dost thou spit at me?

Lady Anne. Would it were mortal poison, for thy sake!

Richard. Never came poison from so sweet a place.

Lady Anne. Never hung poison on a fouler toad.

Out of my sight! thou dost infect my eyes.

Richard. Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.

Lady Anne. Would they were basilisks, to strike thee dead!

Richard. I would they were, that I might die at once; 160

For now they kill me with a living death.

Those eyes of thine from mine have drawn salt tears,

Shamed their aspect with store of childish drops:

These eyes that never shed remorseful tear,

No, when my father York and Edward wept,

To hear the piteous moan that Rutland made

When black-faced Clifford shook his sword at him;

Nor when thy warlike father, like a child,

Told the sad story of my father's death,

And twenty times made pause to sob and weep, 170

That all the standers-by had wet their cheeks

Like trees bedash'd with rain: in that sad time

My manly eyes did scorn an humble tear;

And what these sorrows could not thence exhale,

Thy beauty hath, and made them blind with weeping.

I never sued to friend nor enemy;

My tongue could never learn sweet smoothing word;

But now thy beauty is proposed my fee,

My proud heart sues, and prompts my tongue to speak.

She looks scornfully at him

Teach not thy lips such scorn, for they were made 180
 For kissing, lady, not for such contempt.
 If thy revengeful heart cannot forgive,
 Lo, here I lend thee this sharp-pointed sword;
 Which if thou please to hide in this true bosom.
 And let the soul forth that adareth thee,
 I lay it naked to the deadly stroke,
 And humbly beg the death upon my knee.

He lays his breast open: she offers at it with his sword

Nay, do not pause; for I did kill King Henry,
 But 'twas thy beauty that provoked me.
 Nay, now dispatch; 'twas I that stabb'd young Edward, 190
 But 'twas thy heavenly face that set me on.

Here she lets fall the sword

Take up the sword again, or take up me.

Lady Anne. Arise, dissembler: though I wish thy death,
 I will not be the executioner.

Richard. Then bid me kill myself, and I will do it.

Lady Anne. I have already.

Richard. Tush, that was in thy rage:
 Speak it again, and, even with the word,
 That hand, which, for thy love, did kill thy love,
 Shall, for thy love, kill a far truer love; 200
 To both their deaths thou shalt be accessory.

Lady Anne. I would I knew thy heart.

Richard. 'Tis figured in my tongue.

Lady Anne. I fear me both are false.

Richard. Then never man was true.

Lady Anne. Well, well, put up your sword.

Richard. Say, then, my peace is made.

Lady Anne. That shall you know hereafter.

Richard. But shall I live in hope?

Lady Anne. All men, I hope, live so.

210

Richard. Vouchsafe to wear this ring.

Lady Anne. To take is not to give.

Richard. Look, how this ring encompasseth finger.

Even so thy breast encloseth my poor heart;
Wear both of them, for both of them are thine.
And if thy poor devoted suppliant may
But beg one favor at thy gracious hand,
Thou dost confirm his happiness forever.

Lady Anne. What is it?

Richard. That it would please thee leave these sad designs

220

To him that hath more cause to be a mourner,
And presently repair to Crosby Place;
Where, after I have solemnly interr'd
At Chertsey monastery this noble king,
And wet his grave with my repentant tears,
I will with all expedient duty see you:
For divers unknown reasons. I beseech you,
Grant me this boon.

Lady Anne. With all my heart; and much it joys me too,
 To see you are become so penitent. 230
 Tressel and Berkeley, go along with me.

Richard. Bid me farewell.

Lady Anne. 'Tis more than you deserve;
 But since you teach me how to flatter you,
 Imagine I have said farewell already.

Exeunt LADY ANNE, TRESSEL, and BERKELEY

Richard. Sirs, take up the corpse.

Gentlemen. Towards Chertsey, noble lord?

Richard. No, to White-Friars; there attend my coining.

Exeunt all but RICHARD.

Was ever woman in this humor woo'd?
 Was ever woman in this humor won? 240
 I'll have her; but I will not keep her long.
 What! I, that kill'd her husband and his father,
 To take her in her heart's extremest hate,
 With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
 The bleeding witness of her hatred by;
 Having God, her conscience, and these bars against me,
 And I nothing to back my suit at all,
 But the plain devil and dissembling looks,
 And yet to win her, all the world to nothing! 250
 Ha!
 Hath she forgot already that brave prince,
 Edward, her lord, whom I, some three months since,

Stabb'd in my angry mood at Tewksbury?
 A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman,
 Framed in the prodigality of nature,
 Young, valiant, wise, and, no doubt, right royal,
 The spacious world cannot again afford
 And will she yet debase her eyes on me,
 That cropp'd the golden prime of this sweet prince, 260
 And made her widow to a woeful bed?
 On me, whose all not equals Edward's moiety?
 On me, that halts and am misshapen thus?
 My dukedom to a beggarly denier,
 I do mistake my person all this while:
 Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,
 Myself to be a marvelous proper man.
 I'll be at charges for a looking-glass,
 And entertain some score or two of tailors,
 To study fashions to adorn my body: 270
 Since I am crept in favor with myself,
 Will maintain it with some little cost.
 But first I'll turn yon fellow in his grave;
 And then return lamenting to my love.
 Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass,
 That I may see my shadow as I pass.

Exit

SCENE III. The palace.

*Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, EARL RIVERS, LORD GREY,
AND MARQUESS of DORSET.*

Rivers. Have patience, madam: there's no doubt his Majesty
 Will soon recover his accustom'd health.

Grey. In that you brook it ill, it makes him worse:
Therefore, for God's sake, entertain good comfort,
And cheer his grace with quick and merry words.

Queen Elizabeth. If he were dead,
what would betide of me?

Rivers. No other harm but loss of such a lord.

Queen Elizabeth. The loss of such a lord
includes all harms.

Grey. The heavens have bless'd you with a goodly son,
To be your comforter when he is gone. 10

Queen Elizabeth. Oh, he is young and his minority
Is put unto the trust of Richard Gloucester,
A man that loves not me, nor none of you.

Rivers. Is it concluded that he shall be protector?

Queen Elizabeth. It is determined, not concluded yet:
But so it must be, if the king miscarry.

Enter DUKE of BUCKINGHAM and EARL of DERBY.

Grey. Here come the lords of Buckingham and Derby.

Buckingham. Good time of day unto your royal Grace!

Derby. God make your Majesty joyful as you have been!

Queen Elizabeth. The Countess Richmond, good my
Lord of Derby, 20
To your good prayers will scarcely say amen.
Yet, Derby, notwithstanding she's your wife,

And loves not me, be you, good lord, assured
I hate not you for her proud arrogance.

Derby. I do beseech you, either not believe
The envious slanders of her false accusers;
Or, if she be accused in true report,
Bear with her weakness, which, I think proceeds
From wayward sickness, and no grounded malice.

Rivers. Saw you the king to-day, my Lord of Derby? 30

Derby. But now the Duke of Buckingham and I
are come from visiting his Majesty.

Queen Elizabeth. What likelihood of his
amendment, lords?

Buckingham. Madam, good hope; his Grace speaks
cheerfully.

Queen Elizabeth. God grant him health! Did you
confer with him?

Buckingham. Madam, we did: he desires to make
atonement
Betwixt the Duke of Gloucester and your brothers,
And betwixt them and my Lord Chamberlain;
And sent to warn them to his royal presence.

Queen Elizabeth. Would all were well! but that will
never be 40
I fear our happiness is at the highest.

Enter RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER, and LORD HASTINGS.

Richard. They do me wrong, and I will not endure it:

Who are they that complain unto the king,
That I, forsooth, am stern, and love them not?
By holy Paul, they love his Grace but lightly
That fill his ears with such dissentious rumours.
Because I cannot flatter and speak fair,
Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,
Duck with French nods and apish courtesy,
I must be held a rancourous enemy.
Cannot a plain man live and think no harm,
But thus his simple truth must be abused
By silken, sly, insinuating Jacks?

50

Rivers. To whom in all this presence speaks your Grace?

Richard. To thee, that hast nor honesty nor grace.

When have I injured thee? when done thee wrong?
Or thee? or thee? or any of your faction?
A plague upon you all! His royal person—
Whom God preserve better than you would wish!—
Cannot be quiet scarce a breathing-while,
But you must trouble him with lewd complaints.

60

Queen Elizabeth. Brother of Gloucester, you mistake
the matter.

The king, of his own royal disposition,
And not provoked by any suitor else,
Aiming, belike, at your interior hatred,
Which in your outward actions shows itself
Against my kindred, brothers, and myself,
Makes him to send, that thereby he may gather
The ground of your ill-will, and so remove it.

Richard. I cannot tell: the world is grown so bad,

70

That wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch:

Since every Jack became a gentleman
There's many a gentle person made a Jack.

Queen Elizabeth. Come, come, we know your meaning,
brother Gloucester;
You envy my advancement and my friends':
God grant we never may have need of you!

Richard. Meantime, God grants that we have need of you:
Your brother is imprison'd by your means,
Myself disgraced, and the nobility
Held in contempt; whilst many fair promotions 80
Are daily given to ennoble those
That scarce, some two days since, were worth a noble.

Queen Elizabeth. By Him that raised me
to this careful height
From that contented hap which I enjoy'd,
I never did incense his Majesty
Against the Duke of Clarence, but have been
An earnest advocate to plead for him.
My lord, you do me shameful injury,
Falsely to draw me in these vile suspects.

Richard. You may deny that you were not the cause 90
Of my Lord Hastings' late imprisonment.

Rivers. She may, my lord, for—

Richard. She may, Lord Rivers! why, who knows not so?
She may do more, sir, than denying that:
She may help you to many fair preferments,
And then deny her aiding hand therein,
And lay those honors on your high deserts.
What may she not? She may, yea, marry, may she—

Rivers. What, marry, may she?

Richard. What, marry, may she! marry with a king, 100
 A bachelor, a handsome stripling too:
 I wis your grandam had a worser match.

Queen Elizabeth. My Lord of Gloucester, I have
 too long borne
 Your blunt upbraidings and your bitter scoffs:
 By heaven, I will acquaint his Majesty
 With those gross taunts I often have endured.
 I had rather be a country servant-maid
 Than a great queen, with this condition,
 To be thus taunted, scorn'd, and baited at:

Enter QUEEN MARGARET.

Small joy have I in being England's queen. 110

Queen Margaret. [*Aside*]
 And lessen'd be that small, God, I beseech thee!
 Thy honour, state, and seat is due to me.

Richard. [*To ELIZABETH*]
 What! threat you me with telling of the king?
 Tell him, and spare not: look, what I have said
 I will avouch in presence of the king:
 I dare adventure to be sent to the Tower.
 'Tis time to speak; my pains are quite forgot.

Queen Margaret. [*Aside*]
 Out, devil! I remember them too well:
 Thou slewest my husband Henry in the Tower,
 And Edward, my poor son, at Tewksbury. 120

Richard. [*To ELIZABETH*]

Ere you were queen, yea, or your husband king,
I was a pack-horse in his great affairs;
A weeder-out of his proud adversaries,
A liberal rewarder of his friends:
To royalize his blood I spilt mine own.

Queen Margaret. [*Aside*]

Yea, and much better blood than his or thine.

Richard. [*To ELIZABETH*]

In all which time you and your husband Grey
Were factious for the house of Lancaster;
And, Rivers, so were you. Was not your husband
In Margaret's battle at Saint Alban's slain?
Let me put in your minds, if you forget,
What you have been ere now, and what you are;
Withal, what I have been, and what I am.

130

Queen Margaret. [*Aside*]

A murderous villain, and so still thou art.

Richard. Poor Clarence did forsake his father, Warwick;

Yea, and forswore himself—which Jesu pardon!—

Queen Margaret. [*Aside*]

Which God revenge!

Richard. To fight on Edward's party for the crown;

And for his meed, poor lord, he is mew'd up.

I would to God my heart were flint, like Edward's;

Or Edward's soft and pitiful, like mine

I am too childish-foolish for this world.

140

Queen Margaret. [*Aside*]

Hie thee to hell for shame, and leave the world,

Thou cacodemon! there thy kingdom is.

Rivers. My Lord of Gloucester, in those busy days
Which here you urge to prove us enemies,
We follow'd then our lord, our lawful king:
So should we you, if you should be our king.

Richard. If I should be! I had rather be a peddler:
Far be it from my heart, the thought of it!

150

Queen Elizabeth. As little joy, my lord, as you suppose
You should enjoy, were you this country's king,
As little joy may you suppose in me.
That I enjoy, being the queen thereof.

Queen Margaret. [*Aside*]
A little joy enjoys the queen thereof;
For I am she, and altogether joyless.
I can no longer hold me patient.

Advancing

Hear me, you wrangling pirates, that fall out
In sharing that which you have pill'd from me!
Which of you trembles not that looks on me?
If not, that, I being queen, you bow like subjects,
Yet that, by you deposed, you quake like rebels?
O gentle villain, do not turn away!

160

Richard. Foul wrinkled witch, what makest thou in my sight?

Queen Margaret. But repetition of what thou hast marr'd;
That will I make before I let thee go.

Richard. Wert thou not banished on pain of death?

Queen Margaret. I was; but I do find more pain in
banishment

Than death can yield me here by my abode.
A husband and a son thou owest to me; 170

[To ELIZABETH]

And thou a kingdom; all of you allegiance:
The sorrow that I have, by right is yours,
And all the pleasures you usurp are mine.

Richard. The curse my noble father laid on thee,
When thou didst crown his warlike brows with paper
And with thy scorns drew'st rivers from his eyes,
And then, to dry them, gavest the duke a clout
Steep'd in the faultless blood of pretty Rutland—
His curses, then from bitterness of soul
Denounced against thee, are all fall'n upon thee; 180
And God, not we, hath plagued thy bloody deed.

Queen Elizabeth. So just is God, to right the innocent.

Hastings. O, 'twas the foulest deed to slay that babe,
And the most merciless that e'er was heard of!

Rivers. Tyrants themselves wept when it was reported.

Dorset. No man but prophesied revenge for it.

Buckingham. Northumberland, then present,
wept to see it.

Queen Margaret. What were you snarling all
before I came,
Ready to catch each other by the throat,
And turn you all your hatred now on me? 190
Did York's dread curse prevail so much with heaven
That Henry's death, my lovely Edward's death,

Their kingdom's loss, my woeful banishment,
 Could all but answer for that peevish brat?
 Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven?
 Why, then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses!
 If not by war, by surfeit die your king,
 As ours by murder, to make him a king!

[*To ELIZABETH*]

Edward thy son, which now is Prince of Wales,
 For Edward my son, which was Prince of Wales, 200
 Die in his youth by like untimely violence!
 Thyself a queen, for me that was a queen,
 Outlive thy glory, like my wretched self!
 Long mayst thou live to wail thy children's loss;
 And see another, as I see thee now,
 Deck'd in thy rights, as thou art stall'd in mine!
 Long die thy happy days before thy death;
 And, after many lengthen'd hours of grief,
 Die neither mother, wife, nor England's queen!
 Rivers and Dorset, you were standers by, 210
 And so wast thou, Lord Hastings, when my son
 Was stabb'd with bloody daggers: God, I pray him,
 That none of you may live your natural age,
 But by some unlook'd accident cut off!

Richard. Have done thy charm, thou hateful wither'd hag!

Queen Margaret. And leave out thee? Stay, dog,
 for thou shalt hear me.

If heaven have any grievous plague in store
 Exceeding those that I can wish upon thee,
 O, let them keep it till thy sins be ripe,
 And then hurl down their indignation 220
 On thee, the troubler of the poor world's peace!
 The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul!

Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou livest,
 And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends!
 No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,
 Unless it be whilst some tormenting dream
 Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils!
 Thou elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog!
 Thou that wast seal'd in thy nativity
 The slave of nature and the son of hell! 230
 Thou slander of thy mother's heavy womb!
 Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins!
 Thou rag of honour! thou detested—

Richard. Margaret.

Queen Margaret. Richard!

Richard Ha!

Queen Margaret. I call thee not.

Richard. I cry thee mercy then, for I had thought
 That thou hadst call'd me all these bitter names.

Queen Margaret. Why, so I did; but look'd for no reply. 240
 O, let me make the period to my curse!

Richard. 'Tis done by me, and ends in 'Margaret.'

Queen Elizabeth. [*To MARGARET*]
 Thus have you breathed your curse against yourself.

Queen Margaret. Poor painted queen, vain flourish
 of my fortune!
 Why strew'st thou sugar on that bottled spider,
 Whose deadly web ensnareth thee about?
 Fool, fool! thou whet'st a knife to kill thyself.

The time will come when thou shalt wish for me
To help thee curse that poisonous bunch-back'd toad.

Hastings. False-boding woman, end thy frantic curse, 250
Lest to thy harm thou move our patience.

Queen Margaret. Foul shame upon you!
you have all moved mine.

Rivers. Were you well served, you would be taught
your duty.

Queen Margaret. To serve me well, you all should
do me duty,
Teach me to be your queen, and you my subjects:
O, serve me well, and teach yourselves that duty!

Dorset. Dispute not with her; she is lunatic.

Queen Margaret. Peace, master marquess,
you are malapert:
Your fire-new stamp of honor is scarce current.
O, that your young nobility could judge 260
What 'twere to lose it, and be miserable!
They that stand high have many blasts to shake them;
And if they fall, they dash themselves to pieces.

Richard. Good counsel, marry: learn it, learn it, marquess.

Dorset. It toucheth you, my lord, as much as me.

Richard. Yea, and much more: but I was born so high,
Our aerie buildeth in the cedar's top,
And dallies with the wind and scorns the sun.

Queen Margaret. And turns the sun to shade;
alas! alas!

Witness my son, now in the shade of death; 270
 Whose bright out-shining beams thy cloudy wrath
 Hath in eternal darkness folded up.
 Your aerie buildeth in our aerie's nest.
 O God, that seest it, do not suffer it!
 As it was won with blood, lost be it so!

Buckingham. Have done! for shame, if not for charity.

Queen Margaret. Urge neither charity nor shame to me:
 Uncharitably with me have you dealt,
 And shamefully by you my hopes are butcher'd.
 My charity is outrage, life my shame 280
 And in that shame still live my sorrow's rage.

Buckingham. Have done, have done.

Queen Margaret. O princely Buckingham
 I'll kiss thy hand,
 In sign of league and amity with thee:
 Now fair befall thee and thy noble house!
 Thy garments are not spotted with our blood,
 Nor thou within the compass of my curse.

Buckingham. Nor no one here; for curses never pass
 The lips of those that breathe them in the air.

Queen Margaret. I'll not believe but they
 ascend the sky, 290
 And there awake God's gentle-sleeping peace.

[Aside to BUCKINGHAM]

O Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog!
 Look, when he fawns, he bites; and when he bites,
 His venom tooth will rankle to the death:

Have not to do with him, beware of him;
Sin, death, and hell have set their marks on him,
And all their ministers attend on him.

Richard. What doth she say, my Lord of Buckingham?

Buckingham. Nothing that I respect, my gracious lord.

Queen Margaret. What, dost thou scorn me for my
gentle counsel?

300

And soothe the devil that I warn thee from?
O, but remember this another day,
When he shall split thy very heart with sorrow,
And say poor Margaret was a prophetess!
Live each of you the subjects to his hate,
And he to yours, and all of you to God's!

Exit

Hastings. My hair doth stand on end to hear her curses.

Rivers. And so doth mine: I muse why she's at liberty.

Richard. I cannot blame her: by God's holy mother,
She hath had too much wrong; and I repent
My part thereof that I have done to her.

310

Queen Elizabeth. I never did her any, to my knowledge.

Richard. But you have all the vantage of her wrong.
I was too hot to do somebody good,
That is too cold in thinking of it now.
Marry, as for Clarence, he is well repaid,
He is frank'd up to fatting for his pains
God pardon them that are the cause of it!

Rivers. A virtuous and a Christian-like conclusion,
To pray for them that have done scathe to us. 320

Richard. So do I ever—

[Aside]

being well-advised.
For had I cursed now, I had cursed myself.

Enter SIR WILLIAM CATESBY

Catesby. Madam, his Majesty doth call for you,
And for your Grace; and you, my noble lords.

Queen Elizabeth. Catesby, I come. Lords, will you go
with us?

Rivers. Madam, we will attend your Grace.

Exeunt all but RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER

Richard. I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl.
The secret mischiefs that I set abroad
I lay unto the grievous charge of others.
Clarence, whom I, indeed, have laid in darkness, 330
I do bewEEP to many simple gulls
Namely, to Hastings, Derby, Buckingham;
And say it is the queen and her allies
That stir the king against the duke my brother.
Now, they believe it; and withal whet me
To be revenged on Rivers, Vaughan, Grey:
But then I sigh; and, with a piece of scripture,
Tell them that God bids us do good for evil:
And thus I clothe my naked villainy

With old odd ends stolen out of holy writ;
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.

340

Enter two MURDERERS

But, soft! here come my executioners.
How now, my hardy, stout resolved mates!
Are you now going to dispatch this deed?

1st Murderer. We are, my lord; and come to have the warrant
That we may be admitted where he is.

Richard. Well thought upon; I have it here about me.

[Gives the warrant]

When you have done, repair to Crosby Place.
But, sirs, be sudden in the execution,
Withal obdurate, do not hear him plead;
For Clarence is well-spoken, and perhaps
May move your hearts to pity if you mark him.

350

1st Murderer. Tush!

Fear not, my lord, we will not stand to prate;
Talkers are no good doers: be assured
We come to use our hands and not our tongues.

Richard. Your eyes drop millstones, when fools' eyes
drop tears:
I like you, lads; about your business straight;
Go, go, dispatch.

1st Murderer. We will, my noble lord.

360

Exeunt

SCENE IV. London. The Tower.

Enter GEORGE, DUKE of CLARENCE and BRAKENBURY.

Brakenbury. Why looks your Grace so heavily today?

Clarence. O, I have pass'd a miserable night,
So full of ugly sights, of ghastly dreams,
That, as I am a Christian faithful man,
I would not spend another such a night,
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days,
So full of dismal terror was the time!

Brakenbury. What was your dream? I long to hear you tell it.

Clarence. Methoughts that I had broken from the Tower,
And was embark'd to cross to Burgundy; 10
And, in my company, my brother Gloucester;
Who from my cabin tempted me to walk
Upon the hatches: thence we looked toward England,
And cited up a thousand fearful times,
During the wars of York and Lancaster
That had befall'n us. As we paced along
Upon the giddy footing of the hatches,
Methought that Gloucester stumbled; and, in falling,
Struck me, that thought to stay him, overboard,
Into the tumbling billows of the main. 20
Lord, Lord! methought, what pain it was to drown!
What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears!
What ugly sights of death within mine eyes!
Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks;
Ten thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon;
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea:

Some lay in dead men's skulls; and, in those holes
 Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept, 30
 As 'twere in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems,
 Which woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep,
 And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatter'd by.

Brakenbury. Had you such leisure in the time of death
 To gaze upon the secrets of the deep?

Clarence. Methought I had; and often did I strive
 To yield the ghost: but still the envious flood
 Kept in my soul, and would not let it forth
 To seek the empty, vast and wandering air;
 But smother'd it within my panting bulk, 40
 Which almost burst to belch it in the sea.

Brakenbury. Awaked you not with this sore agony?

Clarence. O, no, my dream was lengthen'd after life;
 O, then began the tempest to my soul,
 Who pass'd, methought, the melancholy flood,
 With that grim ferryman which poets write of,
 Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.
 The first that there did greet my stranger soul,
 Was my great father-in-law, renowned Warwick;
 Who cried aloud, 'What scourge for perjury 50
 Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?'
 And so he vanish'd: then came wandering by
 A shadow like an angel, with bright hair
 Dabbled in blood; and he squeak'd out aloud,
 'Clarence is come; false, fleeting, perjured Clarence,
 That stabb'd me in the field by Tewksbury;
 Seize on him, Furies, take him to your torments!
 With that, methoughts, a legion of foul fiends
 Environ'd me about, and howled in mine ears

Such hideous cries, that with the very noise
 I trembling waked, and for a season after
 Could not believe but that I was in hell,
 Such terrible impression made the dream. 60

Brakenbury. No marvel, my lord, though it
 affrighted you;
 I promise, I am afraid to hear you tell it.

Clarence. O Brakenbury, I have done those things,
 Which now bear evidence against my soul,
 For Edward's sake; and see how he requites me!
 O God! if my deep prayers cannot appease thee,
 But thou wilt be avenged on my misdeeds, 70
 Yet execute thy wrath in me alone,
 O, spare my guiltless wife and my poor children!
 I pray thee, gentle keeper, stay by me;
 My soul is heavy, and I fain would sleep.

Brakenbury. I will, my lord: God give your Grace good rest!

GEORGE, DUKE of CLARENCE sleeps

Sorrow breaks seasons and reposing hours,
 Makes the night morning, and the noon-tide night.
 Princes have but their tides for their glories,
 An outward honour for an inward toil;
 And, for unfelt imagination, 80
 They often feel a world of restless cares:
 So that, betwixt their tides and low names,
 There's nothing differs but the outward fame.

Enter the two MURDERERS

1st Murderer. Ho! who's here?

Brakenbury. In God's name what are you,
and how came you hither?

1st Murderer. I would speak with Clarence,
and I came hither on my legs.

Brakenbury. Yea, are you so brief?

2nd Murderer. O sir, it is better to be brief than tedious.
Show him our commission; talk no more.

BRAKENBURY reads it

Brakenbury. I am, in this, commanded to deliver 90
The noble Duke of Clarence to your hands:
I will not reason what is meant hereby,
Because I will be guiltless of the meaning.
Here are the keys, there sits the duke asleep:
I'll to the king; and signify to him
That thus I have resign'd my charge to you.

1st Murderer. Do so, it is a point of wisdom: fare you well.

Exit BRAKENBURY

2nd Murderer. What, shall we stab him as he sleeps?

1st Murderer. No; then he will say 'twas done cowardly,
when he wakes.

2nd Murderer. When he wakes! why, fool, he shall 100
never wake till the judgment-day.

1st Murderer. Why, then he will say we
stabbed him sleeping.

2nd Murderer. The urging of that word 'judgment'
hath bred a kind of remorse in me.

1st Murderer. What, art thou afraid?

2nd Murderer. Not to kill him, having a warrant for it;
but to be damned for killing him, from which no
warrant can defend us.

1st Murderer. I thought thou hadst been resolute.

2nd Murderer. So I am, to let him live.

1st Murderer. Back to the Duke of Gloucester, tell him so. 110

2nd Murderer. I pray thee, stay a while: I hope
my holy humour will change; 'twas wont to hold me
but while one would tell twenty.

1st Murderer. How dost thou feel thyself now?

2nd Murderer. 'Faith, some certain dregs of conscience
are yet within me.

1st Murderer. Remember our reward, when the deed is done.

2nd Murderer. 'Zounds, he dies: I had forgot the reward.

1st Murderer. Where is thy conscience now?

2nd Murderer. In the Duke of Gloucester's purse. 120

1st Murderer. So when he opens his purse
to give us our reward, thy conscience flies out.

2nd Murderer. Let it go; there's few or none will
entertain it.

1st Murderer. How if it come to thee again?

2nd Murderer. I'll not meddle with it:

it is a dangerous thing: it makes a man a coward:
a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him;
he cannot swear, but it cheques him; he cannot lie
with his neighbour's wife, but it detects him:
'tis a blushing shamefast spirit that mutinies in
a man's bosom; it fills one full of obstacles:
it made me once restore a purse of gold that I found;
it beggars any man that keeps it: it is turned out of all
towns and cities for a dangerous thing; and every man
that means to live well endeavors to trust to himself
and to live without it.

130

1st Murderer. 'Zounds, it is even now at my elbow,
persuading me not to kill the duke.

2nd Murderer. Take the devil in thy mind, and relieve him not: he
would insinuate with thee but to make thee sigh.

1st Murderer. Tut, I am strong-framed, he cannot
prevail with me, I warrant thee.

140

2nd Murderer. Spoke like a tall fellow that respects
his reputation. Come, shall we to this gear?

1st Murderer. Take him over the costard with the
hilts of thy sword, and then we will chop him in the
malmsey-butt in the next room.

2nd Murderer. O excellent devise! make a sop of him.

1st Murderer. Hark! he stirs: shall I strike?

2nd Murderer. No, first let's reason with him.

Clarence. Where art thou, keeper? give me a cup of wine.

2nd Murderer. You shall have wine enough, my lord, anon.

Clarence. In God's name, what art thou? 150

2nd Murderer. A man, as you are.

Clarence. But not, as I am, royal.

2nd Murderer. Nor you, as we are, loyal.

Clarence. Thy voice is thunder, but thy looks are humble.

2nd Murderer. My voice is now the king's,
my looks mine own.

Clarence. How darkly and how deadly dost thou speak!
Your eyes do menace me: why look you pale?
Who sent you hither? Wherefore do you come?

Both. To, to, to—

Clarence. To murder me? 160

Both. Ay, ay.

Clarence. You scarcely have the hearts to tell me so,
And therefore cannot have the hearts to do it.
Wherein, my friends, have I offended you?

1st Murderer. Offended us you have not, but the king.

Clarence. I shall be reconciled to him again.

2nd Murderer. Never, my lord; therefore prepare to die.

Clarence. Are you call'd forth from out a world of men
To slay the innocent? What is my offence?

Where is the evidence that doth accuse me? 170
 What lawful quest have given their verdict up
 Unto the frowning judge? or who pronounced
 The bitter sentence of poor Clarence' death
 Before I be convict by course of law?
 To threaten me with death is most unlawful.
 I charge you, as you hope to have redemption
 By Christ's dear blood shed for our grievous sins,
 That you depart and lay no hands on me.
 The deed you undertake is damnable.

1st Murderer. What we will do, we do upon command. 180

2nd Murderer. And he that hath commanded is the king.

Clarence. Erroneous vassall! the great King of kings
 Hath in the tables of his law commanded
 That thou shalt do no murder: and wilt thou, then,
 Spurn at his edict and fulfill a man's?
 Take heed; for he holds vengeance in his hands,
 To hurl upon their heads that break his law.

2nd Murderer. And that same vengeance doth he
 hurl on thee,
 For false forswearing and for murder too.
 Thou didst receive the holy sacrament, to fight 190
 In quarrel of the house of Lancaster.

1st Murderer. And, like a traitor to the name of God,
 Didst break that vow; and with thy treacherous blade
 Unrip'dst the bowels of thy sovereign's son.

2nd Murderer. Whom thou wert sworn to cherish and defend.

1st Murderer. How canst thou urge God's dreadful law to us,
 When thou hast broke it in so dear degree?

Clarence. Alas! for whose sake did I that ill deed?

For Edward, for my brother, for his sake: Why, sirs,

He sends ye not to murder me for this

200

For in this sin he is as deep as I.

If God will be revenged for this deed.

O, know you yet, he doth it publicly,

Take not the quarrel from his powerful arm;

He needs no indirect nor lawless course

To cut off those that have offended him.

1st Murderer. Who made thee, then, a bloody minister,

When gallant-springing brave Plantagenet,

That princely novice, was struck dead by thee?

Clarence. My brother's love, the devil, and my rage.

210

1st Murderer. Thy brother's love, our duty, and thy fault,

Provoke us hither now to slaughter thee.

Clarence. Oh, if you love my brother, hate not me;

I am his brother, and I love him well.

If you be hired for meed, go back again,

And I will send you to my brother Gloucester,

Who shall reward you better for my life

Than Edward will for tidings of my death.

2nd Murderer. You are deceived,

your brother Gloucester hates you.

220

Clarence. O, no, he loves me, and he holds me dear:

Go you to him from me.

Both. Ay, so we will.

Clarence. Tell him, when that our princely father York

Bless'd his three sons with his victorious arm,

And charged us from his soul to love each other,
He little thought of this divided friendship:
Bid Gloucester think of this, and he will weep.

1st Murderer. Ay, millstones; as he lesson'd us to weep.

Clarence. O, do not slander him, for he is kind.

230

1st Murderer. Right, as snow in harvest.

Thou deceivest thyself:

'Tis he that sent us hither now to slaughter thee.

Clarence. It cannot be; for when I parted with him,
He hugg'd me in his arms, and swore, with sobs,
That he would labor my delivery.

2nd Murderer. Why, so he doth, now he delivers thee
From this world's thralldom to the joys of heaven.

1st Murderer. Make peace with God,
for you must die, my lord.

Clarence. Hast thou that holy feeling in thy soul,
To counsel me to make my peace with God,
And art thou yet to thy own soul so blind,
That thou wilt war with God by murdering me?
Ah, sirs, consider, he that set you on
To do this deed will hate you for the deed.

240

2nd Murderer. What shall we do?

Clarence. Relent, and save your souls.

1st Murderer. Relent! 'tis cowardly and womanish.

Clarence. Not to relent is beastly, savage, devilish.
Which of you, if you were a prince's son,

Being pent from liberty, as I am now, 250
 If two such murderers as yourselves came to you,
 Would not entreat for life?

[To 2nd MURDER]

My friend, I spy some pity in thy looks:
 O, if thine eye be not a flatterer,
 Come thou on my side, and entreat for me,
 As you would beg, were you in my distress
 A begging prince what beggar pities not?

2nd Murderer. Look behind you, my lord.

1st Murderer. *[Stabs him]*

Take that, and that: if all this will not do,
 I'll drown you in the malmsey-butt within. 260

Exit, with the body

2nd Murderer. A bloody deed, and desperately dispatch'd!
 How fain, like Pilate, would I wash my hands
 Of this most grievous guilty murder done!

Re-enter FIRST MURDERER

1st Murderer. How now! what mean'st thou, that thou help'st
 me not?
 By heavens, the duke shall know how slack thou art!

2nd Murderer. I would he knew that I had saved
 his brother!
 Take thou the fee, and tell him what I say;
 For I repent me that the duke is slain.

Exit

1st Murderer. So do not I: go, coward as thou art.

Now must I hide his body in some hole, 270
Until the duke take order for his burial:
And when I have my meed, I must away;
For this will out, and here I must not stay.

Exit

ACT II

SCENE I. London. The palace.

*Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV, sick, QUEEN ELIZABETH,
DORSET, RIVERS, HASTINGS, BUCKINGHAM,
GREY, and others.*

King Edward IV. Why, so: now have I done
a good day's work:
You peers, continue this united league:
I every day expect an embassy
From my Redeemer to redeem me hence;
And now in peace my soul shall part to heaven,
Since I have set my friends at peace on earth.
Rivers and Hastings, take each other's hand;
Dissemble not your hatred, swear your love.

Rivers. By heaven, my heart is purged from
grudging hate:
And with my hand I seal my true heart's love. 10

Hastings. So thrive I, as I truly swear the like!

King Edward IV. Take heed you dally not
before your king;

Lest he that is the supreme King of kings
 Confound your hidden falsehood, and award
 Either of you to be the other's end.

Hastings. So prosper I, as I swear perfect love!

Rivers. And I, as I love Hastings with my heart!

King Edward IV. Madam, yourself are not
 exempt in this,
 Nor you, son Dorset, Buckingham, nor you;
 You have been factious one against the other,
 Wife, love Lord Hastings, let him kiss your hand;
 And what you do, do it unfeignedly.

20

Queen Elizabeth. Here, Hastings; I will never more
 remember
 Our former hatred, so thrive I and mine!

King Edward IV. Dorset, embrace him;
 Hastings, love lord marquess.

Dorset. This interchange of love, I here protest,
 Upon my part shall be inviolable.

Hastings. And so swear I, my lord

They embrace

King Edward IV. Now, princely Buckingham,
 seal thou this league
 With thy embracements to my wife's allies,
 And make me happy in your unity.

30

Buckingham. [*To the QUEEN*]
 Whenever Buckingham doth turn his hate
 On you or yours, but with all duteous love

Doth cherish you and yours, God punish me
With hate in those where I expect most love!
When I have most need to employ a friend,
And most assured that he is a friend
Deep, hollow, treacherous, and full of guile,
Be he unto me! this do I beg of God,
When I am cold in zeal to yours.

40

King Edward IV. A pleasing cordial, princely Buckingham,
Is this thy vow unto my sickly heart.
There wanteth now our brother Gloucester here,
To make the perfect period of this peace.

Buckingham. And, in good time, here comes the noble duke.

Enter RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER

Richard. Good morrow to my sovereign king and queen:
And, princely peers, a happy time of day!

King Edward IV. Happy, indeed, as we have spent the day.
Brother, we have done deeds of charity;
Made peace of enmity, fair love of hate,
Between these swelling wrong-incensed peers.

50

Richard. A blessed labour, my most sovereign liege:
Amongst this princely heap, if any here,
By false intelligence, or wrong surmise,
Hold me a foe;
If I unwittingly, or in my rage,
Have aught committed that is hardly borne
By any in this presence, I desire
To reconcile me to his friendly peace:
'Tis death to me to be at enmity;
I hate it, and desire all good men's love.

60

First, madam, I entreat true peace of you,
Which I will purchase with my duteous service;
Of you, my noble cousin Buckingham,
If ever any grudge were lodged between us;
Of you, Lord Rivers, and Lord Grey, of you;
That without desert have frown'd on me;
Dukes, earls, lords, gentlemen; indeed, of all.
I do not know that Englishman alive
With whom my soul is any jot at odds
More than the infant that is born to-night.
I thank my God for my humility.

70

Queen Elizabeth. A holy day shall this be kept hereafter:
I would to God all strifes were well compounded.
My sovereign liege, I do beseech your Majesty
To take our brother Clarence to your Grace.

Richard. Why, madam, have I offer'd love for this
To be so flouted in this royal presence?
Who knows not that the noble duke is dead?

They all start

You do him injury to scorn his corpse.

80

Rivers. Who knows not he is dead! who knows he is?

Queen Elizabeth. All seeing heaven, what a world is this!

Buckingham. Look I so pale, Lord Dorset, as the rest?

Dorset. Ay, my good lord; and no one in this presence
But his red colour hath forsook his cheeks.

King Edward IV. Is Clarence dead? the order was
reversed.

Richard. But he, poor soul, by your first order died,
 And that a winged Mercury did bear:
 Some tardy cripple bore the countermand,
 That came too lag to see him buried. 90
 God grant that some, less noble and less loyal,
 Nearer in bloody thoughts, but not in blood,
 Deserve not worse than wretched Clarence did,
 And yet go current from suspicion!

Enter DERBY

Derby. A boon, my sovereign, for my service done!

King Edward IV. I pray thee, peace: my soul is full of sorrow.

Derby. I will not rise, unless your Highness grant.

King Edward IV. Then speak at once what is it thou demand'st.

Derby. The forfeit, sovereign, of my servant's life;
 Who slew to-day a righteous gentleman 100
 Lately attendant on the Duke of Norfolk.

King Edward IV. Have a tongue to doom
 my brother's death,
 And shall the same give pardon to a slave?
 My brother slew no man; his fault was thought,
 And yet his punishment was cruel death.
 Who sued to me for him? who, in my rage,
 Kneel'd at my feet, and bade me be advised
 Who spake of brotherhood? who spake of love?
 Who told me how the poor soul did forsake
 The mighty Warwick, and did fight for me? 110
 Who told me, in the field by Tewksbury
 When Oxford had me down, he rescued me,

And said, 'Dear brother, live, and be a king'?
 Who told me, when we both lay in the field
 Frozen almost to death, how he did lap me
 Even in his own garments, and gave himself,
 All thin and naked, to the numb cold night?
 All this from my remembrance brutish wrath
 Sinfully pluck'd, and not a man of you
 Had so much grace to put it in my mind. 120
 But when your carters or your waiting-vassals
 Have done a drunken slaughter, and defaced
 The precious image of our dear Redeemer,
 You straight are on your knees for pardon, pardon;
 And I unjustly too, must grant it you
 But for my brother not a man would speak,
 Nor I, ungracious, speak unto myself
 For him, poor soul. The proudest of you all
 Have been beholding to him in his life;
 Yet none of you would once plead for his life. 130
 O God, I fear thy justice will take hold
 On me, and you, and mine, and yours for this!
 Come, Hastings, help me to my closet.
 Oh, poor Clarence!

Exeunt some with KING EDWARD IV and QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Richard. This is the fruit of rashness! Mark'd you not
 How that the guilty kindred of the queen
 Look'd pale when they did hear of Clarence' death?
 O, they did urge it still unto the king!
 God will revenge it. But come, let us in,
 To comfort Edward with our company. 140

Buckingham. We wait upon your grace.

Exeunt

SCENE II. The palace.

*Enter the DUCHESS of YORK, with the two
CHILDREN of CLARENCE*

Boy. Tell me, good grandam, is our father dead?

Duchess of York. No, boy.

Boy. Why do you wring your hands, and beat your breast,
And cry 'O Clarence, my unhappy son!'

Girl. Why do you look on us, and shake your head,
And call us wretches, orphans, castaways
If that our noble father be alive?

Duchess of York. My pretty cousins,
you mistake me much;
I do lament the sickness of the king,
As loath to lose him, not your father's death; 10
It were lost sorrow to wail one that's lost.

Boy. Then, grandam, you conclude that he is dead.
The king my uncle is to blame for this:
God will revenge it, whom I will importune
With daily prayers all to that effect.

Girl. And so will I.

Duchess of York. Peace, children, peace!
the king doth love you well:
Incapable and shallow innocents,
You cannot guess who caused your father's death.

Boy. Grandam, we can; for my good uncle Gloucester 20
Told me the king, provoked by the queen,

Devised impeachments to imprison him:
 And when my uncle told me so, he wept,
 And hugg'd me in his arm, and kindly kiss'd my cheek;
 Bade me rely on him as on my father,
 And he would love me dearly as his child.

Duchess of York. Oh, that deceit should steal such
 gentle shapes,
 And with a virtuous visor hide foul guile!
 He is my son, yea, and therein my shame;
 Yet from my dugs he drew not this deceit.

30

Boy. Think you my uncle did dissemble, grandam?

Duchess of York. Ay, boy.

Boy. I cannot think it. Hark! what noise is this?

*Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, with her hair about her ears; RIVERS and
 DORSET after her*

Queen Elizabeth. Oh, who shall hinder me to wail and weep,
 To chide my fortune, and torment myself?
 I'll join with black despair against my soul,
 And to myself become an enemy.

Duchess of York. What means this scene of rude impatience?

Queen Elizabeth. To make an act of tragic violence:
 Edward, my lord, your son, our king, is dead.
 Why grow the branches now the root is wither'd?
 Why wither not the leaves the sap being gone?
 If you will live, lament; if die, be brief,
 That our swift-winged souls may catch the king's;
 Or, like obedient subjects, follow him
 To his new kingdom of perpetual rest.

40

Duchess of York. Ah, so much interest have I
in thy sorrow
As I had title in thy noble husband!
I have bewept a worthy husband's death,
And lived by looking on his images: 50
But now two mirrors of his princely semblance
Are crack'd in pieces by malignant death,
And I for comfort have but one false glass,
Which grieves me when I see my shame in him.
Thou art a widow; yet thou art a mother,
And hast the comfort of thy children left thee:
But death hath snatch'd my husband from mine arms,
And pluck'd two crutches from my feeble limbs,
Edward and Clarence. O, what cause have I,
Thine being but a moiety of my grief, 60
To overgo thy plaints and drown thy cries!

Boy. Good aunt, you wept not for our father's death;
How can we aid you with our kindred tears?

Girl. Our fatherless distress was left unmoan'd;
Your widow-dolor likewise be unwept!

Queen Elizabeth. Give me no help in lamentation;
I am not barren to bring forth complaints.
All springs reduce their currents to mine eyes,
That I, being govern'd by the watery moon,
May send forth plenteous tears to drown the world! 70
Oh for my husband, for my dear lord Edward!

Children. Oh for our father, for our dear lord Clarence!

Duchess of York. Alas for both, both mine,
Edward and Clarence!

Elizabeth. What stay had I but Edward? and he's gone.

Children. What stay had we but Clarence? and he's gone.

Duchess of York. What stays had I but they? and they are gone.

Elizabeth. Was never widow had so dear a loss!

Children. Were never orphans had so dear a loss!

Duchess of York. Was never mother had so dear a loss!

Alas, I am the mother of these moans! 80
 Their woes are parcel'd, mine are general.
 She for an Edward weeps, and so do I;
 I for a Clarence weep, so doth not she:
 These babes for Clarence weep and so do I;
 I for an Edward weep, so do not they:
 Alas, you three, on me, threefold distress'd,
 Pour all your tears! I am your sorrow's nurse,
 And I will pamper it with lamentations.

Dorset. [*To QUEEN ELIZABETH*]

Comfort, dear mother: God is much displeased
 That you take with unthankfulness, his doing: 90
 In common worldly things, 'tis call'd ungrateful
 With dull unwillingness to repay a debt
 Which with a bounteous hand was kindly lent;
 Much more to be thus opposite with heaven,
 For it requires the royal debt it lent you.

Rivers. Madam, bethink you, like a careful mother,
 Of the young prince your son: send straight for him
 Let him be crown'd; in him your comfort lives:
 Drown desperate sorrow in dead Edward's grave,
 And plant your joys in living Edward's throne. 100

*Enter RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM,
 DERBY, HASTINGS, and RATCLIFF*

Richard. Madam, have comfort: all of us have cause
To wail the dimming of our shining star;
But none can cure their harms by wailing them.
Madam, my mother, I do cry you mercy;
I did not see your grace: humbly on my knee
I crave your blessing.

Duchess of York. God bless thee; and put meekness
in thy mind,
Love, charity, obedience, and true duty!

Richard.

Amen

[Aside]

And make me die a good old man!
That is the butt-end of a mother's blessing: 110
I marvel why her Grace did leave it out.

Buckingham. You cloudy princes and heart-sorrowing
peers,
That bear this mutual heavy load of moan,
Now cheer each other in each other's love
Though we have spent our harvest of this king,
We are to reap the harvest of his son.
The broken rancour of your high-swoln hearts,
But lately splinter'd, knit, and join'd together,
Must gently be preserved, cherish'd, and kept: 120
Me seemeth good that, with some little train,
Forthwith from Ludlow the young prince be fetch'd
Hither to London, to be crown'd our king.

Rivers. Why with some little train, my Lord of Buckingham?

Buckingham. Marry, my lord, lest, by a multitude,
The new-heal'd wound of malice should break out,

Which would be so much the more dangerous
 By how much the estate is green and yet ungovern'd:
 Where every horse bears his commanding rein,
 And may direct his course as please himself,
 As well the fear of harm, as harm apparent, 130
 In my opinion, ought to be prevented.

Richard. I hope the king made peace with all of us
 And the compact is firm and true in me.

Rivers. And so in me; and so, I think, in all:
 Yet, since it is but green, it should be put
 To no apparent likelihood of breach,
 Which haply by much company might be urged:
 Therefore I say with noble Buckingham,
 That it is meet so few should fetch the prince.

Hastings. And so say I. 140

Richard. Then be it so; and go we to determine
 Who they shall be that straight shall post to Ludlow.
 Madam, and you, my mother, will you go
 To give your censures in this weighty business?

Queen Elizabeth and Duchess of York.

With all our hearts.

*Exeunt all but BUCKINGHAM and RICHARD, DUKE of
 GLOUCESTER*

Buckingham. My lord, whoever journeys to the Prince,
 For God's sake, let not us two be behind;
 For, by the way, I'll sort occasion,
 As index to the story we late talk'd of,
 To part the queen's proud kindred from the king. 150

Richard. My other self, my counsel's consistory,
My oracle, my prophet! My dear cousin,
I, like a child, will go by thy direction.
Towards Ludlow then, for we'll not stay behind.

Exeunt

SCENE III. London. A street.

Enter two CITIZENS

1st Citizen. Neighbor, well met: whither away so fast?

2nd Citizen. I promise you, I scarcely know myself:
Hear you the news abroad?

1st Citizen. Ay, that the king is dead.

2nd Citizen. Bad news, by'r Lady; seldom comes the better:
I fear, I fear 'twill prove a troublous world.

Enter another CITIZEN

3rd Citizen. Neighbours, God speed!

1st Citizen. Give you good morrow, sir.

3rd Citizen. Doth the news hold of good King Edward's death?

2nd Citizen. Ay, sir, it is too true; God help the while! 10

3rd Citizen. Then, masters, look to see a troublous world.

1st Citizen. No, no; by God's good grace his son shall reign.

3rd Citizen. Woe to the land that's govern'd by a child!

2nd Citizen. In him there is a hope of government,
That, in his nonage, council under him,
And, in his full and ripen'd years, himself,
No doubt, shall then and till then govern well.

1st Citizen. So stood the state when Henry the Sixth
Was crown'd in Paris but at nine months old.

3rd Citizen. Stood the state so? No, no, good friends,
God wot; 20
For then this land was famously enrich'd
With politic grave counsel; then the king
Had virtuous uncles to protect his grace.

1st Citizen. Why, so hath this, both by the father and mother.

3rd Citizen. Better it were they all came by the father,
Or by the father there were none at all;
For emulation now, who shall be nearest,
Will touch us all too near, if God prevent not.
O, full of danger is the Duke of Gloucester!
And the queen's sons and brothers haught and proud: 30
And were they to be ruled, and not to rule,
This sickly land might solace as before.

1st Citizen. Come, come, we fear the worst; all shall be well.

3rd Citizen. When clouds appear,
wise men put on their cloaks;
When great leaves fall, the winter is at hand;
When the sun sets, who doth not look for night?
Untimely storms make men expect a dearth.
All may be well; but, if God sort it so,
'Tis more than we deserve, or I expect.

2nd Citizen. Truly, the souls of men are full of dread: 40
 Ye cannot reason almost with a man
 That looks not heavily and full of fear.

3rd Citizen. Before the times of change, still is it so:
 By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust
 Ensuing dangers; as by proof, we see
 The waters swell before a boisterous storm.
 But leave it all to God. Whither away?

2nd Citizen. Marry, we were sent for to the justices.

3rd Citizen. And so was I: I'll bear you company.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. London. The palace.

Enter the ARCHBISHOP of YORK, young YORK, QUEEN ELIZABETH, and the DUCHESS of YORK

Archbishop of York. Last night, I hear, they lay at Northampton;
 At Stony-Stratford will they be to-night:
 To-morrow, or next day, they will be here.

Duchess of York. I long with all my heart
 to see the prince:
 I hope he is much grown since last I saw him.

Queen Elizabeth. But I hear, no; they say my son of York
 Hath almost overta'en him in his growth.

York. Ay, mother; but I would not have it so.

Duchess of York. Why, my young cousin,
 it is good to grow.

York. Grandam, one night, as we did sit at supper, 10
 My uncle Rivers talk'd how I did grow
 More than my brother: 'Ay,' quoth my uncle Gloucester,
 'Small herbs have grace, great weeds do grow apace.'
 And since, methinks, I would not grow so fast,
 Because sweet flowers are slow and weeds make haste.

Duchess of York. Good faith, good faith, the saying
 did not hold
 In him that did object the same to thee;
 He was the wretched'st thing when he was young,
 So long a-growing and so leisurely, 20
 That, if this rule were true, he should be gracious.

Archbishop of York. Why, madam, so, no doubt, he is.

Duchess of York. I hope he is; but yet let mothers doubt.

York. Now, by my troth, if I had been remember'd,
 I could have given my uncle's grace a flout,
 To touch his growth nearer than he touch'd mine.

Duchess of York. How, my pretty York? I pray thee,
 let me hear it.

York. Marry, they say my uncle grew so fast
 That he could gnaw a crust at two hours old
 'Twas full two years ere I could get a tooth. 30
 Grandam, this would have been a biting jest.

Duchess of York. I pray thee, pretty York,
 who told thee this?

York. Grandam, his nurse.

Duchess of York. His nurse! why, she was dead ere
 thou wert born.

York. If 'twere not she, I cannot tell who told me.

Queen Elizabeth. A parlous boy: go to,
you are too shrewd.

Archbishop of York. Good madam, be not angry
with the child.

Queen Elizabeth. Pitchers have ears.

Enter a MESSENGER

Archbishop of York. Here comes a messenger.
What news?

Messenger. Such news, my lord, as grieves me to unfold. 40

Queen Elizabeth. How fares the prince?

Messenger. Well, madam, and in health.

Duchess of York. What is thy news then?

Messenger. Lord Rivers and Lord Grey are sent to Pomfret,
And with them Sir Thomas Vaughan, prisoners.

Duchess of York. Who hath committed them?

Messenger. The mighty dukes, Gloucester and Buckingham.

Queen Elizabeth. For what offence?

Messenger. The sum of all I can, I have disclosed;
Why or for what these nobles were committed 50
Is all unknown to me, my gracious lady.

Queen Elizabeth. Ay me, I see the downfall
of our house!

The tiger now hath seized the gentle hind;
 Insulting tyranny begins to jut
 Upon the innocent and aweless throne:
 Welcome, destruction, death, and massacre!
 I see, as in a map, the end of all.

Duchess of York. Accursed and unquiet wrangling days,
 How many of you have mine eyes beheld!
 My husband lost his life to get the crown; 60
 And often up and down my sons were toss'd,
 For me to joy and weep their gain and loss:
 And being seated, and domestic broils
 Clean over-blown, themselves, the conquerors,
 Make war upon themselves; blood against blood,
 Self against self: O, preposterous
 And frantic outrage, end thy damned spleen;
 Or let me die, to look on death no more!

Queen Elizabeth. Come, come, my boy; we will to sanctuary.
 Madam, farewell. 70

Duchess of York. I'll go along with you.

Queen Elizabeth. You have no cause.

Archbishop of York. My gracious lady, go;
 And thither bear your treasure and your goods.
 For my part, I'll resign unto your Grace
 The seal I keep: and so betide to me
 As well I tender you and all of yours!
 Come, I'll conduct you to the sanctuary.

Exeunt

ACT III

SCENE I. London. A street.

The trumpets sound. Enter the young PRINCE EDWARD, RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM, CARDINAL, CATESBY, and others

Buckingham. Welcome, sweet prince, to London,
to your chamber.

Richard. Welcome, dear cousin, my thoughts' sovereign.
The weary way hath made you melancholy.

Prince Edward. No, uncle; but our crosses on the way
Have made it tedious, wearisome, and heavy.
I want more uncles here to welcome me.

Richard. Sweet prince, the untainted virtue of your years
Hath not yet dived into the world's deceit;
Nor more can you distinguish of a man
Than of his outward show, which, God he knows, 10
Seldom or never jumpeth with the heart.
Those uncles which you want were dangerous;
Your Grace attended to their sugar'd words,
But look'd not on the poison of their hearts:
God keep you from them, and from such false friends!

Prince Edward. God keep me from false friends!
But they were none.

Richard. My lord, the Mayor of London comes to greet you.

Enter the LORD MAYOR and his train

Lord Mayor. God bless your Grace with health and happy days!

Prince Edward. I thank you, good my lord,
and thank you all.

I thought my mother, and my brother York, 20
Would long ere this have met us on the way.
Fie, what a slug is Hastings, that he comes not
To tell us whether they will come or no!

Enter HASTINGS

Buckingham. And, in good time, here comes the
sweating lord.

Prince Edward. Welcome, my lord: what, will our
mother come?

Hastings. On what occasion, God he knows, not I,
The queen your mother, and your brother York,
Have taken sanctuary. The tender prince
Would fain have come with me to meet your Grace,
But by his mother was perforce withheld. 30

Buckingham. Fie, what an indirect and peevish course
Is this of hers! Lord Cardinal, will your Grace
Persuade the queen to send the Duke of York
Unto his princely brother presently?
If she deny, Lord Hastings, go with him,
And from her jealous arms pluck him perforce.

Cardinal. My Lord of Buckingham, if my weak oratory
Can from his mother win the Duke of York,
Anon expect him here; but if she be obdurate
To mild entreaties, God in heaven forbid 40
We should infringe the holy privilege
Of blessed sanctuary! not for all this land
Would I be guilty of so deep a sin.

Buckingham. You are too senseless obstinate, my lord,
Too ceremonious and traditional.
Weigh it but with the grossness of this age,
You break not sanctuary in seizing him.
The benefit thereof is always granted
To those whose dealings have deserv'd the place
And those who have the wit to claim the place: 50
This prince hath neither claim'd it nor deserv'd it;
And therefore, in mine opinion, cannot have it:
Then taking him from thence that is not there,
You break no privilege nor charter there.
Oft have I heard of sanctuary men,
But sanctuary children ne'er till now.

Cardinal. My lord, you shall o'er-rule my mind for once.
Come on, Lord Hastings, will you go with me?

Hastings. I go, my lord.

Prince Edward. Good lords, make all the speedy
haste you may. 60

Exeunt CARDINAL and HASTINGS

Say, uncle Gloucester, if our brother come,
Where shall we sojourn till our coronation?

Richard. Where it seems best unto your royal self.
If I may counsel you, some day or two
Your highness shall repose you at the Tower:
Then where you please, and shall be thought most fit
For your best health and recreation.

Prince Edward. I do not like the Tower, of any place.
Did Julius Caesar build that place, my lord?

Buckingham. He did, my gracious lord,
begin that place; 70
Which, since, succeeding ages have re-edified.

Prince Edward. Is it upon record, or else reported
Successively from age to age, he built it?

Buckingham. Upon record, my gracious lord.

Prince Edward. But say, my lord, it were not register'd,
Methinks the truth should live from age to age,
As 'twere retail'd to all posterity,
Even to the general all-ending day.

Richard. [*Aside*]
So wise so young, they say, do never live long.

Prince Edward. What say you, uncle? 80

Richard. I say, without characters, fame lives long.

[*Aside*]
Thus, like the formal vice, Iniquity,
I moralize two meanings in one word.

Prince Edward. That Julius Caesar was a famous man;
With what his valour did enrich his wit,
His wit set down to make his valour live
Death makes no conquest of this conqueror;
For now he lives in fame, though not in life.
I'll tell you what, my cousin Buckingham—

Buckingham. What, my gracious lord? 90

Prince Edward. An if I live until I be a man,
I'll win our ancient right in France again,
Or die a soldier, as I lived a king.

Richard. [*Aside*]

Short summers lightly have a forward spring.

Enter young YORK, HASTINGS, and the CARDINAL

Buckingham. Now, in good time, here comes the
Duke of York.

Prince Edward. Richard of York! how fares our loving brother?

York. Well, my dread lord; so must I call you now.

Prince Edward. Ay, brother, to our grief, as it is yours:

Too late he died that might have kept that title,

Which by his death hath lost much majesty. 100

Richard. How fares our cousin, noble Lord of York?

York. I thank you, gentle uncle. O, my lord,

You said that idle weeds are fast in growth.

The prince my brother hath outgrown me far.

Richard. He hath, my lord.

York. And therefore is he idle?

Richard. O, my fair cousin, I must not say so.

York. Then he is more beholding to you than I.

Richard. He may command me as my sovereign;

But you have power in me as in a kinsman. 110

York. I pray you, uncle, give me this dagger.

Richard. My dagger, little cousin? with all my heart.

Prince Edward. A beggar, brother?

York. Of my kind uncle, that I know will give;
And being but a toy, which is no grief to give.

Richard. A greater gift than that I'll give my cousin.

York. A greater gift! O, that's the sword to it.

Richard. Aye, gentle cousin, were it light enough.

York. O, then, I see, you will part but with light gifts;
In weightier things you'll say a beggar nay. 120

Richard. It is too heavy for your Grace to wear.

York. I weigh it lightly, were it heavier.

Richard. What, would you have my weapon, little lord?

York. I would, that I might thank you as you call me.

Gloucester. How?

York. Little.

Prince Edward. My Lord of York will still be cross in talk:
Uncle, your Grace knows how to bear with him.

York. You mean, to bear me, not to bear with me:
Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me; 130
Because that I am little, like an ape,
He thinks that you should bear me on your shoulders.

Buckingham. [*Aside*]
With what a sharp-provided wit he reasons!
To mitigate the scorn he gives his uncle,
He prettily and aptly taunts himself:
So cunning and so young is wonderful.

Richard. *[To PRINCE]*

My lord, will't please you pass along?
Myself and my good cousin Buckingham
Will to your mother, to entreat of her
To meet you at the Tower and welcome you.

140

York. What, will you go unto the Tower, my lord?

Prince Edward. My Lord Protector needs will have it so.

York. I shall not sleep in quiet at the Tower.

Richard. Why, what should you fear?

York. Marry, my uncle Clarence' angry ghost:
My grandam told me he was murdered there.

Prince Edward. I fear no uncles dead.

Richard. Nor none that live, I hope.

Prince Edward. An if they live, I hope I need not fear.

[To YORK]

But come, my lord; and with a heavy heart,
Thinking on them, go I unto the Tower.

150

*A sennet. Exeunt all but RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER,
BUCKINGHAM and CATESBY*

Buckingham. Think you, my lord, this little prating York
Was not incensed by his subtle mother
To taunt and scorn you thus opprobriously?

Richard. No doubt, no doubt; O, 'tis a parlous boy;
Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable
He is all the mother's, from the top to toe.

Buckingham. Well, let them rest. Come hither, Catesby.

Thou art sworn as deeply to effect what we intend
 As closely to conceal what we impart: 160
 Thou know'st our reasons urged upon the way.
 What think'st thou? is it not an easy matter
 To make William Lord Hastings of our mind
 For the installment of this noble duke
 In the seat royal of this famous isle?

Catesby. He for his father's sake so loves the prince,
 That he will not be won to aught against him.

Buckingham. What think'st thou, then, of Stanley?
 what will he?

Catesby. He will do all in all as Hastings doth.

Buckingham. Well, then, no more but this:
 go, gentle Catesby, 170
 And, as it were far off, sound thou Lord Hastings
 How doth he stand affected to our purpose;
 And summon him to-morrow to the Tower
 To sit about the coronation.
 If thou dost find him tractable to us,
 Encourage him, and show him all our reasons:
 If he be leaden, icy-cold, unwilling,
 Be thou so too; and so break off your talk,
 And give us notice of his inclination:
 For we to-morrow hold divided councils, 180
 Wherein thyself shalt highly be employ'd.

Richard. Commend me to Lord William: tell him, Catesby,
 His ancient knot of dangerous adversaries
 To-morrow are let blood at Pomfret Castle;
 And bid my friend, for joy of this good news,
 Give Mistress Shore one gentle kiss the more.

Buckingham. Good Catesby, go, effect this business soundly.

Catesby. My good lords both, with all the heed I may.

Richard. Shall we hear from you, Catesby, ere we sleep?

Catesby. You shall, my lord.

190

Richard. At Crosby Place, there shall you find us both.

Exit CATESBY

Buckingham. Now, my lord, what shall we do,
if we perceive
Lord Hastings will not yield to our complots?

Richard. Chop off his head, man; somewhat we will do:
And, look, when I am king, claim thou of me
The earldom of Hereford, and the moveables
Whereof the king my brother stood possess'd.

Buckingham. I'll claim that promise at your Grace's hands.

Richard. And look to have it yielded with
all willingness.
Come, let us sup betimes, that afterwards
We may digest our complots in some form.

200

Exeunt

SCENE II. Before Lord Hastings' house.

Enter a MESSENGER

Messenger. [*Knocking*] What, ho! my lord!

Hastings. [*Within*]

Who knocks at the door?

Messenger. A messenger from the Lord Stanley.

Enter HASTINGS

Hastings. What is't o'clock?

Messenger. Upon the stroke of four.

Hastings. Cannot thy master sleep these tedious nights?

Messenger. So it should seem by that I have to say.

First, he commends him to your noble lordship.

Hastings. And then?

Messenger. And then he sends you word

10

He dreamt to-night the boar had razed his helm:

Besides, he says there are two councils held;

And that may be determined at the one

which may make you and him to rue at the other.

Therefore he sends to know your lordship's pleasure,

If presently you will take horse with him,

And with all speed post with him toward the north,

To shun the danger that his soul divines.

Hastings. Go, fellow, go, return unto thy lord;

Bid him not fear the separated councils.

20

His Honour and myself are at the one,

And at the other is my servant Catesby
Where nothing can proceed that toucheth us
Whereof I shall not have intelligence.
Tell him his fears are shallow, wanting instance:
And for his dreams, I wonder he is so fond
To trust the mockery of unquiet slumbers.
To fly the boar before the boar pursues
Were to incense the boar to follow us
And make pursuit where he did mean no chase. 30
Go, bid thy master rise and come to me
And we will both together to the Tower,
Where, he shall see, the boar will use us kindly.

Messenger. My gracious lord, I'll tell him what you say.

Exit

Enter CATESBY

Catesby. Many good morrows to my noble lord!

Hastings. Good morrow, Catesby; you are early stirring.
What news, what news, in this our tottering state?

Catesby. It is a reeling world, indeed, my lord;
And I believe 'twill never stand upright
Till Richard wear the garland of the realm. 40

Hastings. How! wear the garland! dost thou mean
the crown?

Catesby. Ay, my good lord.

Hastings. I'll have this crown of mine
cut from my shoulders
Ere I will see the crown so foul misplaced.
But canst thou guess that he doth aim at it?

Catesby. Ay, on my life; and hopes to find you forward
 Upon his party for the gain thereof:
 And thereupon he sends you this good news,
 That this same very day your enemies,
 The kindred of the queen, must die at Pomfret. 50

Hastings. Indeed, I am no mourner for that news,
 Because they have been still mine enemies:
 But, that I'll give my voice on Richard's side,
 To bar my master's heirs in true descent,
 God knows I will not do it, to the death.

Catesby. God keep your lordship in that gracious mind!

Hastings. But I shall laugh at this a twelve-month hence,
 That they who brought me in my master's hate
 I live to look upon their tragedy.
 I tell thee, Catesby— 60

Catesby. What, my lord?

Hastings. Ere a fortnight make me elder,
 I'll send some packing that yet think not on it.

Catesby. 'Tis a vile thing to die, my gracious lord,
 When men are unprepared and look not for it.

Hastings. O monstrous, monstrous! and so falls it out
 With Rivers, Vaughan, Grey: and so 'twill do
 With some men else, who think themselves as safe
 As thou and I, who, as thou know'st, are dear
 To princely Richard and to Buckingham. 70

Catesby. The princes both make high account of you;
[Aside]
 For they account his head upon the bridge.

Hastings. I know they do; and I have well deserved it.

Enter STANLEY

Come on, come on; where is your boar-spear, man?
Fear you the boar, and go so unprovided?

Stanley. My lord, good morrow; good morrow, Catesby:
You may jest on, but, by the holy rood,
I do not like these several councils, I.

Hastings. My lord, I hold my life as dear as
you do yours; 80
And never in my life, I do protest,
Was it more precious to me than 'tis now:
Think you, but that I know our state secure,
I would be so triumphant as I am?

Stanley. The lords at Pomfret, when they rode
from London,
Were jocund, and supposed their state was sure,
And they indeed had no cause to mistrust;
But yet you see how soon the day o'ercast.
This sudden stab of rancour I misdoubt:
Pray God, I say, I prove a needless coward! 90
What, shall we toward the Tower? the day is spent.

Hastings. Come, come, have with you.
Wot you what, my lord?
To-day the lords you talk of are beheaded.

Stanley. They, for their truth, might better wear
their heads
Than some that have accused them wear their hats.
But come, my lord, let us away.

RICHARD III—ACT III

Enter a PURSUIVANT

Hastings. Go on before; I'll talk with this good fellow.

Exeunt STANLEY and CATESBY

How now, sirrah! how goes the world with thee?

Pursuivant. The better that your lordship please to ask.

Hastings. I tell thee, man, 'tis better with me now 100
Than when I met thee last where now we meet:
Then was I going prisoner to the Tower,
By the suggestion of the queen's allies;
But now, I tell thee—keep it to thyself—
This day those enemies are put to death,
And I in better state than e'er I was.

Pursuivant. God hold it, to your Honor's good content!

Hastings. Gramercy, fellow: there, drink that for me.

[Throws him his purse]

Pursuivant. God save your lordship!

Exit

Enter a PRIEST

Priest. Well met, my lord; I am glad to see your Honor. 110

Hastings. I thank thee, good Sir John, with all my heart.
I am in your debt for your last exercise;
Come the next Sabbath, and I will content you.

[He whispers in his ear]

Enter BUCKINGHAM

Buckingham. What, talking with a priest,
Lord Chamberlain?
Your friends at Pomfret, they do need the priest;
Your Honor hath no shriving work in hand.

Hastings. Good faith, and when I met this holy man,
Those men you talk of came into my mind.
What, go you toward the Tower?

Buckingham. I do, my lord; but long I shall not stay. 120
I shall return before your lordship thence.

Hastings. 'Tis like enough, for I stay dinner there.

Buckingham. [*Aside*]
And supper too, although thou know'st it not.

[*To HASTINGS*]

Come, will you go?

Hastings. I'll wait upon your lordship.

Exeunt

SCENE III. Pomfret Castle.

*Enter RATCLIFF, with halberds, carrying RIVERS, GREY, and
VAUGHAN to death*

Ratcliff. Come, bring forth the prisoners.

Rivers. Sir Richard Ratcliff, let me tell thee this:
To-day shalt thou behold a subject die
For truth, for duty, and for loyalty.

Grey. God keep the prince from all the pack of you!
A knot you are of damned blood-suckers!

Vaughan. You live that shall cry woe for this after.

Ratcliff. Dispatch; the limit of your lives is out.

Rivers. O Pomfret, Pomfret! O thou bloody prison,
Fatal and ominous to noble peers! 10
Within the guilty closure of thy walls,
Richard the Second here was hack'd to death;
And, for more slander to thy dismal seat,
We give thee up our guiltless blood to drink.

Grey. Now Margaret's curse is fall'n upon our heads,
For standing by when Richard stabb'd her son.

Rivers. Then cursed she Hastings, then cursed she
Buckingham,
Then cursed she Richard. O, remember, God
To hear her prayers for them, as now for us
And for my sister and her princely sons. 20
Be satisfied, dear God, with our true blood,
Which, as thou know'st, unjustly must be spilt.

Ratcliff. Make haste; the hour of death is expiate.

Rivers. Come, Grey, come, Vaughan, let us all embrace:
And take our leave, until we meet in heaven.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. The Tower of London.

*Enter BUCKINGHAM, DERBY, HASTINGS, the BISHOP of ELY,
RATCLIFF, LOVELL, with others*

Hastings. My lords, at once: the cause why we are met
Is to determine of the coronation.
In God's name, speak: when is the royal day?

Buckingham. Are all things fitting for that royal time?

Derby. It is, and wants but nomination.

Bishop of Ely. To-morrow, then, I judge a happy day.

Buckingham. Who knows the Lord Protector's mind
herein?
Who is most inward with the royal duke?

Bishop of Ely. Your Grace, we think, should soonest
know his mind.

Buckingham. Who, I, my lord? 10
We know each other's faces, but for our hearts,
He knows no more of mine, than I of yours;
Nor I no more of his, than you of mine.
Lord Hastings, you and he are near in love.

Hastings. I thank his Grace, I know he loves me well;
But, for his purpose in the coronation.
I have not sounded him, nor he deliver'd
His gracious pleasure any way therein:
But you, my noble lords, may name the time;
And in the duke's behalf I'll give my voice, 20
Which, I presume, he'll take in gentle part.

Enter RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER

Bishop of Ely. Now in good time, here comes the
duke himself.

Richard. My noble lords and cousins all, good morrow.
I have been long a sleeper; but, I hope,
My absence doth neglect no great designs
Which by my presence might have been concluded.

Buckingham. Had not you come upon your cue, my lord
William Lord Hastings had pronounced your part—
I mean, your voice—for crowning of the king.

Richard. Than my Lord Hastings no man might
be bolder;
His lordship knows me well, and loves me well.

30

Hastings. I thank your Grace.

Richard. My lord of Ely!

Bishop of Ely. My lord?

Richard. When I was last in Holborn,
I saw good strawberries in your garden there
I do beseech you send for some of them.

Bishop of Ely. Marry, and will, my lord, with all my heart.

Exit

Richard. Cousin of Buckingham, a word with you.

[Drawing him aside]

Catesby hath sounded Hastings in our business,
And finds the testy gentleman so hot,

40

As he will lose his head ere give consent.
His master's son, as worshipfully as he terms it,
Shall lose the royalty of England's throne.

Buckingham. Withdraw you hence, my lord,
I'll follow you.

*Exit RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER,
BUCKINGHAM following*

Derby. We have not yet set down this day of triumph.
To-morrow, in mine opinion, is too sudden;
For I myself am not so well provided
As else I would be, were the day prolong'd.

Re-enter BISHOP of ELY

Bishop of Ely. Where is my lord the Duke of Gloucester? 50
I have sent for these strawberries.

Hastings. His Grace looks cheerfully and smooth to-day;
There's some conceit or other likes him well
When he doth bid good morrow with such a spirit.
I think there's never a man in Christendom
That can less hide his love or hate than he;
For by his face straight shall you know his heart.

Derby. What of his heart perceive you in his face
By any livelihood he show'd to-day?

Hastings. Marry, that with no man here he is offended; 60
For, were he, he had shown it in his looks.

Derby. I pray God he be not, I say.

Re-enter RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER, and BUCKINGHAM

Richard. I pray you all, tell me what they deserve
That do conspire my death with devilish plots
Of damned witchcraft, and that have prevail'd
Upon my body with their hellish charms?

Hastings. The tender love I bear your Grace, my lord,
Makes me most forward in this noble presence
To doom the offenders, whatsoever they be.
I say, my lord, they have deserved death.

70

Richard. Then be your eyes the witness of this ill:
See how I am bewitch'd; behold mine arm
Is like a blasted sapling wither'd up:
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,
Consorted with that harlot, strumpet Shore,
That by their witchcraft thus have marked me.

Hastings. If they have done this thing, my gracious lord—

Richard. If? Thou protector of this damned strumpet—
Tellest thou me of 'ifs'? Thou art a traitor:
Off with his head! Now, by Saint Paul I swear
I will not dine until I see the same.
Lovell and Ratcliff, look that it be done:
The rest, that love me, rise and follow me.

80

Exeunt all but HASTINGS, RATCLIFF, and LOVELL

Hastings. Woe, woe for England! not a whit for me;
For I, too fond, might have prevented this.
Stanley did dream the boar did raze his helm;
But I disdain'd it, and did scorn to fly:
Three times to-day my foot-cloth horse did stumble,

And startled when he look'd upon the Tower,
 As loath to bear me to the slaughter-house. 90
 O, now I want the priest that spake to me:
 I now repent I told the pursuivant
 As 'twere triumphing at mine enemies,
 How they at Pomfret bloodily were butcher'd,
 And I myself secure in grace and favor.
 O Margaret, Margaret, now thy heavy curse
 Is lighted on poor Hastings' wretched head!

Ratcliff. Dispatch, my lord; the duke would be at dinner:
 Make a short shrift; he longs to see your head.

Hastings. O momentary grace of mortal men, 100
 Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!
 Who builds his hopes in air of your good looks,
 Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast,
 Ready, with every nod, to tumble down
 Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

Lovell. Come, come, dispatch; 'tis bootless to exclaim.

Hastings. O bloody Richard! miserable England!
 I prophesy the fearful'st time to thee
 That ever wretched age hath look'd upon.
 Come, lead me to the block; bear him my head. 110
 They smile at me that shortly shall be dead.

Exeunt

SCENE V. The Tower-walls.

*Enter RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER, and BUCKINGHAM,
in rotten armor, marvelous ill-favored.*

Richard. Come, cousin, canst thou quake,
and change thy color,
Murder thy breath in the middle of a word,
And then begin again, and stop again,
As if thou wert distraught and mad with terror?

Buckingham. Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian;
Speak and look back, and pry on every side,
Tremble and start at wagging of a straw,
Intending deep suspicion. Ghastly looks
Are at my service, like enforced smiles;
And both are ready in their offices, 10
At any time, to grace my stratagems.
But what, is Catesby gone?

Richard. He is; and, see, he brings the mayor along.

Enter the LORD MAYOR and CATESBY

Buckingham. Lord Mayor—

Richard. Look to the drawbridge there!

Buckingham. Hark! a drum.

Richard. Catesby, o'erlook the walls.

Buckingham. Lord Mayor, the reason we have sent—

Richard. Look back, defend thee, here are enemies.

Buckingham. God and our innocence defend and guard us! 20

Richard. Be patient, they are friends, Ratcliff and Lovell.

Enter LOVELL and RATCLIFF with HASTINGS' head

Lovell. Here is the head of that ignoble traitor,
The dangerous and unsuspected Hastings.

Richard. So dear I loved the man, that I must weep.

I took him for the plainest harmless creature
That breathed upon this earth a Christian;
Made him my book wherein my soul recorded
The history of all her secret thoughts:
So smooth he daub'd his vice with show of virtue
That, his apparent open guilt omitted,
I mean, his conversation with Shore's wife,
He lived from all attainder of suspect.

30

Buckingham. Well, well, he was the covert'st
shelter'd traitor
That ever lived.—
Would you imagine, or almost believe,
Were't not that, by great preservation,
We live to tell it you, the subtle traitor
This day had plotted in the council-house
To murder me and my good Lord of Gloucester?

Lord Mayor. What, had he so?

40

Richard. What, think you we are Turks or infidels?
Or that we would, against the form of law,
Proceed thus rashly to the villain's death,
But that the extreme peril of the case,
The peace of England and our persons' safety,
Enforced us to this execution?

Lord Mayor. Now, fair befall you! he deserved his death;
 And you my good lords, both have well proceeded
 To warn false traitors from the like attempts.
 I never look'd for better at his hands, 50
 After he once fell in with Mistress Shore.

Richard. Yet had not we determined he should die,
 Until your lordship came to see his death—
 Which now the loving haste of these our friends,
 Somewhat against our meaning, have prevented—
 Because, my lord, we would have had you heard
 The traitor speak, and timorously confess
 The manner and the purpose of his treason,
 That you might well have signified the same
 Unto the citizens, who haply may 60
 Misconstrue us in him and wail his death.

Lord Mayor. But, my good lord, your Grace's word
 shall serve
 As well as I had seen and heard him speak;
 And doubt you not, right noble princes both,
 But I'll acquaint our duteous citizens
 With all your just proceedings in this cause.

Richard. And to that end we wish'd your lordship here,
 To avoid the carping censures of the world.

Buckingham. But since you come too late of our intents,
 Yet witness what you hear we did intend: 70
 And so, my good Lord Mayor, we bid farewell.

Exit LORD MAYOR

Richard. Go, after, after, cousin Buckingham.
 The Mayor towards Guildhall hies him in all post:

There, at your meet'st advantage of the time,
 Infer the bastardy of Edward's children:
 Tell them how Edward put to death a citizen,
 Only for saying he would make his son
 Heir to the crown, meaning indeed his house,
 Which by the sign thereof was termed so.
 Moreover, urge his hateful luxury 80
 And bestial appetite in change of lust;
 Which stretched to their servants, daughters, wives,
 Even where his lustful eye or savage heart,
 Without control, listed to make his prey.
 Nay, for a need, thus far come near my person:
 Tell them, when that my mother went with child
 Of that unsatiate Edward, noble York
 My princely father then had wars in France
 And, by just computation of the time,
 Found that the issue was not his begot; 90
 Which well appeared in his lineaments,
 Being nothing like the noble duke my father:
 But touch this sparingly, as 'twere far off,
 Because you know, my lord, my mother lives.

Buckingham. Fear not, my lord, I'll play the orator
 As if the golden fee for which I plead
 Were for myself: and so, my lord, adieu.

Richard. If you thrive well, bring them to Baynard's Castle;
 Where you shall find me well accompanied
 With reverend fathers and well-learned bishops. 100

Buckingham. I go: and towards three or four o'clock
 Look for the news that the Guildhall affords.

Exit BUCKINGHAM

Richard. Go, Lovell, with all speed to Doctor Shaw;

[To CATESBY]

Go thou to Friar Penker; bid them both
Meet me within this hour at Baynard's Castle.

Exeunt all but RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER

Now will I in to take some privy order,
To draw the brats of Clarence out of sight;
And to give notice that no manner of person
At any time have recourse unto the princes.

Exit

SCENE VI. The same.

Enter a SCRIVENER with a paper in his hand.

Scrivener. This is the indictment of the good Lord Hastings;
Which in a set hand fairly is engross'd,
That it may be this day read over in Paul's.
And mark how well the sequel hangs together:
Eleven hours I spent to write it over,
For yesternight by Catesby was it brought me;
The precedent was full as long a-doing:
And yet within these five hours lived Lord Hastings,
Untainted, unexamined, free, at liberty.
Here's a good world the while! Why who's so gross, 10
That seeth not this palpable device?
Yet who's so blind, but says he sees it not?
Bad is the world; and all will come to nought,
When such bad dealings must be seen in thought.

Exit

SCENE VII. Baynard's Castle.

*Enter RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER, and BUCKINGHAM
at several doors.*

Richard. How now, my lord, what say the citizens?

Buckingham. Now, by the holy mother of our Lord,
The citizens are mum and speak not a word.

Richard. Touch'd you the bastardy of Edward's children?

Buckingham. I did; with his contract with Lady Lucy,
And his contract by deputy in France;
The insatiate greediness of his desires,
And his enforcement of the city wives;
His tyranny for trifles; his own bastardy,
As being got, your father then in France, 10
And his resemblance being not like the duke;
Withal I did infer your lineaments,
Being the right idea of your father,
Both in your form and nobleness of mind;
Laid open all your victories in Scotland,
Your discipline in war, wisdom in peace,
Your bounty, virtue, fair humility:
Indeed, left nothing fitting for the purpose
Untouch'd, or slightly handled, in discourse.
And when mine oratory grew to an end 20
I bid them that did love their country's good
Cry 'God save Richard, England's royal king!'

Richard. Ah! and did they so?

Buckingham. No, so God help me, they spake not a word;
But, like dumb statues or breathing stones,
Gazed each on other, and look'd deadly pale.
Which when I saw, I reprehended them;

And ask'd the Mayor what meant this willful silence:
 His answer was, the people were not wont
 To be spoke to but by the recorder. 30
 Then he was urged to tell my tale again,
 'Thus saith the duke, thus hath the duke inferr'd;
 But nothing spake in warrant from himself.
 When he had done, some followers of mine own,
 At the lower end of the hall, hurl'd up their caps,
 And some ten voices cried 'God save King Richard!
 And thus I took the vantage of those few.
 'Thanks, gentle citizens and friends,' quoth I;
 'This general applause and loving shout
 Argues your wisdoms and your love to Richard:' 40
 And even here brake off, and came away.

Richard. What tongueless blocks were they!
 would not they speak?

Buckingham. No, by my troth, my lord.

Richard. Will not the Mayor then and his brethren come?

Buckingham. The Mayor is here at hand: intend some fear;
 Be not you spoke with, but by mighty suit:
 And look you get a prayer-book in your hand,
 And stand betwixt two churchmen, good my lord;
 For on that ground I'll build a holy descant.
 And be not easily won to our request; 50
 Play the maid's part, still answer nay, and take it.

Richard. I go; and if you plead as well for them
 As I can say nay to thee for myself,
 No doubt we bring it to a happy issue.

Buckingham. Go, go, up to the leads;
 the Lord Mayor knocks.

Exit RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER

Enter the LORD MAYOR and CITIZENS

Welcome my lord; I dance attendance here;
I think the duke will not be spoke withal.

Enter CATESBY

Here comes his servant: how now, Catesby,
What says he?

Catesby. My lord: he doth entreat your Grace 60
To visit him to-morrow or next day:
He is within with two right reverend fathers,
Divinely bent to meditation;
And in no worldly suit would he be moved
To draw him from his holy exercise.

Buckingham. Return, good Catesby, to thy lord again;
Tell him myself, the Mayor and citizens,
In deep designs and matters of great moment,
No less importing than our general good,
Are come to have some conference with his Grace. 70

Catesby. I'll tell him what you say, my lord.

Exit

Buckingham. Ah, ha, my lord, this prince is not
an Edward!
He is not lolling on a lewd day-bed,
But on his knees at meditation;
Not dallying with a brace of courtesans,
But meditating with two deep divines;

Not sleeping, to engross his idle body,
 But praying, to enrich his watchful soul:
 Happy were England would this gracious prince
 Take on himself the sovereignty thereof: 80
 But, sure, I fear, we shall ne'er win him to it.

Lord Mayor. Marry, God forbid his Grace should
 say us nay!

Buckingham. I fear he will.

Re-enter CATESBY

How now, Catesby, what says your lord?

Catesby. My lord,
 He wonders to what end you have assembled
 Such troops of citizens to speak with him,
 His Grace not being warn'd thereof before:
 My lord, he fears you mean no good to him.

Buckingham. Sorry I am my noble cousin should 90
 Suspect me, that I mean no good to him:
 By heaven, I come in perfect love to him;
 And so once more return and tell his Grace.

Exit CATESBY

When holy and devout religious men
 Are at their beads, 'tis hard to draw them thence,
 So sweet is zealous contemplation.

Enter RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER, aloft between two BISHOPS

CATESBY returns

Lord Mayor. See, where he stands between two
clergymen!

Buckingham. Two props of virtue for a Christian prince,
To stay him from the fall of vanity:
And, see, a book of prayer in his hand, 100
True ornaments to know a holy man.
Famous Plantagenet, most gracious prince,
Lend favorable ears to our request;
And pardon us the interruption
Of thy devotion and right Christian zeal.

Richard. My lord, there needs no such apology:
I rather do beseech you pardon me,
Who, earnest in the service of my God,
Neglect the visitation of my friends.
But, leaving this, what is your Grace's pleasure? 110

Buckingham. Even that, I hope, which pleaseth
God above,
And all good men of this ungovern'd isle.

Richard. I do suspect I have done some offence
That seems disgracious in the city's eyes,
And that you come to reprehend my ignorance.

Buckingham. You have, my lord: would it might please
your Grace,
At our entreaties, to amend that fault!

Richard. Else wherefore breathe I in a Christian land?

Buckingham. Then know, it is your fault that you resign
The supreme seat, the throne majestical, 120
The scepter'd office of your ancestors,
Your state of fortune and your due of birth,

The lineal glory of your royal house,
 To the corruption of a blemished stock:
 Whilst, in the mildness of your sleepy thoughts,
 Which here we waken to our country's good,
 This noble isle doth want her proper limbs;
 Her face defaced with scars of infamy,
 Her royal stock graft with ignoble plants,
 And almost shoulder'd in the swallowing gulf 130
 Of blind forgetfulness and dark oblivion.
 Which to recure, we heartily solicit
 Your gracious self to take on you the charge
 And kingly government of this your land,
 Not as protector, steward, substitute,
 Or lowly factor for another's gain;
 But as successively from blood to blood,
 Your right of birth, your empery, your own.
 For this, consorted with the citizens,
 Your very worshipful and loving friends, 140
 And by their vehement instigation,
 In this just suit come I to move your Grace.

Richard. I know not whether to depart in silence,
 Or bitterly to speak in your reproof
 Best fitteth my degree or your condition.
 If not to answer, you might haply think
 Tongue-tied ambition, not replying, yielded
 To bear the golden yoke of sovereignty,
 Which fondly you would here impose on me;
 If to reprove you for this suit of yours, 150
 So season'd with your faithful love to me,
 Then, on the other side, I cheque'd my friends.
 Therefore, to speak, and to avoid the first,
 And then, in speaking, not to incur the last,
 Definitively thus I answer you.

Your love deserves my thanks; but my desert
 Unmeritable shuns your high request.
 First if all obstacles were cut away,
 And that my path were even to the crown,
 As my ripe revenue and due by birth 160
 Yet so much is my poverty of spirit,
 So mighty and so many my defects,
 As I had rather hide me from my greatness,
 Being a bark to brook no mighty sea,
 Than in my greatness covet to be hid,
 And in the vapour of my glory smother'd.
 But, God be thank'd, there's no need of me,
 And much I need to help you, if need were;
 The royal tree hath left us royal fruit,
 Which, mellow'd by the stealing hours of time, 170
 Will well become the seat of majesty,
 And make, no doubt, us happy by his reign.
 On him I lay what you would lay on me,
 The right and fortune of his happy stars;
 Which God defend that I should wring from him!

Buckingham. My lord, this argues conscience in
 your Grace;
 But the respects thereof are nice and trivial,
 All circumstances well considered.
 You say that Edward is your brother's son:
 So say we too, but not by Edward's wife; 180
 For first he was contract to Lady Lucy—
 Your mother lives a witness to that vow—
 And afterward by substitute betroth'd
 To Bona, sister to the King of France.
 These both put by a poor petitioner,
 A care-crazed mother of a many children,
 A beauty-waning and distressed widow,

Even in the afternoon of her best days,
 Made prize and purchase of his lustful eye,
 Seduced the pitch and height of all his thoughts 190
 To base declension and loathed bigamy
 By her, in his unlawful bed, he got
 This Edward, whom our manners term the prince.
 More bitterly could I expostulate,
 Save that, for reverence to some alive,
 I give a sparing limit to my tongue.
 Then, good my lord, take to your royal self
 This proffer'd benefit of dignity;
 If not to bless us and the land withal,
 Yet to draw forth your noble ancestry 200
 From the corruption of abusing times,
 Unto a lineal true-derived course.

Lord Mayor. Do, good my lord, your citizens
 entreat you.

Buckingham. Refuse not, mighty lord, this
 proffer'd love.

Catesby. O, make them joyful, grant their lawful suit!

Richard. Alas, why would you heap these cares on me?
 I am unfit for state and majesty;
 I do beseech you, take it not amiss;
 I cannot nor I will not yield to you.

Buckingham. If you refuse it—as, in love and zeal, 210
 Loath to depose the child, your brother's son;
 As well we know your tenderness of heart
 And gentle, kind, effeminate remorse,
 Which we have noted in you to your kin,
 And equally indeed to all estates—
 Yet whether you accept our suit or no,

Your brother's son shall never reign our king;
But we will plant some other in the throne,
To the disgrace and downfall of your house:
And in this resolution here we leave you—
Come, citizens: 'zounds! I'll entreat no more.

220

Richard. O, do not swear, my lord of Buckingham.

Exit BUCKINGHAM with the CITIZENS

Catesby. Call them again, my lord, and accept their suit.
Do, good my lord, lest all the land do rue it.

Richard. Would you enforce me to a world of care?
Well, call them again. I am not made of stone,
But penetrable to your kind entreats,
Albeit against my conscience and my soul.

Re-enter BUCKINGHAM and the rest

Cousin of Buckingham, and you sage, grave men,
Since you will buckle fortune on my back,
To bear her burthen, whether I will or no,
I must have patience to endure the load:
But if black scandal or foul-faced reproach
Attend the sequel of your imposition,
Your mere enforcement shall acquittance me
From all the impure blots and stains thereof;
For God he knows, and you may partly see,
How far I am from the desire thereof.

230

Lord Mayor. God bless your Grace! we see it, and will
say it.

Richard. In saying so, you shall but say the truth.

240

RICHARD III—ACT IV

Buckingham. Then I salute you with this kingly title:
Long live Richard, England's royal king!

Lord Mayor and Citizens. Amen.

Buckingham. To-morrow will it please you to
be crown'd?

Richard. Even when you please, since you will have
it so.

Buckingham. To-morrow, then, we will attend
your Grace:
And so most joyfully we take our leave.

Richard. Come, let us to our holy task again.
Farewell, good cousin; farewell, gentle friends.

Exeunt

ACT IV

SCENE I. Before the Tower.

*Enter, on one side, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DUCHESS of YORK,
and DORSET; on the other, ANNE, DUCHESS of GLOUCESTER,
leading LADY MARGARET PLANTAGENET, CLARENCE'S
young daughter.*

Duchess of York. Who meets us here?
my niece Plantagenet
Led in the hand of her kind aunt of Gloucester?
Now, for my life, she's wandering to the Tower,

On pure heart's love to greet the tender princes.
Daughter, well met.

Lady Anne. God give your Graces both
A happy and a joyful time of day!

Queen Elizabeth. As much to you, good sister!
Whither away?

Lady Anne. No farther than the Tower; and, as I guess,
Upon the like devotion as yourselves, 10
To 'gratulate the gentle princes there.

Queen Elizabeth. Kind sister, thanks: we'll enter
all together.

Enter BRAKENBURY

And, in good time, here the Lieutenant comes.
Master Lieutenant, pray you, by your leave,
How doth the prince, and my young son of York?

Brakenbury. Right well, dear madam. By your patience,
I may not suffer you to visit them;
The king hath straitly charged the contrary.

Queen Elizabeth. The king! why, who's that?

Brakenbury. I cry you mercy: I mean the
Lord Protector. 20

Queen Elizabeth. The Lord protect him from that
kingly title!
Hath he set bounds betwixt their love and me?
I am their mother; who should keep me from them?

Duchess of York. I am their father's mother;
I will see them.

Lady Anne. Their aunt I am in law, in love their mother:
Then bring me to their sights; I'll bear thy blame
And take thy office from thee, on my peril.

Brakenbury. No, madam, no; I may not leave it so:
I am bound by oath, and therefore pardon me.

Exit

Enter LORD STANLEY

Lord Stanley. Let me but meet you, ladies,
one hour hence,
And I'll salute your Grace of York as mother,
And reverend looker on, of two fair queens.

30

[To LADY ANNE]

Come, madam, you must straight to Westminster,
There to be crowned Richard's royal queen.

Queen Elizabeth. O, cut my lace in sunder,
That my pent heart may have some scope to beat,
Or else I swoon with this dead-killing news!

Lady Anne. Despiteful tidings! O displeasing news!

Dorset. Be of good cheer: mother, how fares your Grace?

Queen Elizabeth. O Dorset, speak not to me,
get thee hence!
Death and destruction dog thee at the heels;
Thy mother's name is ominous to children.

40

If thou wilt outstrip death, go cross the seas,
And live with Richmond, from the reach of hell
Go, hie thee, hie thee from this slaughter-house,
Lest thou increase the number of the dead;
And make me die the thrall of Margaret's curse,
Nor mother, wife, nor England's counted queen.

Lord Stanley. Full of wise care is this your counsel,
madam.

Take all the swift advantage of the hours; 50
You shall have letters from me to my son
To meet you on the way, and welcome you.
Be not ta'en tardy by unwise delay.

Duchess of York. O ill-dispersing wind of misery!
O my accursed womb, the bed of death!
A cockatrice hast thou hatch'd to the world,
Whose unavoided eye is murderous.

Lord Stanley. Come, madam, come; I in all haste
was sent.

Lady Anne. And I in all unwillingness will go. 60
I would to God that the inclusive verge
Of golden metal that must round my brow
Were red-hot steel, to sear me to the brain!
Anointed let me be with deadly venom,
And die, ere men can say, God save the queen!

Queen Elizabeth. Go, go, poor soul, I envy not
thy glory
To feed my humour, wish thyself no harm.

Lady Anne. No! why? When he that is my husband now
Came to me, as I follow'd Henry's corpse,
When scarce the blood was well wash'd from his hands

Which issued from my other angel husband 70
 And that dead saint which then I weeping follow'd;
 O, when, I say, I look'd on Richard's face,
 This was my wish: 'Be thou,' quoth I, 'accursed,
 For making me, so young, so old a widow!
 And, when thou wed'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;
 And be thy wife—if any be so mad—
 As miserable by the life of thee
 As thou hast made me by my dear lord's death!
 Lo, ere I can repeat this curse again,
 Even in so short a space, my woman's heart 80
 Grossly grew captive to his honey words
 And proved the subject of my own soul's curse,
 Which ever since hath kept my eyes from rest;
 For never yet one hour in his bed
 Have I enjoy'd the golden dew of sleep,
 But have been waked by his timorous dreams.
 Besides, he hates me for my father Warwick;
 And will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me.

Queen Elizabeth. Poor heart, adieu! I pity thy
 complaining.

Lady Anne. No more than from my soul I mourn 90
 for yours.

Queen Elizabeth. Farewell, thou woeful welcomer
 of glory!

Lady Anne. Adieu, poor soul, that takest thy leave of it!

Duchess of York. [*To DORSET*]

Go thou to Richmond, and good fortune guide thee!

[*To LADY ANNE*]

Go thou to Richard, and good angels guard thee!

[To QUEEN ELIZABETH]

Go thou to sanctuary, and good thoughts possess thee!
I to my grave, where peace and rest lie with me!
Eighty odd years of sorrow have I seen,
And each hour's joy wrecked with a week of teen.

Queen Elizabeth. Stay, yet look back with me
unto the Tower.

Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes 100
Whom envy hath immured within your walls!
Rough cradle for such little pretty ones!
Rude ragged nurse, old sullen playfellow
For tender princes, use my babies well!
So foolish sorrow bids your stones farewell.

Exeunt

SCENE II. London. The palace.

*Sennet. Enter KING RICHARD III, in pomp, crowned; BUCKINGHAM,
CATESBY, a PAGE, and others*

King Richard III. Stand all apart.
Cousin of Buckingham!

Buckingham. My gracious sovereign?

King Richard III. Give me thy hand.

[*Here he ascendeth his throne*]

Thus high, by thy advice
And thy assistance, is King Richard seated;
But shall we wear these honors for a day?
Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?

Buckingham. Still live they and forever may they last!

King Richard III. O Buckingham, now do I play
the touch,

To try if thou be current gold indeed
Young Edward lives: think now what I would say. 10

Buckingham. Say on, my loving lord.

King Richard III. Why, Buckingham, I say,
I would be king—

Buckingham. Why, so you are, my thrice renowned liege.

King Richard III. Ha! am I king? 'tis so: but Edward lives.

Buckingham. True, noble prince.

King Richard III. O bitter consequence,
That Edward still should live! 'True, noble prince!'
Cousin, thou wert not wont to be so dull:
Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead;
And I would have it suddenly perform'd.
What sayest thou? speak suddenly; be brief. 20

Buckingham. Your Grace may do your pleasure.

King Richard III. Tut, tut, thou art all ice, thy kindness
freezeth:
Say, have I thy consent that they shall die?

Buckingham. Give me some breath, some little pause,
my lord
Before I positively speak herein:
I will resolve your Grace immediately.

Exit

Catesby. [*Aside to a stander by*]

The king is angry: see, he bites the lip.

King Richard III. I will converse with iron-witted fools 30

And unrespective boys: none are for me
That look into me with considerate eyes:
High-reaching Buckingham grows circumspect.
Boy!

Page. My lord?

King Richard III. Know'st thou not any whom
corrupting gold
Would tempt unto a close exploit of death?

Page. My lord, I know a discontented gentleman,
Whose humble means match not his haughty mind:
Gold were as good as twenty orators, 40
And will, no doubt, tempt him to anything.

King Richard III. What is his name?

Page. His name, my lord, is Tyrrel.

King Richard III. I partly know the man:
go, call him hither.

Exit PAGE

The deep-revolving witty Buckingham
No more shall be the neighbor to my counsel:
Hath he so long held out with me untired,
And stops he now for breath?

Enter STANLEY

How now! what news with you?

Stanley. My lord, I hear the Marquis Dorset's fled
To Richmond, in those parts beyond the sea
Where he abides. 50

Stands apart

King Richard III. Catesby!

Catesby. My lord?

King Richard III. Rumor it abroad
That Anne, my wife, is sick and like to die:
I will take order for her keeping close.
Inquire me out some mean-born gentleman,
Whom I will marry straight to Clarence' daughter:
The boy is foolish, and I fear not him. 60
Look, how thou dream'st! I say again, give out
That Anne my wife is sick and like to die:
About it; for it stands me much upon,
To stop all hopes whose growth may damage me.

Exit CATESBY

I must be married to my brother's daughter,
Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass.
Murder her brothers, and then marry her!
Uncertain way of gain! But I am in
So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin:
Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye. 70

Re-enter PAGE, with TYRREL

Is thy name Tyrrel?

Tyrrel. James Tyrrel, and your most obedient subject.

King Richard III. Art thou, indeed?

Tyrrel. Prove me, my gracious sovereign.

King Richard III. Darest thou resolve to kill a
friend of mine?

Tyrrel. Ay, my lord;
But I had rather kill two enemies.

King Richard III. Why, there thou hast it:
two deep enemies,
Foes to my rest and my sweet sleep's disturbers
Are they that I would have thee deal upon:
Tyrrel, I mean those bastards in the Tower.

80

Tyrrel. Let me have open means to come to them,
And soon I'll rid you from the fear of them.

King Richard III. Thou sing'st sweet music.
Hark, come hither, Tyrrel
Go, by this token: rise, and lend thine ear:

[Whispers]

There is no more but so: say it is done,
And I will love thee, and prefer thee too.

Tyrrel. 'Tis done, my gracious lord.

King Richard III. Shall we hear from thee, Tyrrel,
ere we sleep?

Tyrrel. Ye shall, my lord.

90

Exit

Re-enter BUCKINGHAM

Buckingham. My Lord, I have consider'd in my mind
The late demand that you did sound me in.

King Richard III. Well, let that pass. Dorset is fled to Richmond.

Buckingham. I hear that news, my lord.

King Richard III. Stanley, he is your wife's son.
Well, look to it.

Buckingham. My lord, I claim your gift, my due by promise,
For which your honour and your faith is pawn'd;
The earldom of Hereford and the moveables
The which you promised I should possess.

King Richard III. Stanley, look to your wife;
if she convey 100
Letters to Richmond, you shall answer it.

Buckingham. What says your Highness to my
just demand?

King Richard III. As I remember, Henry the Sixth
Did prophesy that Richmond should be king,
When Richmond was a little peevish boy.
A king, perhaps, perhaps—

Buckingham. My lord—

King Richard III. How chance the prophet could not
at that time
Have told me, I being by, that I should kill him?

Buckingham. My lord, your promise for the earldom— 110

King Richard III. Richmond! When last I was at Exeter,
The Mayor in courtesy show'd me the castle,

And call'd it Rougemont: at which name I started,
Because a bard of Ireland told me once
I should not live long after I saw Richmond.

Buckingham. My Lord—

King Richard III. Ay, what's o'clock?

Buckingham. I am thus bold to put your Grace in mind
Of what you promised me.

King Richard III. Well, but what's o'clock?

120

Buckingham. Upon the stroke of ten.

King Richard III. Well, let it strike.

Buckingham. Why let it strike?

King Richard III. Because that, like a Jack,
thou keep'st the stroke
Betwixt thy begging and my meditation.
I am not in the giving vein to-day.

Buckingham. Why, then resolve me whether you will or no.

King Richard III. Tut, tut,
Thou troublest me; I am not in the vein.

Exeunt all but BUCKINGHAM

Buckingham. Is it even so? Rewards he my true service
With such deep contempt? Made I him king for this?
O, let me think on Hastings, and be gone
To Brecknock, while my fearful head is on!

130

Exit

SCENE III. The same.

Enter TYRREL.

Tyrrel. The tyrannous and bloody deed is done.

The most arch deed of piteous massacre
That ever yet this land was guilty of.
Dighton and Forrest, whom I did suborn
To do this ruthless piece of butchery,
Although they were flesh'd villains, bloody dogs,
Melting with tenderness and kind compassion
Wept like two children in their deaths' sad stories.
'Lo, thus' quoth Dighton, 'lay those tender babes:'
'Thus, thus,' quoth Forrest, 'girdling one another 10
Within their innocent alabaster arms:
Their lips were four red roses on a stalk,
Which in their summer beauty kiss'd each other.
A book of prayers on their pillow lay;
Which once,' quoth Forrest, 'almost changed my mind;
But O! the devil'—there the villain stopp'd
Whilst Dighton thus told on: 'We smothered
The most replenished sweet work of nature,
That from the prime creation e'er she framed.'
Thus both are gone with conscience and remorse; 20
They could not speak; and so I left them both,
To bring this tidings to the bloody king.
And here he comes.

Enter KING RICHARD III

All health, my sovereign lord.

King Richard III. Kind Tyrrel, am I happy in thy news?

Tyrrel. If to have done the thing you gave in charge
Beget your happiness, be happy then
For it is done.

King Richard III. But didst thou see them dead?

Tyrrel. I did, my lord.

30

King Richard III. And buried, gentle Tyrrel?

Tyrrel. The chaplain of the Tower hath buried them,
But where, to say the truth, I do not know.

King Richard III. Come to me, Tyrrel, soon at
after-supper,
When thou shalt tell the process of their death.
Meantime, but think how I may do the good
And be inheritor of thy desire.
Farewell till then.

Tyrrel. I humbly take my leave.

Exit TYRREL

King Richard III. The son of Clarence have I pent up close;
His daughter meanly have I match'd in marriage;
The sons of Edward sleep in Abraham's bosom,
And Anne my wife hath bid the world good night.
Now, for I know the Breton Richmond aims
At young Elizabeth, my brother's daughter,
And, by that knot, looks proudly o'er the crown,
To her I go, a jolly thriving wooer.

40

Enter CATESBY

Catesby. My lord!

King Richard III. Good news or bad, that thou
comest in so bluntly?

Catesby. Bad news, my lord: Ely is fled to Richmond;
 And Buckingham, back'd with the hardy Welshmen, 50
 Is in the field, and still his power increaseth.

King Richard III. Ely with Richmond troubles me more near
 Than Buckingham and his rash-levied army.
 Come, I have heard that fearful commenting
 Is leaden servitor to dull delay;
 Delay leads impotent and snail-paced beggary;
 Then fiery expedition be my wing,
 Jove's Mercury, and herald for a king!
 Go, muster men: my counsel is my shield;
 We must be brief when traitors brave the field. 60

Exeunt

SCENE IV. Before the palace.

Enter QUEEN MARGARET

Queen Margaret. So, now prosperity begins to mellow
 And drop into the rotten mouth of death.
 Here in these confines slily have I lurk'd,
 To watch the waning of mine adversaries.
 A dire induction am I witness to,
 And will to France, hoping the consequence
 Will prove as bitter, black, and tragical.
 Withdraw thee, wretched Margaret: who comes here?

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH and the DUCHESS of YORK

Queen Elizabeth. Ah, my young princes!
 ah, my tender babes!

My unblown flowers, new-appearing sweets! 10
 If yet your gentle souls fly in the air
 And be not fix'd in doom perpetual,
 Hover about me with your airy wings
 And hear your mother's lamentation!

Queen Margaret. *[Aside]*

Hover about her; say, that right for right
 Hath dimm'd your infant morn to aged night.

Duchess of York. So many miseries have crazed
 my voice,

That my woe-wearied tongue is mute and dumb,
 Edward Plantagenet, why art thou dead?

Queen Margaret. *[Aside]*

Plantagenet doth quit Plantagenet. 20
 Edward for Edward pays a dying debt.

Queen Elizabeth. Wilt thou, O God, fly from such
 gentle lambs,
 And throw them in the entrails of the wolf?
 When didst thou sleep when such a deed was done?

Queen Margaret. *[Aside]*

When holy Harry died, and my sweet son.

Duchess of York. Blind sight, dead life, poor mortal
 living ghost,

Woe's scene, world's shame, grave's due by life usurp'd,
 Brief abstract and record of tedious days,
 Rest thy unrest on England's lawful earth,

[Sitting down]

Unlawfully made drunk with innocents' blood! 30

Queen Elizabeth. O, that thou wouldst as well
 afford a grave
 As thou canst yield a melancholy seat!
 Then would I hide my bones, not rest them here.
 O, who hath any cause to mourn but I?

[Sitting down by her]

Queen Margaret. If ancient sorrow be most reverend,
 Give mine the benefit of seniory,
 And let my woes frown on the upper hand.
 If sorrow can admit society,

[Sitting down with them]

Tell o'er your woes again by viewing mine:
 I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
 I had a Harry, till a Richard kill'd him:
 Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
 Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard killed him;

40

Duchess of York. I had a Richard too, and thou didst
 kill him;
 I had a Rutland too, thou holp'st to kill him.

Queen Margaret. Thou hadst a Clarence too,
 and Richard kill'd him.
 From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
 A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death:
 That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes,
 To worry lambs and lap their gentle blood,
 That foul defacer of God's handiwork,
 That excellent grand tyrant of the earth,
 That reigns in galled eyes of weeping souls,
 Thy womb let loose, to chase us to our graves.
 O upright, just, and true-disposing God,

50

How do I thank thee, that this carnal cur
Preys on the issue of his mother's body,
And makes her pew-fellow with others' moan!

Duchess of York. O Harry's wife, triumph not in my woes!
God witness with me, I have wept for thine. 60

Queen Margaret. Bear with me; I am hungry for revenge,
And now I cloy me with beholding it.
Thy Edward he is dead, that stabb'd my Edward:
Thy other Edward dead, to quit my Edward;
Young York he is but boot, because both they
Match not the high perfection of my loss:
Thy Clarence he is dead that kill'd my Edward;
And the beholders of this tragic play,
The adulterate Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey,
Untimely smother'd in their dusky graves. 70
Richard yet lives, hell's black intelligencer,
Only reserved their factor, to buy souls
And send them thither: but at hand, at hand,
Ensues his piteous and unpitied end:
Earth gapes, hell burns, fiends roar, saints pray.
To have him suddenly convey'd away.
Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I pray,
That I may live to say, The dog is dead!

Queen Elizabeth. O, thou didst prophesy the time would come
That I should wish for thee to help me curse 80
That bottled spider, that foul bunch-back'd toad!

Queen Margaret. I call'd thee then vain flourish of my fortune;
I call'd thee then poor shadow, painted queen;
The presentation of but what I was;
The flattering index of a direful pageant;
One heaved a-high, to be hurl'd down below;

A mother only mock'd with two sweet babes;
 A dream of what thou wert, a breath, a bubble,
 A sign of dignity, a garish flag,
 To be the aim of every dangerous shot,
 A queen in jest, only to fill the scene. 90
 Where is thy husband now? where be thy brothers?
 Where are thy children? wherein dost thou, joy?
 Who sues to thee and cries 'God save the queen'?
 Where be the bending peers that flatter'd thee?
 Where be the thronging troops that follow'd thee?
 Decline all this, and see what now thou art:
 For happy wife, a most distressed widow;
 For joyful mother, one that wails the name;
 For queen, a very caitiff crown'd with care;
 For one being sued to, one that humbly sues; 100
 For one that scorn'd at me, now scorn'd of me;
 For one being fear'd of all, now fearing one;
 For one commanding all, obey'd of none.
 Thus hath the course of justice wheel'd about,
 And left thee but a very prey to time;
 Having no more but thought of what thou wert,
 To torture thee the more, being what thou art.
 Thou didst usurp my place, and dost thou not
 Usurp the just proportion of my sorrow?
 Now thy proud neck bears half my burthen'd yoke; 110
 From which even here I slip my weary neck,
 And leave the burthen of it all on thee.
 Farewell, York's wife, and queen of sad mischance:
 These English woes will make me smile in France.

Queen Elizabeth. O thou well skill'd in curses, stay awhile,
 And teach me how to curse mine enemies!

Queen Margaret. Forbear to sleep the nights,
 and fast the days;

Compare dead happiness with living woe;
Think that thy babes were fairer than they were,
And he that slew them fouler than he is: 120
Bettering thy loss makes the bad causer worse:
Revolving this will teach thee how to curse.

Queen Elizabeth. My words are dull; O, quicken them
with thine!

Queen Margaret. Thy woes will make them
sharp and pierce like mine.

Exit

Duchess of York. Why should calamity be full of words?

Queen Elizabeth. Windy attorneys to their client woes,
Airy succeeders of intestate joys,
Poor breathing orators of miseries!
Let them have scope: though what they do impart
Help not all, yet do they ease the heart. 130

Duchess of York. If so, then be not tongue-tied, go with me
And in the breath of bitter words let's smother
My damned son, which thy two sweet sons smother'd.
I hear his drum: be copious in exclams.

Enter KING RICHARD III, marching, with drums and trumpets

King Richard III. Who intercepts my expedition?

Duchess of York. O, she that might have intercepted thee,
By strangling thee in her accursed womb
From all the slaughters, wretch, that thou hast done!

Queen Elizabeth. Hidest thou that forehead with
a golden crown,
Where should be graven, if that right were right, 140
The slaughter of the prince that owed that crown,
And the dire death of my two sons and brothers?
Tell me, thou villain slave, where are my children?

Duchess of York. Thou toad, thou toad,
where is thy brother Clarence?
And little Ned Plantagenet, his son?

Queen Elizabeth. Where is kind Hastings, Rivers,
Vaughan, Grey?

King Richard III. A flourish, trumpets! strike alarum, drums!
Let not the heavens hear these tell-tale women
Rail on the Lord's anointed: strike, I say!

Flourish. Alarums

Either be patient, and entreat me fair, 150
Or with the clamorous report of war
Thus will I drown your exclamations.

Duchess of York. Art thou my son?

King Richard III. Ay, I thank God, my father, and
yourself.

Duchess of York. Then patiently hear my impatience.

King Richard III. Madam, I have a touch of your condition,
Which cannot brook the accent of reproof.

Duchess of York. O, let me speak!

King Richard III. Do then: but I'll not hear.

Duchess of York. I will be mild and gentle in
my speech.

160

King Richard III. And brief, good mother;
for I am in haste.

Duchess of York. Art thou so hasty? I have stay'd for thee,
God knows, in anguish, pain and agony.

King Richard III. And came I not at last to comfort you?

Duchess of York. No, by the holy rood, thou know'st it well,
Thou camest on earth to make the earth my hell.
A grievous burthen was thy birth to me;
Tetchy and wayward was thy infancy;
Thy school-days frightful, desperate, wild, and furious,
Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous, 170
Thy age confirm'd, proud, subdued, bloody, treacherous,
More mild, but yet more harmful, kind in hatred:
What comfortable hour canst thou name,
That ever graced me in thy company?

King Richard III. Faith, none, but Humphrey Hour,
that call'd your Grace
To breakfast once forth of my company.
If I be so disgracious in your sight,
Let me march on, and not offend your Grace. 180
Strike the drum.

Duchess of York. I prithee, hear me speak.

King Richard III. You speak too bitterly.

Duchess of York. Hear me a word;
For I shall never speak to thee again.

King Richard III. So.

Duchess of York. Either thou wilt die, by God's just ordinance,
 Ere from this war thou turn a conqueror,
 Or I with grief and extreme age shall perish
 And never look upon thy face again. 190
 Therefore take with thee my most heavy curse;
 Which, in the day of battle, tire thee more
 Than all the complete armor that thou wear'st!
 My prayers on the adverse party fight;
 And there the little souls of Edward's children
 Whisper the spirits of thine enemies
 And promise them success and victory.
 Bloody thou art, bloody will be thy end;
 Shame serves thy life and doth thy death attend.

Exit

Queen Elizabeth. Though far more cause, yet much less
 spirit to curse 200
 Abides in me; I say amen to all.

King Richard III. Stay, madam; I must speak a word
 with you.

Queen Elizabeth. I have no more sons of the
 royal blood
 For thee to murder: for my daughters, Richard,
 They shall be praying nuns, not weeping queens;
 And therefore level not to hit their lives.

King Richard III. You have a daughter call'd Elizabeth,
 Virtuous and fair, royal and gracious.

Queen Elizabeth. And must she die for this?
 O, let her live,

And I'll corrupt her manners, stain her beauty;
Slander myself as false to Edward's bed;
Throw over her the veil of infamy:
So she may live unscarr'd of bleeding slaughter,
I will confess she was not Edward's daughter. 210

King Richard III. Wrong not her birth, she is of
royal blood.

Queen Elizabeth. To save her life, I'll say she is not so.

King Richard III. Her life is only safest in her birth.

Queen Elizabeth. And only in that safety died
her brothers.

King Richard III. Lo, at their births good stars
were opposite.

Queen Elizabeth. No, to their lives bad friends
were contrary. 220

King Richard III. All unavoided is the doom of destiny.

Queen Elizabeth. True, when avoided grace
makes destiny:
My babes were destined to a fairer death,
If grace had bless'd thee with a fairer life.

King Richard III. You speak as if that I had
slain my cousins.

Queen Elizabeth. Cousins, indeed; and by their uncle cozen'd
Of comfort, kingdom, kindred, freedom, life.
Whose hand soever lanced their tender hearts,
Thy head, all indirectly, gave direction:

No doubt the murderous knife was dull and blunt 230
 Till it was whetted on thy stone-hard heart
 To revel in the entrails of my lambs.
 But that still use of grief makes wild grief tame,
 My tongue should to thy ears not name my boys
 Till that my nails were anchor'd in thine eyes;
 And I, in such a desperate bay of death,
 Like a poor bark, of sails and tackling reft,
 Rush all to pieces on thy rocky bosom.

King Richard III. Madam, so thrive I in my enterprise
 And dangerous success of bloody wars, 240
 As I intend more good to you and yours,
 Than ever you or yours were by me wrong'd!

Queen Elizabeth. What good is cover'd with the
 face of heaven,
 To be discover'd, that can do me good?

King Richard III. The advancement of your children,
 gentle lady.

Queen Elizabeth. Up to some scaffold, there to lose
 their heads?

King Richard III. No, to the dignity and height
 of honour
 The high imperial type of this earth's glory.

Queen Elizabeth. Flatter my sorrows with report of it;
 Tell me what state, what dignity, what honor, 250
 Canst thou demise to any child of mine?

King Richard III. Even all I have; yea, and myself and all,
 Will I withal endow a child of thine;
 So in the Lethe of thy angry soul

Thou drown the sad remembrance of those wrongs
Which thou supposest I have done to thee.

Queen Elizabeth. Be brief, lest that the process
of thy kindness
Last longer telling than thy kindness' date.

King Richard III. Then know, that from my soul
I love thy daughter.

Queen Elizabeth. My daughter's mother thinks it
with her soul.

260

King Richard III. What do you think?

Queen Elizabeth. That thou dost love my daughter
from thy soul:
So from thy soul's love didst thou love her brothers;
And from my heart's love I do thank thee for it.

King Richard III. Be not so hasty to confound
my meaning:
I mean, that with my soul I love thy daughter,
And mean to make her queen of England.

Queen Elizabeth. Say then, who dost thou mean
shall be her king?

King Richard III. Even he that makes her queen
who should be else?

Queen Elizabeth. What, thou?

270

King Richard III. I, even I: what think you of it,
madam?

Queen Elizabeth. How canst thou woo her?

King Richard III. That would I learn of you,
As one that are best acquainted with her humor.

Queen Elizabeth. And wilt thou learn of me?

King Richard III. Madam, with all my heart.

Queen Elizabeth. Send to her, by the man that
slew her brothers,
A pair of bleeding-hearts; thereon engrave
Edward and York; then haply she will weep:
Therefore present to her—as sometime Margaret 280
Did to thy father, steep'd in Rutland's blood—
A handkerchief; which, say to her, did drain
The purple sap from her sweet brother's body
And bid her dry her weeping eyes therewith.
If this inducement force her not to love,
Send her a story of thy noble acts;
Tell her thou madest away her uncle Clarence,
Her uncle Rivers; yea, and, for her sake,
Madest quick conveyance with her good aunt Anne.

King Richard III. Come, come, you mock me;
this is not the way 290
To win our daughter.

Queen Elizabeth. There is no other way
Unless thou couldst put on some other shape,
And not be Richard that hath done all this.

King Richard III. Say that I did all this for love of her.

Queen Elizabeth. Nay, then indeed she cannot choose
but hate thee,
Having bought love with such a bloody spoil.

King Richard III. Look, what is done cannot be
now amended:

Men shall deal unadvisedly sometimes,
Which after hours give leisure to repent. 300
If I did take the kingdom from your sons,
To make amends, I'll give it to your daughter.
If I have kill'd the issue of your womb,
To quicken your increase, I will beget
Mine issue of your blood upon your daughter
A grandam's name is little less in love
Than is the doting title of a mother;
They are as children but one step below,
Even of your mettle, of your very blood;
Of an one pain, save for a night of groans 310
Endured of her, for whom you bid like sorrow.
Your children were vexation to your youth,
But mine shall be a comfort to your age.
The loss you have is but a son being king,
And by that loss your daughter is made queen.
I cannot make you what amends I would,
Therefore accept such kindness as I can.
Dorset your son, that with a fearful soul
Leads discontented steps in foreign soil,
This fair alliance quickly shall call home 320
To high promotions and great dignity:
The king, that calls your beauteous daughter wife,
Familiarly shall call thy Dorset brother;
Again shall you be mother to a king,
And all the ruins of distressful times
Repair'd with double riches of content.
What! we have many goodly days to see:
The liquid drops of tears that you have shed
Shall come again, transform'd to orient pearl,
Advantaging their loan with interest 330

Of ten times double gain of happiness.
 Go, then my mother, to thy daughter go
 Make bold her bashful years with your experience;
 Prepare her ears to hear a wooer's tale
 Put in her tender heart the aspiring flame
 Of golden sovereignty; acquaint the princess
 With the sweet silent hours of marriage joys.
 And when this arm of mine hath chastised
 The petty rebel, dull-brain'd Buckingham,
 Bound with triumphant garlands will I come 340
 And lead thy daughter to a conqueror's bed;
 To whom I will retail my conquest won,
 And she shall be sole victress, Caesar's Caesar.

Queen Elizabeth. What were I best to say?
 her father's brother
 Would be her lord? or shall I say, her uncle?
 Or, he that slew her brothers and her uncles?
 Under what title shall I woo for thee,
 That God, the law, my honour, and her love
 Can make seem pleasing to her tender years?

King Richard III. Infer fair England's peace by
 this alliance. 350

Queen Elizabeth. Which she shall purchase with still
 lasting war.

King Richard III. Say that the king, which may
 command, entreats.

Queen Elizabeth. That at her hands which the king's
 King forbids.

King Richard III. Say, she shall be a high and
 mighty queen.

Queen Elizabeth. To wail the tide, as her mother doth.

King Richard III. Say, I will love her everlastingly.

Queen Elizabeth. But how long shall that title
‘ever’ last?

King Richard III. Sweetly in force unto her
fair life’s end.

Queen Elizabeth. But how long fairly shall her
sweet life last?

King Richard III. So long as heaven and nature
lengthens it.

360

Queen Elizabeth. So long as hell and Richard
likes of it.

King Richard III. Say, I, her sovereign, am her
subject love.

Queen Elizabeth. But she, your subject, loathes such sovereignty.

King Richard III. Be eloquent in my behalf to her.

Queen Elizabeth. An honest tale speeds best being
plainly told.

King Richard III. Then in plain terms tell her my
loving tale.

Queen Elizabeth. Plain and not honest is too harsh
a style.

King Richard III. Your reasons are too shallow and
too quick.

Queen Elizabeth. O no, my reasons are too
 deep and dead;
 Too deep and dead, poor infants, in their grave. 370

King Richard III. Harp not on that string, madam;
 that is past.

Queen Elizabeth. Harp on it still shall I till
 heart-strings break.

King Richard III. Now, by my George, my garter,
 and my crown—

Queen Elizabeth. Profaned, dishonor'd, and the
 third usurp'd.

King Richard III. I swear—

Queen Elizabeth. By nothing; for this is no oath:
 The George, profaned, hath lost his holy honor;
 The garter, blemish'd, pawn'd his knightly virtue;
 The crown, usurp'd, disgraced his kingly glory.
 If something thou wilt swear to be believed, 380
 Swear then by something that thou hast not wrong'd.

King Richard III. Now, by the world—

Queen Elizabeth. 'Tis full of thy foul wrongs.

King Richard III. My father's death—

Queen Elizabeth. Thy life hath that dishonor'd.

King Richard III. Then, by myself—

Queen Elizabeth. Thyself thyself misusest.

King Richard III. Why then, by God—

Queen Elizabeth. God's wrong is most of all.

If thou hadst fear'd to break an oath by Him, 390
 The unity the king thy brother made
 Had not been broken, nor my brother slain:
 If thou hadst fear'd to break an oath by Him,
 The imperial metal, circling now thy brow,
 Had graced the tender temples of my child,
 And both the princes had been breathing here,
 Which now, two tender playfellows to dust,
 Thy broken faith hath made a prey for worms.
 What canst thou swear by now?

King Richard III. The time to come. 400

Queen Elizabeth. That thou hast wronged in the
 time o'erpast;

For I myself have many tears to wash
 Hereafter time, for time past wrong'd by thee.
 The children live, whose parents thou hast slaughter'd,
 Ungovern'd youth, to wail it in their age;
 The parents live, whose children thou hast butcher'd,
 Old wither'd plants, to wail it with their age.
 Swear not by time to come; for that thou hast
 Misused ere used, by time misused o'erpast. 410

King Richard III. As I intend to prosper and repent,

So thrive I in my dangerous attempt
 Of hostile arms! myself myself confound!
 Heaven and fortune bar me happy hours!
 Day, yield me not thy light; nor, night, thy rest!
 Be opposite all planets of good luck
 To my proceedings, if, with pure heart's love,
 Immaculate devotion, holy thoughts,
 I tender not thy beauteous princely daughter!

In her consists my happiness and thine; 420
 Without her, follows to this land and me,
 To thee, herself, and many a Christian soul,
 Death, desolation, ruin, and decay:
 It cannot be avoided but by this;
 It will not be avoided but by this.
 Therefore, good mother—I must call you so—
 Be the attorney of my love to her:
 Plead what I will be, not what I have been;
 Not my deserts, but what I will deserve:
 Urge the necessity and state of times, 430
 And be not peevish-fond in great designs.

Queen Elizabeth. Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?

King Richard III. Ay, if the devil tempt thee to do good.

Queen Elizabeth. Shall I forget myself to be myself?

King Richard III. Ay, if yourself's remembrance
 wrong yourself.

Queen Elizabeth. But thou didst kill my children.

King Richard III. But in your daughter's womb
 I bury them:
 Where in that nest of spicery they shall breed
 Selves of themselves, to your recomforture.

Queen Elizabeth. Shall I go win my daughter
 to thy will? 440

King Richard III. And be a happy mother by the deed.

Queen Elizabeth. I go. Write to me very shortly.
 And you shall understand from me her mind.

King Richard III. Bear her my true love's kiss;
and so, farewell.

Exit QUEEN ELIZABETH

Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman!

Enter RATCLIFF, CATESBY following

How now! what news?

Ratcliff. My gracious sovereign, on the western coast
Rideth a puissant navy; to the shore
Throng many doubtful hollow-hearted friends,
Unarm'd, and unresolved to beat them back: 450
'Tis thought that Richmond is their admiral;
And there they hull, expecting but the aid
Of Buckingham to welcome them ashore.

King Richard III. Some light-foot friend post to the
Duke of Norfolk:
Ratcliff, thyself, or Catesby; where is he?

Catesby. Here, my lord.

King Richard III. Fly to the duke.

[To RATCLIFF]

Post thou to Salisbury
When thou comest thither—

[To CATESBY]

Dull, unmindful villain, 460
Why stand'st thou still, and go'st not to the duke?

Catesby. First, mighty sovereign, let me know your mind,
What from your Grace I shall deliver to him.

King Richard III. O, true, good Catesby:
bid him levy straight
The greatest strength and power he can make,
And meet me presently at Salisbury.

Catesby. I go.

Exit

Ratcliff. What is't your Highness' pleasure
I shall do at Salisbury?

King Richard III. Why, what wouldst thou do there
before I go?

470

Ratcliff. Your Highness told me I should post before.

King Richard III. My mind is changed, sir,
my mind is changed.

Enter STANLEY

How now, what news with you?

Stanley. None good, my lord, to please you with
the hearing;
Nor none so bad, but it may well be told.

King Richard III. Hoyday, a riddle! neither good
nor bad!
Why dost thou run so many mile about,
When thou mayst tell thy tale a nearer way?
Once more, what news?

Stanley. Richmond is on the seas.

480

King Richard III. There let him sink, and be the
seas on him!

White-liver'd runagate, what doth he there?

Stanley. I know not, mighty sovereign, but by guess.

King Richard III. Well, sir, as you guess, as you guess?

Stanley. Stirr'd up by Dorset, Buckingham, and Ely,
He makes for England, there to claim the crown.

King Richard III. Is the chair empty? is the sword
unsway'd?

Is the king dead? the empire unpossess'd?

What heir of York is there alive but we?

And who is England's king but great York's heir?

490

Then, tell me, what doth he upon the sea?

Stanley. Unless for that, my liege, I cannot guess.

King Richard III. Unless for that he comes to be
your liege,

You cannot guess wherefore the Welshman comes.

Thou wilt revolt, and fly to him, I fear.

Stanley. No, mighty liege; therefore mistrust me not.

King Richard III. Where is thy power, then,
to beat him back?

Where are thy tenants and thy followers?

Are they not now upon the western shore.

Safe-conducting the rebels from their ships!

500

Stanley. No, my good lord, my friends are in the north.

King Richard III. Cold friends to Richard: what do they
in the north,
When they should serve their sovereign in the west?

Stanley. They have not been commanded,
mighty sovereign:
Please it your Majesty to give me leave,
I'll muster up my friends, and meet your Grace
Where and what time your Majesty shall please.

King Richard III. Ay, ay, thou wouldst be gone to join
with Richmond:
I will not trust you, sir.

Stanley. Most mighty sovereign,
You have no cause to hold my friendship doubtful: 510
I never was nor never will be false.

King Richard III. Well,
Go muster men; but, hear you, leave behind
Your son, George Stanley: look your faith be firm.
Or else his head's assurance is but frail.

Stanley. So deal with him as I prove true to you.

Exit

Enter a MESSENGER

Messenger. My gracious sovereign, now in Devonshire,
As I by friends am well advertised,
Sir Edward Courtney, and the haughty prelate
Bishop of Exeter, his brother there, 520
With many more confederates, are in arms.

Enter another MESSENGER

2nd Messenger. My liege, in Kent the Guildfords
are in arms;
And every hour more competitors
Flock to their aid, and still their power increaseth.

Enter another MESSENGER

3rd Messenger. My lord, the army of the
Duke of Buckingham—

King Richard III. Out on you, owls! nothing but songs
of death?

[He strikes him]

Take that, until thou bring me better news.

3rd Messenger. The news I have to tell your Majesty
Is, that by sudden floods and fall of waters,
Buckingham's army is dispersed and scatter'd; 530
And he himself wander'd away alone,
No man knows whither.

King Richard III. I cry thee mercy:
There is my purse to cure that blow of thine.
Hath any well-advised friend proclaim'd
Reward to him that brings the traitor in?

3rd Messenger. Such proclamation hath been made,
my liege.

Enter another MESSENGER

Fourth Messenger. Sir Thomas Lovell and Lord Marquis Dorset,
'Tis said, my liege, in Yorkshire are in arms.
Yet this good comfort bring I to your Grace: 540

The Breton navy is dispersed by tempest:
 Richmond, in Yorkshire, sent out a boat
 Unto the shore, to ask those on the banks
 If they were his assistants, yea or no;
 Who answer'd him, they came from Buckingham
 Upon his party. He, mistrusting them,
 Hoisted sail and made away for Brittany.

King Richard III. March on, march on, since we are
 up in arms;
 If not to fight with foreign enemies,
 Yet to beat down these rebels here at home.

550

Re-enter CATESBY

Catesby. My liege, the Duke of Buckingham is taken;
 That is the best news. That the Earl of Richmond
 Is with a mighty power landed at Milford,
 Is colder tidings, yet they must be told.

King Richard III. Away towards Salisbury! while we
 reason here,
 A royal battle might be won and lost
 Some one take order Buckingham be brought
 To Salisbury; the rest march on with me.

Flourish. Exeunt.

SCENE V. Lord Derby's house.

*Enter STANLEY, LORD of DERBY and SIR CHRISTOPHER
URSWICK*

Stanley. Sir Christopher, tell Richmond this from me:

That in the sty of this most bloody boar
My son George Stanley is frank'd up in hold:
If I revolt, off goes young George's head;
The fear of that withholds my present aid.
But, tell me, where is princely Richmond now?

Christopher. At Pembroke, or at Harford-west, in Wales.

Stanley. What men of name resort to him?

Christopher. Sir Walter Herbert, a renowned soldier;

Sir Gilbert Talbot, Sir William Stanley; 10
Oxford, redoubted Pembroke, Sir James Blunt,
And Rice ap Thomas with a valiant crew;
And many more of noble fame and worth:
And towards London they do bend their course,
If by the way they be not fought withal.

Stanley. Return unto thy lord; commend me to him:

Tell him the queen hath heartily consented
He shall espouse Elizabeth her daughter.
These letters will resolve him of my mind. Farewell.

Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I. Salisbury. An open place.

Enter BUCKINGHAM, with SHERIFF and halberds, led to execution

Buckingham. Will not King Richard let me speak
with him?

Sheriff. No, my good lord; therefore be patient.

Buckingham. Hastings, and Edward's children, Rivers, Grey,
Holy King Henry, and thy fair son Edward,
Vaughan, and all that have miscarried
By underhand corrupted foul injustice,
If that your moody discontented souls
Do through the clouds behold this present hour,
Even for revenge mock my destruction!
This is All-Souls' day, fellows, is it not? 10

Sheriff. It is, my lord.

Buckingham. Why, then All-Souls' day is my body's doomsday.
This is the day that, in King Edward's time,
I wish't might fall on me, when I was found
False to his children or his wife's allies.
This is the day wherein I wish'd to fall
By the false faith of him I trusted most;
This, this All-Souls' day to my fearful soul
Is the determined respite of my wrongs:
That high All-Seer that I dallied with 20
Hath turn'd my feigned prayer on my head
And given in earnest what I begg'd in jest.
Thus doth he force the swords of wicked men
To turn their own points on their masters' bosoms:

Now Margaret's curse is fallen upon my head;
'When he,' quoth she, 'shall split thy heart with sorrow,
Remember Margaret was a prophetess.'
Come, sirs, convey me to the block of shame;
Wrong hath but wrong, and blame the due of blame.

Exeunt

SCENE II. The camp near Tamworth.

*Enter RICHMOND, OXFORD, CAPTAIN BLUNT, HERBERT,
and others with drum and colors*

Richmond. Fellows in arms, and my most loving friends,
Bruised underneath the yoke of tyranny,
Thus far into the bowels of the land
Have we march'd on without impediment;
And here receive we from our father Stanley
Lines of fair comfort and encouragement.
The wretched, bloody, and usurping boar,
That spoil'd your summer fields and fruitful vines,
Swills your warm blood like wash, and makes his trough
In your embowell'd bosoms—this foul swine
Lies now even in the center of this isle,
Near to the town of Leicester, as we learn.
From Tamworth thither is but one day's march.
In God's name, cheerly on, courageous friends,
To reap the harvest of perpetual peace
By this one bloody trial of sharp war.

10

Oxford. Every man's conscience is a thousand swords,
To fight against that bloody homicide.

Herbert. I doubt not but his friends will fly to us.

Blunt. He hath no friends but who are friends for fear. 20
Which in his greatest need will shrink from him.

Richmond. All for our vantage. Then, in God's name, march:
True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings:
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.

Exeunt

SCENE III. Bosworth Field.

*Enter KING RICHARD III in arms, with NORFOLK, SURREY,
and others.*

King Richard III. Here pitch our tents, even here in
Bosworth field.
My Lord of Surrey, why look you so sad?

Surrey. My heart is ten times lighter than my looks.

King Richard III. My Lord of Norfolk—

Norfolk. Here, most gracious liege.

King Richard III. Norfolk, we must have knocks; ha!
must we not?

Norfolk. We must both give and take, my gracious lord.

King Richard III. Up with my tent there! here will I lie tonight;
But where to-morrow? Well, all's one for that.
Who hath descried the number of the foe? 10

Norfolk. Six or seven thousand is their utmost power.

King Richard III. Why, our battalion trebles that account:

Besides, the king's name is a tower of strength,
Which they upon the adverse party want.
Up with my tent there! Valiant gentlemen,
Let us survey the vantage of the field
Call for some men of sound direction
Let's want no discipline, make no delay,
For, lords, to-morrow is a busy day.

Exeunt

*Enter, on the other side of the field, RICHMOND, CAPTAIN BLUNT,
BRANDON, OXFORD, HERBERT, and others. Some of the soldiers
pitch RICHMOND'S tent.*

Richmond. The weary sun hath made a golden set, 20
And by the bright track of his fiery car,
Gives signal, of a goodly day to-morrow.
Sir William Brandon, you shall bear my standard.
Give me some ink and paper in my tent;
I'll draw the form and model of our battle,
Limit each leader to his several charge,
And part in just proportion our small strength.
My Lord of Oxford, you, Sir William Brandon,
And you, Sir Walter Herbert, stay with me. 30
The Earl of Pembroke keeps his regiment:
Good Captain Blunt, bear my good night to him
And by the second hour in the morning
Desire the Earl to see me in my tent:
Yet one thing more, good Blunt, before thou go'st,
Where is Lord Stanley quarter'd, dost thou know?

Blunt. Unless I have mista'en his colors much,
Which well I am assured I have not done,

His regiment lies half a mile at least
South from the mighty power of the king. 40

Richmond. If without peril it be possible,
Good Captain Blunt, bear my good-night to him,
And give him from me this most needful scroll.

Blunt. Upon my life, my lord, I'll under-take it;
And so, God give you quiet rest to-night!

Richmond. Good night, good Captain Blunt.
Come gentlemen,
Let us consult upon to-morrow's business
In to our tent; the air is raw and cold.

They withdraw into the tent

*Enter, to his tent, KING RICHARD III, NORFOLK, RATCLIFF,
CATESBY, and others.*

King Richard III. What is't o'clock? 50

Catesby. It's supper-time, my lord;
It's nine o'clock.

King Richard III. I will not sup to-night.
Give me some ink and paper.
What, is my beaver easier than it was?
And all my armor laid into my tent?

Catesby. It is, my liege; and all things are in readiness.

King Richard III. Good Norfolk, hie thee to thy charge;
Use careful watch, choose trusty sentinels.

Norfolk. I go, my lord. 60

King Richard III. Stir with the lark to-morrow,
gentle Norfolk.

Norfolk. I warrant you, my lord.

Exit

King Richard III. Catesby!

Catesby. My lord?

King Richard III. Send out a pursuivant at arms
To Stanley's regiment; bid him bring his power
Before sunrising, lest his son George fall
Into the blind cave of eternal night.

Exit CATESBY

Fill me a bowl of wine. Give me a watch.
Saddle white Surrey for the field to-morrow.
Look that my staves be sound, and not too heavy.
Ratcliff!

70

Ratcliff. My lord?

King Richard III. Saw'st thou the melancholy
Lord Northumberland?

Ratcliff. Thomas the Earl of Surrey, and himself,
Much about cock-shut time, from troop to troop
Went through the army, cheering up the soldiers.

King Richard III. So, I am satisfied. Give me a bowl
of wine:
I have not that alacrity of spirit,

Nor cheer of mind, that I was wont to have.
Set it down. Is ink and paper ready?

80

Ratcliff. It is, my lord.

King Richard III. Bid my guard watch; leave me.
Ratcliff, about the mid of night come to my tent
And help to arm me. Leave me, I say.

Exeunt RATCLIFF and the other ATTENDANTS

*Enter STANLEY, EARL of DERBY, to RICHMOND in his tent,
LORDS and others attending*

Stanley. Fortune and victory sit on thy helm!

Richmond. All comfort that the dark night can afford
Be to thy person, noble father-in-law!
Tell me, how fares our loving mother?

Stanley. I, by attorney, bless thee from thy mother
Who prays continually for Richmond's good:
So much for that. The silent hours steal on,
And flaky darkness breaks within the east.
In brief—for so the season bids us be—
Prepare thy battle early in the morning,
And put thy fortune to the arbitrement
Of bloody strokes and mortal-staring war.
I, as I may—that which I would I cannot—
With best advantage will deceive the time,
And aid thee in this doubtful shock of arms:
But on thy side I may not be too forward
Lest, being seen, thy brother, tender George,
Be executed in his father's sight.
Farewell: the leisure and the fearful time

90

100

Cuts off the ceremonious vows of love
 And ample interchange of sweet discourse,
 Which so long sunder'd friends should dwell upon:
 God give us leisure for these rites of love!
 Once more, adieu: be valiant, and speed well!

Richmond. Good lords, conduct him to his regiment: 110
 I'll strive, with troubled thoughts, to take a nap,
 Lest leaden slumber peise me down to-morrow,
 When I should mount with wings of victory:
 Once more, good night, kind lords and gentlemen.

Exeunt all but RICHMOND

O Thou, whose captain I account myself,
 Look on my forces with a gracious eye;
 Put in their hands thy bruising irons of wrath,
 That they may crush down with a heavy fall
 The usurping helmets of our adversaries!
 Make us thy ministers of chastisement, 120
 That we may praise thee in the victory!
 To thee I do commend my watchful soul,
 Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes:
 Sleeping and waking, O, defend me still! [*Sleeps*]

Enter the GHOST of PRINCE EDWARD, son to KING HENRY VI

Ghost of Edward. [*To KING RICHARD III*]

Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!
 Think how thou stab'dst me in my prime of youth
 At Tewksbury. Despair, therefore, and die!

[*To RICHMOND*]

Be cheerful, Richmond; for the wronged souls
 Of butcher'd princes fight in thy behalf.

King Henry's issue, Richmond, comforts thee.

130

Enter the GHOST of KING HENRY VI

Ghost of King Henry VI. [*To KING RICHARD III*]

When I was mortal, my anointed body
By thee was punched full of deadly holes.
Think on the Tower and me: despair, and die!
Harry the Sixth bids thee despair, and die!

[*To RICHMOND*]

Virtuous and holy, be thou conqueror!
Harry, that prophesied thou shouldst be king,
Doth comfort thee in thy sleep. Live, and flourish!

Enter the GHOST of CLARENCE

Ghost of Clarence. [*To KING RICHARD III*]

Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow,
I that was wash'd to death with fulsome wine,
Poor Clarence, by thy guile betrayed to death!
To-morrow in the battle think on me,
And fall thy edgeless sword. Despair, and die!

140

[*To RICHMOND*]

Thou offspring of the house of Lancaster,
The wronged heirs of York do pray for thee.
Good angels guard thy battle! Live, and flourish!

Enter the GHOSTS of RIVERS, GRAY, and VAUGHAN

Ghost of Rivers. [*To KING RICHARD III*]

Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow,
Rivers, that died at Pomfret! Despair, and die!

Ghost of Grey. [*To KING RICHARD III*]

Think upon Grey, and let thy soul despair!

Ghost of Vaughan. [*To KING RICHARD III*]

Think upon Vaughan, and, with guilty fear,

Let fall thy lance. Despair, and die!

150

All. [*To RICHMOND*]

Awake, and think our wrongs in Richard's bosom

Will conquer him! Awake, and win the day!

Enter the GHOST of HASTINGS

Ghost of Hastings. [*To KING RICHARD III*]

Bloody and guilty, guiltily awake,

And in a bloody battle end thy days!

Think on Lord Hastings. Despair, and die!

[*To RICHMOND*]

Quiet untroubled soul, awake, awake!

Arm, fight, and conquer, for fair England's sake!

Enter the GHOSTS of THE TWO YOUNG PRINCES

Ghosts of young Princes. [*To KING RICHARD III*]

Dream on thy cousins smother'd in the Tower:

Let us be lead within thy bosom, Richard,

And weigh thee down to ruin, shame, and death!

Thy nephews' souls bid thee despair and die!

160

[*To RICHMOND*]

Sleep, Richmond, sleep in peace, and wake in joy;

Good angels guard thee from the boar's annoy!

Live, and beget a happy race of kings!

Edward's unhappy sons do bid thee flourish.

Enter the GHOST of ANNE

Ghost of Anne. [*To KING RICHARD III*]

Richard, thy wife, that wretched Anne thy wife,
That never slept a quiet hour with thee,
Now fills thy sleep with perturbations.
To-morrow in the battle think on me,
And fall thy edgeless sword. Despair, and die! 170

[*To RICHMOND*]

Thou quiet soul, sleep thou a quiet sleep;
Dream of success and happy victory!
Thy adversary's wife doth pray for thee.

Enter the GHOST of BUCKINGHAM

Ghost of Buckingham. [*To KING RICHARD III*]

The last was I that helped thee to the crown;
The last was I that felt thy tyranny:
O, in the battle think on Buckingham,
And die in terror of thy guiltiness!
Dream on, dream on, of bloody deeds and death.
Fainting, despair; despairing, yield thy breath!

[*To RICHMOND*]

I died for hope ere I could lend thee aid: 180
But cheer thy heart, and be thou not dismay'd:
God and good angels fight on Richmond's side;
And Richard falls in height of all his pride.

The GHOSTS vanish

KING RICHARD III starts out of his dream

King Richard III. Give me another horse:
bind up my wounds.

Have mercy, Jesu!—Soft! I did but dream.
 O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
 The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.
 Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
 What do I fear? myself? there's none else by:
 Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I. 190
 Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:
 Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why:
 Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
 Alack. I love myself. Wherefore? for any good
 That I myself have done unto myself?
 O, no! alas, I rather hate myself
 For hateful deeds committed by myself!
 I am a villain: yet I lie. I am not.
 Fool, of thyself speak well: fool, do not flatter.
 My conscience hath a thousand several tongues, 200
 And every tongue brings in a several tale,
 And every tale condemns me for a villain.
 Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree
 Murder, stem murder, in the direst degree;
 All several sins, all used in each degree,
 Throng to the bar, crying all, Guilty! guilty!
 I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;
 And if I die, no soul shall pity me:
 Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself
 Find in myself no pity to myself? 210
 Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
 Came to my tent; and everyone did threat
 To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard.

Enter RATCLIFF

Ratcliff. My lord!

King Richard III. 'Zounds! who is there?

Ratcliff. Ratcliff, my lord; 'tis I. The early village-cock
Hath twice done salutation to the morn;
Your friends are up, and buckle on their armor.

King Richard III. O Ratcliff, I have dream'd a fearful dream!
What thinkest thou, will our friends prove all true? 220

Ratcliff. No doubt, my lord.

King Richard III. O Ratcliff, I fear, I fear—

Ratcliff. Nay, good my lord, be not afraid of shadows.

King Richard III. By the apostle Paul, shadows to-night
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers,
Armed in proof and led by shallow Richmond.
It is not yet near day. Come, go with me;
Under our tents I'll play the eaves-dropper,
To see if any mean to shrink from me. 230

Exeunt

Enter the LORDS to RICHMOND, sitting in his tent

Lords. Good morrow, Richmond!

Richmond. Cry mercy, lords and watchful gentlemen,
That you have ta'en a tardy sluggard here.

Lords. How have you slept, my lord?

Richmond. The sweetest sleep, and fairest-boding dreams
That ever enter'd in a drowsy head,

Have I since your departure had, my lords.
 Methought their souls, whose bodies Richard murder'd,
 Came to my tent, and cried on victory:
 I promise you, my soul is very jocund 240
 In the remembrance of so fair a dream.
 How far into the morning is it, lords?

Lords. Upon the stroke of four.

Richmond. Why, then 'tis time to arm and give direction.

[His oration to his SOLDIERS]

More than I have said, loving countrymen,
 The leisure and enforcement of the time
 Forbids to dwell upon: yet remember this,
 God and our good cause fight upon our side;
 The prayers of holy saints and wronged souls,
 Like high-rear'd bulwarks, stand before our faces; 250
 Richard except, those whom we fight against
 Had rather have us win than him they follow:
 For what is he they follow? Truly, gentlemen,
 A bloody tyrant and a homicide;
 One raised in blood, and one in blood establish'd;
 One that made means to come by what he hath,
 And slaughter'd those that were the means to help him;
 Abase foul stone, made precious by the foil
 Of England's chair, where he is falsely set;
 One that hath ever been God's enemy: 260
 Then, if you fight against God's enemy,
 God will in justice ward you as his soldiers;
 If you do sweat to put a tyrant down,
 You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain;
 If you do fight against your country's foes,
 Your country's fat shall pay your pains the hire;

If you do fight in safeguard of your wives,
 Your wives shall welcome home the conquerors;
 If you do free your children from the sword,
 Your children's children quit it in your age. 270
 Then, in the name of God and all these rights,
 Advance your standards, draw your willing swords.
 For me, the ransom of my bold attempt
 Shall be this cold corpse on the earth's cold face;
 But if I thrive, the gain of my attempt
 The least of you shall share his part thereof.
 Sound drums and trumpets boldly and cheerfully;
 God and Saint George! Richmond and victory!

Exeunt

*Re-enter KING RICHARD, RATCLIFF, ATTENDANTS and
 FORCES*

King Richard III. What said Northumberland as
 touching Richmond?

Ratcliff. That he was never trained up in arms. 280

King Richard III. He said the truth: and what said
 Surrey then?

Ratcliff. He smiled and said 'The better for our purpose.'

King Richard III. He was in the right; and so indeed it is.

Clock striketh

Ten the clock there. Give me a calendar.
 Who saw the sun to-day?

Ratcliff. Not I, my lord.

King Richard III. Then he disdains to shine;
 for by the book
 He should have braved the east an hour ago.
 A black day will it be to somebody. Ratcliff!

Ratcliff. My lord?

290

King Richard III. The sun will not be seen to-day;
 The sky doth frown and lour upon our army.
 I would these dewy tears were from the ground.
 Not shine to-day! Why, what is that to me
 More than to Richmond? For the selfsame heaven
 That frowns on me looks sadly upon him.

Enter NORFOLK

Norfolk. Arm, arm, my lord; the foe vaunts in the field.

King Richard III. Come, bustle, bustle;
 caparison my horse.
 Call up Lord Stanley, bid him bring his power:
 I will lead forth my soldiers to the plain,
 And thus my battle shall be ordered:
 My foreward shall be drawn out all in length,
 Consisting equally of horse and foot;
 Our archers shall be placed in the midst
 John Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Earl of Surrey,
 Shall have the leading of this foot and horse.
 They thus directed, we will follow
 In the main battle, whose puissance on either side
 Shall be well winged with our chiefest horse.
 This, and Saint George to boot! What think'st
 thou, Norfolk?

300

310

Norfolk. A good direction, warlike sovereign.
 This found I on my tent this morning. [*He sheweth him a paper*]

King Richard III. [*Reads*]

'Jockey of Norfolk, be not too bold,
For Dickon thy master is bought and sold.'

A thing devised by the enemy.
Go, gentleman, every man unto his charge
Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls:
Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devised at first to keep the strong in awe:
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law. 320
March on, join bravely, let us to't pell-mell;
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.

[*His oration to his ARMY*]

What shall I say more than I have inferr'd?
Remember whom you are to cope withal;
A sort of vagabonds, rascals, and runaways,
A scum of Bretons, and base lackey peasants,
Whom their o'er-cloyed country vomits forth
To desperate ventures and assured destruction.
You sleeping safe, they bring to you unrest;
You having lands, and blest with beauteous wives, 340
They would restrain the one, distain the other.
And who doth lead them but a paltry fellow,
Long kept in Bretagne at our mother's cost?
A milk-sop, one that never in his life
Felt so much cold as over shoes in snow?
Let's whip these stragglers o'er the seas again;
Lash hence these overweening rags of France,
These famish'd beggars, weary of their lives;
Who, but for dreaming on this fond exploit,
For want of means, poor rats, had hang'd themselves: 350
If we be conquer'd, let men conquer us,
And not these bastard Bretons; whom our fathers

Have in their own land beaten, bobb'd, and thump'd,
And in record, left them the heirs of shame.
Shall these enjoy our lands? lie with our wives?
Ravish our daughters?

Drum afar off

Hark! I hear their drum.
Fight, gentlemen of England! Fight, bold yoemen!
Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head!
Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in blood; 360
Amaze the welkin with your broken staves!

Enter a MESSENGER

What says Lord Stanley? Will he bring his power?

Messenger. My lord, he doth deny to come.

King Richard III. Off with his son George's head!

Norfolk. My lord, the enemy is past the marsh
After the battle let George Stanley die.

King Richard III. A thousand hearts are great within my bosom:
Advance our standards, set upon our foes
Our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George,
Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons! 370
Upon them! Victory sits on our helms.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. Another part of the field.

Alarum: excursions. Enter NORFOLK and forces fighting; to him CATESBY.

Catesby. Rescue, my Lord of Norfolk, rescue, rescue!
The king enacts more wonders than a man,
Daring an opposite to every danger:
His horse is slain, and all on foot he fights,
Seeking for Richmond in the throat of death.
Rescue, fair lord, or else the day is lost!

Alarum. Enter KING RICHARD III

King Richard III. A horse! a horse! my kingdom
for a horse!

Catesby. Withdraw, my lord; I'll help you to a horse.

King Richard III. Slave, I have set my life upon a cast,
And I will stand the hazard of the die: 10
I think there be six Richmonds in the field;
Five have I slain to-day instead of him.
A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!

Exeunt

SCENE V. Another part of the field.

*Alarum. Enter KING RICHARD III and RICHMOND; they fight.
KING RICHARD III is slain. Retreat and flourish.*

*Re-enter RICHMOND, STANLEY, EARL of DERBY, bearing the
crown, with diverse other LORDS.*

Richmond. God and your arms be praised, victorious friends,
The day is ours, the bloody dog is dead.

Stanley. Courageous Richmond, well hast thou acquit thee.

Lo, here, this long-usurped royalty
From the dead temples of this bloody wretch
Have I pluck'd off, to grace thy brows withal:
Wear it, enjoy it, and make much of it.

Richmond. Great God of heaven, say Amen to all!

But, tell me, is young George Stanley living?

Stanley. He is, my lord, and safe in Leicester town;

10

Whither, if it please you, we may now withdraw us.

Richmond. What men of name are slain on either side?

Stanley. John Duke of Norfolk, Walter Lord Ferrers,

Sir Robert Brakenbury, and Sir William Brandon.

Richmond. Inter their bodies as becomes their births:

Proclaim a pardon to the soldiers fled
That in submission will return to us:
And then, as we have ta'en the sacrament,
We will unite the white rose and the red:
Smile heaven upon this fair conjunction,
That long have frown'd upon their enmity!
What traitor hears me, and says not amen?
England hath long been mad, and scarr'd herself;
The brother blindly shed the brother's blood,
The father rashly slaughter'd his own son,
The son, compell'd, been butcher to the sire:
All this divided York and Lancaster,
Divided in their dire division,
O, now, let Richmond and Elizabeth,
The true succeeders of each royal house,
By God's fair ordinance conjoin together!
And let their heirs, God, if thy will be so,

20

30

Enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace,
 With smiling plenty and fair prosperous days!
 Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord,
 That would reduce these bloody days again,
 And make poor England weep in streams of blood!
 Let them not live to taste this land's increase
 That would with treason wound this fair land's peace!
 Now civil wounds are stopp'd, peace lives again: 40
 That she may long live here, God say amen!

Exeunt

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

William Shakespeare



CHARACTERS

Portia

an heiress of Belmont

Nerissa

her waiting gentlewoman

Balthazar & Stephano

servants to Portia

Prince of Morocco &

Prince of Arragon

suitors to Portia

Antonio

a merchant of Venice

Bassanio

a Venetian gentleman, suitor to Portia

Clarence's daughter

Solanio, Salarino, Gratiano &

Lorenzo

companions of Antonio and Bassanio

Leonardo

servant to Bassanio

Shylock

a Jewish moneylender in Venice

Jessica

Shylock's daughter

Tubal

another Jewish moneylender

Launcelot Gobbo

servant to Shylock and later to

Bassanio

Old Gobbo

Lancelet's father

Salerio

a messenger from Venice

Jailer

Duke of Venice

**Various Servants, Attendants,
Messengers & Musicians**

ACT I

SCENE I. Venice. A street.

Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SOLANIO

Antonio. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:

It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.

Salarino. Your mind is tossing on the ocean;

There where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood, 10
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

Solanio. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,

The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,
Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;
And every object that might make me fear 20
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
Would make me sad.

Salarino. My wind, cooling my broth,

Would blow me to an ague when I thought
What harm a wind too great at sea might do.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,

But I should think of shallows and of flats,
 And see my wealthy *Andrew* dock'd in sand,
 Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
 To kiss her burial. Should I go to church 30
 And see the holy edifice of stone,
 And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
 Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
 Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
 Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
 And, in a word, but even now worth this,
 And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
 To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
 That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
 But tell not me; I know, Antonio 40
 Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Antonio. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
 My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
 Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
 Upon the fortune of this present year:
 Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salarino. Why, then you are in love.

Antonio. Fie, fie!

Salarino. Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
 Because you are not merry: and 'twere as easy 50
 For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
 Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
 Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
 Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
 And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,
 And other of such vinegar aspect
 That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
 Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO

Solanio. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
 Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well: 60
 We leave you now with better company.

Salarino. I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,
 If worthier friends had not prevented me.

Antonio. Your worth is very dear in my regard.
 I take it your own business calls on you
 And you embrace the occasion to depart.

Salarino. Good morrow, my good lords.

Bassanio. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh?
 say, when?
 You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?

Salarino. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours. 70

Exeunt SALARINO and SOLANIO

Lorenzo. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio
 We two will leave you: but at dinner-time,
 I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.

Bassanio. I will not fail you.

Gratiano. You look not well, Signior Antonio;
 You have too much respect upon the world:
 They lose it that do buy it with much care:
 Believe me, you are marvelously changed.

Antonio. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano—
 A stage where every man must play a part, 80
 And mine a sad one.

Gratiano. Let me play the fool:

With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
 And let my liver rather heat with wine
 Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
 Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
 Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
 Sleep when he wakes and creep into the jaundice
 By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio—
 I love thee, and it is my love that speaks— 90
 There are a sort of men whose visages
 Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
 And do a willful stillness entertain
 With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
 Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
 As who should say 'I am Sir Oracle,
 And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!'
 O my Antonio, I do know of these
 That therefore only are reputed wise
 For saying nothing when, I am very sure, 100
 If they should speak, would almost damn those ears,
 Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.
 I'll tell thee more of this another time:
 But fish not, with this melancholy bait
 For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.
 Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:
 I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

Lorenzo. Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time:

I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
 For Gratiano never lets me speak. 110

Gratiano. Well, keep me company but two years more,
 Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

Antonio. Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear.

Gratiano. Thanks, i' faith, for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried and a maid not vendible.

Exeunt GRATIANO and LORENZO

Antonio. Is that anything now?

Bassanio. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more
than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains
of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff:
you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when 120
you have them, they are not worth the search.

Antonio. Well, tell me now what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promised to tell me of?

Bassanio. 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate
By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance:
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged
From such a noble rate; but my chief care 130
Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time, something too prodigal,
Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love,
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

Antonio. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honor, be assured 140
My purse, my person, my extremest means
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.

Bassanio. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
 I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
 The self-same way with more advised watch,
 To find the other forth, and by adventuring both
 I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof
 Because what follows is pure innocence.
 I owe you much, and, like a willful youth,
 That which I owe is lost; but if you please 150
 To shoot another arrow that self way
 Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
 As I will watch the aim, or to find both
 Or bring your latter hazard back again
 And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Antonio. You know me well, and herein spend but time
 To wind about my love with circumstance;
 And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
 In making question of my uttermost
 Than if you had made waste of all I have: 160
 Then do but say to me what I should do
 That in your knowledge may by me be done,
 And I am pressed unto it: therefore, speak.

Bassanio. In Belmont is a lady richly left,
 And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,
 Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes
 I did receive fair speechless messages.
 Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
 To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:
 Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth, 170
 For the four winds blow in from every coast
 Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
 Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
 Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
 And many Jasons come in quest of her.

O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate!

Antonio. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea; 180
Neither have I money nor commodity
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;
Try what my credit can in Venice do:
That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is, and I no question make
To have it of my trust or for my sake.

Exeunt

SCENE II: Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA

Portia. By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of
this great world.

Nerissa. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries
were in the same abundance as your good fortunes
are: and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that
surfeit with too much as they that starve with
nothing. It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be
seated in the mean. Superfluity comes sooner by
white hairs, but competency lives longer.

Portia. Good sentences and well pronounced.

Nerissa. They would be better, if well followed. 10

Portia. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions. I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose!' I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none? 20

Nerissa. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations: therefore the lottery that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come? 30

Portia. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description level at my affection.

Nerissa. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Portia. Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe 40

him himself. I am much afeard my lady his mother
played false with a smith.

Nerissa. Then there is the County Palatine.

Portia. He doth nothing but frown, as who should say
‘If you will not have me, choose.’ He hears merry
tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping
philosopher when he grows old, being so full of
unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be
married to a death’s-head with a bone in his mouth 50
than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

Nerissa. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

Portia. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man.
In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker:
but, he! why, he hath a horse better than the
Neapolitan’s, a better bad habit of frowning than
the Count Palatine. He is every man in no man.
If a throstle sing, he falls straight a-capering.
He will fence with his own shadow. If I should
marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. 60
If he would despise me I would forgive him,
for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

Nerissa. What say you, then, to Falconbridge,
the young baron of England?

Portia. You know I say nothing to him, for he
understands not me, nor I him. He hath neither
Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into
the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth
in the English. He is a proper man’s picture, but alas,
who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly

he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, 70
his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany,
and his behavior everywhere.

Nerissa. What think you of the Scottish lord,
his neighbor?

Portia. That he hath a neighborly charity in him,
for he borrowed a box of the ear of the
Englishman and swore he would pay him again
when he was able. I think the Frenchman became
his surety and sealed under for another.

Nerissa. How like you the young German, the Duke
of Saxony's nephew?

Portia. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, 80
and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk.
When he is best, he is a little worse than a man,
and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast;
and the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall
make shift to go without him.

Nerissa. If he should offer to choose, and choose
the right casket, you should refuse to perform
your father's will if you should refuse to accept him.

Portia. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, 90
set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary
casket, for if the devil be within and that temptation
without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything,
Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.

Nerissa. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords:
they have acquainted me with their determinations;
which is, indeed, to return to their home and to

trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets.

Portia. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, and I pray God grant them a fair departure. 100

Nerissa. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

Portia. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, he was so called.

Nerissa. True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady. 110

Portia. I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a SERVING-MAN

How now! what news?

Servant. The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave: and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the prince his master will be here to-night.

Portia. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, 120

I should be glad of his approach. If he have the
condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil,
I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.
Come, Nerissa.

[To SERVINGMAN]

Sirrah, go before. Whiles we shut
the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.

Exeunt

SCENE III. Venice. A public place.

Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK

Shylock. Three thousand ducats; well.

Bassanio. Ay, sir, for three months.

Shylock. For three months; well.

Bassanio. For the which, as I told you, Antonio
shall be bound.

Shylock. Antonio shall become bound; well.

Bassanio. May you stead me? Will you pleasure me?
Shall I know your answer?

Shylock. Three thousand ducats for three months,
and Antonio bound.

Bassanio. Your answer to that.

Shylock. Antonio is a good man.

Bassanio. Have you heard any imputation to
the contrary? 10

Shylock. Oh, no, no, no, no! My meaning in saying
he is a good man is to have you understand me
that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition:
he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to
the Indies. I understand moreover, upon the Rialto,
he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England,
and other ventures he hath squandered abroad.
But ships are but boards, sailors but men:
there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves
and land-thieves—I mean pirates—and then there is 20
the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is,
notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats.
I think I may take his bond.

Bassanio. Be assured you may.

Shylock. I will be assured I may; and, that I may be
assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

Bassanio. If it please you to dine with us.

Shylock. Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation
which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the
devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, 30
talk with you, walk with you, and so following,
but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor
pray with you. What news on the Rialto?
Who is he comes here?

Enter ANTONIO

Bassanio. This is Signior Antonio.

Shylock. [*Aside*]

How like a fawning publican he looks!
 I hate him for he is a Christian,
 But more for that in low simplicity
 He lends out money gratis and brings down
 The rate of usance here with us in Venice. 40
 If I can catch him once upon the hip,
 I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
 He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
 Even there where merchants most do congregate,
 On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,
 Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe
 If I forgive him!

Bassanio. Shylock, do you hear?

Shylock. I am debating of my present store,
 And, by the near guess of my memory, 50
 I cannot instantly raise up the gross
 Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
 Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
 Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
 Do you desire?

[*To ANTONIO*]

Rest you fair, good signior;
 Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

Antonio. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow
 By taking nor by giving of excess,
 Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend, 60
 I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd
 How much ye would?

Shylock. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Antonio. And for three months.

Shylock. I had forgot—three months; you told me so.
Well then, your bond; and let me see—but hear you:
Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage.

Antonio. I do never use it.

Shylock. When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep— 70
This Jacob from our holy Abram was,
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,
The third possessor; ay, he was the third—

Antonio. And what of him? Did he take interest?

Shylock. No, not take interest, not, as you would say,
Directly interest. Mark what Jacob did.
When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire, the ewes being rank
In the end of autumn turned to the rams, 80
And when the work of generation was
Between these woolly breeders in the act,
The skillful shepherd peel'd me certain wands,
And, in the doing of the deed of kind,
He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,
Who then conceiving did in eaning time
Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest:
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

Antonio. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for; 90
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven.
Was this inserted to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

Shylock. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:
But note me, signior—

Antonio. [*Aside to BASSANIO*]

Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose!
An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek, 100
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

Shylock. Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve; then, let me see; the rate—

Antonio. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

Shylock. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe. 110
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gabardine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help:
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say
'Shylock, we would have moneys:' you say so,
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold. Moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say 120
'Hath a dog money? Is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' Or
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,

Say this; 'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
 You spurn'd me such a day; another time
 You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
 I'll lend you thus much moneys'?

Antonio. I am as like to call thee so again,
 To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too. 130
 If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
 As to thy friends; for when did friendship take
 A breed for barren metal of his friend?
 But lend it rather to thine enemy,
 Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face
 Exact the penalty.

Shylock. Why, look you how you storm!
 I would be friends with you and have your love,
 Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
 Supply your present wants and take no doit 140
 Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me!
 This is kind I offer.

Bassanio. This were kindness.

Shylock. This kindness will I show.
 Go with me to a notary, seal me there
 Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,
 If you repay me not on such a day,
 In such a place, such sum or sums as are
 Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
 Be nominated for an equal pound 150
 Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
 In what part of your body pleaseth me.

Antonio. Content, i' faith: I'll seal to such a bond
 And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

Bassanio. You shall not seal to such a bond for me!
I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

Antonio. Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it!
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond. 160

Shylock. O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this:
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favor, I extend this friendship:
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu; 170
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

Antonio. Yes Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

Shylock. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
See to my house, left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently
I will be with you.

Antonio. Hie thee, gentle Jew.

Exit SHYLOCK

The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind. 180

Bassanio. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

Antonio. Come on, in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day.

Exeunt

ACT II

SCENE I. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE of MOROCCO and his train;
PORTIA, NERISSA, and others attending*

Prince of Morocco. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbor and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phoebus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love I swear
The best-regarded virgins of our clime 10
Have loved it too. I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

Portia. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:
But if my father had not scanted me
And hedged me by his wit to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair 20
As any comer I have look'd on yet
For my affection.

Prince of Morocco. Even for that I thank you.

Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
 To try my fortune. By this scimitar
 That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince,
 That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
 I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
 Outbrave the heart most daring on the Earth,
 Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear, 30
 Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
 To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
 If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
 Which is the better man, the greater throw
 May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
 So is Alcides beaten by his page;
 And so may I, blind Fortune leading me,
 Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
 And die with grieving.

Portia. You must take your chance, 40

And either not attempt to choose at all
 Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong
 Never to speak to lady afterward
 In way of marriage: therefore be advised.

Prince of Morocco. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto
 my chance.

Portia. First, forward to the temple: after dinner
 Your hazard shall be made.

Prince of Morocco. Good fortune then,
 To make me blest or cursed'st among men!

Cornets, and exeunt

SCENE II. Venice. A street.

Enter LAUNCELOT

Launcelot. Certainly my conscience will serve me
to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine
elbow and tempts me, saying to me ‘Gobbo,
Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot,’ or ‘good Gobbo,’
or ‘good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start,
run away.’ My conscience says ‘No; take heed,
honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo,’
or, as aforesaid, ‘honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run;
scorn running with thy heels.’ Well, the most
courageous fiend bids me pack: ‘Via!’ says the fiend; 10
‘away!’ says the fiend; ‘for the heavens, rouse up a
brave mind,’ says the fiend, ‘and run.’ Well, my
conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart,
says very wisely to me ‘My honest friend Launcelot,
being an honest man’s son’—or rather, an honest
woman’s son; for, indeed, my father did something
smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste—
well, my conscience says ‘Launcelot, budge not.’
‘Budge,’ says the fiend. ‘Budge not,’ says my conscience.
‘Conscience,’ say I, ‘you counsel well;’ ‘Fiend,’ say I, 20
‘you counsel well.’ To be ruled by my conscience,
I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless
the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from
the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving
your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew
is the very devil incarnal; and, in my conscience,
my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience
to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend
gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend,
my heels are at your command. I will run. 30

Enter Old GOBBO, with a basket

Gobbo. Master young man, you, I pray you, which is
the way to master Jew's?

Launcelot. [*Aside*]

O heavens, this is my true-begotten father,
who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind,
knows me not. I will try confusions with him.

Gobbo. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is
the way to master Jew's?

Launcelot. Turn up on your right hand at the next
turning, but at the next turning of all, on your left;
marry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand, 40
but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

Gobbo. By God's sonties, 'twill be a hard way to hit.
Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells
with him, dwell with him or no?

Launcelot. Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

[*Aside*]

Mark me now; now will I raise the waters.

[*To GOBBO*]

Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gobbo. No master, sir, but a poor man's son.
His father, though I say it, is an honest exceeding
poor man and, God be thanked, well to live. 50

Launcelot. Well, let his father be what a' will,
we talk of young Master Launcelot.

Gobbo. Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

Launcelot. But I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo,
I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gobbo. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

Launcelot. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of
Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman,
according to Fates and Destinies and such odd
sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of
learning is indeed deceased, or, as you would say
in plain terms, gone to heaven. 60

Gobbo. Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very
staff of my age, my very prop.

Launcelot. [*Aside*]
Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post,
a staff or a prop?—Do you know me, father?

Gobbo. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman:
but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God rest his soul,
alive or dead?

Launcelot. Do you not know me, father? 70

Gobbo. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

Launcelot. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you
might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father
that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell
you news of your son. Give me your blessing.
Truth will come to light, murder cannot be hid long;
a man's son may, but at the length truth will out.

Gobbo. Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not
Launcelot, my boy.

Launcelot. Pray you, let's have no more fooling
about it, but give me your blessing. I am Launcelot, 80
your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

Gobbo. I cannot think you are my son.

Launcelot. I know not what I shall think of that:
but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man, and I am sure
Margery your wife is my mother.

Gobbo. Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be sworn
if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and
blood. Lord worshiped might he be! what a beard
hast thou got! Thou hast got more hair on thy chin
than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail. 100

Launcelot. It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail
grows backward: I am sure he had more hair of his
tail than I have of my face when I last saw him.

Gobbo. Lord, how art thou changed! How dost
thou and thy master agree? I have brought him
a present. How 'gree you now?

Launcelot. Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have
set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have
run some ground. My master's a very Jew. Give him
a present! Give him a halter. I am famished in his 110
service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs.
Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present
to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new
liveries. If I serve not him, I will run as far as God
has any ground. O rare fortune, here comes the man!
To him, father, for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter BASSANIO, with LEONARDO and other followers

Bassanio. [*To a SERVANT*]

You may do so; but let it be so hasted
that supper be ready at the farthest by five of
the clock. See these letters delivered; put the liveries
to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging. 120

Exit SERVANT

Launcelot. To him, father.

Gobbo. God bless your worship!

Bassanio. Gramercy! Wouldst thou aught with me?

Gobbo. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy—

Launcelot. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man,
that would, sir, as my father shall specify—

Gobbo. He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say,
to serve—

Launcelot. Indeed, the short and the long is,
I serve the Jew, and have a desire, as my father shall specify—

Gobbo. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, 130
are scarce cater-cousins—

Launcelot. To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew,
having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father,
being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you—

Gobbo. I have here a dish of doves that I would
bestow upon your worship, and my suit is—

Launcelot. In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself,
as your worship shall know by this honest old man;
and, though I say it, though old man, yet poor man,
my father—

Bassanio. One speak for both. What would you?

140

Launcelot. Serve you, sir.

Gobbo. That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

Bassanio. [*To LAUNCELOT*]

I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit.
Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment
To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Launcelot. The old proverb is very well parted
between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have
the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

150

Bassanio. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.
Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out.

[*To a SERVANT*]

Give him a livery
More guarded than his fellows.' See it done.

Exit SERVANT

Launcelot. Father, in. I cannot get a service, no!
I have ne'er a tongue in my head. Well, if any man in
Italy have a fairer table which doth offer to swear

upon a book, I shall have good fortune. Go to,
 here's a simple line of life: here's a small trifle of
 wives: alas, fifteen wives is nothing! eleven 160
 widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for
 one man: and then to 'scape drowning thrice, and to
 be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed;
 here are simple 'scapes. Well, if Fortune be a woman,
 she's a good wench for this gear. Father, come;
 I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye.

Exeunt LAUNCELOT and Old GOBBO

Bassanio. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this. [*Handing him a
 paper*]
 These things being bought and orderly bestow'd,
 Return in haste, for I do feast to-night
 My best-esteem'd acquaintance. Hie thee, go. 170

Leonardo. My best endeavors shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO

Gratiano. [*To LEONARDO*]
 Where is your master?

Leonardo. Yonder, sir, he walks.

Exit LEONARDO

Gratiano. Signior Bassanio!

Bassanio. Gratiano!

Gratiano. I have a suit to you.

Bassanio. You have obtain'd it.

Gratiano. You must not deny me. I must go with
you to Belmont.

Bassanio. Why then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano,
Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice— 180
Parts that become thee happily enough
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults.
But where thou art not known—why, there they show
Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain
To allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behavior
I be misconstrued in the place I go to,
And lose my hopes.

Gratiano. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit, 190
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh and say 'amen,'
Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

Bassanio. Well, we shall see your bearing.

Gratiano. Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not gauge me
By what we do to-night. 200

Bassanio. No, that were pity:
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well:
I have some business.

Gratiano. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest:
But we will visit you at supper-time.

Exeunt

SCENE III. The same. A room in SHYLOCK'S house.

Enter JESSICA and LAUNCELOT

Jessica. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so.
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest.
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell: I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

Launcelot. Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue,
Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! if a Christian
did not play the knave and get thee, I am much
deceived. But, adieu: these foolish drops do
something drown my manly spirit: adieu.

10

Jessica. Farewell, good Launcelot.

Exit LAUNCELOT

Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife.

20

Exit

SCENE IV. The same. A street.

Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, and SOLANIO

Lorenzo. Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
Disguise us at my lodging and return,
All in an hour.

Gratiano. We have not made good preparation.

Salarino. We have not spoke us yet of torchbearers.

Solanio. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,
And better in my mind not undertook.

Lorenzo. 'Tis now but four o'clock: we have two hours
To furnish us.

Enter LAUNCELOT with a letter

Friend Launcelot, what's the news? 10

Launcelot. An it shall please you to break up this,
it shall seem to signify.

Lorenzo. I know the hand: in faith, 'tis a fair hand;
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

Gratiano. Love-news, in faith.

Launcelot. By your leave, sir.

Lorenzo. Whither goest thou?

Launcelot. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the
Jew to sup to-night with my new master the Christian. 20

Lorenzo. Hold here, take this. [*Giving him money*]
 Tell gentle Jessica
 I will not fail her; speak it privately.

Exit LAUNCELOT

Go, gentlemen,
 Will you prepare you for this masque tonight?
 I am provided of a torch-bearer.

Salarino. Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

Solanio. And so will I.

Lorenzo. Meet me and Gratiano
 At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

Salarino. 'Tis good we do so.

30

Exeunt SALARINO and SOLANIO

Gratiano. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

Lorenzo. I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
 How I shall take her from her father's house,
 What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with,
 What page's suit she hath in readiness.
 If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
 It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:
 And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
 Unless she do it under this excuse,
 That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
 Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest. [*Handing him the letter.*]
 Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer.

40

Exeunt

SCENE V. The same. Before Shylock's house.

Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT

Shylock. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio.—
What, Jessica!—thou shalt not gormandise,
As thou hast done with me.—What, Jessica!—
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out—
Why, Jessica, I say!

Launcelot. Why, Jessica!

Shylock. Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

Launcelot. Your worship was wont to tell me that
I could do nothing without bidding.

10

Enter JESSICA

Jessica. Call you? What is your will?

Shylock. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica.
There are my keys.—But wherefore should I go?
I am not bid for love; they flatter me:
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian.—Jessica, my girl,
Look to my house.—I am right loath to go:
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

Launcelot. I beseech you, sir, go. My young master
doth expect your reproach.

20

Shylock. So do I his.

Launcelot. And they have conspired together—I will not say you shall see a masque; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black Monday last at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash Wednesday was four year, in the afternoon.

Shylock. What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica,
 Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum
 And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife, 30
 Clamber not you up to the casements then,
 Nor thrust your head into the public street
 To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces,
 But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements.
 Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
 My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear
 I have no mind of feasting forth to-night.
 But I will go.—Go you before me, sirrah.
 Say I will come.

Launcelot. I will go before, sir. 40

[Aside to JESSICA]

Mistress, look out at window for all this.
 There will come a Christian by
 Will be worth a Jewess' eye.

Exit LAUNCELOT

Shylock. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?

Jessica. His words were 'Farewell, mistress,' nothing else.

Shylock. The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder;
 Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day

More than the wild-cat. Drones hive not with me,
 Therefore I part with him, and part with him
 To one that I would have him help to waste 50
 His borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica, go in.
 Perhaps I will return immediately:
 Do as I bid you; shut doors after you:
 Fast bind, fast find—
 A proverb never stale in thrifty mind.

Exit SHYLOCK

Jessica. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,
 I have a father, you a daughter, lost.

Exit

SCENE VI. The same.

Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO, masked

Gratiano. This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
 Desired us to make stand.

Salarino. His hour is almost past.

Gratiano. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
 For lovers ever run before the clock.

Salarino. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly
 To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
 To keep obliged faith unforfeited!

Gratiano. That ever holds. Who riseth from a feast
 With that keen appetite that he sits down? 10
 Where is the horse that doth untread again

His tedious measures with the unbated fire
 That he did pace them first? All things that are,
 Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.
 How like a younger or a prodigal
 The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
 Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind!
 How like the prodigal doth she return,
 With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,
 Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind! 20

Salarino. Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

Enter LORENZO

Lorenzo. Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode.
 Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait.
 When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
 I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;
 Here dwells my father Jew.—Ho! who's within?

Enter JESSICA, above, in boy's clothes

Jessica. Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
 Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

Lorenzo. Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jessica. Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed, 30
 For who love I so much? And now who knows
 But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

Lorenzo. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that
 thou art.

Jessica. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
 I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,

For I am much ashamed of my exchange;
But love is blind and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit;
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformed to a boy.

40

Lorenzo. Descend, for you must be my torchbearer.

Jessica. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
They in themselves, good-sooth, are too too light.
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;
And I should be obscured.

Lorenzo. So are you, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.
But come at once;
For the close night doth play the runaway,
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

50

Jessica. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

Exit JESSICA above

Gratiano. Now, by my hood, a Gentile and no Jew!

Lorenzo. Beshrew me but I love her heartily;
For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
And true she is, as she hath proved herself.
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,
Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

Enter JESSICA below

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen, away! 60
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

Exit LORENZO with JESSICA and SALARINO

Enter ANTONIO

Antonio. Who's there?

Gratiano. Signior Antonio!

Antonio. Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?
'Tis nine o'clock! Our friends all stay for you.
No masque to-night: the wind is come about;
Bassanio presently will go aboard:
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

Gratiano. I am glad on't: I desire no more delight 70
Than to be under sail and gone to-night.

Exeunt

SCENE VII. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter PORTIA, with the PRINCE of MOROCCO,
and their trains*

Portia. Go draw aside the curtains and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.
Now make your choice.

Prince of Morocco. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;'
The second, silver, which this promise carries,
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;'

This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
 How shall I know if I do choose the right? 10

Portia. The one of them contains my picture, prince:
 If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

Prince of Morocco. Some god direct my judgment!

Let me see;
 I will survey the inscriptions back again.
 What says this leaden casket?
 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
 Must give—for what? For lead? Hazard for lead?
 This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
 Do it in hope of fair advantages.
 A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross; 20
 I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
 What says the silver with her virgin hue?

'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
 As much as he deserves—pause there, Morocco,
 And weigh thy value with an even hand.
 If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
 Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
 May not extend so far as to the lady.
 And yet to be afraid of my deserving
 Were but a weak disabling of myself. 30
 As much as I deserve—why, that's the lady!
 I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
 In graces, and in qualities of breeding;
 But more than these, in love I do deserve.
 What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?
 Let's see once more this saying graved in gold
 'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
 Why, that's the lady! All the world desires her.

From the four corners of the Earth they come
 To kiss this shrine, this mortal, breathing saint. 40
 The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
 Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now
 For princes to come view fair Portia:
 The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
 Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
 To stop the foreign spirits, but they come,
 As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
 One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
 Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
 To think so base a thought: it were too gross 50
 To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
 Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
 Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
 O, sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
 Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
 A coin that bears the figure of an angel
 Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;
 But here an angel in a golden bed
 Lies all within.—Deliver me the key:
 Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may! 60

Portia. There, take it, prince; and if my form lie there,
 Then I am yours.

He unlocks the golden casket

Prince of Morocco. O hell! what have we here?
 A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
 There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

[Reads]

'All that glitters is not gold;
 Often have you heard that told:

Many a man his life hath sold
 But my outside to behold:
 Gilded tombs do worms enfold.
 Had you been as wise as bold,
 Young in limbs, in judgment old,
 Your answer had not been inscroll'd:
 Fare you well; your suit is cold.'

70

Cold, indeed; and labor lost!
 Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!
 Portia, adieu. I have too griev'd a heart
 To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.

Exit with his train. Flourish of cornets

Portia. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
 Let all of his complexion choose me so.

80

Exeunt

SCENE VIII. Venice. A street.

Enter SALARINO and SOLANIO

Salarino. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:
 With him is Gratiano gone along;
 And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.

Solanio. The villain Jew with outcries raised the Duke,
 Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

Salarino. He came too late, the ship was under sail:
 But there the Duke was given to understand
 That in a gondola were seen together
 Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:

Besides, Antonio certified the Duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship. 10

Solanio. I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
‘My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!
And jewels—two stones, two rich and precious stones— 20
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl!
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats.’

Salarino. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, “His stones, his daughter, and his ducats.”

Solanio. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

Salarino. Marry, well remember’d.
I reason’d with a Frenchman yesterday
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarried 30
A vessel of our country richly fraught:
I thought upon Antonio when he told me,
And wish’d in silence that it were not his.

Solanio. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear—
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

Salarino. A kinder gentleman treads not the Earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part.
Bassanio told him he would make some speed

Of his return: he answer'd, 'Do not so.
 Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio, 40
 But stay the very riping of the time;
 And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
 Let it not enter in your mind of love:
 Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
 To courtship and such fair ostents of love
 As shall conveniently become you there.'
 And even there, his eye being big with tears,
 Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
 And with affection wondrous sensible
 He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted. 50

Solanio. I think he only loves the world for him.
 I pray thee, let us go and find him out
 And quicken his embraced heaviness
 With some delight or other.

Salarino. Do we so.

Exeunt

SCENE IX. Belmont. A room in Portia's house.

Enter NERISSA with a Servitor

Nerissa. Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain straight:
 The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
 And comes to his election presently.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE of ARRAGON, his train,
 and PORTIA*

Portia. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince:
 If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,

Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized:
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.

Prince of Arragon. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe
three things:

First, never to unfold to any one 10
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage:
Lastly, if I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

Portia. To these injunctions everyone doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

Prince of Arragon. And so have I address'd me.

Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold, silver, and base lead.
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.' 20
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
What many men desire—that 'many' may be meant
By the fool multitude that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.
I will not choose what many men desire, 30
Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:

'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'

And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune and be honorable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.

O, that estates, degrees, and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honor
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare?
How many be commanded that command?
How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
From the true seed of honour? And how much honor
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times
To be new-varnish'd? Well, but to my choice:

40

'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'

I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

50

He opens the silver casket

Portia. Too long a pause for that which you find there.

Prince of Arragon. What's here? The portrait of a
blinking idiot

Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
'Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.'
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize? Are my deserts no better?

60

Portia. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices
And of opposed natures.

Prince of Arragon. What is here?

[Reads]

‘The fire seven times tried this:
Seven times tried that judgment is,
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow’s bliss:
There be fools alive, I wis,
Silver’d o’er—and so was this.
Take what wife you will to bed,
I will ever be your head:
So be gone: you are sped.’

70

Still more fool I shall appear
By the time I linger here.
With one fool’s head I came to woo,
But I go away with two.
Sweet, adieu. I’ll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.

Exeunt PRINCE of ARRAGON and train

Portia. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.

80

O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

Nerissa. The ancient saying is no heresy:
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

Portia. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a MESSENGER

Messenger. Where is my lady?

Portia. Here: what would my lord?

Messenger. Madam, there is alighted at your gate

A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord, 90
From whom he bringeth sensible regreets,
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love:
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Portia. No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard

Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him! 100
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

Nerissa. Bassanio, Lord Love, if thy will it be!

Exeunt

ACT III

SCENE I. Venice. A street.

Enter SOLANIO and SALARINO

Solanio. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salarino. Why, yet it lives there uncheck'd that
Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the
narrow seas—the Goodwins, I think they call

the place—a very dangerous flat, and fatal, where
the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried,
as they say, if my gossip Report be an honest
woman of her word.

Solanio. I would she were as lying a gossip in that
as ever knapped ginger or made her neighbors 10
believe she wept for the death of a third husband.
But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or
crossing the plain highway of talk, that the
good Antonio, the honest Antonio—O that I had
a title good enough to keep his name company!—

Salarino. Come, the full stop.

Solanio. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is,
he hath lost a ship.

Salarino. I would it might prove the end of his losses.

Solanio. Let me say 'amen' betimes, lest the devil 20
cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter SHYLOCK

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

Shylock. You knew, none so well, none so well as you,
of my daughter's flight.

Salarino. That's certain: I, for my part, knew the tailor
that made the wings she flew withal.

Solanio. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird
was fledged; and then it is the complexion of them
all to leave the dam.

Shylock. She is damned for it.

Solanio. That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

Shylock. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

30

Solanio. Out upon it, old carrion! Rebels it at these years?

Shylock. I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood.

Salarino. There is more difference between thy
flesh and hers than between jet and ivory;
more between your bloods than there is between
red wine and Rhenish. But tell us, do you hear
whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

Shylock. There I have another bad match! A bankrupt,
a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the
Rialto, a beggar, that was used to come so smug
upon the mart! Let him look to his bond. He was
wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond.
He was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy;
let him look to his bond.

40

Salarino. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take
his flesh! What's that good for?

Shylock. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else,
it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me and
hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses,
mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted
my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies—
and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes?
Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses,
affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt
with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases,

50

healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by
the same winter and summer as a Christian is?
If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us,
do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?
And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we 60
are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that.
If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility?
Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should
his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge!
The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall
go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant

Servant. Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house
and desires to speak with you both.

Salarino. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter TUBAL

Solanio. Here comes another of the tribe: a third
cannot be matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew. 70

Exeunt SOLANIO, SALARINO, and SERVANT

Shylock. How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa?
Hast thou found my daughter?

Tubal. I often came where I did hear of her,
but cannot find her.

Shylock. Why, there, there, there, there! A diamond gone
cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort!
The curse never fell upon our nation till now;
I never felt it till now. Two thousand ducats in that;

and other precious, precious jewels! I would my
daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in
her ear! Would she were hearsed at my foot,
and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? 80
Why, so? And I know not what's spent in the search!
Why, thou loss upon loss! The thief gone with so much,
and so much to find the thief, and no satisfaction,
no revenge, nor no ill luck stirring but what lights
on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing,
no tears but of my shedding.

Tubal. Yes, other men have ill luck too. Antonio,
as I heard in Genoa—

Shylock. What, what, what? Ill luck, ill luck?

Tubal. —Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

Shylock. I thank God, I thank God. Is't true, is't true? 90

Tubal. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped
the wreck.

Shylock. I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news!
Ha, ha! Heard in Genoa.

Tubal. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one
night fourscore ducats.

Shylock. Thou stickest a dagger in me: I shall never see
my gold again. Fourscore ducats at a sitting, fourscore ducats!

Tubal. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my
company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

Shylock. I am very glad of it. I'll plague him, 100
I'll torture him. I am glad of it.

Tubal. One of them showed me a ring that he had of
your daughter for a monkey.

Shylock. Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal:
it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a
bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness
of monkeys.

Tubal. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shylock. Nay, that's true, that's very true.
Go, Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a
fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, 110
if he forfeit; for were he out of Venice
I can make what merchandise I will.
Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue;
go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.

*Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, and
ATTENDANTS*

Portia. I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
There's something tells me, but it is not love,
I would not lose you; and you know yourself
Hate counsels not in such a quality.
But lest you should not understand me well—
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought—
I would detain you here some month or two

Before you venture for me. I could teach you 10
 How to choose right, but I am then forsworn;
 So will I never be: so may you miss me;
 But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
 That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
 They have o'erlook'd me and divided me.
 One half of me is yours, the other half yours—
 Mine own, I would say—but if mine, then yours,
 And so all yours. O, these naughty times
 Put bars between the owners and their rights!
 And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so, 20
 Let Fortune go to hell for it, not I.
 I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time,
 To eke it and to draw it out in length,
 To stay you from election.

Bassanio. Let me choose
 For as I am, I live upon the rack.

Portia. Upon the rack, Bassanio! Then confess
 What treason there is mingled with your love.

Bassanio. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
 Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love: 30
 There may as well be amity and life
 'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

Portia. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
 Where men enforced do speak anything.

Bassanio. Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

Portia. Well then, confess and live.

Bassanio. 'Confess and love'
 Had been the very sum of my confession.

O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance! 40
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

Portia. Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them:
If you do love me, you will find me out.—
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
Let music sound while he doth make his choice;
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music. That the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And watery death-bed for him. He may win;
And what is music then? Then music is 50
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
To a new-crowned monarch. Such it is
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
With no less presence, but with much more love,
Than young Alcides when he did redeem
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster. I stand for sacrifice;
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives, 60
With bleared visages, come forth to view
The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules!
Live thou, I live. With much, much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that makest the fray.

Music, whilst BASSANIO comments on the caskets to himself

SONG.

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart, or in the head?

How begot, how nourished?

Reply, reply.

It is engender'd in the eyes,

With gazing fed; and fancy dies

70

In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell

I'll begin it—Ding, dong, bell.

All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bassanio. So may the outward shows be least themselves:

The world is still deceived with ornament.

In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt

But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,

Obscures the show of evil? In religion,

What damned error but some sober brow

80

Will bless it and approve it with a text,

Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?

There is no vice so simple but assumes

Some mark of virtue on his outward parts.

How many cowards whose hearts are all as false

As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins

The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,

Who inward search'd, have livers white as milk,

And these assume but valor's excrement

To render them redoubted. Look on beauty,

90

And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight,

Which therein works a miracle in nature,

Making them lightest that wear most of it.

So are those crisped snaky golden locks,

Which make such wanton gambols with the wind

Upon supposed fairness, often known

To be the dowry of a second head,

The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.

Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
 To a most dangerous sea, the beauteous scarf 100
 Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
 The seeming truth which cunning times put on
 To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
 Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee.
 Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
 'Tween man and man. But thou, thou meagre lead,
 Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
 Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
 And here choose I. Joy be the consequence!

Portia. [*Aside*]

How all the other passions fleet to air, 110
 As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
 And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy!
 O love, be moderate; allay thy ecstasy,
 In measure rein thy joy; scant this excess!
 I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
 For fear I surfeit.

Bassanio. [*Opening the leaden casket*]

What find I here?
 Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
 Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
 Or whether, riding on the balls of mine, 120
 Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,
 Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar
 Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
 The painter plays the spider and hath woven
 A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
 Faster than gnats in cobweb. But her eyes!
 How could he see to do them? Having made one,
 Methinks it should have power to steal both his
 And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look how far

The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow 130
 In underprizing it, so far this shadow
 Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
 The continent and summary of my fortune.

[Reads]

'You that choose not by the view
 Chance as fair and choose as true!
 Since this fortune falls to you,
 Be content and seek no new.
 If you be well pleased with this
 And hold your fortune for your bliss,
 Turn you where your lady is 140
 And claim her with a loving kiss.'

A gentle scroll! Fair lady, by your leave;
 I come by note to give and to receive.
 Like one of two contending in a prize
 That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
 Hearing applause and universal shout,
 Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
 Whether these pearls of praise be his or no;
 So, thrice fair lady, stand I even so,
 As doubtful whether what I see be true, 150
 Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

Portia. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
 Such as I am. Though for myself alone
 I would not be ambitious in my wish
 To wish myself much better; yet, for you
 I would be trebled twenty times myself:
 A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich,
 That only to stand high in your account
 I might in virtue, beauties, livings, friends,
 Exceed account. But the full sum of me 160
 Is sum of something, which, to term in gross,

Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpracticed;
 Happy in this, she is not yet so old
 But she may learn; happier than this,
 She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
 Happiest of all, is that her gentle spirit
 Commits itself to yours to be directed
 As from her lord, her governor, her king.
 Myself, and what is mine, to you and yours
 Is now converted. But now I was the lord 170
 Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
 Queen o'er myself: and even now, but now,
 This house, these servants, and this same myself
 Are yours, my lord. I give them with this ring;
 Which, when you part from, lose, or give away,
 Let it presage the ruin of your love,
 And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

Bassanio. Madam, you have bereft me of all words.
 Only my blood speaks to you in my veins,
 And there is such confusion in my powers 180
 As after some oration fairly spoke
 By a beloved prince there doth appear
 Among the buzzing pleased multitude,
 Where every something being blent together
 Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy
 Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring
 Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence.
 O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

Nerissa. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
 That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper, 190
 To cry "Good joy, good joy, my lord and lady!"

Gratiano. My Lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
 I wish you all the joy that you can wish;

For I am sure you can wish none from me.
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you
Even at that time I may be married too.

Bassanio. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

Gratiano. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.

My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours: 200
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid.
You loved, I loved; for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls.
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing until my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune 210
Achieved her mistress.

Portia. Is this true, Nerissa?

Nerissa. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

Bassanio. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

Gratiano. Yes, faith, my lord.

Bassanio. Our feast shall be much honor'd in
your marriage.

Gratiano. We'll play with them the first boy for a
thousand ducats.

Nerissa. What, and stake down?

Gratiano. No; we shall ne'er win at that sport,
and stake down.

But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel? 220
What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

Enter LORENZO, JESSICA, and SALERIO, a messenger from Venice

Bassanio. Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome.

[To PORTIA]

By your leave, I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

Portia. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.

Lorenzo. I thank your Honor. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here, 230
But meeting with Salerio by the way,
He did entreat me past all saying nay
To come with him along.

Salerio. I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you.

Gives BASSANIO a letter

Bassanio. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you tell me how my good friend doth.

Salerio. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there 240
Will show you his estate.

Gratiano. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger, bid her welcome.

Your hand, Salerio: what's the news from Venice?

How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?

I know he will be glad of our success.

We are the Jasons, we have won the Fleece.

Salerio. I would you had won the fleece that he
hath lost.

Portia. There are some shrewd contents in yon
same paper

That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek.

Some dear friend dead, else nothing in the world 250

Could turn so much the constitution

Of any constant man. What, worse and worse?—

With leave, Bassanio, I am half yourself,

And I must freely have the half of anything

That this same paper brings you.

Bassanio. O sweet Portia,

Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words

That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,

When I did first impart my love to you,

I freely told you all the wealth I had 260

Ran in my veins: I was a gentleman.

And then I told you true; and yet, dear lady,

Rating myself at nothing, you shall see

How much I was a braggart. When I told you

My state was nothing, I should then have told you

That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,

I have engaged myself to a dear friend,

Engaged my friend to his mere enemy

To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady,

The paper as the body of my friend, 270

And every word in it a gaping wound,

Issuing life-blood.—But is it true, Salerio?
 Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?
 From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
 From Lisbon, Barbary, and India?
 And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
 Of merchant-marring rocks?

Salerio. Not one, my lord.

Besides, it should appear that if he had
 The present money to discharge the Jew, 280
 He would not take it. Never did I know
 A creature that did bear the shape of man
 So keen and greedy to confound a man:
 He plies the Duke at morning and at night,
 And doth impeach the freedom of the state
 If they deny him justice. Twenty merchants,
 The Duke himself, and the magnificoes
 Of greatest port have all persuaded with him;
 But none can drive him from the envious plea
 Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond. 290

Jessica. When I was with him, I have heard him swear

To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
 That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
 Than twenty times the value of the sum
 That he did owe him. And I know, my lord,
 If law, authority, and power deny not,
 It will go hard with poor Antonio.

Portia. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

Bassanio. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,

The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit 300
 In doing courtesies, and one in whom
 The ancient Roman honor more appears
 Than any that draws breath in Italy.

Portia. What sum owes he the Jew?

Bassanio. For me, three thousand ducats.

Portia. What, no more?

Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond.
 Double six thousand, and then treble that,
 Before a friend of this description
 Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault. 310
 First go with me to church and call me wife,
 And then away to Venice to your friend!
 For never shall you lie by Portia's side
 With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
 To pay the petty debt twenty times over.
 When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
 My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
 Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
 For you shall hence upon your wedding-day.
 Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer: 320
 Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
 But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bassanio. [*Reads*]

"Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried,
 my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low,
 my bond to the Jew is forfeit, and since in paying it,
 it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you
 and I if I might but see you at my death.
 Notwithstanding, use your pleasure. If your love
 do not persuade you to come, let not my letter."

Portia. O love, dispatch all business and be gone!

Bassanio. Since I have your good leave to go away, 330
 I will make haste: but, till I come again,

No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain.

Exeunt

SCENE III. Venice. A street.

Enter SHYLOCK, SOLANIO, ANTONIO, and Gaoler

Shylock. Gaoler, look to him: tell not me of mercy;
This is the fool that lent out money gratis:
Gaoler, look to him.

Antonio. Hear me yet, good Shylock—

Shylock. I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs.
The Duke shall grant me justice.—I do wonder,
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.

10

Antonio. I pray thee, hear me speak—

Shylock. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak.
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not!
I'll have no speaking. I will have my bond.

Exit SHYLOCK

Solanio. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.

20

Antonio. Let him alone.

I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me.
Therefore he hates me.

Solanio. I am sure the Duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

Antonio. The Duke cannot deny the course of law,
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of the state,
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go.
These griefs and losses have so bated me
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.—
Well, gaoler, on.—Pray God Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not!

30

Exeunt

SCENE IV. Belmont. A room in Portia's house.

*Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, and
BALTHASAR*

Lorenzo. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit

Of godlike amity; which appears most strongly
 In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
 But if you knew to whom you show this honor,
 How true a gentleman you send relief,
 How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
 I know you would be prouder of the work
 Than customary bounty can enforce you.

Portia. I never did repent for doing good, 10
 Nor shall not now: for in companions
 That do converse and waste the time together,
 Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
 There must be needs a like proportion
 Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit;
 Which makes me think that this Antonio,
 Being the bosom lover of my lord,
 Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
 How little is the cost I have bestow'd
 In purchasing the semblance of my soul 20
 From out the state of hellish misery!
 This comes too near the praising of myself;
 Therefore no more of it. Hear other things:
 Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
 The husbandry and manage of my house
 Until my lord's return. For mine own part,
 I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
 To live in prayer and contemplation,
 Only attended by Nerissa here,
 Until her husband and my lord's return. 30
 There is a monastery two miles off,
 And there will we abide. I do desire you
 Not to deny this imposition,
 The which my love and some necessity
 Now lays upon you.

Lorenzo. Madam, with all my heart.

I shall obey you in all fair commands.

Portia. My people do already know my mind

And will acknowledge you and Jessica

In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.

40

And so farewell till we shall meet again.

Lorenzo. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

Jessica. I wish your Ladyship all heart's content.

Portia. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased

To wish it back on you. Fare you well, Jessica.

Exeunt JESSICA and LORENZO

Now, Balthasar,

As I have ever found thee honest-true,

So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,

And use thou all the endeavor of a man

In speed to Padua. See thou render this

50

Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;

And look what notes and garments he doth give thee.

Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed

Unto the trajet, to the common ferry

Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,

But get thee gone. I shall be there before thee.

Balthasar. Madam, I go with all convenient speed.

Exit BALTHASAR

Portia. Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand

That you yet know not of. We'll see our husbands

Before they think of us.

60

Nerissa. Shall they see us?

Portia. They shall, Nerissa, but in such a habit
 That they shall think we are accomplished
 With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
 When we are both accoutred like young men,
 I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
 And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
 And speak between the change of man and boy
 With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
 Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
 Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies
 How honorable ladies sought my love,
 Which I denying, they fell sick and died—
 I could not do withal!—then I'll repent,
 And wish, for all that, that I had not killed them.
 And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
 That men shall swear I have discontinued school
 Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
 A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
 Which I will practice.

70

80

Nerissa. Why, shall we turn to men?

Portia. Fie, what a question's that,
 If thou wert near a lewd interpreter!
 But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
 When I am in my coach, which stays for us
 At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
 For we must measure twenty miles to-day.

Exeunt

SCENE V. The same. A garden.

Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA

Launcelot. Yes, truly; for look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children. Therefore, I promise you I fear you. I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation of the matter: therefore be of good cheer, for truly I think you are damned. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good; and that is but a kind of bastard hope neither.

Jessica. And what hope is that, I pray thee?

Launcelot. Marry, you may partly hope that your father got you not, that you are not the Jew's daughter.

10

Jessica. That were a kind of bastard hope, indeed; so the sins of my mother should be visited upon me!

Launcelot. Truly then I fear you are damned both by father and mother: thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother. Well, you are gone both ways.

Jessica. I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

Launcelot. Truly, the more to blame he!

We were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs. If we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

20

Enter LORENZO

Jessica. I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say.
Here he comes.

Lorenzo. I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot,
if you thus get my wife into corners!

Jessica. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo.
Launcelot and I are out. He tells me flatly there
is no mercy for me in heaven, because I am a Jew's
daughter; and he says, you are no good member 30
of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews
to Christians you raise the price of pork.

Lorenzo. I shall answer that better to the commonwealth
than you can the getting up of the Negro's belly!
The Moor is with child by you, Launcelot.

Launcelot. It is much that the Moor should be more
than reason: but if she be less than an honest
woman, she is indeed more than I took her for.

Lorenzo. How every fool can play upon the word!
I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn 40
into silence, and discourse grow commendable
in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them
prepare for dinner.

Launcelot. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

Lorenzo. Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you!
Then bid them prepare dinner.

Launcelot. That is done too, sir; only 'cover' is the word.

Lorenzo. Will you cover then, sir?

Launcelot. Not so, sir, neither! I know my duty.

Lorenzo. Yet more quarreling with occasion!

Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit
in an instant? I pray thee understand a plain man
in his plain meaning: go to thy fellows, bid them
cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come
in to dinner. 50

Launcelot. For the table, sir, it shall be served in;
for the meat, sir, it shall be covered; for your coming
in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humors and conceits
shall govern.

Exit LAUNCELOT

Lorenzo. O dear discretion, how his words are suited!

The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words; and I do know
A many fools that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricky word
Defy the matter. How cheerest thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion:
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife? 60

Jessica. Past all expressing. It is very meet

The Lord Bassanio live an upright life,
For having such a blessing in his lady
He finds the joys of heaven here on Earth;
And if on Earth he do not merit it,
In reason he should never come to heaven. 70
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match,
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawn'd with the other, for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.

Lorenzo. Even such a husband
Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.

Jessica. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

Lorenzo. I will anon: first, let us go to dinner.

Jessica. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach. 80

Lorenzo. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk;
Then, howso'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest it.

Jessica. Well, I'll set you forth.

Exeunt

ACT IV

SCENE I. Venice. A court of justice.

*Enter the DUKE, the MAGNIFICOES, ANTONIO, BASSANIO,
GRATIANO, SALERIO, and others*

Duke. What, is Antonio here?

Antonio. Ready, so please your Grace.

Duke. I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch,
Incapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.

Antonio. I have heard
Your Grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify

His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate,
 And that no lawful means can carry me 10
 Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
 My patience to his fury, and am arm'd
 To suffer with a quietness of spirit
 The very tyranny and rage of his.

Duke. Go, one, and call the Jew into the court.

Salerio. He is ready at the door. He comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face.—
 Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
 That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
 To the last hour of act, and then, 'tis thought, 20
 Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange
 Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
 And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
 Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
 Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
 But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
 Forgive a moiety of the principal,
 Glancing an eye of pity on his losses
 That have of late so huddled on his back,
 Enow to press a royal merchant down 30
 And pluck commiseration of his state
 From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
 From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd
 To offices of tender courtesy.
 We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Shylock. I have possess'd your Grace of what I purpose,
 And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn

To have the due and forfeit of my bond.
 If you deny it, let the danger light
 Upon your charter and your city's freedom! 40
 You'll ask me why I rather choose to have
 A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
 Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that,
 But, say, it is my humor. Is it answer'd?
 What if my house be troubled with a rat,
 And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
 To have it baned? What, are you answer'd yet?
 Some men there are love not a gaping pig,
 Some that are mad if they behold a cat,
 And others, when the bagpipe sings i' the nose, 50
 Cannot contain their urine; for affection,
 Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood
 Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:
 As there is no firm reason to be render'd
 Why he cannot abide a gaping pig,
 Why he a harmless necessary cat,
 Why he a woolen bagpipe, but of force
 Must yield to such inevitable shame
 As to offend, himself being offended,
 So can I give no reason, nor I will not, 60
 More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
 I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
 A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

Bassanio. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
 To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

Shylock. I am not bound to please thee with my answers.

Bassanio. Do all men kill the things they do not love?

Shylock. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

Bassanio. Every offence is not a hate at first.

Shylock. What, wouldst thou have a serpent
sting thee twice?

70

Antonio. [*To BASSANIO*]

I pray you, think you question with the Jew:
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
You may as well use question with the wolf
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do anything most hard
As seek to soften that—than which what's harder?—
His Jewish heart. Therefore I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.

80

Bassanio. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

Shylock. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them. I would have my bond.

Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

Shylock. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts
Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,
'Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?'

90

Why sweat they under burthens? Let their beds
 Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
 Be season'd with such viands?' You will answer
 'The slaves are ours!' so do I answer you:
 The pound of flesh, which I demand of him, 100
 Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.
 If you deny me, fie upon your law!
 There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
 I stand for judgment. Answer: shall I have it?

Duke. Upon my power I may dismiss this court
 Unless Bellario, a learned doctor
 Whom I have sent for to determine this,
 Come here to-day.

Salerio. My lord, here stays without
 A messenger with letters from the doctor, 110
 New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letter; call the messenger.

Bassanio. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!
 The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all
 Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood!

Antonio. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
 Meetest for death. The weakest kind of fruit
 Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me.
 You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
 Than to live still and write mine epitaph. 120

Enter NERISSA, dressed like a lanyer's clerk

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

Nerissa. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your Grace.

*She hands him a letter which he reads while SHYLOCK sharpens his knife
on the sole of his shoe.*

Bassanio. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

Shylock. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

Gratiano. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou makest thy knife keen. But no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

Shylock. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

Gratiano. O, be thou damn'd, inexecrable dog! 130
And for thy life let justice be accused.
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith
To hold opinion with Pythagoras
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men. Thy currish spirit
Govern'd a wolf who, hang'd for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
And whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
Are wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous. 140

Shylock. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud.
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend
A young and learned doctor to our court.
Where is he?

Nerissa. He attendeth here hard by
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

Duke. With all my heart.—Some three or four of you 150
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.

Exeunt ATTENDANTS

Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

[Reads]

'Your Grace shall understand that at the receipt
of your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that
your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me
a young doctor of Rome. His name is Balthasar.
I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between
the Jew and Antonio the merchant. We turned o'er
many books together. He is furnished with my opinion,
which, bettered with his own learning (the greatness 160
whereof I cannot enough commend), comes with him
at my importunity to fill up your Grace's request in my stead.
I beseech you let his lack of years be no
impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation;
for I never knew so young a body with so old a head.
I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial
shall better publish his commendation.'

You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

Enter PORTIA, dressed like a doctor of law

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

Portia. I did, my lord. 170

Duke. You are welcome. Take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

Portia. I am informed thoroughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Portia. Is your name Shylock?

Shylock. Shylock is my name.

Portia. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow,
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed. 180

[To ANTONIO]

You stand within his danger, do you not?

Antonio. Ay, so he says.

Portia. Do you confess the bond?

Antonio. I do.

Portia. Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shylock. On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

Portia. The quality of mercy is not strain'd.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest: 190
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway.

It is enthroned in the hearts of kings;
 It is an attribute to God himself;
 And earthly power doth then show likest God's 200
 When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
 Though justice be thy plea, consider this:
 That in the course of justice none of us
 Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,
 And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
 The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
 To mitigate the justice of thy plea,
 Which, if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
 Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shylock. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
 The penalty and forfeit of my bond. 210

Portia. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bassanio. Yes, Here I tender it for him in the court,
 Yea, twice the sum. If that will not suffice,
 I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er
 On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart.
 If this will not suffice, it must appear
 That malice bears down truth.

[To the DUKE]

And I beseech you,
 Wrest once the law to your authority.
 To do a great right, do a little wrong,
 And curb this cruel devil of his will. 220

Portia. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
 Can alter a decree established;
 'Twill be recorded for a precedent
 And many an error by the same example
 Will rush into the state. It cannot be.

Shylock. A Daniel come to judgment! Yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honor thee!

Portia. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

Shylock. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is. 240

Portia. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

Shylock. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven!
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.

Portia. Why, this bond is forfeit,
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart.—Be merciful:
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

Shylock. When it is paid according to the tenor. 250
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound. I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment. By my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me. I stay here on my bond.

Antonio. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgment.

Portia. Why then, thus it is: 260
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

Shylock. O noble judge! O excellent young man!

Portia. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

Shylock. 'Tis very true. O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

Portia. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

Shylock. Ay, his breast!
So says the bond, doth it not, noble judge? 270
'Nearest his heart.' Those are the very words.

Portia. It is so.
Are there balance here to weigh the flesh?

Shylock. I have them ready.

Portia. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

Shylock. Is it so nominated in the bond?

Portia. It is not so express'd, but what of that?
'Twere good you do so much for charity.

Shylock. I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond. 280

Portia. You, merchant, have you anything to say?

Antonio. But little: I am arm'd and well prepared.—
Give me your hand, Bassanio. Fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you,
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance

Of such misery doth she cut me off. 290
 Commend me to your honorable wife,
 Tell her the process of Antonio's end,
 Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death,
 And when the tale is told, bid her be judge
 Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
 Repent but you that you shall lose your friend
 And he repents not that he pays your debt.
 For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
 I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.

Bassanio. Antonio, I am married to a wife 300
 Which is as dear to me as life itself;
 But life itself, my wife, and all the world
 Are not with me esteem'd above thy life.
 I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
 Here to this devil, to deliver you.

Portia. [*Aside*]
 Your wife would give you little thanks for that
 If she were by to hear you make the offer.

Gratiano. I have a wife whom I protest I love.
 I would she were in heaven, so she could
 Entreat some power to change this currish Jew. 310

Nerissa. [*Aside*]
 'Tis well you offer it behind her back.
 The wish would make else an unquiet house.

Shylock. [*Aside*]
 These be the Christian husbands!
 I have a daughter—would any of the stock of Barrabas
 Had been her husband rather than a Christian!

[*Aloud*]

We trifle time. I pray thee, pursue sentence.

Portia. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

Shylock. Most rightful judge!

Portia. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast: 320
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shylock. Most learned judge! A sentence!—Come, prepare!

Portia. Tarry a little, there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood.
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh.'
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh,
But in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are by the laws of Venice confiscate
Unto the state of Venice. 330

Gratiano. O upright judge!—Mark, Jew.—
O learned judge!

Shylock. Is that the law?

Portia. Thyself shalt see the act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

Gratiano. O learned judge!—Mark, Jew, a learned judge!

Shylock. I take this offer then. Pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.

Bassanio. Here is the money. 340

Portia. Soft! The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gratiano. O Jew, an upright judge, a learned judge!

Portia. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.

Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more

But just a pound of flesh. If thou cut'st more

Or less than a just pound, be it but so much

As makes it light or heavy in the substance

Or the division of the twentieth part

Of one poor scruple—nay, if the scale do turn

350

But in the estimation of a hair,

Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

Gratiano. A second Daniel! A Daniel, Jew!

Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

Portia. Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture.

Shylock. Give me my principal and let me go.

Bassanio. I have it ready for thee. Here it is.

Portia. He hath refused it in the open court.

He shall have merely justice and his bond.

Gratiano. A Daniel still, say I! A second Daniel!—

360

I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

Shylock. Shall I not have barely my principal?

Portia. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture

To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

Shylock. Why, then, the devil give him good of it!

I'll stay no longer question.

Portia. Tarry, Jew:

The law hath yet another hold on you.

It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
 If it be proved against an alien 370
 That by direct or indirect attempts
 He seek the life of any citizen,
 The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
 Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
 Comes to the privy coffer of the state,
 And the offender's life lies in the mercy
 Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
 In which predicament I say thou stand'st,
 For it appears by manifest proceeding
 That indirectly (and directly too) 380
 Thou hast contrived against the very life
 Of the defendant, and thou hast incurr'd
 The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
 Down therefore and beg mercy of the Duke.

Gratiano. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself!
 And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
 Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
 Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,
 I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it. 390
 For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
 The other half comes to the general state,
 Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

Portia. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.

Shylock. Nay, take my life and all. Pardon not that.
 You take my house when you do take the prop
 That doth sustain my house; you take my life
 When you do take the means whereby I live.

Portia. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Gratiano. A halter gratis, nothing else, for God's sake. 400

Antonio. So please my lord the Duke and all the court
 To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
 I am content; so he will let me have
 The other half in use, to render it
 Upon his death unto the gentleman
 That lately stole his daughter.
 Two things provided more: that for this favor
 He presently become a Christian;
 The other, that he do record a gift,
 Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd 410
 Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

Duke. He shall do this, or else I do recant
 The pardon that I late pronounced here.

Portia. Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?

Shylock. I am content.

Portia. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shylock. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence.
 I am not well. Send the deed after me
 And I will sign it.

Duke. Get thee gone, but do it. 420

Gratiano. In christening shalt thou have two
 god-fathers.
 Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
 To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.

Exit SHYLOCK

Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

Portia. I humbly do desire your Grace of pardon:

I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.

Duke. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.—

Antonio, gratify this gentleman,
For in my mind you are much bound to him.

430

Exeunt DUKE and his train

Bassanio. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend

Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties, in lieu whereof
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.

Antonio. And stand indebted, over and above,

In love and service to you evermore.

Portia. He is well paid that is well satisfied,

And I, delivering you, am satisfied,
And therein do account myself well paid:

440

My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me when we meet again.
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

Bassanio. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further.

Take some remembrance of us as a tribute,
Not as a fee. Grant me two things, I pray you:
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

Portia. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.

[*To ANTONIO*]

Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;

[*To BASSANIO*]

And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you. 450
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more,
And you in love shall not deny me this.

Bassanio. This ring, good sir? Alas, it is a trifle!
I will not shame myself to give you this.

Portia. I will have nothing else but only this.
And now methinks I have a mind to it.

Bassanio. There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation.
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me. 460

Portia. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers.
You taught me first to beg, and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.

Bassanio. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife,
And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

Portia. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserved the ring,
She would not hold out enemy forever 470
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

Exeunt PORTIA and NERISSA

Antonio. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring;
Let his deservings and my love withal
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.

Bassanio. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him.
Give him the ring, and bring him if thou canst
Unto Antonio's house. Away, make haste.

Exit GRATIANO

Come, you and I will thither presently
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont. Come, Antonio.

480

Exeunt

SCENE II. The same. A street.

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA

Portia. Inquire the Jew's house out; give him this deed
And let him sign it. We'll away to-night,
And be a day before our husbands home:
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter GRATIANO

Gratiano. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en.
My Lord Bassanio, upon more advice,
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.

Portia. That cannot be.
His ring I do accept most thankfully,

And so I pray you tell him. Furthermore, 10
I pray you show my youth old Shylock's house.

Gratiano. That will I do.

Nerissa. Sir, I would speak with you.

[Aside to PORTIA]

I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

Portia. *[Aside to NERISSA]*

Thou mayst, I warrant!
We shall have old swearing
That they did give the rings away to men;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.—

[Aloud]

Away, make haste! Thou knowest where I will tarry. 20

PORTIA exits

Nerissa. Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?

Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I. Belmont. Avenue to PORTIA'S house.

Enter LORENZO and JESSICA

Lorenzo. The moon shines bright. In such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents
Where Cressid lay that night.

Jessica. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself
And ran dismay'd away.

10

Lorenzo. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

Jessica. In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Aeson.

Lorenzo. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

20

Jessica. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one.

Lorenzo. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

Jessica. I would out-night you did no body come,
But hark, I hear the footing of a man.

30

Enter STEPHANO

Lorenzo. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

Stephano. A friend.

Lorenzo. A friend? What friend? Your name, I pray you,
friend?

Stephano. Stephano is my name, and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont. She doth stray about
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.

Lorenzo. Who comes with her?

Stephano. None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet return'd?

40

Lorenzo. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.—
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT

Launcelot. Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!

Lorenzo. Who calls?

Launcelot. Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo?
Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

Lorenzo. Leave hollaing, man! Here.

50

Launcelot. Sola! Where? Where?

Lorenzo. Here!

Launcelot. Tell him there's a post come from my master
with his horn full of good news. My master will be
here ere morning.

Exit LAUNCELOT

Lorenzo. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter: why should we go in?—
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand,
And bring your music forth into the air.

60

Exit STEPHANO

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims.
Such harmony is in immortal souls,

But whilst this muddy vesture of decay 70
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Enter MUSICIANS

Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn!
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music.

Music

Jessica. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Lorenzo. The reason is, your spirits are attentive.
For do but note a wild and wanton herd
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood, 80
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music. Therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, 90
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA

Portia. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

Nerissa. When the moon shone we did not see the candle.

Portia. So doth the greater glory dim the less.
A substitute shines brightly as a king 100
Until a king be by, and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music, hark!

Nerissa. It is your music, madam, of the house.

Portia. Nothing is good, I see, without respect.
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

Nerissa. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Portia. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended, and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day 110
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise and true perfection!
Peace—how the moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awaked!

Music ceases

Lorenzo. That is the voice,
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

Portia. He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
By the bad voice. 120

Lorenzo. Dear lady, welcome home.

Portia. We have been praying for our husbands' welfare,
Which speed we hope the better for our words.
Are they return'd?

Lorenzo. Madam, they are not yet,
But there is come a messenger before
To signify their coming.

Portia. Go in, Nerissa.

Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence— 130
Nor you, Lorenzo—Jessica, nor you.

A tucket sounds

Lorenzo. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet.
We are no tell-tales, madam, fear you not.

Portia. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
It looks a little paler. 'Tis a day
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, and their followers

Bassanio. We should hold day with the Antipodes
If you would walk in absence of the sun.

Portia. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband, 140
And never be Bassanio so for me.
But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.

Bassanio. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
 This is the man, this is Antonio,
 To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Portia. You should in all sense be much bound to him,
 For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

Antonio. No more than I am well acquitted of.

Portia. Sir, you are very welcome to our house.
 It must appear in other ways than words, 150
 Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

Gratiano. [*To NERISSA*]
 By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong!
 In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.
 Would he were gelt that had it, for my part,
 Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

Portia. A quarrel, ho, already! What's the matter?

Gratiano. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
 That she did give me, whose posy was
 For all the world like cutler's poetry
 Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not.' 160

Nerissa. What talk you of the posy or the value?
 You swore to me when I did give it you
 That you would wear it till your hour of death,
 And that it should lie with you in your grave.
 Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
 You should have been respective and have kept it.
 Gave it a judge's clerk! No, God's my judge,
 The clerk will ne'er wear hair on 's face that had it.

Gratiano. He will, an if he live to be a man.

Nerissa. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

170

Gratiano. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
 A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,
 No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,
 A prating boy that begg'd it as a fee.
 I could not for my heart deny it him.

Portia. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
 To part so slightly with your wife's first gift,
 A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger,
 And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.
 I gave my love a ring and made him swear
 Never to part with it, and here he stands.
 I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
 Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
 That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
 You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief.
 An 'twere to me I should be mad at it.

180

Bassanio. [*Aside*]

Why, I were best to cut my left hand off
 And swear I lost the ring defending it.

Gratiano. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
 Unto the judge that begg'd it, and indeed
 Deserved it, too. And then the boy, his clerk,
 That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine,
 And neither man nor master would take aught
 But the two rings.

190

Portia. What ring gave you my lord?
 Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

Bassanio. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it. It is gone.

Portia. Even so void is your false heart of truth. 200
By heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed
Until I see the ring!

Nerissa. Nor I in yours
Till I again see mine!

Bassanio. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive for what I gave the ring,
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring, 210
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Portia. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe: 220
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring!

Bassanio. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begg'd the ring, the which I did deny him
And suffer'd him to go displeased away,

Even he that did uphold the very life
 Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
 I was enforced to send it after him.
 I was beset with shame and courtesy. 230
 My honour would not let ingratitude
 So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady,
 For, by these blessed candles of the night,
 Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
 The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Portia. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house!
 Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
 And that which you did swear to keep for me,
 I will become as liberal as you:
 I'll not deny him anything I have, 240
 No, not my body nor my husband's bed.
 Know him I shall, I am well sure of it.
 Lie not a night from home. Watch me like Argus.
 If you do not, if I be left alone,
 Now by mine honor, which is yet mine own,
 I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow.

Nerissa. And I his clerk. Therefore be well advised
 How you do leave me to mine own protection.

Gratiano. Well, do you so. Let not me take him, then,
 For if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen. 250

Antonio. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Portia. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome
 notwithstanding.

Bassanio. Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong,
 And, in the hearing of these many friends

I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself—

Portia. Mark you but that!

In both my eyes he doubly sees himself,
In each eye one. Swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit.

260

Bassanio. Nay, but hear me.

Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.

Antonio. I once did lend my body for his wealth,
Which but for him that had your husband's ring
Had quite miscarried. I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.

Portia. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this,
And bid him keep it better than the other.

270

Antonio. Here, Lord Bassanio, swear to keep this ring.

Bassanio. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

Portia. I had it of him. Pardon me, Bassanio.
For, by this ring, the doctor lay with me.

Nerissa. And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano,
For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk,
In lieu of this, last night did lie with me.

Gratiano. Why, this is like the mending of highways
In summer, where the ways are fair enough!
What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserved it?

280

Portia. Speak not so grossly.—You are all amazed.

Here is a letter; read it at your leisure.

It comes from Padua, from Bellario.

There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,

Nerissa there, her clerk. Lorenzo here

Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,

And even but now return'd. I have not yet

Enter'd my house.—Antonio, you are welcome,

And I have better news in store for you

Than you expect. Unseal this letter soon.

290

There you shall find three of your argosies

Are richly come to harbor suddenly.

You shall not know by what strange accident

I chanced on this letter.

Antonio. I am dumb.

Bassanio. Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

Gratiano. Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold?

Nerissa. Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it,

Unless he live until he be a man.

Bassanio. Sweet doctor, you shall be my bed-fellow.

300

When I am absent, then lie with my wife.

Antonio. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;

For here I read for certain that my ships

Are safely come to road.

Portia. How now, Lorenzo!

My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

Nerissa. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.

There do I give to you and Jessica,

From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of. 310

Lorenzo. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starved people.

Portia. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in,
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

Gratiano. Let it be so. The first inter'gatory
That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is
Whether till the next night she had rather stay, 320
Or go to bed now, being two hours today:
But were the day come, I should wish it dark
That I were couching with the doctor's clerk.
Well, while I live, I'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

Exeunt



POEMS

John Donne

A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDING MOURNING

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say
The breath goes now, and some say, No: 4

So let us melt, and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love. 8

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,
Men reckon what it did, and meant;
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent. 12

Dull sublunary lovers' love
(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it. 16

JOHN DONNE

But we by a love so much refined,
That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss. 20

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat. 24

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other do. 28

And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home. 32

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun. 36

HOLY SONNET X

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me. 4

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery. 8

Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
 And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
 And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
 And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then? 12
 One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
 And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

HOLY SONNET XIV

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you
 As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
 That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
 Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new. 4
 I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
 Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
 Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
 But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue. 8
 Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
 But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
 Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
 Take me to you, imprison me, for I, 12
 Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
 Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

MEDITATION XVII

Perchance, he for whom this bell tolls may be so ill, as that he knows not it tolls for him; and perchance I may think myself so much better than I am, as that they who are about me, and see my state, may have caused it to toll for me, and I know not that. The church is catholic, universal, so are all her actions; all that she does belongs to all. When she baptizes a child, that action concerns me; for that child is thereby connected to that head which is my head too, and ingrafted into that body whereof I am a member. And when she buries a man, that action concerns me: all mankind is of one Author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated; God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but God's hand is in every translation, and His hand shall bind up all our scattered leaves again for that library where every book shall lie open to one another. As therefore the bell that rings to a sermon calls not upon the preacher only, but upon the congregation to come, so this bell calls us all; but how much more me, who am brought so near the door by this sickness.

There was a contention as far as a suit (in which both piety and dignity, religion and estimation, were mingled), which of the religious orders should ring to prayers first in the morning; and it was determined, that they should ring first that rose earliest. If we understand aright the dignity of this bell that tolls for our evening prayer, we would be glad to make it ours by rising early, in that application, that it might be ours as well as his, whose indeed it is.

The bell doth toll for him that thinks it doth; and though it intermit again, yet from that minute that that occasion wrought upon him, he is united to God. Who casts not up his eye to the sun when it rises? But who takes off his eye from a comet when that breaks out? Who bends not his ear to any bell which upon any occasion rings? But who can remove it from that bell which is passing a piece of himself out of this world?

MEDITATION XVII

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

Neither can we call this a begging of misery, or a borrowing of misery, as though we were not miserable enough of ourselves, but must fetch in more from the next house, in taking upon us the misery of our neighbors. Truly it were an excusable covetousness if we did, for affliction is a treasure, and scarce any man hath enough of it. No man hath affliction enough that is not matured and ripened by it, and made fit for God by that affliction. If a man carry treasure in bullion, or in a wedge of gold, and have none coined into current money, his treasure will not defray him as he travels. Tribulation is treasure in the nature of it, but it is not current money in the use of it, except we get nearer and nearer our home, heaven, by it. Another man may be sick too, and sick to death, and this affliction may lie in his bowels, as gold in a mine, and be of no use to him; but this bell, that tells me of his affliction, digs out and applies that gold to me: if by this consideration of another's danger I take mine own into contemplation, and so secure myself, by making my recourse to my God, Who is our only security.



POEMS

George Herbert

REDEMPTION

Having been tenant long to a rich lord,
Not thriving, I resolvèd to be bold,
And make a suit unto him, to afford
A new small-rented lease, and cancel th' old. 4

In heaven at his manor I him sought;
They told me there that he was lately gone
About some land, which he had dearly bought
Long since on earth, to take possession. 8

I straight returned, and knowing his great birth,
Sought him accordingly in great resorts;
In cities, theaters, gardens, parks, and courts;
At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth 12

Of thieves and murderers; there I him espied,
Who straight, Your suit is granted, said, and died.

THE COLLAR

I struck the board, and cried, "No more;
 I will abroad!
 What? shall I ever sigh and pine?
 My lines and life are free, free as the road, 4
 Loose as the wind, as large as store.
 Shall I be still in suit?
 Have I no harvest but a thorn
 To let me blood, and not restore 8
 What I have lost with cordial fruit?
 Sure there was wine
 Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn
 Before my tears did drown it. 12
 Is the year only lost to me?
 Have I no bays to crown it,
 No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?
 All wasted? 16
 Not so, my heart; but there is fruit,
 And thou hast hands.
 Recover all thy sigh-blown age
 On double pleasures: leave thy cold dispute 20
 Of what is fit and not. Forsake thy cage,
 Thy rope of sands,
 Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee
 Good cable, to enforce and draw, 24
 And be thy law,
 While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
 Away! take heed;
 I will abroad. 28
 Call in thy death's-head there; tie up thy fears;
 He that forbears
 To suit and serve his need
 Deserves his load." 32

But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild
 At every word,
 Methought I heard one calling, Child!
 And I replied My Lord. 36

LOVE III

Love bade me welcome. Yet my soul drew back
 Guilty of dust and sin.
 But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in, 4
 Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
 If I lacked any thing.

A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:
 Love said, You shall be he. 8
 I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,
 I cannot look on thee.
 Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
 Who made the eyes but I? 12

Truth Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame
 Go where it doth deserve.
 And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?
 My dear, then I will serve. 16
 You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:
 So I did sit and eat.



POEM

Andrew Marvell

TO HIS COY MISTRESS

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day. 4
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood, 8
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow; 12
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest; 16
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.

For, lady, you deserve this state,
 Nor would I love at lower rate. 20

 But at my back I always hear
 Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
 And yonder all before us lie
 Deserts of vast eternity. 24

Thy beauty shall no more be found;
 Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
 My echoing song; then worms shall try
 That long-preserved virginity, 28
 And your quaint honour turn to dust,
 And into ashes all my lust;
 The grave's a fine and private place,
 But none, I think, do there embrace. 32

 Now therefore, while the youthful hue
 Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
 And while thy willing soul transpires
 At every pore with instant fires, 36
 Now let us sport us while we may,
 And now, like amorous birds of prey,
 Rather at once our time devour
 Than languish in his slow-chapped power. 40
 Let us roll all our strength and all
 Our sweetness up into one ball,
 And tear our pleasures with rough strife
 Through the iron gates of life: 44
 Thus, though we cannot make our sun
 Stand still, yet we will make him run.



POEMS

John Milton

ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

I

This is the Month, and this the happy morn
Wherein the Son of Heav'n's eternal King,
Of wedded Maid, and Virgin Mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages once did sing, 5
That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

II

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heav'n's high council-table, 10
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

III

Say Heav'nly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein 15
 Afford a present to the Infant God?
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain,
 To welcome him to this his new abode,
Now while the Heav'n by the Sun's team untrod,
 Hath took no print of the approaching light, 20
 And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?

IV

See how from far upon the eastern road
 The star-led Wizards haste with odors sweet:
O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
 And lay it lowly at his blessed feet; 25
Have thou the honor first, thy Lord to greet,
 And join thy voice unto the angel choir,
 From out his secret altar touched with hallow'd fire.

The Hymn

I

It was the winter wild,
While the Heav'n-born child, 30
 All meanly wrapped in the rude manger lies;
Nature in awe to him
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
 With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her 35
 To wanton with the Sun her lusty paramour.

II

Only with speeches fair
 She woos the gentle air
 To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,
 And on her naked shame, 40
 Pollute with sinful blame,
 The saintly veil of maiden white to throw,
 Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
 Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

III

But he her fears to cease, 45
 Sent down the meek-eyed Peace,
 She crown'd with olive green, came softly sliding
 Down through the turning sphere,
 His ready harbinger,
 With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing, 50
 And waving wide her myrtle wand,
 She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

IV

No war, or battle's sound
 Was heard the world around:
 The idle spear and shield were high up hung; 55
 The hooked chariot stood
 Unstain'd with hostile blood,
 The trumpet spake not to the armed throng,
 And Kings sate still with awful eye,
 As if they surely knew their sovereign Lord was by. 60

V

But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of light
 His reign of peace upon the earth began:
The winds, with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kissed, 65
 Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.

VI

The stars with deep amaze
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze, 70
 Bending one way their precious influence,
And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,
 Or Lucifer that often warn'd them thence;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow, 75
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

VII

And though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
 The Sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame, 80
As his inferior flame,
 The new-enlightened world no more should need;
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne, or burning axletree could bear.

VIII

The shepherds on the lawn, 85
 Or ere the point of dawn,
 Sate simply chatting in a rustic row;
 Full little thought they than,
 That the mighty Pan
 Was kindly come to live with them below; 90
 Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
 Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

IX

When such music sweet
 Their hearts and ears did greet,
 As never was by mortal finger strook, 95
 Divinely warbled voice
 Answering the stringed noise,
 As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
 The air such pleasure loth to lose,
 With thousand echoes still prolongs each heav'nly close. 100

X

Nature that heard such sound
 Beneath the hollow round
 Of Cynthia's seat, the airy region thrilling,
 Now was almost won
 To think her part was done, 105
 And that her reign had here its last fulfilling;
 She knew such harmony alone
 Could hold all Heav'n and Earth in happier union.

XI

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light, 110
 That with long beams the shame-fac'd night array'd,
The helméd Cherubim
And sworded Seraphim
 Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn choir 115
With unexpressive notes to Heav'n's new-born Heir.

XII

Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
 But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator Great 120
His constellations set,
 And the well-balanced world on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltring waves their oozy channel keep.

XIII

Ring out ye crystal spheres, 125
Once bless our human ears,
 (If ye have power to touch our senses so)
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
 And let the base of Heav'n's deep organ blow, 130
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full consort to th' angelic symphony.

XIV

For if such holy song
 Enwrap our fancy long,
 Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold, 135
 And speckled vanity
 Will sicken soon and die,
 And leprous sin will melt from earthly mold,
 And Hell itself will pass away,
 And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day. 140

XV

Yea Truth, and Justice then
 Will down return to men,
 Th' enameled arras of the rainbow wearing,
 And Mercy set between,
 Thron'd in celestial sheen, 145
 With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering,
 And Heav'n as at some festival,
 Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

XVI

But wisest Fate says no,
 This must not yet be so, 150
 The Babe lies yet in smiling infancy,
 That on the bitter cross
 Must redeem our loss;
 So both himself and us to glorify:
 Yet first to those chain'd in sleep, 155
 The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep.

XVII

With such a horrid clang
As on mount Sinai rang
 While the red fire, and smold'ring clouds outbrake:
The agéd Earth aghast 160
With terror of that blast,
 Shall from the surface to the center shake,
When at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.

XVIII

And then at last our bliss 165
Full and perfect is,
 But now begins; for from this happy day
Th' old Dragon underground,
In straiter limits bound,
 Not half so far casts his usurped sway, 170
And wrath to see his kingdom fail,
Swings the scaly horror of his folded tail.

XIX

The oracles are dumb,
No voice or hideous hum
 Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving. 175
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
 With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell. 180

XX

The lonely mountains o'er,
 And the resounding shore,
 A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;
 From haunted spring and dale
 Edged with poplar pale, 185
 The parting Genius is with sighing sent,
 With flower-inwov'n tresses torn
 The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

XXI

In consecrated earth,
 And on the holy hearth, 190
 The Lars, and Lemures moan with midnight plaint,
 In urns, and altars round,
 A drear, and dying sound
 Affrights the flamens at their service quaint;
 And the chill marble seems to sweat, 195
 While each peculiar power forgoes his wonted seat.

XXII

Peor, and Baalim,
 Forsake their temples dim,
 With that twice-batter'd god of Palestine,
 And moonéd Ashtaroth, 200
 Heav'n's queen and mother both,
 Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine,
 The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn,
 In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thamuz mourn.

XXIII

And sullen Moloch fled, 205
Hath left in shadows dread.

His burning idol all of blackest hue,
In vain with cymbals ring,
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue; 210
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis and Horus, and the dog Anubis hast.

XXIV

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove, or green,
Trampling the unshower'd grass with lowings loud: 215
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest,
Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud:
In vain with timbrel'd anthems dark
The sable-stoled sorcerers bear his worship'd ark. 220

XXV

He feels from Judah's land
The dreaded Infant's hand,
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;
Nor all the gods beside,
Longer dare abide, 225
Nor Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:
Our babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damned crew.

XXVI

So when the Sun in bed,
 Curtain'd with cloudy red, 230
 Pillows his chin upon an orient wave.
 The flocking shadows pale
 Troop to th' infernal jail,
 Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave,
 And the yellow-skirted Fayses 235
 Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their Moon-loved maze.

XXVII

But see the Virgin blest,
 Hath laid her Babe to rest.
 Time is our tedious song should here have ending,
 Heav'n's youngest-teemed star 240
 Hath fixed her polished car,
 Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending.
 And all about the courtly stable,
 Bright-harnessed angels sit in order serviceable.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

446

Paradise Lost

John Milton



The Verse

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

BOOK I

The Argument

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

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Horeb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,

In the beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
 Rose out of Chaos: Or if Zion Hill 10
 Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
 Fast by the oracle of God; I thence
 Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,
 That with no middle flight intends to soar
 Above th' Aonian Mount, while it pursues
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
 And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
 Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
 Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
 Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread 20
 Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss
 And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark
 Illumine, what is low raise and support;
 That to the height of this great argument
 I may assert Eternal Providence,
 And justify the ways of God to men.

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

Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile
 Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
 The Mother of mankind, what time his pride
 Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his host
 Of rebel Angels, by whose aid aspir'ng
 To set himself in glory above his peers,
 He trusted to have equal'd the Most High, 40
 If he opposed; and with ambitious aim
 Against the throne and monarchy of God

Raised impious war in Heav'n and battle proud
 With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Pow'r
 Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky
 With hideous ruin and combustion down
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
 In adamant chains and penal fire,
 Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.

Nine times the space that measures day and night 50
 To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
 Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf
 Confounded though immortal: But his doom
 Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
 Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes
 That witnessed huge affliction and dismay
 Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:
 At once as far as Angels ken he views
 The dismal situation waste and wild, 60
 A dungeon horrible, on all sides round
 As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames
 No light, but rather darkness visible
 Served only to discover sights of woe,
 Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
 And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
 That comes to all; but torture without end
 Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
 With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed:
 Such place Eternal Justice had prepared 70
 For those rebellious, here their prison ordained
 In utter darkness, and their portion set
 As far removed from God and light of Heav'n
 As from the center thrice to th' utmost pole.
 Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell!
 There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelm'd

With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
 He soon discerns, and welt'ring by his side
 One next himself in pow'r, and next in crime,
 Long after known in Palestine, and named 80
 Beelzebub. To whom th' Arch-Enemy,
 And thence in Heav'n called Satan, with bold words
 Breaking the horrid silence thus began:
 "If thou be'st he—but oh how fall'n! how changed
 From him, who in the happy realms of light
 Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine
 Myriads though bright!—if he whom mutual league,
 United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
 And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
 Joined with me once, now misery hath joined 90
 In equal ruin: into what pit thou seest
 From what height fall'n, so much the stronger proved
 He with his thunder: and till then who knew
 The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
 Nor what the Potent Victor in his rage
 Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
 Though changed in outward luster; that fixed mind
 And high disdain, from sense of injured merit,
 That with the mightiest raised me to contend,
 And to the fierce contention brought along 100
 Innumerable force of Spirits armed
 That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,
 His utmost pow'r with adverse pow'r opposed
 In dubious battle on the plains of Heav'n,
 And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
 All is not lost; th' unconquerable will,
 And study of revenge, immortal hate,
 And courage never to submit or yield:
 And what is else not to be overcome?
 That glory never shall his wrath or might 110

Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
 With suppliant knee, and deify his pow'r,
 Who from the terror of this arm so late
 Doubted his empire, that were low indeed,
 That were an ignominy and shame beneath
 This downfall; since by fate the strength of Gods
 And this Empyrean substance cannot fail,
 Since through experience of this great event
 In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
 We may with more successful hope resolve 120
 To wage by force or guile eternal war
 Irreconcilable, to our grand foe,
 Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy
 Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heav'n."

So spake th' apostate Angel, though in pain,
 Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair:
 And him thus answer'd soon his bold compeer:
 "O Prince, O Chief of many thronéd pow'rs,
 That led th' embattled Seraphim to war
 Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds 130
 Fearless, endangered Heav'n's perpetual King;
 And put to proof his high supremacy,
 Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate,
 Too well I see and rue the dire event,
 That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
 Hath lost us Heav'n, and all this mighty host
 In horrible destruction laid thus low,
 As far as Gods and Heav'nly essences
 Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
 Invincible, and vigor soon returns, 140
 Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
 Here swallowed up in endless misery.
 But what if he our Conqueror, (whom I now
 Of force believe Almighty, since no less

Then such could have o'erpow'r'd such force as ours)
 Have left us this our spirit and strength entire
 Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
 That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
 Or do him mightier service as his thralls
 By right of war, what e're his business be 150
 Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
 Or do his errands in the gloomy deep?
 What can it then avail though yet we feel
 Strength undiminished, or eternal being
 To undergo eternal punishment?"

Whereto with speedy words th' Arch-Fiend replied:
 "Fall'n Cherub, to be weak is miserable
 Doing or suffering: but of this be sure,
 To do ought good never will be our task,
 But ever to do ill our sole delight, 160
 As being the contrary to his high will
 Whom we resist. If then his providence
 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
 Our labor must be to pervert that end,
 And out of good still to find means of evil;
 Which oft times may succeed, so as perhaps
 Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
 His inmost counsels from their destin'd aim.
 But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
 His ministers of vengeance and pursuit 170
 Back to the gates of Heav'n: The sulph'rous hail
 Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
 The fiery surge that from the precipice
 Of Heav'n received us falling, and the thunder,
 Wing'd with red lightning and impetuous rage,
 Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
 To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.
 Let us not slip th' occasion, whether scorn,

Or satiate fury yield it from our foe.
 Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild, 180
 The seat of desolation, void of light,
 Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
 Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
 From off the tossing of these fiery waves,
 There rest, if any rest can harbor there,
 And, reassembling our afflicted Pow'rs,
 Consult how we may henceforth most offend
 Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,
 How overcome this dire calamity,
 What reinforcement we may gain from hope, 190
 If not what resolution from despair."

Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate
 With head up-lift above the wave, and eyes
 That sparkling blazed, his other parts besides
 Prone on the flood, extended long and large
 Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
 As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
 Titanian, or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
 Briarios or Typhon, whom the den
 By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast 200
 Leviathan, which God of all his works
 Created hugest that swim th' ocean stream:
 Him, haply slumb'ring on the Norway foam,
 The pilot of some small night-founder'd skiff,
 Deeming some island, oft, as sea-men tell,
 With fixéd anchor in his scaly rind
 Moors by his side under the lee, while night
 Invests the sea, and wishéd morn delays:
 So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay
 Chained on the burning lake, nor ever thence 210
 Had ris'n or heaved his head, but that the will
 And high permission of all-ruling Heav'n

Left him at large to his own dark designs,
 That with reiterated crimes he might
 Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
 Evil to others, and enraged might see
 How all his malice served but to bring forth
 Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shown
 On man by him seduced, but on himself
 Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance poured. 220

Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
 His mighty stature; on each hand the flames
 Driv'n backward slope their pointing spires, and rolled
 In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid vale.
 Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
 Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air
 That felt unusual weight, till on dry land
 He lights, if it were land that ever burned
 With solid, as the lake with liquid fire;
 And such appeared in hue, as when the force 230
 Of subterranean wind transports a hill
 Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
 Of thund'ring Aetna, whose combustible
 And fueled entrails thence conceiving fire,
 Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
 And leave a singéd bottom all involved
 With stench and smoke: Such resting found the sole
 Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate,
 Both glorying to have 'scaped the Stygian flood
 As Gods, and by their own recovered strength, 240
 Not by the sufferance of Supernal Pow'r.

"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
 Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat
 That we must change for Heav'n, this mournful gloom
 For that celestial light? Be't so, since he
 Who now is Sovereign can dispose and bid

What shall be right: farthest from him is best
 Whom reason hath equal'd, force hath made supreme
 Above his equals. Farewell happy fields
 Where joy forever dwells: Hail horrors, hail 250
 Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell
 Receive thy new possessor: One who brings
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.
 The mind is its own place, and in itself
 Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.
 What matter where, if I be still the same,
 And what I should be, all but less than he
 Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
 We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence: 260
 Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
 To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:
 Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n.
 But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
 Th' associates and co-partners of our loss
 Lie thus astonished on th' oblivious pool,
 And call them not to share with us their part
 In this unhappy mansion, or once more
 With rallied arms to try what may be yet
 Regain'd in Heav'n, or what more lost in Hell?" 270
 So Satan spake, and him Beelzebub
 Thus answer'd: "Leader of those armies bright,
 Which but th' Omnipotent none could have foiled,
 If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
 Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft
 In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
 Of battle when it raged, in all assaults
 Their surest signal, they will soon resume
 New courage and revive, though now they lie
 Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire, 280

As we erewhile, astounded and amazed,
No wonder, fall'n such a pernicious height!"

He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield
Ethereal temper, massy, large and round,
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the Moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At ev'ning from the top of Fesole,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
Rivers or mountains in her spotty globe.

290

His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great admiral, were but a wand—
He walked with to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marle, not like those steps
On Heaven's azure, and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire;
Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflaméd sea, he stood and called
His legions, Angel forms, who lay entranced
Thick as autumnal Leaves that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades
High overarch'd embow'r; or scattered sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
Hath vexed the Red Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses
And broken chariot wheels. So thick bestrown,
Abject and lost, lay these, cov'ring the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.
He called so loud, that all the hollow deep

300

310

Of Hell resounded: "Princes, Potentates,
 Warriors, the Flow'r of Heav'n, once yours, now lost,
 If such astonishment as this can seize
 Eternal Spirits; or have ye chos'n this place
 After the toil of battle to repose
 Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find 320
 To slumber here, as in the vales of Heav'n?
 Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
 To adore the Conqueror? Who now beholds
 Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood
 With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
 His swift pursuers from Heav'n-gates discern
 Th' advantage, and descending tread us down
 Thus drooping, or with linkéd thunderbolts
 Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?
 Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n!" 330

They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
 Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
 On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
 Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
 Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
 In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
 Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed
 Innumerable. As when the potent rod
 Of Amram's son in Egypt's evil day
 Wav'd round the coast, up call'd a pitchy cloud 340
 Of Locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
 That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
 Like might, and darken'd all the land of Nile:
 So numberless were those bad Angels seen
 Hov'ring on wing under the cope of Hell
 'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
 Till, as a signal giv'n, th' uplifted spear
 Of their great Sultan waving to direct

Their course, in even balance down they light
 On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain; 350
 A multitude, like which the populous North
 Poured never from her frozen loins, to pass
 Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
 Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
 Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.
 Forthwith from every squadron and each band
 The heads and leaders thither haste where stood
 Their great Commander—godlike shapes and forms
 Excelling human, princely dignities,
 And Pow'rs that erst in Heaven sat on thrones; 360
 Though of their names in heav'nly records now
 Be no memorial blotted out and 'rased
 By their rebellion from the Books of Life.
 Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
 Got them new names, till wandering o'er the Earth,
 Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,
 By falsities and lies the greatest part
 Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
 God their Creator, and th' invisible
 Glory of him that made them, to transform 370
 Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
 With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
 And Devils to adore for Deities:
 Then were they known to men by various names,
 And various idols through the heathen world.
 Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last,
 Roused from the slumber, on that fiery couch,
 At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth
 Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
 While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof? 380
 The chief were those who, from the pit of Hell
 Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst fix

Their seats long after next the seat of God,
 Their altars by his altar, Gods adored
 Among the nations round, and durst abide
 Jehovah thund'ring out of Zion, throned
 Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed
 Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,
 Abominations; and with curséd things
 His holy rites, and solemn feasts profaned, 390
 And with their darkness durst affront his light.
 First Moloch, horrid king besmeared with blood
 Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears,
 Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud
 Their children's cries unheard, that passed through fire
 To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
 Worshiped in Rabba and her wat'ry plain,
 In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
 Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
 Audacious neighborhood, the wisest heart 400
 Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
 His temple right 'gainst the temple of God
 On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove
 The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence
 And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.
 Next Chemos, th' obscene dread of Moab's sons,
 From Aroar to Nebo, and the wild
 Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
 And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
 The flow'ry dale of Sibma clad with vines, 410
 And Eleale to th' asphaltic pool.
 Peor his other name, when he enticed
 Israel in Sittim on their march from Nile
 To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
 Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
 E'en to that hill of scandal, by the grove

Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate;
 Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
 With these came they who, from the bord'ring flood
 Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts 420
 Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
 Of Baalim and Ashtaroth—those male,
 These feminine. For Spirits when they please
 Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
 And uncompounded is their essence pure,
 Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
 Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
 Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose
 Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
 Can execute their aerie purposes, 430
 And works of love or enmity fulfill.
 For those the race of Israel oft forsook
 Their living strength, and unfrequented left
 His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
 To bestial Gods; for which their heads as low
 Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
 Of despicable foes. With these in troop
 Came Astoreth, whom the Phoenicians called
 Astarte, Queen of Heav'n, with crescent horns;
 To whose bright image nightly by the Moon 440
 Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs,
 In Zion also not unsung, where stood
 Her Temple on th' offensive mountain, built
 By that uxorious king, whose heart though large,
 Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
 To idols foul. Thammuz came next behind,
 Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
 The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
 In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
 While smooth Adonis from his native rock 450

Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
 Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
 Infected Zion's daughters with like heat,
 Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
 Ezekiel saw, when by the vision led
 His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
 Of alienated Judah. Next came one
 Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark
 Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopped off
 In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge, 460
 Where he fell flat, and shamed his worshipers:
 Dagon his name, sea monster, upward man
 And downward fish: yet had his temple high
 Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
 Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon
 And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
 Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat
 Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
 Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
 He also 'gainst the house of God was bold: 470
 A leper once he lost and gained a king,
 Ahaz his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
 God's altar to disparage and displace
 For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
 His odious offerings, and adore the Gods
 Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared
 A crew who under names of old renown—
 Osiris, Isis, Orus and their train—
 With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
 Fanatic Egypt and her priests, to seek 480
 Their wand'ring Gods disguised in brutish forms
 Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape
 Th' infection when their borrowed gold composed
 The calf in Horeb: and the rebel king

Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
 Likening his Maker to the grazed ox,
 Jehovah, who in one night when he passed
 From Egypt marching, equal'd with one stroke
 Both her first-born and all her bleating Gods.
 Belial came last; than whom a Spirit more lewd 490
 Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
 Vice for itself: To him no temple stood
 Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
 In temples and at altars, when the priest
 Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled
 With lust and violence the house of God?
 In courts and palaces he also reigns,
 And in luxurious cities, where the noise
 Of riot ascends above their loftiest tow'rs,
 And injury and outrage; and, when night 500
 Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
 Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.
 Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
 In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
 Exposed a matron to avoid worse rape.

These were the prime in order and in might;
 The rest were long to tell; though far renowned
 Th' Ionian Gods—of Javan's issue held
 Gods, yet confessed later than Heav'n and Earth
 Their boasted parents—Titan, Heav'n's firstborn, 510
 With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
 By younger Saturn, he from mightier Jove,
 His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
 So Jove usurping reigned. These, first in Crete
 And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
 Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,
 Their highest Heav'n; or on the Delphian cliff,
 Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds

Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old
 Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields, 520
 And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost isles.

All these and more came flocking; but with looks
 Downcast and damp, yet such wherein appeared
 Obscure some glimpse of joy, to have found their Chief
 Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
 In loss itself; which on his count'nance cast
 Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride
 Soon recollecting, with high words that bore
 Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
 Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears. 530

Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound
 Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
 His mighty standard; that proud honor claimed
 Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:
 Who forthwith from the glitt'ring staff unfurled
 Th' imperial ensign, which full high advanced,
 Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind
 With gems and golden luster rich emblazed,
 Seraphic arms and trophies: all the while
 Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds: 540

At which the universal host upsent
 A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond
 Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
 All in a moment through the gloom were seen
 Ten thousand banners rise into the air
 With orient colors waving; with them rose
 A forest huge of spears: and thronging helms
 Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
 Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
 In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood 550
 Of flutes and soft recorders—such as raised
 To height of noblest temper heroes old

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

By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
 Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
 Their dread Commander: he above the rest
 In shape and gesture proudly eminent 590
 Stood like a tow'r; his form had yet not lost
 All her original brightness, nor appeared
 Less than Archangel ruined, and th' excess
 Of glory obscured: As when the Sun new-ris'n
 Looks through the horizontal misty air
 Shorn of his beams, or from behind the Moon
 In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
 On half the nations, and with fear of change
 Perplexes monarchs. Dark'n'd so, yet shone 600
 Above them all th' Archangel: but his face
 Deep scars of thunder had entrenched, and care
 Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
 Of dauntless courage, and consid'rate pride
 Waiting revenge. Cruél his eye, but cast
 Signs of remorse and passion to behold
 The fellows of his crime, the follow'rs rather
 (Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
 Forever now to have their lot in pain—
 Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
 Of Heav'n, and from eternal splendors flung 610
 For his revolt—yet faithful how they stood,
 Their glory withered, as when Heaven's fire
 Hath scathed the forest oaks, or mountain pines,
 With singéd top their stately growth, though bare,
 Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
 To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
 From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
 With all his peers: attention held them mute.
 Thrice he assayed, and thrice in spite of scorn,
 Tears such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last 620

Words interwove with sighs found out their way:

“O Myriads of immortal Spirits, O Pow’rs
 Matchless, but with th’ Almighty!—and that strife
 Was not inglorious, though th’ event was dire,
 As this place testifies, and this dire change
 Hateful to utter. But what pow’r of mind,
 Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
 Of knowledge past or present, could have feared
 How such united force of Gods, how such
 As stood like these, could ever know repulse? 630
 For who can yet believe, though after loss,
 That all these puissant legions, whose exile
 Hath emptied Heav’n, shall fail to re-ascend
 Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
 For me be witness all the host of Heav’n,
 If counsels different, or danger shunned
 By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
 Monarch in Heav’n till then as one secure
 Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
 Consent or custom, and his regal state 640
 Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed,
 Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
 Henceforth his might we know, and know our own
 So as not either to provoke, or dread
 New war, provoked; our better part remains
 To work in close design, by fraud or guile
 What force effected not: that he no less
 At length from us may find, who overcomes
 By force, hath overcome but half his foe.
 Space may produce new worlds; whereof so rife 650
 There went a fame in Heav’n that he ere long
 Intended to create, and therein plant
 A generation, whom his choice regard
 Should favor equal to the Sons of Heav’n:

Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
 Our first eruption, thither or elsewhere:
 For this infernal pit shall never hold
 Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor th' abyss
 Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
 Full counsel must mature: Peace is despaired, 660
 For who can think submission? War then, war
 Open or understood must be resolved."

He spake: and to confirm his words, out-flew
 Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
 Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
 Far round illumined Hell: highly they raged
 Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
 Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
 Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heav'n.

There stood a hill not far whose grisly top 670
 Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
 Shone with a glossy scurf—undoubted sign
 That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
 The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,
 A numerous brigade hastened; as when bands
 Of pioneers with spade and pickaxe armed
 Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
 Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on—
 Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
 From Heav'n, for even in Heav'n his looks and thoughts 680
 Were always downward bent, admiring more
 The riches of Heav'n's pavement, trodden gold,
 Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
 In vision beatific. By him first
 Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
 Ransack'd the center, and with impious hands
 Riff'd the bowels of their mother Earth
 For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew

Open'd into the hill a spacious wound
 And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire 690
 That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best
 Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
 Who boast in mortal things, and wond'ring tell
 Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
 Learn how their greatest monuments of fame
 And strength and art are easily out-done
 By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
 What in an age they with incessant toil
 And hands innumerable scarce perform.
 Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared, 700
 That underneath had veins of liquid fire
 Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
 With wondrous art founded the massy ore,
 Sev'ring each kind, and scummed the bullion-dross:
 A third as soon had formed within the ground
 A various mould, and from the boiling cells
 By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook,
 As in an organ from one blast of wind
 To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
 Anon out of the earth a fabric huge 710
 Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
 Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
 Built like a temple, where pilasters round
 Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
 With golden architrave; nor did there want
 Cornice or freize, with bossy sculptures grav'n;
 The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon,
 Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
 Equaled in all their glories, to enshrine
 Belus or Serapis their Gods, or seat 720
 Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
 In wealth and luxury. Th' ascending pile

Stood fixed her stately height, and straight the doors
 Op'ning their brazen folds discover wide
 Within, her ample spaces, o'er the smooth
 And level pavement: from the archéd roof,
 Pendant by subtle magic, many a row
 Of starry lamps and blazing cressets fed
 With naphtha and asphaltus yielded light
 As from a sky. The hasty multitude 730
 Admiring entered, and the work some praise
 And some the architect: his hand was known
 In Heav'n by many a towered structure high,
 Where sceptred Angels held their residence,
 And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King
 Exalted to such pow'r, and gave to rule,
 Each in his hierarchy, the orders bright.
 Nor was his name unheard or unadored
 In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land
 Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell 740
 From Heav'n they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
 Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
 To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
 A summer's day; and with the setting Sun
 Dropped from the zenith like a falling Star,
 On Lemnos th' Aegean isle: thus they relate,
 Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
 Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
 To have built in Heav'n high tow'rs; nor did he 'scape
 By all his engines, but was headlong sent 750
 With his industrious crew to build in Hell.

Meanwhile the wingéd heralds, by command
 Of sov'reign pow'r, with awful ceremony
 And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
 A solemn council forthwith to be held
 At Pandemonium, the high capital

Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
 From every band and squaréd regiment
 By place or choice the worthiest; they anon
 With hundreds and with thousands trooping came 760
 Attended. All access was thronged, the gates
 And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
 (Though like a covered field, where champions bold
 Wont ride in armed, and at the sultan's chair
 Defied the best of Paynim chivalry
 To mortal combat or career with lance),
 Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
 Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
 In springtime, when the Sun with Taurus rides,
 Pour forth their populous youth about the hive 770
 In clusters; they among fresh dews and flow'rs
 Fly to and fro, or on the smoothéd plank,
 The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
 New rubbed with balm, expatiate and confer
 Their state affairs; so thick the aerie crowd
 Swarmed and were straitened; till the signal giv'n.
 Behold a wonder! they but now who seemed
 In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons
 Now less than smallest Dwarfs, in narrow room
 Throng numberless—like that Pygmean race 780
 Beyond the Indian mount; or Fairy Elves,
 Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side
 Or fountain some belated peasant sees,
 Or dreams he sees, while overhead the Moon
 Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth
 Wheels her pale course, they on their mirth and dance
 Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;
 At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
 Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
 Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large, 790

Though without number still amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within
And in their own dimensions like themselves
The great Seraphic lords and Cherubim
In close recess and secret conclave sat,
A thousand Demigods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then
And summons read, the great consult began.

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BOOK II

The Argument

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

High on a throne of royal state, which far
 Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
 Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
 Show'rs on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
 Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
 To that bad eminence; and, from despair
 Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
 Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
 Vain war with Heav'n; and, by success untaught,
 His proud imaginations thus displayed:

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“Pow'rs and Dominions, Deities of Heav'n!
 For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
 Immortal vigor, though oppressed and fall'n,
 I give not Heav'n for lost: from this descent
 Celestial virtues rising will appear
 More glorious and more dread than from no fall,

And trust themselves to fear no second fate!
 Me though just right, and the fixed laws of Heav'n,
 Did first create your leader, next, free choice
 With what besides in council or in fight 20
 Hath been achieved of merit, yet this loss,
 Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
 Established in a safe, unenvied throne,
 Yielded with full consent. The happier state
 In Heav'n, which follows dignity, might draw
 Envy from each inferior; but who here
 Will envy whom the highest place exposes
 Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
 Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
 Of endless pain? Where there is, then, no good 30
 For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
 From faction: for none sure will claim in Hell
 Precedence; none whose portion is so small
 Of present pain that with ambitious mind
 Will covet more! With this advantage, then,
 To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
 More than can be in Heav'n, we now return
 To claim our just inheritance of old,
 Surer to prosper than prosperity
 Could have assured us; and by what best way, 40
 Whether of open war or covert guile,
 We now debate. Who can advise may speak."

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

“My sentence is for open war. Of wiles,
 More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
 Contrive who need, or when they need; not now.
 For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest—
 Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
 The signal to ascend—sit ling’ring here,
 Heav’n’s fugitives, and for their dwelling-place
 Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
 The prison of his tyranny who reigns
 By our delay? No! let us rather choose, 60
 Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once
 O’er Heav’n’s high tow’rs to force resistless way,
 Turning our tortures into horrid arms
 Against the Torturer; when, to meet the noise
 Of his almighty engine, he shall hear
 Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see
 Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
 Among his Angels, and his throne itself
 Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire,
 His own invented torments. But perhaps 70
 The way seems difficult, and steep to scale
 With upright wing against a higher foe!
 Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
 Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,
 That in our proper motion we ascend
 Up to our native seat; descent and fall
 To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
 When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear
 Insulting, and pursued us through the deep,
 With what compulsion and laborious flight 80
 We sunk thus low? Th’ ascent is easy, then;
 Th’ event is feared! Should we again provoke
 Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find
 To our destruction, if there be in Hell

Fear to be worse destroyed! What can be worse
 Than to dwell here, driv'n out from bliss, condemned
 In this abhorréd deep to utter woe!
 Where pain of unextinguishable fire
 Must exercise us without hope of end
 The vassals of his anger, when the scourge 90
 Inexorably, and the torturing hour,
 Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus,
 We should be quite abolished, and expire.
 What fear we then? what doubt we to incense
 His utmost ire? which, to the height enraged,
 Will either quite consume us, and reduce
 To nothing this essential—happier far
 Than miserable to have eternal being!—
 Or, if our substance be indeed divine,
 And cannot cease to be, we are at worst 100
 On this side nothing; and by proof we feel
 Our pow'r sufficient to disturb his Heav'n,
 And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
 Though inaccessible, his fatal throne:
 Which, if not victory, is yet revenge.”

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

“I should be much for open war, O Peers,
 As not behind in hate, if what was urged 120
 Main reason to persuade immediate war
 Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
 Ominous conjecture on the whole success;
 When he who most excels in fact of arms,
 In what he counsels and in what excels
 Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
 And utter dissolution, as the scope
 Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
 First, what revenge? The tow’rs of Heav’n are filled
 With arméd watch, that render all access 130
 Impregnable: oft on the bord’ring deep
 Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
 Scout far and wide into the realm of night,
 Scorning surprise. Or, could we break our way
 By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
 With blackest insurrection to confound
 Heav’n’s purest light, yet our great enemy,
 All incorruptible, would on his throne
 Sit unpolluted, and th’ ethereal mould,
 Incapable of stain, would soon expel 140
 Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
 Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
 Is flat despair: we must exasperate
 Th’ Almighty Victor to spend all his rage;
 And that must end us; that must be our cure,
 To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,
 Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
 Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
 To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
 In the wide womb of uncreated night, 150
 Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows,
 Let this be good, whether our angry foe

Can give it, or will ever? How he can
 Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.
 Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
 Belike through impotence or unaware,
 To give his enemies their wish, and end
 Them in his anger whom his anger saves
 To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we, then?'
 Say they who counsel war; 'we are decreed,
 Reserved and destined to eternal woe;
 Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
 What can we suffer worse?' Is this, then, worst—
 Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
 What when we fled amain, pursued and struck
 With Heav'n's afflicting thunder, and besought
 The deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed
 A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
 Chained on the burning lake? That sure was worse.
 What if the breath that kindled those grim fires,
 Awaked, should blow them into sev'nfold rage,
 And plunge us in the flames; or from above
 Should intermitted vengeance arm again
 His red right hand to plague us? What if all
 Her stores were opened, and this firmament
 Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
 Impendent horrors, threat'ning hideous fall
 One day upon our heads; while we perhaps,
 Designing or exhorting glorious war,
 Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled,
 Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
 Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
 Under yon boiling ocean, wrapped in chains,
 There to converse with everlasting groans,
 Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
 Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.

War, therefore, open or concealed, alike
 My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile
 With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye
 Views all things at one view? He from Heav'n's height 190
 All these our motions vain sees and derides,
 Not more almighty to resist our might
 Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
 Shall we, then, live thus vile, the race of Heav'n
 Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here
 Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,
 By my advice; since fate inevitable
 Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
 The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
 Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust 200
 That so ordains. This was at first resolved,
 If we were wise, against so great a foe
 Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
 I laugh when those who at the spear are bold
 And vent'rous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear
 What yet they know must follow, to endure
 Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
 The sentence of their conqueror. This is now
 Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
 Our supreme foe in time may much remit 210
 His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,
 Not mind us not offending, satisfied
 With what is punished; whence these raging fires
 Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
 Our purer essence then will overcome
 Their noxious vapor; or, inured, not feel;
 Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed
 In temper and in nature, will receive
 Familiar the fierce heat; and, void of pain,
 This horror will grow mild, this darkness light; 220

Besides what hope the never-ending flight
 Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
 Worth waiting—since our present lot appears
 For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
 If we procure not to ourselves more woe.”

Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason’s garb,
 Counseled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
 Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake:

“Either to disenthroned the King of Heav’n
 We war, if war be best, or to regain 230
 Our own right lost. Him to unthroned we then
 May hope, when everlasting fate shall yield
 To fickle chance, and Chaos judge the strife.
 The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
 The latter; for what place can be for us
 Within Heav’n’s bound, unless Heav’n’s Lord supreme
 We overpow’r? Suppose he should relent
 And publish grace to all, on promise made
 Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
 Stand in his presence humble, and receive 240
 Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
 With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
 Forced Hallelujahs, while he lordly sits
 Our envied Sovereign, and his altar breathes
 Ambrosial odors and ambrosial flow’rs,
 Our servile off’rings? This must be our task
 In Heav’n, this our delight. How wearisome
 Eternity so spent in worship paid
 To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,
 By force impossible, by leave obtained 250
 Unacceptable, though in Heav’n, our state
 Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek
 Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
 Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,

Free and to none accountable, preferring
 Hard liberty before the easy yoke
 Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
 Then most conspicuous when great things of small,
 Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
 We can create, and in what place so e'er 260
 Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
 Through labor and endurance. This deep world
 Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
 Thick clouds and dark doth Heav'n's all-ruling Sire
 Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
 And with the majesty of darkness round
 Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar.
 Mustering their rage, and Heav'n resembles Hell!
 As he our darkness, cannot we his light
 Imitate when we please? This desert soil 270
 Wants not her hidden luster, gems and gold;
 Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise
 Magnificence; and what can Heav'n show more?
 Our torments also may, in length of time,
 Become our elements, these piercing fires
 As soft as now severe, our temper changed
 Into their temper; which must needs remove
 The sensible of pain. All things invite
 To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
 Of order, how in safety best we may 280
 Compose our present evils, with regard
 Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
 All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."

He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled
 Th' assembly as when hollow rocks retain
 The sound of blust'ring winds, which all night long
 Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
 Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose bark by chance

Or pinnacle, anchors in a craggy bay
 After the tempest. Such applause was heard 290
 As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,
 Advising peace: for such another field
 They dreaded worse than Hell; so much the fear
 Of thunder and the sword of Michael
 Wrought still within them; and no less desire
 To found this nether empire, which might rise,
 By policy and long process of time,
 In emulation opposite to Heav'n.
 Which when Beelzebub perceived—than whom,
 Satan except, none higher sat—with grave 300
 Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
 A pillar of state. Deep on his front engrav'n
 Deliberation sat, and public care;
 And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
 Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood
 With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear
 The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look
 Drew audience and attention still as night
 Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake:
 "Thrones and Imperial Pow'rs, offspring of Heav'n, 310
 Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now
 Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called
 Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote
 Inclines—here to continue, and build up here
 A growing empire; doubtless! while we dream,
 And know not that the King of Heav'n hath doomed
 This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat
 Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
 From Heav'n's high jurisdiction, in new league
 Banded against his throne, but to remain 320
 In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,
 Under th' inevitable curb, reserved

His captive multitude. For he, to be sure,
 In height or depth, still first and last will reign
 Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
 By our revolt, but over Hell extend
 His empire, and with iron sceptre rule
 Us here, as with his golden those in Heav'n.
 What sit we then projecting peace and war?
 War hath determined us and foiled with loss 330
 Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
 Vouchsafed or sought; for what peace will be giv'n
 To us enslaved, but custody severe,
 And stripes and arbitrary punishment
 Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
 But, to our pow'r, hostility and hate,
 Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,
 Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least
 May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
 In doing what we most in suff'ring feel? 340
 Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
 With dangerous expedition to invade
 Heav'n, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,
 Or ambush from the deep. What if we find
 Some easier enterprise? There is a place
 (If ancient and prophetic fame in Heav'n
 Err not)—another world, the happy seat
 Of some new race, called man, about this time
 To be created like to us, though less
 In pow'r and excellence, but favored more 350
 Of him who rules above; so was his will
 Pronounced among the Gods, and by an oath
 That shook Heav'n's whole circumference confirmed.
 Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
 What creatures there inhabit, of what mould
 Or substance, how endued, and what their pow'r

And where their weakness: how attempted best,
 By force or subtlety. Though Heav'n be shut,
 And Heav'n's high Arbitrator sit secure
 In his own strength, this place may lie exposed, 360
 The utmost border of his kingdom, left
 To their defense who hold it: here, perhaps,
 Some advantageous act may be achieved
 By sudden onset—either with Hell-fire
 To waste his whole creation, or possess
 All as our own, and drive, as we were driv'n,
 The puny habitants; or, if not drive,
 Seduce them to our party, that their God
 May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
 Abolish his own works. This would surpass 370
 Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
 In our confusion, and our joy upraise
 In his disturbance; when his darling sons,
 Hurl'd headlong to partake with us, shall curse
 Their frail original, and faded bliss—
 Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth
 Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
 Hatching vain empires." Thus Beelzebub
 Pleaded his devilish counsel—first devised
 By Satan, and in part proposed: for whence, 380
 But from the author of all ill, could spring
 So deep a malice, to confound the race
 Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell
 To mingle and involve, done all to spite
 The great Creator? But their spite still serves
 His glory to augment. The bold design
 Pleas'd highly those infernal States, and joy
 Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent
 They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews:
 "Well have ye judged, well ended long debate, 390

Synod of Gods, and, like to what ye are,
 Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep
 Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
 Nearer our ancient seat—perhaps in view
 Of those bright confines, whence, with neighb’ring arms,
 And opportune excursion, we may chance
 Re-enter Heav’n; or else in some mild zone
 Dwell, not unvisited of Heav’n’s fair light,
 Secure, and at the bright’ning orient beam
 Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious air, 400
 To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
 Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom shall we send
 In search of this new world? whom shall we find
 Sufficient? who shall tempt with wand’ring feet
 The dark, unbottomed, infinite abyss,
 And through the palpable obscure find out
 His uncouth way, or spread his airy flight,
 Upborne with indefatigable wings
 Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive
 The happy isle? What strength, what art, can then 410
 Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe,
 Through the strict senteries and stations thick
 Of Angels watching round? Here he had need
 All circumspection: and we now no less
 Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send
 The weight of all, and our last hope, relies.”

This said, he sat; and expectation held
 His look suspense, awaiting who appeared
 To second, or oppose, or undertake
 The perilous attempt. But all sat mute, 420
 Pond’ring the danger with deep thoughts; and each
 In other’s count’nance read his own dismay,
 Astonished. None among the choice and prime
 Of those Heav’n-warring champions could be found

So hardy as to proffer or accept,
 Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last,
 Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
 Above his fellows, with monarchal pride
 Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:

“O progeny of Heav’n! Empyreal Thrones! 430

With reason hath deep silence and demur
 Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the way
 And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light.
 Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
 Outrageous to devour, immures us round
 Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant,
 Barred over us, prohibit all egress.

These passed, if any pass, the void profound
 Of unessential Night receives him next,
 Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being 440
 Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.

If thence he ’scape, into whatever world,
 Or unknown region, what remains him less
 Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?
 But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
 And this imperial sovereignty, adorned
 With splendor, armed with pow’r, if aught proposed
 And judged of public moment in the shape
 Of difficulty or danger, could deter

Me from attempting. Wherefore do I ’ssume 450

These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
 Refusing to accept as great a share
 Of hazard as of honor, due alike
 To him who reigns, and so much to him due
 Of hazard more as he above the rest
 High honored sits? Go, therefore, mighty Pow’rs,
 Terror of Heav’n, though fall’n; intend at home,
 While here shall be our home, what best may ease

The present misery, and render Hell
 More tolerable; if there be cure or charm 460
 To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
 Of this ill mansion: intermit no watch
 Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad
 Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
 Deliv'rance for us all. This enterprise
 None shall partake with me." Thus saying, rose
 The Monarch, and prevented all reply;
 Prudent lest, from his resolution raised,
 Others among the chief might offer now,
 Certain to be refused, what erst they feared, 470
 And, so refused, might in opinion stand
 His rivals, winning cheap the high repute
 Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they
 Dreaded not more th' adventure than his voice
 Forbidding; and at once with him they rose.
 Their rising all at once was as the sound
 Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
 With awful rev'rence prone, and as a God
 Extol him equal to the highest in Heav'n.
 Nor failed they to express how much they praised 480
 That for the general safety he despised
 His own: for neither do the Spirits damned
 Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast
 Their specious deeds on Earth, which glory excites,
 Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal.
 Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
 Ended, rejoicing in their matchless Chief:
 As, when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
 Ascending, while the North wind sleeps, o'erspread
 Heav'n's cheerful face, the low'ring element 490
 Scowls o'er the darkened landscape snow or show'r,
 If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,

Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
 The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
 Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
 Oh shame to men! Devil with devil damned
 Firm concord holds; men only disagree
 Of creatures rational, though under hope
 Of heav'nly grace, and, God proclaiming peace,
 Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife 500
 Among themselves, and levy cruél wars
 Wasting the Earth, each other to destroy:
 As if (which might induce us to accord)
 Man had not hellish foes enough besides,
 That day and night for his destruction wait.

The Stygian council thus dissolved; and forth
 In order came the grand infernal Peers:
 Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seemed
 Alone th' antagonist of Heav'n, nor less
 Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp supreme, 510
 And god-like imitated state: him round
 A globe of fiery Seraphim enclosed
 With bright emblazonry, and horrent arms.
 Then of their session ended they bid cry
 With trumpet's regal sound the great result:
 Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
 Put to their mouths the sounding alchemy,
 By herald's voice explained; the hollow abyss
 Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
 With deaf'ning shout returned them loud acclaim. 520
 Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised
 By false presumptuous hope, the rangéd Pow'rs
 Disband; and, wand'ring, each his several way
 Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
 Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest find
 Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain

The irksome hours, till his great Chief return.
 Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
 Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
 As at th' Olympian games or Pythian fields; 530
 Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
 With rapid wheels, or fronted brigades form:
 As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
 Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
 To battle in the clouds; before each van
 Prick forth the airy knights, and couch their spears,
 Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
 From either end of heav'n the welkin burns.
 Others, with vast Typhoean rage, more fell,
 Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air 540
 In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar:
 As when Alcides, from Oechalia crowned
 With conquest, felt th' envenomed robe, and tore
 Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
 And Lichas from the top of Oeta threw
 Into th' Euboic sea. Others, more mild,
 Retreated in a silent valley, sing
 With notes angelical to many a harp
 Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
 By doom of battle, and complain that Fate 550
 Free virtue should enthrall to force or chance.
 Their song was partial; but the harmony
 (What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)
 Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
 The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
 (For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense)
 Others apart sat on a hill retired,
 In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
 Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate—
 Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute, 560

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

Burns froze, and cold performs th' effect of fire.
 Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,
 At certain revolutions all the damned
 Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
 Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
 From beds of raging fire to starve in ice 600
 Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
 Immovable, infixed, and frozen round
 Periods of time—thence hurried back to fire.
 They ferry over this Lethean sound
 Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
 And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
 The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
 In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
 All in one moment, and so near the brink;
 But fate withstands, and, to oppose th' attempt, 610
 Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards
 The ford, and of itself the water flies
 All taste of living wight, as once it fled
 The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
 In confused march forlorn, th' adventurous bands,
 With shudd'ring horror pale, and eyes aghast,
 Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
 No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
 They passed, and many a region dolorous,
 O'er many a frozen, many a fiery alp, 620
 Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death—
 A universe of death, which God by curse
 Created evil, for evil only good;
 Where all life dies, Death lives, and nature breeds,
 Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
 Abominable, unutterable, and worse
 Than fables yet have feigned or fear conceived,
 Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.

Meanwhile the adversary of God and Man,
 Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design, 630
 Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell
 Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
 He scours the right hand coast, sometimes the left;
 Now shaves with level wing the deep, then soars
 Up to the fiery concave tow'ring high.
 As when far off at sea a fleet descried
 Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
 Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
 Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
 Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood, 640
 Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,
 Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seemed
 Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear
 Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
 And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,
 Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
 Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
 Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
 On either side a formidable shape.
 The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair, 650
 But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
 Voluminous and vast—a serpent armed
 With mortal sting. About her middle round
 A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked
 With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung
 A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep,
 If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,
 And kennel there; yet there still barked and howled
 Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these
 Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts 660
 Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;
 Nor uglier follow the Night-Hag, when, called

In secret, riding through the air she comes,
 Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
 With Lapland witches, while the lab'ring Moon
 Eclipses at their charms. The other shape—
 If shape it might be called that shape had none
 Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
 Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
 For each seemed either—black it stood as Night, 670
 Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
 And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head
 The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
 Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
 The monster moving onward came as fast
 With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode.
 Th' undaunted Fiend what this might be admired—
 Admired, not feared (God and his Son except,
 Created thing naught valued he nor shunned)—
 And with disdainful look thus first began: 680
 “Whence and what art thou, execrable shape,
 That dar'st, though grim and terrible, advance
 Thy miscreated front athwart my way
 To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,
 That be assured, without leave asked of thee.
 Retire; or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
 Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heav'n.”
 To whom the Goblin, full of wrath, replied:
 “Art thou that traitor Angel? art thou he,
 Who first broke peace in Heav'n and faith, till then 690
 Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms
 Drew after him the third part of Heav'n's sons,
 Conjured against the Highest, for which both thou
 And they, outcast from God, are here condemned
 To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
 And reckon'st thou thyself with Spirits of Heav'n

Hell-doomed, and breath'st defiance here and scorn,
 Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
 Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,
 False fugitive; and to thy speed add wings, 700
 Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
 Thy ling'ring, or with one stroke of this dart
 Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before."

So spake the grisly terror, and in shape,
 So speaking and so threat'ning, grew tenfold,
 More dreadful and deform. On th' other side,
 Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
 Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
 That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
 In th' Arctic sky, and from his horrid hair 710
 Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
 Leveled his deadly aim; their fatal hands
 No second stroke intend; and such a frown
 Each cast at th' other as when two black clouds,
 With heav'n's artillery fraught, came rattling on
 Over the Caspian, then stand front to front
 Hov'ring a space, till winds the signal blow
 To join their dark encounter in mid-air.

So frowned the mighty combatants that Hell
 Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood; 720
 For never but once more was either like
 To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds
 Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
 Had not the snaky Sorceress, that sat
 Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key,
 Ris'n, and with hideous outcry rushed between.

"O Father, what intends thy hand," she cried,
 "Against thy only son? What fury, O Son,
 Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
 Against thy father's head? And know'st for whom? 730

For him who sits above, and laughs the while
 At thee, ordained his drudge to execute
 Whate'er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids—
 His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both!”

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

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

740

T' whom thus the portress of Hell-gate replied:

“Hast thou forgot me, then; and do I seem
 Now in thine eye so foul?—once deemed so fair
 In Heav'n, when at th' assembly, and in sight
 Of all the Seraphim with thee combined
 In bold conspiracy against Heav'n's King,
 All on a sudden miserable pain

750

Surprised thee, dim thine eyes and dizzy swum
 In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
 Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,
 Likest to thee in shape and count'nance bright,
 Then shining heav'nly fair, a Goddess armed,
 Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized
 All th' host of Heav'n; back they recoiled afraid
 At first, and called me Sin, and for a sign
 Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,
 I pleased, and with attractive graces won
 The most averse—thee chiefly, who, full oft
 Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,

760

Becam'st enamored; and such joy thou took'st
 With me in secret that my womb conceived
 A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,
 And fields were fought in Heav'n: wherein remained
 (For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe
 Clear victory; to our part loss and rout 770
 Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell,
 Driven headlong from the pitch of Heav'n, down
 Into this deep; and in the general fall
 I also: at which time this pow'rful key
 Into my hands was giv'n, with charge to keep
 These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
 Without my op'ning. Pensive here I sat
 Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb,
 Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
 Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes. 780
 At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
 Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
 Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
 Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
 Transformed: but he my inbred enemy
 Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
 Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out Death!
 Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed
 From all her caves, and back resounded Death!
 I fled; but he pursued (though more, it seems, 790
 Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter far,
 Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,
 And, in embraces forcible and foul
 Engend'ring with me, of that rape begot
 These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
 Surround me, as thou saw'st, hourly conceived
 And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
 To me; for, when they list, into the womb

That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw
 My bowels, their repast; then, bursting forth 800
 Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round,
 That rest or intermission none I find.

Before mine eyes in opposition sits
 Grim Death, my son and foe, who set them on,
 And me, his parent, would full soon devour
 For want of other prey, but that he knows
 His end with mine involved, and knows that I
 Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
 Whenever that shall be: so fate pronounced.
 But thou, O Father, I forewarn thee, shun 810
 His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
 To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
 Through tempered heav'nly; for that mortal dint,
 Save he who reigns above, none can resist."

She finished, and the subtle Fiend his lore
 Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered smooth:

"Dear Daughter—since thou claim'st me for thy sire,
 And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge
 Of dalliance had with thee in Heav'n, and joys
 Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change 820
 Befall'n us unforeseen, unthought-of—know,
 I come no enemy, but to set free
 From out this dark and dismal house of pain
 Both him and thee, and all the heav'nly host
 Of Spirits that, in our just pretenses armed,
 Fell with us from on high. From them I go
 This uncouth errand sole, and one for all
 Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread
 Th' unfounded deep, and through the void immense
 To search, with wand'ring quest, a place foretold 830
 Should be—and, by concurring signs, ere now
 Created vast and round—a place of bliss

In the purlieus of Heav'n; and therein placed
 A race of upstart creatures, to supply
 Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed,
 Lest Heav'n, surcharged with potent multitude,
 Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
 Than this more secret, now designed, I haste
 To know; and, this once known, shall soon return,
 And bring ye to the place where thou and Death 840
 Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
 Wing silently the buxom air, embalmed
 With odors. There ye shall be fed and filled
 Immeasurably, all things shall be your prey."

He ceased, for both seemed highly pleased, and Death
 Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
 His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw
 Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced
 His mother bad, and thus bespake her sire:

"The key of this infernal pit, by due 850
 And by command of Heav'n's all-pow'rful King,
 I keep, by him forbidden to unlock
 These adamantine gates; against all force
 Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
 Fearless to be o'ermatched by living might.
 But what owe I to his commands above,
 Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
 Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
 To sit in hateful office here confined,
 Inhabitant of Heav'n and heav'nly born, 860
 Here in perpetual agony and pain,
 With terrors and with clamors compassed round
 Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
 Thou art my Father, thou my Author, thou
 My being gavest me; whom should I obey
 But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring me soon

To that new world of light and bliss, among
 The Gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
 At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
 Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.” 870

Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
 Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
 And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train,
 Forthwith the huge portcullis high up-drew,
 Which, but herself, not all the Stygian pow’rs
 Could once have moved; then in the key-hole turns
 Th’ intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
 Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
 Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,
 With impetuous recoil and jarring sound, 880
 Th’ infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
 Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
 Of Erebus. She opened; but to shut
 Excelled her pow’r: the gates wide open stood,
 That with extended wings a bannered host,
 Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through
 With horse and chariots ranked in loose array;
 So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth
 Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.
 Before their eyes in sudden view appear 890
 The secrets of the hoary deep—a dark
 Illimitable ocean, without bound,
 Without dimension; where length, breadth, and height,
 And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night
 And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
 Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
 Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
 For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
 Strive here for mast’ry, and to battle bring
 Their embryon atoms: they around the flag 900

Of each his faction, in their several clans,
 Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
 Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands
 Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil,
 Levied to side with warring winds, and poise
 Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere
 He rules a moment: Chaos umpire sits,
 And by decision more embroils the fray
 By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter,
 Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss, 910
 The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,
 Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
 But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
 Confusedly, and which thus must e'er fight,
 Unless th' Almighty Maker them ordain
 His dark materials to create more worlds—
 Into this wild abyss the wary Fiend
 Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,
 Pond'ring his voyage; for no narrow frith
 He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed 920
 With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
 Great things with small) than when Bellona storms
 With all her batt'ring engines, bent to 'rase
 Some capital city; or less than if this frame
 Of Heav'n were falling, and these elements
 In mutiny had from her axle torn
 The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad vans
 He spread for flight, and, in the surging smoke
 Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many a league,
 As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides 930
 Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets
 A vast vacuity. All unawares,
 Flutt'ring his pennons vain, plumb-down he drops
 Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour

Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,
 The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
 Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
 As many miles aloft. That fury stayed—
 Quenched in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,
 Nor good dry land—nigh foundered, on he fares, 940
 Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
 Half flying; behooves him now both oar and sail.
 As when a gryphon through the wilderness
 With wingéd course, o'er hill or moory dale,
 Pursues the Arimasbian, who by stealth
 Had from his wakeful custody purloined
 The guarded gold; so eagerly the Fiend
 O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
 With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
 And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies. 950
 At length a universal hubbub wild
 Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused,
 Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
 With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies
 Undaunted, to meet there whatever Pow'r
 Or Spirit of the nethermost abyss
 Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
 Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
 Bord'ring on light; when straight behold the throne
 Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread 960
 Wide on the wasteful deep! With him enthroned
 Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things,
 The consort of his reign; and by them stood
 Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
 Of Demogorgon; Rumour next, and Chance,
 And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,
 And Discord with a thousand various mouths.

T' whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: "Ye Pow'rs

And Spirits of this nethermost abyss,
 Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy 970
 With purpose to explore or to disturb
 The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint
 Wand'ring this darksome desert, as my way
 Lies through your spacious empire up to light,
 Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek,
 What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds
 Confine with Heav'n; or, if some other place,
 From your dominion won, th' Ethereal King
 Possesses lately, thither to arrive
 I travel this profound. Direct my course: 980
 Directed, no mean recompense it brings
 To your behoove, if I that region lost,
 All usurpation thence expelled, reduce
 To her original darkness and your sway
 (Which is my present journey), and once more
 Erect the standard there of ancient Night.
 Yours be th' advantage all, mine the revenge!"
 Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,
 With falt'ring speech and visage incomposed,
 Answered: "I know thee, stranger, who thou art, 990
 That mighty leading Angel, who of late
 Made head against Heav'n's King, though overthrown.
 I saw and heard; for such a numerous host
 Fled not in silence through the frightened deep,
 With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
 Confusion worse confounded; and Heav'n-gates
 Poured out by millions her victorious bands,
 Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
 Keep residence; if all I can will serve
 That little which is left so to defend, 1000
 Encroached on still through our intestine broils
 Weak'ning the sceptre of Old Night: first, Hell,

Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
 Now lately Heav'n and Earth, another world
 Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden chain
 To that side Heav'n from whence your legions fell!
 If that way be your walk, you have not far;
 So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed;
 Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."

He ceased; and Satan stayed not to reply, 1010
 But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
 With fresh alacrity and force renewed
 Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,
 Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
 Of fighting elements, on all sides round
 Environed, wins his way; harder beset
 And more endangered than when Argo passed
 Through Bosphorus betwixt the jostling rocks,
 Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
 Charybdis, and by th' other whirlpool steered. 1020
 So he with difficulty and labor hard
 Moved on, with difficulty and labor he;
 But, he once passed, soon after, when man fell,
 Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain,
 Foll'wing his track (such was the will of Heav'n)
 Paved after him a broad and beaten way
 Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf
 Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,
 From Hell continued, reaching th' utmost orb
 Of this frail World; by which the Spirits perverse 1030
 With easy intercourse pass to and fro
 To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
 God and good Angels guard by special grace.

But now at last the sacred influence
 Of light appears, and from the walls of Heav'n
 Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night

A glimm'ring dawn. Here Nature first begins
 Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire,
 As from her outmost works, a broken foe,
 With tumult less and with less hostile din; 1040
 That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,
 Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,
 And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds
 Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;
 Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
 Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
 Far off th' Empyreal Heav'n, extended wide
 In circuit, undetermined square or round,
 With opal tow'rs and battlements adorned
 Of living sapphire, once his native seat; 1050
 And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
 This pendant World, in bigness as a star
 Of smallest magnitude close by the Moon.
 Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
 Accursed, and in a curséd hour, he hies. 1055

BOOK III

The Argument

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

Hail, holy Light, offspring of Heav'n firstborn,
 Or of th' Eternal coeternal beam
 May I express thee unblam'd? since God is light,
 And never but in unapproach'd light
 Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee
 Bright effluence of bright essence increate.

Or hear'st thou rather pure ethereal stream,
 Whose fountain who shall tell? before the sun,
 Before the Heav'ns thou wert, and at the voice
 Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest 10
 The rising world of waters dark and deep,
 Won from the void and formless infinite.
 Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
 Escaped the Stygian pool, though long detained
 In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight
 Through utter and through middle darkness borne,
 With other notes than to th' Orphean lyre
 I sung of Chaos and Eternal Night;
 Taught by the heav'nly Muse to venture down
 The dark descent, and up to re-ascend, 20
 Though hard and rare: Thee I revisit safe,
 And feel thy sovereign vital lamp; but thou
 Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
 To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
 So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,
 Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more
 Cease I to wander, where the Muses haunt,
 Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
 Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
 Thee, Zion, and the flow'ry brooks beneath, 30
 That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
 Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
 So were I equaled with them in renown,
 Thy sovereign command, that man should find grace;
 Blind Thamyras, and blind Maeonides,
 And Tiresias, and Phineus, prophets old:
 Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
 Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
 Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid
 Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year 40

Seasons return; but not to me returns
 Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
 But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
 Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
 Presented with a universal blank
 Of nature's works to me expunged and 'rased,
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out. 50
 So much the rather thou, celestial Light,
 Shine inward, and the mind through all her pow'rs
 Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
 Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
 Of things invisible to mortal sight.
 Now had th' Almighty Father from above,
 From the pure Empyrean where he sits
 High throned above all height, bent down his eye
 His own works and their works at once to view:
 About him all the Sanctities of Heav'n 60
 Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received
 Beatitude past utterance; on his right
 The radiant image of his glory sat,
 His only Son; on Earth he first beheld
 Our two first parents, yet the only two
 Of mankind in the happy garden placed
 Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,
 Uninterrupted joy, unrivaled love,
 In blissful solitude; he then surveyed
 Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there 70
 Coasting the wall of Heav'n on this side Night
 In the dun air sublime, and ready now
 To stoop with wearied wings, and willing feet,
 On the bare outside of this world, that seemed

Firm land embosomed, without firmament,
 Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.
 Him God beholding from his prospect high,
 Wherein past, present, future, he beholds,
 Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake:

“Only begotten Son, seest thou what rage
 Transports our adversary? whom no bounds
 Prescribed, no bars of Hell, nor all the chains
 Heaped on him there, nor yet the main abyss
 Wide interrupt, can hold; so bent he seems
 On desperate revenge, that shall redound
 Upon his own rebellious head. And now,
 Through all restraint broke loose, he wings his way
 Not far off Heav’n, in the precincts of light,
 Directly towards the new created World,
 And man there placed, with purpose to assay
 If him by force he can destroy, or, worse,
 By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert;
 For man will hearken to his glozing lies,
 And easily transgress the sole command,
 Sole pledge of his obedience: So will fall
 He and his faithless progeny: Whose fault?
 Whose but his own? ingrate, he had of me
 All he could have; I made him just and right,
 Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
 Such I created all th’ ethereal Pow’rs
 And Spirits, both them who stood, and them who failed;
 Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
 Not free, what proof could they have giv’n sincere
 Of true allegiance, constant faith or love,
 Where only what they needs must do appeared,
 Not what they would? what praise could they receive?
 What pleasure I from such obedience paid,
 When will and reason (reason also is choice)

Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
 Made passive both, had served necessity, 110
 Not me? They therefore, as to right belonged,
 So were created, nor can justly accuse
 Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,
 As if predestination overruled
 Their will, disposed by absolute decree
 Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed
 Their own revolt, not I; if I foreknew,
 Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
 Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
 So without least impulse or shadow of fate, 120
 Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
 They trespass, authors to themselves in all
 Both what they judge, and what they choose; for so
 I formed them free: and free they must remain,
 Till they enthrall themselves; I else must change
 Their nature, and revoke the high decree
 Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
 Their freedom: they themselves ordained their fall.
 The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
 Self-tempted, self-depraved: man falls, deceived 130
 By th' other first: man therefore shall find grace,
 Th' other none: In mercy and justice both,
 Through Heav'n and Earth, so shall my glory excel;
 But mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine."

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

Which utt'ring, thus he to his Father spake:

“Oh Father, gracious was that word which closed
 Thy sovereign command, that man should find grace;
 For which both Heav'n and Earth shall high extol
 Thy praises, with th' innumerable sound
 Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne
 Encompassed shall resound thee ever blest.
 For should man finally be lost, should man, 150
 Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son,
 Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined
 With his own folly? that be from thee far,
 That far be from thee, Father, who art judge
 Of all things made, and judgest only right.
 Or shall the Adversary thus obtain
 His end, and frustrate thine? shall he fulfill
 His malice, and thy goodness bring to naught,
 Or proud return, though to his heavier doom,
 Yet with revenge accomplished, and to Hell 160
 Draw after him the whole race of mankind,
 By him corrupted? or wilt thou thyself
 Abolish thy creation, and unmake
 For him, what for thy glory thou hast made?
 So should thy goodness and thy greatness both
 Be questioned and blasphemed without defense.”

To whom the great Creator thus replied:
 “Oh Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,
 Son of my bosom, Son who art alone.
 My word, my wisdom, and effectual might, 170
 All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all
 As my eternal purpose hath decreed;
 Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will;
 Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
 Freely vouchsafed; once more I will renew
 His lapséd pow'rs, though forfeit; and enthralled

By sin to foul exorbitant desires;
 Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
 On even ground against his mortal foe;
 By me upheld, that he may know how frail 180
 His fall'n condition is, and to me owe
 All his deliv'rance, and to none but me.
 Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,
 Elect above the rest; so is my will:
 The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warned
 Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
 The incensed Deity, while offered grace
 Invites; for I will clear their senses dark,
 What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
 To pray, repent, and bring obedience due. 190
 To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
 Though but endeavored with sincere intent,
 Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.
 And I will place within them as a guide,
 My umpire Conscience; whom if they will hear,
 Light after light, well used, they shall attain,
 And to the end, persisting, safe arrive.
 This my long sufferance, and my day of grace,
 They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste;
 But hard be hardened, blind be blinded more, 200
 That they may stumble on, and deeper fall;
 And none but such from mercy I exclude.
 But yet all is not done; man disobeying,
 Disloyal, breaks his fealty, and sins
 Against the high supremacy of Heav'n,
 Affecting God-head, and, so losing all,
 To expiate his treason hath naught left,
 But to destruction sacred and devote,
 He, with his whole posterity, must die,
 Die he or justice must; unless for him 210

Some other able, and as willing, pay
 The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
 Say, Heav'nly Pow'rs, where shall we find such love?
 Which of ye will be mortal, to redeem
 Man's mortal crime, and just th' unjust to save?
 Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?"

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

"Father, thy word is past, man shall find grace;
 And shall grace not find means, that finds her way,
 The speediest of thy wingéd messengers,
 To visit all thy creatures, and to all 230
 Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought?
 Happy for man, so coming; he her aid
 Can never seek, once dead in sins, and lost;
 Atonement for himself, or offering meet,
 Indebted and undone, hath none to bring;
 Behold me then: me for him, life for life
 I offer: on me let thine anger fall;
 Account me man; I for his sake will leave
 Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
 Freely put off, and for him lastly die 240
 Well pleased; on me let Death wreak all his rage.
 Under his gloomy pow'r I shall not long
 Lie vanquished. Thou hast giv'n me to possess
 Life in myself for ever; by thee I live;

Though now to Death I yield, and am his due,
 All that of me can die, yet, that debt paid,
 Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave
 His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul
 Forever with corruption there to dwell;
 But I shall rise victorious, and subdue 250
 My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted spoil.
 Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop
 Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarmed;
 I through the ample air in triumph high
 Shall lead Hell captive, maugre Hell, and show
 The pow'rs of darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
 Pleased, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile,
 While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes;
 Death last, and with his carcass glut the grave;
 Then, with the multitude of my redeemed, 260
 Shall enter Heav'n, long absent, and return,
 Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud
 Of anger shall remain, but peace assured
 And reconciliation: wrath shall be no more
 Thenceforth, but in thy presence joy entire."

His words here ended; but his meek aspect
 Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love
 To mortal men, above which only shone
 Filial obedience: as a sacrifice
 Glad to be offered, he attends the will 270
 Of his great Father. Admiration seized
 All Heav'n, what this might mean, and whither tend,
 Wond'ring; but soon th' Almighty thus replied:
 "O thou in Heav'n and Earth the only peace
 Found out for mankind under wrath, O thou
 My sole complacence. Well thou know'st how dear
 To me are all my works; nor man the least,
 Though last created, that for him I spare

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

Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt
 With thee thy Manhood also to this throne:
 Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt reign
 Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
 Anointed universal King; all pow'r
 I give thee; reign for ever, and assume
 Thy merits; under thee, as head supreme,
 Thrones, Princedoms, Pow'rs, Dominions, I reduce: 320
 All knees to thee shall bow, of them that bide
 In Heav'n, or Earth, or under Earth in Hell.
 When thou, attended gloriously from Heav'n,
 Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send
 The summoning Archangels to proclaim
 Thy dread tribunal; forthwith from all winds,
 The living, and forthwith the cited dead
 Of all past ages, to the general doom
 Shall hasten; such a peal shall rouse their sleep.
 Then, all thy Saints assembled, thou shalt judge 330
 Bad Men and Angels; they, arraigned, shall sink
 Beneath thy sentence; Hell, her numbers full,
 Thenceforth shall be forever shut. Meanwhile
 The World shall burn, and from her ashes spring
 New Heav'n and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell,
 And, after all their tribulations long,
 See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
 With joy and peace triumphing, and fair truth.
 Then thou thy regal sceptre shalt lay by,
 For regal sceptre then no more shall need, 340
 God shall be all in all. But, all ye Gods,
 Adore him, who to compass all this dies;
 Adore the Son, and honor him as me."

No sooner had th' Almighty ceased, but all
 The multitude of Angels, with a shout
 Loud as from numbers without number, sweet

As from blest voices, utt'ring joy, Heav'n rung
 With jubilee, and loud Hosannas filled
 Th' eternal regions: Lowly reverent
 Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground 350
 With solemn adoration down they cast
 Their crowns enwove with amaranth and gold;
 Immortal amaranth, a flow'r which once
 In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life,
 Began to bloom; but soon for Man's offence
 To Heav'n removed, where first it grew, there grows,
 And flow'rs aloft shading the fount of life,
 And where the river of bliss through midst of Heav'n
 Rolls o'er Elysian flow'rs her amber stream;
 With these that never fade the Spirits elect 360
 Bind their resplendent locks enwreathed with beams;
 Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
 Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,
 Empurpled with celestial roses smiled.
 Then, crowned again, their golden harps they took,
 Harps ever tuned, that glitt'ring by their side
 Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet
 Of charming symphony they introduce
 Their sacred song, and waken raptures high;
 No voice exempt, no voice but well could join 370
 Melodious part, such concord is in Heav'n.

Thee, Father, first they sung Omnipotent,
 Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
 Eternal King; the Author of all being,
 Fountain of light, thyself invisible
 Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sit'st
 Throned inaccessible, but when thou shad'st
 The full blaze of thy beams, and, through a cloud
 Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine,
 Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear, 380

Yet dazzle Heav'n, that brightest Seraphim
 Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.
 Thee next they sang of all creation first,
 Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
 In whose conspicuous count'nance, without cloud
 Made visible, th' Almighty Father shines,
 Whom else no creature can behold; on thee
 Impressed th' effulgence of his glory abides,
 Transfused on thee his ample spirit rests.
 He Heav'n of Heav'ns and all the Pow'rs therein 390
 By thee created; and by thee threw down
 Th' aspiring Dominations: Thou that day
 Thy Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare,
 Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook
 Heav'n's everlasting frame, while o'er the necks
 Thou drov'st of warring Angels disarrayed.
 Back from pursuit thy Pow'rs with loud acclaim
 Thee only extolled, Son of thy Father's might,
 To execute fierce vengeance on his foes,
 Not so on Man: Him through their malice fall'n, 400
 Father of mercy and grace, thou didst not doom
 So strictly, but much more to pity incline:
 No sooner did thy dear and only Son
 Perceive thee purposed not to doom frail Man
 So strictly, but much more to pity inclined,
 He to appease thy wrath, and end the strife
 Of mercy and justice in thy face discerned,
 Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat
 Second to thee, offered himself to die
 For Man's offence. Oh unexampled love, 410
 Love nowhere to be found less than divine!
 Hail, Son of God, Savior of Men! Thy name
 Shall be the copious matter of my song
 Henceforth, and never shall my heart thy praise

Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin.

Thus they in Heav'n, above the starry sphere,
 Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.
 Meanwhile upon the firm opacious globe
 Of this round World, whose first convex divides
 The luminous inferior orbs, enclosed 420
 From Chaos, and th' inroad of Darkness old,
 Satan alighted walks: A globe far off
 It seemed, now seems a boundless continent
 Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night
 Starless exposed, and ever-threat'ning storms
 Of Chaos blust'ring round, inclement sky;
 Save on that side which from the wall of Heav'n,
 Though distant far, some small reflection gains
 Of glimm'ring air less vexed with tempest loud:
 Here walked the Fiend at large in spacious field. 430
 As when a vulture on Imaus bred,
 Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,
 Dislodging from a region scarce of prey
 To gorge the flesh of lambs or yearling kids,
 On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the springs
 Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams;
 But in his way lights on the barren plains
 Of Sericana, where Chinese drive
 With sails and wind their canny wagons light:
 So, on this windy sea of land, the Fiend 440
 Walked up and down alone, bent on his prey;
 Alone, for other creature in this place,
 Living or lifeless, to be found was none;
 None yet, but store hereafter from the Earth
 Up hither like aerial vapors flew
 Of all things transitory and vain, when sin
 With vanity had filled the works of Men:
 Both all things vain, and all who in vain things

Built their fond hopes of glory or lasting fame,
 Or happiness in this or th' other life; 450
 All who have their reward on Earth, the fruits
 Of painful superstition and blind zeal,
 Naught seeking but the praise of Men, here find
 Fit retribution, empty as their deeds;
 All th' unaccomplished works of Nature's hand,
 Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mixed,
 Dissolved on Earth, fleet hither, and in vain,
 Till final dissolution, wander here;
 Not in the neighb'ring Moon as some have dreamed;
 Those argent fields more likely habitants, 460
 Translated Saints, or middle Spirits hold
 Betwixt th' angelical and human kind.
 Hither of ill-joined Sons and Daughters born
 First from the ancient world those Giants came
 With many a vain exploit, though then renowned:
 The builders next of Babel on the plain
 Of Sennaar, and still with vain design,
 New Babels, had they wherewithal, would build:
 Others came single; he, who, to be deemed
 A God, leaped fondly into Aetna flames, 470
 Empedocles; and he, who, to enjoy
 Plato's Elysium, leaped into the sea,
 Cleombrotus; and many more too long,
 Embryos, and idiots, eremites, and friars
 White, black, and gray, with all their trumpery.
 Here pilgrims roam, that strayed so far to seek
 In Golgotha him dead, who lives in Heav'n;
 And they, who to be sure of Paradise,
 Dying, put on the weeds of Dominic,
 Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised; 480
 They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
 And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs

The trepidation talked, and that first moved;
 And now Saint Peter at Heav'n's wicket seems
 To wait them with his keys, and now at foot
 Of Heav'n's ascent they lift their feet, when lo,
 A violent cross wind from either coast
 Blows them transverse, ten thousand leagues awry
 Into the devious air: Then might ye see
 Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tossed 490
 And fluttered into rags; then relics, beads,
 Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
 The sport of winds: All these, upwhirled aloft,
 Fly o'er the backside of the world far off
 Into a Limbo large and broad, since called
 The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown
 Long after; now unpeopled, and untrod.

All this dark globe the Fiend found as he passed,
 And long he wandered, till at last a gleam
 Of dawning light turned thither-ward in haste 500
 His traveled steps: far distant he descries
 Ascending by degrees magnificent
 Up to the wall of Heav'n a structure high;
 At top whereof, but far more rich, appeared
 The work as of a kingly palace-gate,
 With frontispiece of diamond and gold
 Embellished; thick with sparkling orient gems
 The portal shone, inimitable on Earth
 By model, or by shading pencil, drawn.
 These stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw 510
 Angels ascending and descending, bands
 Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled
 To Padan-Aram, in the field of Luz
 Dreaming by night under the open sky
 And waking cried, "This is the gate of Heav'n!"
 Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood

There always, but drawn up to Heav'n sometimes
 Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flowed
 Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon
 Who after came from Earth, sailing arrived 520
 Wafted by Angels, or flew o'er the lake
 Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.
 The stairs were then let down, whether to dare
 The Fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate
 His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss:
 Direct against which opened from beneath,
 Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,
 A passage down to th' Earth, a passage wide,
 Wider by far than that of after-times
 Over Mount Zion, and, though that were large, 530
 Over the Promised Land to God so dear;
 By which, to visit oft those happy tribes,
 On high behests his Angels to and fro
 Passed frequent, and his eye with choice regard
 From Paneas, the fount of Jordan's flood,
 To Beersaba, where the Holy Land
 Borders on Egypt and th' Arabian shore;
 So wide the op'ning seemed, where bounds were set
 To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave.
 Satan from hence, now on the lower stair, 540
 That scaled by steps of gold to Heaven-gate,
 Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
 Of all this world at once. As when a scout,
 Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
 All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn
 Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
 Which to his eye discovers unaware
 The goodly prospect of some foreign land
 First seen, or some renowned metropolis
 With glist'ring spires and pinnacles adorned, 550

Which now the rising Sun gilds with his beams:
 Such wonder seized, though after Heaven seen,
 The Spirit malign, but much more envy seized,
 At sight of all this world beheld so fair.
 Round he surveys (and well might, where he stood
 So high above the circling canopy
 Of night's extended shade,) from eastern point
 Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears
 Andromeda far off Atlantic seas
 Beyond th' horizon; then from pole to pole 560
 He views in breadth, and without longer pause
 Down right into the world's first region throws
 His flight precipitant, and winds with ease
 Through the pure marble air his oblique way
 Amongst innumerable stars, that shone
 Stars distant, but nigh hand seemed other worlds;
 Or other worlds they seemed, or happy isles,
 Like those Hesperian gardens famed of old,
 Fortunate fields, and groves, and flow'ry vales,
 Thrice happy isles; but who dwelt happy there 570
 He stayed not to inquire: Above them all
 The golden sun, in splendor likest Heav'n,
 Allured his eye; thither his course he bends
 Through the calm firmament, (but up or down,
 By center, or eccentric, hard to tell,
 Or longitude) where the great luminary
 Aloof the vulgar constellations thick,
 That from his lordly eye keep distance due,
 Dispenses light from far; they, as they move
 Their starry dance in numbers that compute 580
 Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering lamp
 Turn swift their various motions, or are turned
 By his magnetic beam, that gently warms
 The universe, and to each inward part

With gentle penetration, though unseen,
 Shoots invisible virtue ev'n to the deep;
 So wondrously was set his station bright.

There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps
 Astronomer in the sun's lucent orb

Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw. 590

The place he found beyond expression bright,
 Compared with aught on Earth, metal or stone;
 Not all parts like, but all alike informed

With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire;

If metal, part seemed gold, part silver clear;

If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite,

Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shone

In Aaron's breast-plate, and a stone besides

Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen,

That stone, or like to that which here below 600

Philosophers in vain so long have sought,

In vain, though by their pow'rful art they bind

Volatile Hermes, and call up unbound

In various shapes old Proteus from the sea,

Drained through a limbec to his native form.

What wonder then if fields and regions here

Breathe forth Elixir pure, and rivers run

Potable gold, when with one virtuous touch

The arch-chemic sun, so far from us remote,

Produces, with terrestrial humor mixed, 610

Here in the dark so many precious things

Of color glorious, and effect so rare?

Here matter new to gaze the Devil met

Undazzled; far and wide his eye commands;

For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,

But all sunshine, as when his beams at noon

Culminate from th' equator, as they now

Shot upward still direct, whence no way round

Shadow from body opaque can fall; and th' air,
 Nowhere so clear, sharpened his visual ray 620
 To objects distant far, whereby he soon
 Saw within ken a glorious Angel stand,
 The same whom John saw also in the sun:
 His back was turned, but not his brightness hid;
 Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar
 Circled his head, nor less his locks behind
 Illustrious on his shoulders fledged with wings
 Lay waving round; on some great charge employed
 He seemed, or fixed in cogitation deep.
 Glad was the Spirit impure, as now in hope 630
 To find who might direct his wandering flight
 To Paradise, the happy seat of Man,
 His journey's end and our beginning woe.
 But first he casts to change his proper shape,
 Which else might work him danger or delay:
 And now a stripling Cherub he appears,
 Not of the prime, yet such as in his face
 Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb
 Suitable grace diffused, so well he feigned:
 Under a coronet his flowing hair 640
 In curls on either cheek played; wings he wore
 Of many a colored plume, sprinkled with gold;
 His habit fit for speed succinct, and held
 Before his decent steps a silver wand.
 He drew not nigh unheard; the Angel bright,
 Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turned,
 Admonished by his ear, and straight was known
 The Archangel Uriel, one of the seven
 Who in God's presence, nearest to his throne,
 Stand ready at command, and are his eyes 650
 That run through all the Heav'ns, or down to th' Earth
 Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,

O'er sea and land: him Satan thus accosts:

“Uriel, for thou of those seven Spirits that stand

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

The first art wont his great authentic will

Interpreter through highest Heav'n to bring,

Where all his sons thy embassy attend;

And here art likeliest by supreme decree

Like honor to obtain, and as his eye

660

To visit oft this new creation round;

Unspeakable desire to see, and know

All these his wondrous works, but chiefly man,

His chief delight and favor, him for whom

All these his works so wondrous he ordained,

Hath brought me from the choirs of Cherubim

Alone thus wand'ring. Brightest Seraph, tell

In which of all these shining orbs hath man

His fixéd seat, or fixéd seat hath none,

But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell;

670

That I may find him, and with secret gaze

Or open admiration him behold,

On whom the great Creator hath bestowed

Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces poured;

That both in him and all things, as is meet,

The universal Maker we may praise;

Who justly hath driv'n out his rebel foes

To deepest Hell, and, to repair that loss,

Created this new happy race of men

To serve him better: Wise are all his ways.”

680

So spake the false dissembler unperceived;

For neither man nor Angel can discern

Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks

Invisible, except to God alone,

By his permissive will, through Heav'n and Earth:

And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps

At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
 Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill
 Where no ill seems: Which now for once beguiled
 Uriel, though Regent of the sun, and held 690
 The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heav'n;
 Who to the fraudulent impostor foul,
 In his uprightness, answer thus returned:
 "Fair Angel, thy desire, which tends to know
 The works of God, thereby to glorify
 The great Work-master, leads to no excess
 That reaches blame, but rather merits praise
 The more it seems excess, that led thee hither
 From thy Empyrean mansion thus alone,
 To witness with thine eyes what some perhaps, 700
 Contented with report, hear only in Heav'n:
 For wonderful indeed are all his works,
 Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all
 Had in remembrance always with delight;
 But what created mind can comprehend
 Their number, or the wisdom infinite
 That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?
 I saw when at his word the formless mass,
 This World's material mould, came to a heap:
 Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar 710
 Stood ruled, stood vast infinitude confined;
 Till at his second bidding Darkness fled,
 Light shone, and order from disorder sprung:
 Swift to their several quarters hasted then
 The cumbrous elements, earth, flood, air, fire;
 And this ethereal quintessence of Heav'n
 Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
 That rolled orbicular, and turned to stars
 Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move;
 Each had his place appointed, each his course; 720

The rest in circuit walls this universe.
 Look downward on that globe, whose hither side
 With light from hence, though but reflected, shines;
 That place is Earth, the seat of Man; that light
 His day, which else, as th' other hemisphere,
 Night would invade; but there the neighb'ring Moon
 (So call that opposite fair star) her aid
 Timely interposes, and her monthly round
 Still ending, still renewing, through mid Heav'n,
 With borrowed light her countenance triform
 Hence fills and empties to enlighten the Earth,
 And in her pale dominion checks the night.
 That spot, to which I point, is Paradise,
 Adam's abode; those lofty shades, his bow'r.
 Thy way thou canst not miss, me mine requires."

730

Thus said, he turned; and Satan, bowing low,
 As to superior Spirits is wont in Heav'n,
 Where honor due and reverence none neglects,
 Took leave, and toward the coast of Earth beneath,
 Down from th' ecliptic, sped with hoped success,
 Throws his steep flight in many an aerie wheel;
 Nor stayed, till on Niphates' top he lights.

740

BOOK IV

The Argument

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

Oh, for that warning voice, which he, who saw
 Th' Apocalypse, heard cry in Heav'n aloud,
 Then when the Dragon, put to second rout,
 Came furious down to be revenged on Men,
 Woe to th' inhabitants on Earth, that now,
 While time was, our first parents had been warned
 The coming of their secret foe, and 'scaped,

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

Ah, wherefore he deserved no such return
 From me, whom he created what I was
 In that bright eminence, and with his good
 Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.
 What could be less than to afford him praise,
 The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,
 How due, yet all his good proved ill in me,
 And wrought but malice; lifted up so high
 I disdain'd subjection, and thought one step higher 50
 Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
 The debt immense of endless gratitude,
 So burdensome still paying, still to owe,
 Forgetful what from him I still received,
 And understood not that a grateful mind
 By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
 Indebted and discharged; what burden then?
 Oh, had his pow'rful destiny ordained
 Me some inferior Angel, I had stood
 Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised 60
 Ambition. Yet why not some other Pow'r
 As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,
 Drawn to his part; but other Pow'rs as great
 Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
 Or from without, to all temptations armed.
 Hadst thou the same free will and pow'r to stand?
 Thou hadst: whom hast thou then or what to accuse,
 But Heav'n's free love dealt equally to all?
 Be then his love accursed, since love or hate,
 To me alike, it deals eternal woe. 70
 Nay, cursed be thou; since against his thy will
 Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
 Me miserable, which way shall I fly
 Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
 Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;

And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
 Still threat'ning to devour me opens wide,
 To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n.
 Oh, then, at last relent: Is there no place
 Left for repentance, none for pardon left? 80
 None left but by submission; and that word
 Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
 Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduced
 With other promises and other vaunts
 Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
 Th' Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know
 How dearly I abide that boast so vain,
 Under what torments inwardly I groan,
 While they adore me on the throne of Hell.
 With diadem and sceptre high advanced, 90
 The lower still I fall, only supreme
 In misery: Such joy ambition finds.
 But say I could repent, and could obtain,
 By act of grace, my former state; how soon
 Would height recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
 What feigned submission swore? Ease would recant
 Vows made in pain, as violent and void.
 For never can true reconciliation grow,
 Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep:
 Which would but lead me to a worse relapse 100
 And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear
 Short intermission bought with double smart.
 This knows my punisher; therefore as far
 From granting he, as I from begging, peace;
 All hope excluded thus, behold, in stead
 Mankind created, and for him this world.
 So farewell, hope; and with hope farewell, fear;
 Farewell, remorse, all good to me is lost;
 Evil, be thou my good; by thee at least

Divided empire with Heav'n's King I hold, 110
 By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;
 As man ere long, and this new world, shall know."

Thus while he spake, each passion dimmed his face
 Thrice changed with pale, ire, envy, and despair;
 Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed
 Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld.
 For heav'nly minds from such distempers foul
 Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware,
 Each perturbation smoothed with outward calm,
 Artificer of fraud; and was the first 120
 That practiced falsehood under saintly show,
 Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge:
 Yet not enough had practiced to deceive
 Uriel once warned; whose eye pursued him down
 The way he went, and on th'Assyrian mount
 Saw him disfigured, more than could befall
 Spirit of happy sort; his gestures fierce
 He marked and mad demeanor, then alone,
 As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen.

So on he fares, and to the border comes 130
 Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
 Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,
 As with a rural mound, the champaign head
 Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
 Access denied; and overhead upgrew
 Insuperable height of loftiest shade,
 Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
 A sylvan scene, and, as the ranks ascend,
 Shade above shade, a woody theater
 Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops 140
 The verdurous wall of Paradise upsprung;
 Which to our general sire gave prospect large
 Into his nether empire neighb'ring round.

And higher than that wall a circling row
 Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,
 Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,
 Appeared, with gay enameled colors mixed:
 On which the Sun more glad impressed his beams
 Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
 When God hath show'ed the Earth; so lovely seemed 150
 That landscape: And of pure now purer air
 Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
 Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
 All sadness but despair: Now gentle gales,
 Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
 Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
 Those balmy spoils. As when to them who fail
 Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
 Mozambique, off at sea north-east winds blow
 Sabeian odors from the spicy shore 160
 Of Araby the blest; with such delay
 Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league
 Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles:
 So entertained those odorous sweets the Fiend,
 Who came their bane; though with them better pleased
 Than Asmodeus with the fishy fume
 That drove him, though enamored, from the spouse
 Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent
 From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.

Now to th' ascent of that steep savage hill 170
 Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow;
 But further way found none, so thick entwined,
 As one continued brake, the undergrowth
 Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed
 All path of man or beast that passed that way.
 One gate there only was, and that looked East
 On th' other side: which when th' Arch-Felon saw,

Due entrance he disdained; and, in contempt,
 At one slight bound high over-leaped all bound
 Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within 180
 Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,
 Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
 Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve
 In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,
 Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold:
 Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash
 Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,
 Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault,
 In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles:
 So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold; 190
 So since into his church lewd hirelings climb.
 Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,
 The middle tree and highest there that grew,
 Sat like a cormorant; yet not true life
 Thereby regained, but sat devising death
 To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought
 Of that life-giving plant, but only used
 For prospect, what well used had been the pledge
 Of immortality. So little knows
 Any, but God alone, to value right 200
 The good before him, but perverts best things
 To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
 Beneath him with new wonder now he views,
 To all delight of human sense exposed,
 In narrow room, nature's whole wealth, yea more,
 A Heav'n on Earth: For blissful Paradise
 Of God the garden was, by him in th' East
 Of Eden planted; Eden stretched her line
 From Auran eastward to the royal tow'rs
 Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings, 210
 Of where the sons of Eden long before

Dwelt in Telassar: In this pleasant soil
 His far more pleasant garden God ordained;
 Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
 All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
 And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
 High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
 Of vegetable gold; and next to Life,
 Our Death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by,
 Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill. 220
 Southward through Eden went a river large,
 Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
 Passed underneath engulfed; for God had thrown
 That mountain as his garden-mould high raised
 Upon the rapid current, which, through veins
 Of porous Earth with kindly thirst up-drawn,
 Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
 Watered the garden; thence united fell
 Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
 Which from his darksome passage now appears, 230
 And now, divided into four main streams,
 Runs diverse, wand'ring many a famous realm
 And country, whereof here needs no account;
 But rather to tell how, if art could tell,
 How from that sapphire fount the crisped brooks,
 Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
 With mazy error under pendant shades
 Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
 Flow'rs worthy of Paradise, which not nice art
 In beds and curious knots, but nature boon 240
 Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
 Both where the morning Sun first warmly smote
 The open field, and where the unpierced shade
 Embrowned the noontide bow'rs: Thus was this place
 A happy rural seat of various view;

Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm,
 Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
 Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true,
 If true, here only, and of delicious taste:
 Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks 250
 Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
 Or palmy hillock; or the flow'ry lap
 Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
 Flow'rs of all hue, and without thorn the rose:
 Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
 Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
 Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
 Luxuriant; meanwhile murm'ring waters fall
 Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake,
 That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned 260
 Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.
 The birds their choir apply; airs, vernal airs,
 Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
 The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
 Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
 Led on th' eternal Spring. Not that fair field
 Of Enna, where Proserpine gath'ring flow'rs,
 Herself a fairer flow'r by gloomy Dis
 Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain
 To seek her through the world; nor that sweet grove 270
 Of Daphne by Orontes, and th' inspired
 Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
 Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle
 Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
 Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,
 Hid Amalthea, and her florid son
 Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye;
 Nor where Abassin kings their issue guard,
 Mount Amara, though this by some supposed

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

With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,
And banished from man's life his happiest life,
Simplicity and spotless innocence.

So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight
Of God or Angel; for they thought no ill:
So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair,
That ever since in love's embraces met; 320
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Under a tuft of shade that on a green
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain side
They sat them down; and, after no more toil
Of their sweet gard'ning labor than sufficed
To recommend cool Zephyr, and made ease
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell,
Nectarine fruits which the compliant boughs 330
Yielded them, side-long as they sat recline
On the soft downy bank damasked with flow'rs:
The savory pulp they chew, and in the rind,
Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream;
Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
Fair couple, linked in happy nuptial league,
Alone as they. About them frisking played
All beasts of th' Earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den; 340
Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gamboled before them; th' unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis; close the serpent sly,
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
His braided train, and of his fatal guile

Gave proof unheeded; others on the grass
 Couched, and now filled with pasture gazing sat,
 Or bedward ruminating; for the Sun, 350
 Declined, was hasting now with prone career
 To th' ocean isles, and in th' ascending scale
 Of Heav'n the stars that usher evening rose:
 When Satan still in gaze, as first he stood,
 Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad:
 "Oh Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold?
 Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
 Creatures of other mould, Earth-born perhaps,
 Not Spirits, yet to heav'nly Spirits bright
 Little inferior; whom my thoughts pursue 360
 With wonder, and could love, so lively shines
 In them divine resemblance, and such grace
 The hand that formed them on their shape hath poured.
 Ah, gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
 Your change approaches, when all these delights
 Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe;
 More woe, the more your taste is now of joy;
 Happy, but for so happy ill secured
 Long to continue, and this high seat your Heav'n
 Ill fenced for Heav'n to keep out such a foe 370
 As now is entered; yet no purposed foe
 To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
 Though I unpitied: League with you I seek,
 And mutual amity, so strait, so close,
 That I with you must dwell, or you with me
 Henceforth; my dwelling haply may not please,
 Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such
 Accept your Maker's work; he gave it me,
 Which I as freely give: Hell shall unfold,
 To entertain you two, her widest gates, 380
 And send forth all her kings; there will be room,

Not like these narrow limits, to receive
 Your numerous offspring; if no better place,
 Thank him who puts me loath to this revenge
 On you who wrong me not for him who wronged.
 And should I at your harmless innocence
 Melt, as I do, yet public reason just,
 Honor and empire with revenge enlarged,
 By conqu'ring this new world, compels me now
 To do what else, though damned, I should abhor.” 390

So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,
 The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds.
 Then from his lofty stand on that high tree
 Down he alights among the sportful herd
 Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,
 Now other, as their shape served best his end
 Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied,
 To mark what of their state he more might learn,
 By word or action marked. About them round
 A lion now he stalks with fiery glare; 400
 Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
 In some purlieu two gentle fawns at play,
 Straight couches close, then, rising, changes oft
 His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
 Whence rushing, he might surest seize them both,
 Gripped in each paw: when, Adam first of Men
 To first of women Eve thus moving speech,
 Turned him, all ear to hear new utt'rance flow:

“Sole partner, and sole part, of all these joys,
 Dearer thyself than all; needs must the Pow'r 410
 That made us, and for us this ample world,
 Be infinitely good, and of his good
 As liberal and free as infinite;
 That raised us from the dust, and placed us here
 In all this happiness, who at his hand

Have nothing merited, nor can perform
 Aught whereof he hath need; he who requires
 From us no other service than to keep
 This one, this easy charge, of all the trees
 In Paradise that bear delicious fruit 420
 So various, not to taste that only Tree
 Of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life;
 So near grows Death to Life, whate'er Death is,
 Some dreadful thing no doubt; for well thou know'st
 God hath pronounced it death to taste that tree,
 The only sign of our obedience left,
 Among so many signs of pow'r and rule
 Conferred upon us, and dominion giv'n
 Over all other creatures that possess
 Earth, air, and sea. Then let us not think hard 430
 One easy prohibition, who enjoy
 Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
 Unlimited of manifold delights:
 But let us ever praise him, and extol
 His bounty, foll'wing our delightful task,
 To prune these growing plants, and tend these flow'rs,
 Which were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet."

To whom thus Eve replied: "Oh thou for whom
 And from whom I was formed, flesh of thy flesh,
 And without whom am to no end, my guide 440
 And head, what thou hast said is just and right.
 For we to him indeed all praises owe,
 And daily thanks; I chiefly, who enjoy
 So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
 Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
 Like consort to thyself canst no where find.
 That day I oft remember, when from sleep
 I first awaked, and found myself reposed
 Under a shade on flow'rs, much wond'ring where

And what I was, whence thither brought, and how. 450
 Not distant far from thence a murm'ring sound
 Of waters issued from a cave, and spread
 Into a liquid plain, then stood unmoved
 Pure as th' expanse of Heav'n; I thither went
 With inexperienced thought, and laid me down
 On the green bank, to look into the clear
 Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.
 As I bent down to look, just opposite
 A shape within the wat'ry gleam appeared,
 Bending to look on me: I started back, 460
 It started back; but pleased I soon returned,
 Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
 Of sympathy and love: There I had fixed
 Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
 Had not a voice thus warned me; 'What thou seest,
 What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;
 With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
 And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
 Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he
 Whose image thou art; him thou shalt enjoy 470
 Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear
 Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
 Mother of human race.' What could I do,
 But follow straight, invisibly thus led?
 Till I espied thee, fair indeed and tall,
 Under a platan; yet methought less fair,
 Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
 Than that smooth wat'ry image: Back I turned;
 Thou foll'wing cried'st aloud, 'Return, fair Eve;
 Whom fly'st thou? whom thou fly'st, of him thou art, 480
 His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
 Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
 Substantial life, to have thee by my side

Henceforth an individual solace dear;
 Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim
 My other half? With that thy gentle hand
 Seized mine: I yielded; and from that time see
 How beauty is excelled by manly grace,
 And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.”

So spake our general Mother, and with eyes 490
 Of conjugal attraction unproved,
 And meek surrender, half-embracing leaned
 On our first Father; half her swelling breast
 Naked met his, under the flowing gold
 Of her loose tresses hid: he in delight
 Both of her beauty, and submissive charms,
 Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
 On Juno smiles, when he impregns the clouds
 That shed May flow'rs; and pressed her matron lip
 With kisses pure. Aside the Devil turned 500
 For envy; yet with jealous leer malign
 Eyed them askance, and to himself thus 'plained:
 “Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two,
 Imparadised in one another's arms,
 The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
 Of bliss on bliss; while I to Hell am thrust,
 Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
 Among our other torments not the least,
 Still unfulfilled with pain of longing pines.
 Yet let me not forget what I have gained 510
 From their own mouths: All is not theirs, it seems;
 One fatal tree there stands, of knowledge called,
 Forbidden them to taste: Knowledge forbidden
 Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord
 Envy them that? Can it be Sin to know?
 Can it be Death? And do they only stand
 By ignorance? Is that their happy state,

The proof of their obedience and their faith?
 Oh fair foundation laid whereon to build
 Their ruin; hence I will excite their minds 520
 With more desire to know, and to reject
 Envious commands, invented with design
 To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt
 Equal with Gods: aspiring to be such,
 They taste and die: What likelier can ensue
 But first with narrow search I must walk round
 This garden, and no corner leave unspied;
 A chance, but chance may lead where I may meet
 Some wand'ring Spirit of Heav'n by fountain side,
 Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw 530
 What further would be learned. Live while ye may,
 Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return,
 Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed!"

So saying, his proud step he scornful turned,
 But with sly circumspection, and began
 Through wood, through waste, o'er hill, o'er dale, his roam
 Meanwhile in utmost longitude, where Heav'n
 With Earth and Ocean meets, the setting Sun
 Slowly descended, and with right aspect
 Against the eastern gate of Paradise 540
 Leveled his evening rays: It was a rock
 Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds,
 Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
 Accessible from Earth, one entrance high;
 The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
 Still as it rose, impossible to climb.
 Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel sat,
 Chief of th' angelic guards, awaiting night;
 About him exercised heroic games
 Th' unarmed youth of Heav'n, but nigh at hand 550
 Celestial armory, shields, helms, and spears,

Hung high with diamond flaming, and with gold.
 Thither came Uriel, gliding through the ev'n
 On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star
 In autumn thwarts the night, when vapors fired
 Impress the air, and shows the mariner
 From what point of his compass to beware
 Impetuous winds: He thus began in haste:

“Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath giv’n
 Charge and strict watch, that to this happy place 560
 No evil thing approach or enter in.

This day at height of noon came to my sphere
 A Spirit, zealous, as he seemed, to know
 More of th’ Almighty’s works, and chiefly man,
 God’s latest image: I described his way
 Bent all on speed, and marked his aerie gait;
 But in the mount that lies from Eden North,
 Where he first lighted, soon discerned his looks
 Alien from Heav’n, with passions foul obscured:
 Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade 570
 Lost sight of him: One of the banished crew,
 I fear, hath ventured from the deep, to raise
 New troubles; him thy care must be to find.”

To whom the wingéd warrior thus returned:
 “Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight,
 Amid the sun’s bright circle where thou sits,
 See far and wide: In at this gate none pass
 The vigilance here placed, but such as come
 Well known from Heav’n; and since meridian hour
 No creature thence: If Spirit of other sort, 580
 So minded, have o’er-leaped these earthly bounds
 On purpose, hard thou know’st it to exclude
 Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.
 But if within the circuit of these walls,
 In whatsoever shape he lurk, of whom

Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know."

So promised he; and Uriel to his charge
 Returned on that bright beam, whose point now raised
 Bore him slope downward to the sun now fall'n
 Beneath the Azores; whether the prime orb, 590
 Incredible how swift, had thither rolled
 Diurnal, or this less voluble Earth,
 By shorter flight to th' east, had left him there
 Araying with reflected purple and gold
 The clouds that on his western throne attend.
 Now came still evening on, and twilight gray
 Had in her sober livery all things clad;
 Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
 They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
 Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale; 600
 She all night long her amorous descant sung;
 Silence was pleased: Now glowed the firmament
 With living sapphires: Hesperus, that led
 The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
 Rising in clouded majesty, at length
 Apparent queen unveiled her peerless light,
 And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

When Adam thus to Eve: "Fair consort, the hour
 Of night, and all things now retired to rest,
 Mind us of like repose; since God hath set 610
 Labor and rest, as day and night, to men
 Successive; and the timely dew of sleep,
 Now falling with soft slumberous weight, inclines
 Our eyelids: Other creatures all day long
 Rove idle, unemployed, and less need rest;
 Man hath his daily work of body or mind
 Appointed, which declares his dignity,
 And the regard of Heav'n on all his ways;
 While other animals inactive range,

And of their doings God takes no account. 620
 To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east
 With first approach of light, we must be ris'n,
 And at our pleasant labor, to reform
 Yon flow'ry arbors, yonder alleys green,
 Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,
 That mock our scant manuring, and require
 More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth:
 Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,
 That lie bestrewn, unsightly and unsmooth,
 Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease; 630
 Meanwhile, as nature wills, night bids us rest."

To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned:
 "My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst
 Unargued I obey: So God ordains;
 God is thy law, thou mine: To know no more
 Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her praise.
 With thee conversing I forget all time;
 All seasons, and their change, all please alike.
 Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
 With charm of earliest birds: pleasant the sun, 640
 When first on this delightful land he spreads
 His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flow'r,
 Glist'ring with dew; fragrant the fertile Earth
 After soft show'rs; and sweet the coming on
 Of grateful evening mild; then silent night,
 With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,
 And these the gems of Heav'n, her starry train:
 But neither breath of morn, when she ascends
 With charm of earliest birds; nor rising sun
 On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flow'r, 650
 Glist'ring with dew; nor fragrance after show'rs;
 Nor grateful evening mild; nor silent night,
 With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,

Or glitt'ring starlight, without thee is sweet.
 But wherefore all night long shine these? for whom
 This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?"

To whom our general ancestor replied:

"Daughter of God and man, accomplished Eve,
 These have their course to finish round the Earth,
 By morrow evening, and from land to land 660
 In order, though to nations yet unborn,
 Minist'ring light prepared, they set and rise;
 Lest total darkness should by night regain
 Her old possession, and extinguish life
 In nature and all things; which these soft fires
 Not only enlighten, but with kindly heat
 Of various influence foment and warm,
 Temper or nourish, or in part shed down
 Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow
 On Earth, made hereby apter to receive 670
 Perfection from the sun's more potent ray.
 These then, though unbeheld in deep of night,
 Shine not in vain; nor think, though men were none,
 That Heav'n would want spectators, God want praise:
 Millions of spiritual creatures walk the Earth
 Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:
 All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
 Both day and night: How often from the steep
 Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard
 Celestial voices to the midnight air, 680
 Sole, or responsive each to others note,
 Singing their great Creator? oft in bands
 While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
 With heav'nly touch of instrumental sounds
 In full harmonic number joined, their songs
 Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heav'n."

Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed

On to their blissful bow'r: it was a place
 Chos'n by the sovereign Planter, when he framed
 All things to man's delightful use; the roof 690
 Of thickest covert was inwoven shade
 Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
 Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side
 Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
 Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flow'r,
 Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,
 Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
 Mosaic; underfoot the violet,
 Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
 Broïdered the ground, more colored than with stone 700
 Of costliest emblem: Other creature here,
 Bird, beast, insect, or worm, durst enter none,
 Such was their awe of man. In shadier bow'r
 More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned,
 Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph
 Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,
 With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
 Espoused Eve decked first her nuptial bed;
 And heav'nly choirs the Hymenaeon sung,
 What day the genial Angel to our sire 710
 Brought her in naked beauty more adorned,
 More lovely, than Pandora, whom the Gods
 Endowed with all their gifts, and Oh! too like
 In sad event, when to th' unwiser son
 Of Japheth brought by Hermes, she ensnared
 Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
 On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.
 Thus, at their shady lodge arrived, both stood,
 Both turned, and under open sky adored
 The God that made both sky, air, Earth, and Heav'n, 720
 Which they beheld, the moon's resplendent globe,

And starry pole: "Thou also mad'st the night,
 Maker Omnipotent, and thou the day,
 Which we, in our appointed work employed,
 Have finished, happy in our mutual help
 And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
 Ordained by thee; and this delicious place
 For us too large, where thy abundance wants
 Partakers, and uncropped falls to the ground.
 But thou hast promised from us two a race 730
 To fill the Earth, who shall with us extol
 Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
 And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep."

This said unanimous, and other rites
 Observing none, but adoration pure
 Which God likes best, into their inmost bow'r
 Handed they went; and, eased the putting off
 These troublesome disguises which we wear,
 Straight side by side were laid; nor turned, I ween,
 Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites 740
 Mysterious of connubial love refused:
 Whatever hypocrites austere talk
 Of purity, and place, and innocence,
 Defaming as impure what God declares
 Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
 Our Maker bids increase; who bids abstain
 But our destroyer, foe to God and man?
 Hail, wedded love, mysterious law, true source
 Of human offspring, sole propriety
 In Paradise of all things common else. 750
 By thee adulterous lust was driv'n from men
 Among the bestial herds to range; by thee
 Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
 Relations dear, and all the charities
 Of Father, Son, and Brother, first were known.

Far be't, that I should write thee sin or blame,
 Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
 Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,
 Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,
 Present, or past, as Saints and Patriarchs used. 760
 Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights
 His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
 Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
 Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendeared,
 Casual fruition; nor in court-amours,
 Mixed dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,
 Or serenade, which the starved lover sings
 To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.
 These, lulled by nightingales, embracing slept,
 And on their naked limbs the flow'ry roof 770
 Show'ed roses, which the morn repaired. Sleep on,
 Blest pair; and O yet happiest, if ye seek
 No happier state, and know to know no more.

Now had night measured with her shadowy cone
 Half way up hill this vast sublunar vault,
 And from their ivory port the Cherubim,
 Forth issuing at th' accustomed hour, stood armed
 To their night watches in warlike parade;
 When Gabriel to his next in pow'r thus spake:
 "Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the South 780
 With strictest watch; these other wheel the North;
 Our circuit meets full West." As flame they part,
 Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.
 From these, two strong and subtle Spirits he called
 That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge:
 "Ithuriel and Zephon, with winged speed
 Search through this garden, leave unsearched no nook;
 But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge,
 Now laid perhaps asleep, secure of harm.

This evening from the Sun's decline arrived, 790
 Who tells of some infernal Spirit seen
 Hitherward bent (who could have thought?) escaped
 The bars of Hell, on errand bad no doubt:
 Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring."

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

"Which of those rebel Spirits adjudged to Hell
 Com'st thou, escaped thy prison? and, transformed,
 Why sat'st thou like an enemy in wait,

Here watching at the head of these that sleep?"

"Know ye not," then said Satan, filled with scorn,

"Know ye not me? ye knew me once no mate

For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar:

Not to know me argues yourselves unknown,

The lowest of your throng; or, if ye know,

Why ask ye, and superfluous begin

830

Your message, like to end as much in vain?"

To whom thus Zephon, answer'ing scorn with scorn:

"Think not, revolted Spirit, thy shape the same,

Or undiminished brightness to be known,

As when thou stood'st in Heav'n upright and pure;

That glory then, when thou no more wast good,

Departed from thee; and thou resemblest now

Thy Sin and place of doom obscure and foul.

But come, for thou, be sure, shalt give account

To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep

840

This place inviolable, and these from harm."

So spake the Cherub; and his grave rebuke,

Severe in youthful beauty, added grace

Invincible: Abashed the Devil stood,

And felt how awful goodness is, and saw

Virtue in her shape how lovely; saw, and pined

His loss; but chiefly to find here observed

His luster visibly impaired; yet seemed

Undaunted. "If I must contend," said he,

"Best with the best, the sender, not the sent,

850

Or all at once; more glory will be won,

Or less be lost." "Thy fear," said Zephon bold,

"Will save us trial what the least can do

Single against thee wicked, and thence weak."

The Fiend replied not, overcome with rage;

But, like a proud steed reined, went haughty on,

Champing his iron curb: To strive or fly

He held it vain; awe from above had quelled
 His heart, not else dismayed. Now drew they nigh
 The western point, where those half-rounding guards 860
 Just met, and closing stood in squadron joined,
 Awaiting next command. To whom their Chief,
 Gabriel, from the front thus called aloud:

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

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

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

To whom thus Satan with contemptuous brow:
 “Gabriel? thou hadst in Heav’n th’ esteem of wise,
 And such I held thee; but this question asked
 Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain,
 Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell,
 Though thither doomed? Thou wouldst thyself, no doubt
 And boldly venture to whatever place
 Farthest from pain, where thou might’st hope to change 890
 Torment with ease, and soonest recompense

Dole with delight, which in this place I sought;
 To thee no reason, who know'st only good,
 But evil hast not tried: and wilt object
 His will who bounds us. Let him surer bar
 His iron gates, if he intends our stay
 In that dark durance: Thus much what was asked.
 The rest is true, they found me where they say;
 But that implies not violence or harm."

Thus he in scorn. The warlike Angel moved, 900
 Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied:
 "O loss of one in Heav'n to judge of wise
 Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew,
 And now returns him from his prison 'scaped,
 Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise
 Or not, who ask what boldness brought him hither
 Unlicensed from his bounds in Hell prescribed;
 So wise he judges it to fly from pain
 However, and to 'scape his punishment.
 So judge thou still, presumptuous, till the wrath, 910
 Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight
 Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell,
 Which taught thee yet no better, that no pain
 Can equal anger infinite provoked!
 But wherefore thou alone? wherefore with thee
 Came not all Hell broke loose? Is pain to them
 Less pain, less to be fled, or thou than they
 Less hardy to endure? Courageous Chief,
 The first in flight from pain, hadst thou alleged
 To thy deserted host this cause of flight, 920
 Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive."

To which the Fiend thus answered, frowning stern:
 "Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,
 Insulting Angel! well thou know'st I stood
 Thy fiercest, when in battle to thy aid

The blasting volleyed thunder made all speed,
 And seconded thy else not dreaded spear.
 But still thy words at random, as before,
 Argue thy inexperience what behooves
 From hard assays and ill successes past 930
 A faithful leader, not to hazard all
 Through ways of danger by himself untried:
 I, therefore, I alone first undertook
 To wing the desolate abyss, and spy
 This new created World, whereof in Hell
 Fame is not silent, here in hope to find
 Better abode, and my afflicted Pow'rs
 To settle here on Earth, or in midair;
 Though for possession put to try once more
 What thou and thy gay legions dare against; 940
 Whose easier business were to serve their Lord
 High up in Heav'n, with songs to hymn his throne,
 And practiced distances to cringe, not fight.”
 To whom the warrior Angel soon replied:
 “To say and straight unsay, pretending first
 Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy,
 Argues no leader but a liar traced,
 Satan, and couldst thou faithful add? O name,
 O sacred name of faithfulness profaned!
 Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew? 950
 Army of Fiends, fit body to fit head.
 Was this your discipline and faith engaged,
 Your military obedience, to dissolve
 Allegiance to th' acknowledged Pow'r supreme?
 And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem
 Patron of liberty, who more than thou
 Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored
 Heav'n's awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope
 To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?

But mark what I arede thee now, avaunt;960
 Fly thither whence thou fledst. If from this hour
 Within these hallowed limits thou appear,
 Back to th' infernal pit I drag thee chained,
 And seal thee so, as henceforth not to scorn
 The facile gates of Hell too slightly barred."

So threatened he; but Satan to no threats
 Gave heed, but waxing more in rage replied:
 "Then when I am thy captive talk of chains,
 Proud liminary Cherub, but ere then
 Far heavier load thyself expect to feel970
 From my prevailing arm, though Heaven's King
 Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compeers,
 Used to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels
 In progress through the road of Heav'n star-paved."

While thus he spake, th' angelic squadron bright
 Turned fiery red, sharp'ning in moonéd horns
 Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
 With ported spears, as thick as when a field
 Of Ceres ripe for harvest waving bends
 Her bearded grove of ears, which way the wind980
 Sways them; the careful plowman doubting stands,
 Left on the threshing floor his hopeless sheaves
 Prove chaff. On th' other side, Satan, alarmed,
 Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
 Like Tenerife or Atlas, unremoved:
 His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
 Sat horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp
 What seemed both spear and shield: Now dreadful deeds
 Might have ensued, nor only Paradise
 In this commotion, but the starry cope990
 Of Heav'n perhaps, or all the elements
 At least had gone to wrack, disturbed and torn
 With violence of this conflict, had not soon

Th' Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,
 Hung forth in Heav'n his golden scales, yet seen
 Betwixt Astraea and the Scorpion sign,
 Wherein all things created first he weighed,
 The pendulous round Earth with balanced air
 In counterpoise, now ponders all events,
 Battles and realms: In these he put two weights, 1000
 The sequel each of parting and of fight:
 The latter quick up flew, and kicked the beam,
 Which Gabriel spying, thus bespake the Fiend:
 "Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine;
 Neither our own, but giv'n: What folly then
 To boast what arms can do? since thine no more
 Than Heav'n permits, nor mine, though doubled now
 To trample thee as mire: For proof look up,
 And read thy lot in yon celestial sign;
 Where thou art weighed, and shown how light, how weak, 1010
 If thou resist." The Fiend looked up, and knew
 His mounted scale aloft: Nor more; but fled
 Murm'ring, and with him fled the shades of night.

BOOK V

The Argument

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

Now morn, her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
 Advancing, sowed the Earth with orient pearl,
 When Adam waked, so custom'd; for his sleep
 Was aerie-light, from pure digestion bred,
 And temperate vapors bland, which th' only sound
 Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
 Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
 Of birds on every bough; so much the more
 His wonder was to find unwakened Eve
 With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek,
 As through unquiet rest: He, on his side
 Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial love
 Hung over her enamored, and beheld
 Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,

10

Shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice
 Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
 Her hand soft touching, whispered thus: "Awake,
 My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
 Heav'n's last best gift, my ever new delight!
 Awake: The morning shines, and the fresh field 20
 Calls us; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
 Our tender plants, how blows the citron grove,
 What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
 How nature paints her colors, how the bee
 Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet."
 Such whisp'ring waked her, but with startled eye
 On Adam, whom embracing, thus she spake:
 "O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
 My glory, my perfection, glad I see
 Thy face, and morn returned; for I this night 30
 (Such night till this I never passed) have dreamed,
 If dreamed, not, as I oft am wont, of thee,
 Works of day past, or morrow's next design,
 But of offence and trouble, which my mind
 Knew never till this irksome night: Methought,
 Close at mine ear one called me forth to walk
 With gentle voice; I thought it thine: It said,
 'Why sleep'st thou, Eve? now is the pleasant time,
 The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
 To the night-warbling bird, that now awake 40
 Tunes sweetest his love-labored song; now reigns
 Full-orbed the moon, and with more pleasing light
 Shadowy sets off the face of things; in vain,
 If none regard; Heav'n wakes with all his eyes,
 Whom to behold but thee, nature's desire?
 In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
 Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.'
 I rose as at thy call, but found thee not;

To find thee I directed then my walk;
 And on, methought, alone I passed through ways 50
 That brought me on a sudden to the tree
 Of interdicted knowledge: fair it seemed,
 Much fairer to my fancy than by day:
 And, as I wond'ring looked, beside it stood
 One shaped and winged like one of those from Heav'n
 By us oft seen; his dewy locks distilled
 Ambrosia; on that tree he also gazed;
 And 'O fair plant,' said he, 'with fruit surcharged,
 Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,
 Nor God, nor man? Is knowledge so despised? 60
 Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste?
 Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
 Longer thy offered good; why else set here?'
 This said, he paused not, but with venturous arm
 He plucked, he tasted; me damp horror chilled
 At such bold words vouched with a deed so bold:
 But he thus, overjoyed; 'O fruit divine,
 Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropped,
 Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit
 For Gods, yet able to make Gods of men: 70
 And why not Gods of men; since good, the more
 Communicated, more abundant grows,
 The Author not impaired, but honored more?
 Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve,
 Partake thou also; happy though thou art,
 Happier thou may'st be, worthier canst not be:
 Taste this, and be henceforth among the Gods
 Thyself a Goddess, not to Earth confined,
 But sometimes in the air, as we, sometimes
 Ascend to Heav'n, by merit thine, and see 80
 What life the Gods live there, and such live thou!
 So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,

E'en to my mouth of that same fruit held part
 Which he had plucked; the pleasant savory smell
 So quickened appetite, that I, methought,
 Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
 With him I flew, and underneath beheld
 The Earth outstretched immense, a prospect wide
 And various: Wond'ring at my flight and change
 To this high exaltation; suddenly 90
 My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,
 And fell asleep; but O, how glad I waked
 To find this but a dream!" Thus Eve her night
 Related, and thus Adam answered sad:
 "Best image of myself, and dearer half,
 The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
 Affects me equally; nor can I like
 This uncouth dream, of evil sprung, I fear;
 Yet evil whence? in thee can harbor none,
 Created pure. But know that in the soul 100
 Are many lesser faculties, that serve
 Reason as chief; among these fancy next
 Her office holds; of all external things
 Which the five watchful senses represent,
 She forms imaginations, aerie shapes,
 Which reason, joining or disjoining, frames
 All what we affirm or what deny, and call
 Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
 Into her private cell, when nature rests.
 Oft in her absence mimic fancy wakes 110
 To imitate her; but, misjoining shapes,
 Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams;
 Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
 Some such resemblances, methinks, I find
 Of our last evening's talk, in this thy dream,
 But with addition strange; yet be not sad.

Evil into the mind of God or man
 May come and go, so unreprieved, and leave
 No spot or blame behind: Which gives me hope
 That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream, 120
 Waking thou never will consent to do.

Be not disheartened then, nor cloud those looks,
 That wont to be more cheerful and serene,
 Than when fair morning first smiles on the world;
 And let us to our fresh employments rise
 Among the groves, the fountains, and the flow'rs
 That open now their choicest bosomed smells,
 Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store."

So cheered he his fair spouse, and she was cheered;
 But silently a gentle tear let fall 130
 From either eye, and wiped them with her hair;
 Two other precious drops that ready stood,
 Each in their crystal sluice, he ere they fell
 Kissed, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
 And pious awe, that feared to have offended.

So all was cleared, and to the field they haste.
 But first, from under shady arborous roof
 Soon as they forth were come to open sight
 Of dayspring, and the sun, who, scarce upris'n,
 With wheels yet hov'ring o'er the ocean-brim, 140
 Shot parallel to th' Earth his dewy ray,
 Discov'ring in wide landscape all the East
 Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains,
 Lowly they bowed adoring, and began
 Their orisons, each morning duly paid
 In various style; for neither various style
 Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
 Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung
 Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence
 Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse, 150

More tunable than needed lute or harp
 To add more sweetness; and they thus began:
 "These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
 Almighty. Thine this universal frame,
 Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous then.
 Unspeakable, who sits above these Heav'ns
 To us invisible, or dimly seen
 In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
 Thy goodness beyond thought, and pow'r divine.
 Speak, ye who best can tell, ye Sons of Light, 160
 Angels; for ye behold him, and with songs
 And choral symphonies, day without night,
 Circle his throne rejoicing; ye in Heav'n
 On Earth join all ye creatures to extol
 Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.
 Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
 If better thou belong not to the dawn,
 Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
 With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere,
 While day arises, that sweet hour of prime. 170
 Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soul,
 Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise
 In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
 And when high noon hast gained, and when thou fall'st.
 Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now fly'st,
 With the fixed stars, fixed in their orb that flies;
 And ye five other wand'ring fires, that move
 In mystic dance not without song, resound
 His praise, who out of darkness called up light.
 Air, and ye elements, the eldest birth 180
 Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run
 Perpetual circle, multiform; and mix
 And nourish all things; let your ceaseless change
 Vary to our great Maker still new praise.

Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
 From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,
 Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
 In honor to the world's great Author rise;
 Whether to deck with clouds th' uncolored sky,
 Or wet the thirsty Earth with falling show'rs, 190
 Rising or falling still advance his praise.
 His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
 Breathe soft or loud; and, wave your tops, ye pines,
 With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
 Fountains, and ye that warble, as ye flow,
 Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
 Join voices, all ye living souls: Ye birds,
 That singing up to Heaven-gate ascend,
 Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
 Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk 200
 The Earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep;
 Witness if I be silent, morn or e'en,
 To hill, or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,
 Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
 Hail, universal Lord, be bounteous still
 To give us only good; and if the night
 Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,
 Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark."

So prayed they innocent, and to their thoughts
 Firm peace recovered soon, and wonted calm. 210
 On to their morning's rural work they haste,
 Among sweet dewes and flow'rs; where any row
 Of fruit trees over-woody reached too far
 Their pampered boughs, and needed hands to check
 Fruitless embraces: or they led the vine
 To wed her elm; she, spoused, about him twines
 Her marriageable arms, and with him brings
 Her dow'r, th' adopted clusters, to adorn

His barren leaves. Them thus employed beheld
 With pity Heav'n's high King, and to him called 220
 Raphael, the sociable Spirit, that deigned
 To travel with Tobias, and secured
 His marriage with the seventimes-wedded maid.

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

So spake th' Eternal Father, and fulfilled
 All justice: Nor delayed the wingéd Saint
 After his charge received; but from among
 Thousand celestial ardors, where he stood
 Veiled with his gorgeous wings, up springing light, 250
 Flew through the midst of Heav'n; th' angelic choirs,
 On each hand parting, to his speed gave way

Through all the Empyreal road; till, at the gate
 Of Heav'n arrived, the gate self-opened wide
 On golden hinges turning, as by work
 Divine the sovereign Architect had framed.
 From hence no cloud, or, to obstruct his sight,
 Star interposed, however, small he sees,
 Not unconformed to other shining globes,
 Earth, and the gard'n of God, with cedars crowned 260
 Above all hills. As when by night the glass
 Of Galileo, less assured, observes
 Imagined lands and regions in the moon:
 Or pilot, from amidst the Cyclades
 Delos or Samos first appearing, kens
 A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight
 He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky
 Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing
 Now on the polar winds, then with quick fan
 Winnows the buxom air; till, within soar 270
 Of tow'ring eagles, to all the fowls he seems
 A phoenix, gazed by all as that sole bird,
 When, to enshrine his relics in the Sun's
 Bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies.
 At once on th' eastern cliff of Paradise
 He lights, and to his proper shape returns
 A Seraph winged: Six wings he wore, to shade
 His lineaments divine; the pair that clad
 Each shoulder broad, came mantling o'er his breast
 With regal ornament; the middle pair 280
 Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
 Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
 And colors dipped in Heav'n; the third his feet
 Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,
 Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia's son he stood,
 And shook his plumes, that heav'nly fragrance filled

The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the bands
 Of Angels under watch; and to his state,
 And to his message high, in honor rise;
 For on some message high they guessed him bound. 290
 Their glitt'ring tents he passed, and now is come
 Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,
 And flow'ring odors, cassia, nard, and balm;
 A wilderness of sweets; for nature here
 Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will
 Her virgin fancies pouring forth more sweet,
 Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss.
 Him through the spicy forest onward come
 Adam discerned, as in the door he sat
 Of his cool bow'r, while now the mounted sun 300
 Shot down direct his fervid rays to warm
 Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs:
 And Eve within, due at her hour prepared
 For dinner savory fruits, of taste to please
 True appetite, and not disrelish thirst
 Of nectarous draughts between, from milky stream,
 Berry or grape: To whom thus Adam called:
 "Haste hither, Eve, and worth thy sight behold
 Eastward among those trees, what glorious shape
 Comes this way moving; seems another morn 310
 Ris'n on mid-noon; some great behest from Heav'n
 To us perhaps he brings, and will vouchsafe
 This day to be our guest. But go with speed,
 And, what thy stores contain, bring forth, and pour
 Abundance, fit to honor and receive
 Our heav'nly stranger: Well we may afford
 Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow
 From large bestowed, where Nature multiplies
 Her fertile growth, and by disburd'ning grows
 More fruitful, which instructs us not to spare." 320

To whom thus Eve: "Adam, Earth's hallowed mould,
 Of God inspired, small store will serve, where store,
 All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk;
 Save what by frugal storing firmness gains
 To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes:
 But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,
 Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice
 To entertain our Angel-Guest, as he
 Beholding shall confess, that here on Earth
 God hath dispensed his bounties as in Heav'n." 330

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

Meanwhile our primitive great Sire, to meet 350
 His God-like guest, walks forth, without more train
 Accompanied than with his own complete
 Perfections; in himself was all his state,
 More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits

On princes, when their rich retinue long
 Of horses led, and grooms besmeared with gold,
 Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape.
 Nearer his presence Adam, though not awed,
 Yet with submissive approach and reverence meek,
 As to a superior nature bowing low, 360
 Thus said: "Native of Heav'n, for other place
 None can than Heav'n such glorious shape contain;
 Since, by descending from the thrones above,
 Those happy places thou hast deigned a while
 To want, and honor these, vouchsafe with us
 Two only, who yet by sovereign gift possess
 This spacious ground, in yonder shady bow'r
 To rest; and what the garden choicest bears
 To sit and taste, till this meridian heat
 Be over, and the sun more cool decline." 370

Whom thus th' angelic virtue answered mild:
 "Adam, I therefore came; nor art thou such
 Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
 As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heav'n,
 To visit thee; lead on then where thy bow'r
 O'ershades; for these mid-hours, till evening rise,
 I have at will." So to the sylvan lodge
 They came, that like Pomona's arbor smiled,
 With flow'rets decked, and fragrant smells; but Eve,
 Undecked save with herself, more lovely fair 380
 Than Wood-Nymph, or the fairest Goddess feigned
 Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove,
 Stood to entertain her guest from Heav'n; no veil
 She needed, virtue-proof; no thought infirm
 Altered her cheek. On whom the Angel hail
 Bestowed, the holy salutation used
 Long after to blest Mary, second Eve:

"Hail, Mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb

Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons,
 Than with these various fruits the trees of God 390
 Have heaped this table!" Raised of grassy turf
 Their table was, and mossy seats had round,
 And on her ample square from side to side
 All autumn piled, though spring and autumn here
 Danced hand in hand. A while discourse they hold;
 No fear lest dinner cool; when thus began
 Our Author: "Heav'nly stranger, please to taste
 These bounties, which our Nourisher, from whom
 All perfect good, unmeasured out, descends,
 To us for food and for delight hath caused 400
 The Earth to yield; unsavory food perhaps
 To spiritual natures; only this I know,
 That one celestial Father gives to all."

To whom the Angel: "Therefore what he gives
 (Whose praise be ever sung) to man in part
 Spiritual, may of purest Spirits be found
 No ungrateful food: And food alike those pure
 Intelligential substances require,
 As doth your rational; and both contain
 Within them every lower faculty 410
 Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,
 Tasting concoct, digest, assimilate,
 And corporeal to incorporeal turn.
 For know, whatever was created, needs
 To be sustained and fed: Of elements
 The grosser feeds the purer, Earth the sea,
 Earth and the sea feed air, the air those fires
 Ethereal, and as lowest first the moon;
 Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged
 Vapors not yet into her substance turned. 420
 Nor doth the moon no nourishment exhale
 From her moist continent to higher orbs.

The sun that light imparts to all, receives
 From all his alimential recompense
 In humid exhalations, and at even
 Sups with the ocean. Though in Heav'n the trees
 Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines
 Yield nectar; though from off the boughs each morn
 We brush mellifluous dew, and find the ground
 Covered with pearly grain: Yet God hath here 430
 Varied his bounty so with new delights,
 As may compare with Heaven; and to taste
 Think not I shall be nice." So down they sat,
 And to their viands fell; nor seemingly
 The Angel, nor in mist, the common gloss
 Of theologians; but with keen dispatch
 Of real hunger, and concoctive heat
 To transubstantiate: What redounds, transpires
 Through Spirits with ease; nor wonder; if by fire
 Of sooty coal th' empiric alchemist 440
 Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,
 Metals of drossest ore to perfect gold,
 As from the mine. Meanwhile at table Eve
 Ministered naked, and their flowing cups
 With pleasant liquors crowned: O innocence
 Deserving Paradise! if ever, then,
 Then had the Sons of God excuse to have been
 Enamored at that sight; but in those hearts
 Love unlibidinous reigned, nor jealousy
 Was understood, the injured lover's Hell. 450

Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed,
 Not burdened nature, sudden mind arose
 In Adam, not to let th' occasion pass
 Given him by this great conference to know
 Of things above his world, and of their being
 Who dwell in Heav'n, whose excellence he saw

Transcend his own so far; whose radiant forms,
 Divine effulgence, whose high pow'r, so far
 Exceeded human; and his wary speech
 Thus to th' empyreal Minister he framed: 460

“Inhabitant with God, now know I well
 Thy favor, in this honor done to man;
 Under whose lowly roof thou hast vouchsafed
 To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,
 Food not of Angels, yet accepted so,
 As that more willingly thou could'st not seem
 At Heav'n's high feasts to have fed: yet what compare?

To whom the wingéd hierarch replied:
 “O Adam, One Almighty is, from whom
 All things proceed, and up to him return, 470

If not depraved from good, created all
 Such to perfection, one first matter all,
 Endued with various forms, various degrees
 Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;
 But more refined, more spiritous, and pure,
 As nearer to him placed, or nearer tending
 Each in their several active spheres assigned,
 Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
 Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
 Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves 480

More aerie, last the bright consummate flow'r
 Spirits odorous breathes: flow'rs and their fruit,
 Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
 To vital Spirits aspire, to animal,
 To intellectual; give both life and sense,
 Fancy and understanding; whence the soul
 Reason receives, and reason is her being,
 Discursive, or intuitive; discourse
 Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,
 Differing but in degree, of kind the same. 490

Wonder not then, what God for you saw good
 If I refuse not, but convert, as you
 To proper substance. Time may come, when men
 With Angels may participate, and find
 No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare;
 And from these corporal nutriments perhaps
 Your bodies may at last turn all to Spirit,
 Improved by tract of time, and, winged, ascend
 Ethereal, as we; or may, at choice,
 Here or in Heav'nly paradises dwell; 500
 If ye be found obedient, and retain
 Unalterably firm his love entire,
 Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy
 Your fill what happiness this happy state
 Can comprehend, incapable of more."

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

To whom the Angel: "Son of Heav'n and Earth,
 Attend. That thou art happy, owe to God; 520
 That thou continu'st such, owe to thyself,
 That is, to thy obedience; therein stand.
 This was that caution giv'n thee; be advised.
 God made thee perfect, not immutable;

And good he made thee, but to persevere
 He left it in thy pow'r; ordained thy will
 By nature free, not overruled by fate
 Inextricable, or strict necessity:
 Our voluntary service he requires,
 Not our necessitated; such with him 530
 Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how
 Can hearts, not free, be tried whether they serve
 Willing or no, who will but what they must
 By destiny, and can no other choose?
 Myself, and all th' angelic host, that stand
 In sight of God, enthroned, our happy state
 Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds;
 On other surety none: Freely we serve,
 Because we freely love, as in our will
 To love or not; in this we stand or fall: 540
 And some are fall'n, to disobedience fall'n,
 And so from Heav'n to deepest Hell; Oh fall
 From what high state of bliss, into what woe!"

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

Hath finished half his journey, and scarce begins
His other half in the great zone of Heav'n." 560

Thus Adam made request; and Raphael,
After short pause assenting, thus began:
"High matter thou enjoimest me, O prime of men,
Sad task and hard: For how shall I relate
To human sense th' invisible exploits
Of warring Spirits? How, without remorse,
The ruin of so many glorious once
And perfect while they stood? How last unfold
The secrets of another world, perhaps
Not lawful to reveal? Yet for thy good 570

This is dispensed; and what surmounts the reach
Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms,
As may express them best; though what if Earth
Be but a shadow of Heav'n, and things therein
Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought?
As yet this world was not, and Chaos wild
Reigned where these Heav'ns now roll, where Earth now rests
Upon her center poised; when on a day
(For time, though in eternity, applied 580

To motion, measures all things durable
By present, past, and future,) on such day
As Heav'n's great year brings forth, th' empyreal host
Of Angels by imperial summons called,
Innumerable before th' Almighty's throne
Forthwith, from all the ends of Heav'n, appeared
Under their hierarchs in orders bright:
Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,
Standards and gonfalons 'twixt van and rear
Stream in the air, and for distinction serve 590
Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees;
Or in their glitt'ring tissues bear emblazed

Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love
 Recorded eminent. Thus when in orbs
 Of circuit inexpressible they stood,
 Orb within orb, the Father Infinite,
 By whom in bliss embosomed sat the Son,
 Amidst as from a flaming mount, whose top
 Brightness had made invisible, thus spake:

‘Hear, all ye Angels, progeny of light,
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Pow’rs;
 Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand.

600

This day I have begot whom I declare
 My only Son, and on this holy hill
 Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
 At my right hand; your head I him appoint;
 And by myself have sworn, to him shall bow
 All knees in Heav’n, and shall confess him Lord:
 Under his great vice-gerent reign abide

United, as one individual soul,

610

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

So spake th’ Omnipotent, and with his words
 All seemed well pleased; all seemed, but were not all.

That day, as other solemn days, they spent
 In song and dance about the sacred hill;
 Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere
 Of planets, and of fixed, in all her wheels
 Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,

620

Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular
 Then most, when most irregular they seem;
 And in their motions harmony divine
 So smooths her charming tones, that God’s own ear

Listens delighted. Evening now approached,
 (For we have also our evening and our morn,
 We ours for change delectable, not need;)
 630
 Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn
 Desirous; all in circles as they stood,
 Tables are set, and on a sudden piled
 With Angel's food, and rubied nectar flows
 In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold,
 Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of Heav'n.
 On flow'rs reposed, and with fresh flow'rets crowned,
 They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet
 Quaff immortality and joy, secure
 Of surfeit, where full measure only bounds
 Excess, before the all-bount'ous King, who show'r'd
 640
 With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy.

Now when ambrosial night with clouds exhaled
 From that high mount of God, whence light and shade
 Spring both, the face of brightest Heav'n had changed
 To grateful twilight, (for night comes not there
 In darker veil,) and roseate dews disposed
 All but th' unsleeping eyes of God to rest;
 Wide over all the plain, and wider far
 Than all this globous Earth in plain outspread,
 (Such are the courts of God) th' angelic throng,
 650
 Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend
 By living streams among the trees of life,
 Pavilions numberless, and sudden reared,
 Celestial tabernacles, where they slept
 Fanned with cool winds; save those, who, in their course,
 Melodious hymns about the sovereign throne
 Alternate all night long: but not so waked
 Satan; so call him now, his former name
 Is heard no more in Heav'n; he of the first,
 If not the first Archangel, great in power,
 660

In favor and pre-eminence, yet fraught
 With envy 'gainst the Son of God, that day
 Honored by his great Father, and proclaimed
 Messiah King anointed, could not bear
 Through pride that sight, and thought himself impaired.
 Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,
 Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
 Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved
 With all his legions to dislodge, and leave
 Unworshiped, unobeyed, the throne supreme, 670
 Contemptuous; and his next subordinate
 Awak'ning, thus to him in secret spake:
 'Sleep'st thou, companion dear? What sleep can close
 Thy eyelids? and remember'st what decree
 Of yesterday, so late hath passed the lips
 Of Heav'n's Almighty. Thou to me thy thoughts
 Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont to impart;
 Both waking we were one; how then can now
 Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou see'st imposed;
 New laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise 680
 In us who serve, new counsels to debate
 What doubtful may ensue: More in this place
 To utter is not safe. Assemble thou
 Of all those myriads which we lead the chief;
 Tell them, that by command, ere yet dim night
 Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,
 And all who under me their banners wave,
 Homeward, with flying march, where we possess
 The quarters of the north; there to prepare
 Fit entertainment to receive our King, 690
 The great Messiah, and his new commands,
 Who speedily through all the hierarchies
 Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.'
 So spake the false Archangel, and infused

Bad influence into th' unwary breast
 Of his associate: He together calls,
 Or several one by one, the regent Pow'rs,
 Under him regent; tells, as he was taught,
 That the Most High commanding, now ere night,
 Now ere dim night had disencumbered Heav'n, 700
 The great hierarchal standard was to move;
 Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
 Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound
 Or taint integrity: But all obeyed
 The wonted signal, and superior voice
 Of their great Potentate; for great indeed
 His name, and high was his degree in Heav'n;
 His countenance, as the morning-star that guides
 The starry flock, allured them, and with lies
 Drew after him the third part of Heav'n's host. 710
 Meanwhile th' eternal eye, whose sight discerns
 Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy mount,
 And from within the golden lamps that burn
 Nightly before him, saw without their light
 Rebellion rising; saw in whom, how spread
 Among the Sons of Morn, what multitudes
 Were banded to oppose his high decree;
 And, smiling, to his only Son thus said:
 'Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
 In full resplendence, heir of all my might, 720
 Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
 Of our omnipotence, and with what arms
 We mean to hold what anciently we claim
 Of deity or empire: Such a foe
 Is rising, who intends to erect his throne
 Equal to ours, throughout the spacious north;
 Nor so content, hath in his thought to try
 In battle, what our pow'r is, or our right.

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

To whom the Son with calm aspect and clear,
 Lightning divine, ineffable, serene,
 Made answer: 'Mighty Father, thou thy foes
 Justly hast in derision, and, secure,
 Laugh'st at their vain designs and tumults vain,
 Matter to me of glory, whom their hate
 Illustrates, when they see all regal pow'r
 Giv'n me to quell their pride, and in event 740
 Know whether I be dext'rous to subdue
 Thy rebels, or be found the worst in Heav'n.'

So spake the Son; but Satan, with his Pow'rs,
 Far was advanced on wingéd speed; an host
 Innumerable as the stars of night,
 Or stars of morning, dewdrops, which the Sun
 Impearls on every leaf and every flow'r.
 Regions they passed, the mighty regencies
 Of Seraphim, and Potentates, and Thrones,
 In their triple degrees; regions to which 750
 All thy dominion, Adam, is no more
 Than what this garden is to all the Earth,
 And all the Sea, from one entire globose
 Stretched into longitude; which having passed,
 At length into the limits of the north
 They came; and Satan to his royal seat
 High on a hill, far blazing, as a mount
 Raised on a mount, with pyramids and tow'rs
 From diamond quarries hewn, and rocks of gold;
 The palace of great Lucifer (so call 760
 That structure in the dialect of men
 Interpreted), which not long after, he

Affecting all equality with God,
 In imitation of that mount whereon
 Messiah was declared in sight of Heav'n,
 The Mountain of the Congregation called;
 For thither he assembled all his train,
 Pretending so commanded to consult
 About the great reception of their King,
 Thither to come, and with calumnious art
 Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears: 770

“Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Pow’rs;
 If these magnificent titles yet remain
 Not merely titular, since by decree
 Another now hath to himself engrossed
 All pow’r, and us eclipsed under the name
 Of King anointed, for whom all this haste
 Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,
 This only to consult how we may best,
 With what may be devised of honors new, 780
 Receive him coming to receive from us
 Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile!
 Too much to one, but double how endured,
 To one, and to his image now proclaimed?
 But what if better counsels might erect
 Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke?
 Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
 The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust
 To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
 Natives and Sons of Heav’n possessed before 790
 By none; and if not equal all, yet free,
 Equally free; for orders and degrees
 Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
 Who can in reason then, or right, assume
 Monarchy over such as live by right
 His equals, if in pow’r and splendor less,

In freedom equal? Or can introduce
 Law and edict on us, who without law
 Err not? Much less for this to be our Lord,
 And look for adoration, to th' abuse 800
 Of those imperial titles, which assert
 Our being ordained to govern, not to serve.'

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

'O argument blasphemous, false, and proud!
 Words which no ear ever to hear in Heav'n 810

Expected, least of all from thee, ingrate,
 In place thyself so high above thy peers.
 Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn
 The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,
 That to his only Son, by right endued
 With regal sceptre, every soul in Heav'n
 Shall bend the knee, and in that honor due
 Confess him rightful King? Unjust, thou say'st,
 Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,
 And equal over equals to let reign, 820
 One over all with unsucceeded pow'r.

Shalt thou give law to God? Shalt thou dispute
 With him the points of liberty, who made
 Thee what thou art, and formed the Pow'rs of Heav'n
 Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being?
 Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,
 And of our good and of our dignity
 How provident he is; how far from thought
 To make us less, bent rather to exalt
 Our happy state, under one head more near 830

United. But to grant it thee unjust,
 That equal over equals monarch reign:
 Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count,
 Or all angelic nature joined in one,
 Equal to him begotten Son, by whom,
 As by his Word, the Mighty Father made
 All things, ev'n thee; and all the Spirits of Heav'n
 By him created in their bright degrees,
 Crowned them with glory, and to their glory named
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Pow'rs, 840
 Essential Pow'rs; nor by his reign obscured,
 But more illustrious made; since he the head
 One of our number thus reduced becomes;
 His laws our laws; all honor to him done
 Returns our own. Cease then this impious rage,
 And tempt not these; but hasten to appease
 The incensed Father, and the incensed Son,
 While pardon may be found in time besought.
 So spake the fervent Angel; but his zeal
 None seconded, as out of season judged, 850
 Or singular and rash: Whereat rejoiced
 Th' Apostate, and, more haughty, thus replied:
 'That we were formed then say'st thou? And the work
 Of secondary hands, by task transferred
 From Father to his Son? Strange point and new,
 Doctrine which we would know whence learned: who saw
 When this creation was? remember'st thou
 Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
 We know no time when we were not as now;
 Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised 860
 By our own quick'ning pow'r, when fatal course
 Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
 Of this our native Heav'n, ethereal sons.
 Our puissance is our own; our own right hand

Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try
 Who is our equal: Then thou shalt behold
 Whether by supplication we intend
 Address, and to begirt th' Almighty throne
 Beseeching or besieging. This report,
 These tidings carry to th' anointed King; 870
 And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.'

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

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

So spake the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found
 Among the faithless, faithful only he;
 Among innumerable false, unmoved,

Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,	
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;	900
Nor number, nor example, with him wrought	
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,	
Though single. From amidst them forth he passed,	
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained	
Superior, nor of violence feared aught;	
And, with retorted scorn, his back he turned	
On those proud tow'rs to swift destruction doomed.	907

BOOK VI

The Argument

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

All night the dreadless Angel, unpursued,
 Through Heav'n's wide champaign held his way; till morn,
 Waked by the circling hours, with rosy hand
 Unbarred the gates of light. There is a cave
 Within the mount of God, fast by his throne,
 Where light and darkness in perpetual round
 Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Heav'n
 Grateful vicissitude, like day and night;
 Light issues forth, and at the other door
 Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour 10
 To veil the Heav'n, though darkness there might well
 Seem twilight here: And now went forth the morn
 Such as in highest Heav'n arrayed in gold
 Empyreal; from before her vanished night,
 Shot through with orient beams; when all the plain
 Covered with thick embattled squadrons bright,
 Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,

Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view:
 War he perceived, war in procinct; and found
 Already known what he for news had thought 20
 To have reported: Gladly then he mixed
 Among those friendly Pow'rs, who him received
 With joy and acclamations loud, that one,
 That of so many myriads fall'n, yet one
 Returned not lost. On to the sacred hill
 They led him high applauded, and present
 Before the seat supreme; from whence a voice,
 From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard:
 'Servant of God, well done; well hast thou fought
 The better fight, who single hast maintained 30
 Against revolted multitudes the cause
 Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms;
 And for the testimony of truth hast borne
 Universal reproach, far worse to bear
 Than violence; for this was all thy care
 To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
 Judged thee perverse: The easier conquest now
 Remains thee, aided by this host of friends,
 Back on thy foes more glorious to return,
 Than scorned thou didst depart; and to subdue 40
 By force, who reason for their law refuse,
 Right reason for their law, and for their King
 Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.
 Go, Michael, of celestial armies Prince,
 And thou, in military prowess next,
 Gabriel, lead forth to battle these my Sons
 Invincible; lead forth my arméd Saints,
 By thousands and by millions, ranged for fight,
 Equal in number to that Godless crew
 Rebellious: Them with fire and hostile arms 50
 Fearless assault; and, to the brow of Heav'n

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

So spake the sovereign voice, and clouds began
 To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll
 In dusky wreaths, reluctant flames, the sign
 Of wrath awaked; nor with less dread the loud
 Ethereal trumpet from on high 'gan blow: 60
 At which command the Powers militant,
 That stood for Heav'n, in mighty quadrate joined
 Of union irresistible, moved on
 In silence their bright legions, to the sound
 Of instrumental harmony, that breathed
 Heroic ardor to adventurous deeds
 Under their God-like Leaders, in the cause
 Of God and his Messiah. On they move
 Indissolubly firm; nor obvious hill,
 Nor strait'ning vale, nor wood, nor stream, divides 70
 Their perfect ranks; for high above the ground
 Their march was, and the passive air upbore
 Their nimble tread; as when the total kind
 Of birds, in orderly array on wing,
 Came summoned over Eden to receive
 Their names of thee; so over many a tract
 Of Heav'n they marched, and many a province wide,
 Tenfold the length of this terrene: At last,
 Far in th' horizon to the north appeared
 From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretched 80
 In battailous aspect, and nearer view
 Bristled with upright beams innumerable
 Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields
 Various, with boastful argument portrayed,
 The banded Pow'rs of Satan hasting on

With furious expedition; for they weened
 That self-same day, by fight or by surprise,
 To win the mount of God, and on his throne
 To set the envier of his state, the proud
 Aspirer; but their thoughts proved fond and vain 90
 In the mid way: Though strange to us it seemed
 At first, that Angel should with Angel war,
 And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet
 So oft in festivals of joy and love
 Unanimous, as Sons of one great Sire,
 Hymning th' Eternal Father: But the shout
 Of battle now began, and rushing sound
 Of onset ended soon each milder thought.
 High in the midst, exalted as a God,
 Th' Apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat, 100
 Idol of majesty divine, enclosed
 With flaming Cherubim, and golden shields;
 Then lighted from his gorgeous throne, for now
 Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,
 A dreadful interval, and front to front
 Presented stood in terrible array
 Of hideous length: Before the cloudy van,
 On the rough edge of battle ere it joined,
 Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,
 Came tow'ring, armed in adamant and gold; 110
 Abdiel that sight endured not, where he stood
 Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds,
 And thus his own undaunted heart explores:
 'O Heav'n! that such resemblance of the High'st
 Should yet remain, where faith and realty
 Remain not: Wherefore should not strength and might
 There fail where virtue fails, or weakest prove
 Where boldest, though to fight unconquerable?
 His puissance, trusting in th' Almighty's aid,

I mean to try, whose reason I have tried 120
 Unsound and false; nor is it aught but just,
 That he, who in debate of truth hath won,
 Should win in arms, in both disputes alike
 Victor; though brutish that contest and foul,
 When reason hath to deal with force, yet so
 Most reason is that reason overcome.'

So pondering, and from his arméd peers
 Forth stepping opposite, half-way he met
 His daring foe, at this prevention more
 Incensed, and thus securely him defied: 130

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

Whom the grand Foe, with scornful eye askance,
 Thus answered: 'Ill for thee, but in wished hour 150
 Of my revenge, first sought for, thou return'st
 From flight, seditious Angel, to receive
 Thy merited reward, the first assay

Of this right hand provoked, since first that tongue,
 Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose
 A third part of the Gods, in synod met
 Their deities to assert; who, while they feel
 Vigor divine within them, can allow
 Omnipotence to none. But well thou com'st
 Before thy fellows, ambitious to win 160
 From me some plume, that thy success may show
 Destruction to the rest: This pause between,
 (Unanswered lest thou boast) to let thee know,
 At first I thought that liberty and Heav'n
 To heav'nly souls had been all one; but now
 I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
 Minist'ring Spirits, trained up in feast and song.
 Such hast thou armed, the minstrelsy of Heav'n,
 Servility with freedom to contend,
 As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.' 170

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

This greeting on thy impious crest receive.’

So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
 Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell 190
 On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,
 Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield,
 Such ruin intercept: Ten paces huge
 He back recoiled; the tenth on bended knee
 His massy spear upstayed; as if on Earth
 Winds underground, or waters forcing way,
 Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,
 Half sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized
 The rebel Thrones, but greater rage, to see
 Thus foiled their mightiest; ours joy filled, and shout, 200
 Presage of victory, and fierce desire
 Of battle: Whereat Michael bid sound
 Th’ Archangel trumpet; through the vast of Heav’n
 It sounded, and the faithful armies rung
 Hosanna to the Highest: Nor stood at gaze
 The adverse legions, nor less hideous joined
 The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,
 And clamor such as heard in Heav’n till now
 Was never; arms on armor clashing brayed
 Horrible discord, and the madding wheels 210
 Of brazen chariots raged; dire was the noise
 Of conflict; over head the dismal hiss
 Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
 And flying vaulted either host with fire.
 So under fiery cope together rushed
 Both battles main, with ruinous assault
 And inextinguishable rage. All Heav’n
 Resounded; and had Earth been then, all Earth
 Had to her center shook. What wonder? when
 Millions of fierce encount’ring Angels fought 220
 On either side, the least of whom could wield

These elements, and arm him with the force
 Of all their regions: How much more of pow'r
 Army 'gainst army numberless to raise
 Dreadful combustion warring, and disturb,
 Though not destroy, their happy native seat;
 Had not th' Eternal King Omnipotent,
 From his strong hold of Heav'n, high over-ruled
 And limited their might; though numbered such
 As each divided legion might have seemed 230
 A numerous host; in strength each arméd hand
 A legion; led in fight, yet leader seemed
 Each warrior single as in chief, expert
 When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
 Of battle, open when, and when to close
 The ridges of grim war: No thought of flight,
 None of retreat, no unbecoming deed
 That argued fear; each on himself relied,
 As only in his arm the moment lay
 Of victory: Deeds of eternal fame 240
 Were done, but infinite; for wide was spread
 That war and various; sometimes on firm ground
 A standing fight, then, soaring on main wing,
 Tormented all the air; all air seemed then
 Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale
 The battle hung; till Satan, who that day
 Prodigious pow'r had shown, and met in arms
 No equal, ranging through the dire attack
 Of fighting Seraphim confused, at length
 Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and felled 250
 Squadrons at once; with huge two-handed sway
 Brandished aloft, the horrid edge came down
 Wide-wasting; such destruction to withstand
 He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb
 Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,

A vast circumference. At his approach
 The great Archangel from his warlike toil
 Surceased, and glad, as hoping here to end
 Intestine war in Heav'n, th' Arch-Foe subdued
 Or captive dragged in chains, with hostile frown 260
 And visage all inflamed, first thus began:

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

So spake the Prince of Angels; to whom thus
 The Adversary: ‘Nor think thou with wind
 Of aerie threats to awe whom yet with deeds
 Thou canst not. Hast thou turned the least of these
 To flight, or if to fall, but that they rise
 Unvanquished, easier to transact with me
 That thou should'st hope, imperious, and with threats
 To chase me hence? Err not, that so shall end
 The strife which thou call'st evil, but we style

The strife of glory; which we mean to win, 290
 Or turn this Heav'n itself into the Hell
 Thou fabl'st; here however to dwell free,
 If not to reign: Meanwhile thy utmost force,
 And join him named Almighty to thy aid,
 I fly not, but have sought thee far and nigh.'

They ended parley, and both addressed for fight
 Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue
 Of Angels, can relate, or to what things
 Liken on Earth conspicuous, that may lift
 Human imagination to such height 300

Of godlike power? For likest Gods they seemed,
 Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms,
 Fit to decide the empire of great Heav'n.
 Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air
 Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields
 Blazed opposite, while Expectation stood
 In horror: From each hand with speed retired,
 Where erst was thickest fight, th' angelic throng,
 And left large field, unsafe within the wind
 Of such commotion; such as, to set forth 310

Great things by small, if, nature's concord broke,
 Among the constellations war were sprung,
 Two planets, rushing from aspect malign
 Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky
 Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound.
 Together both with next to almighty arm
 Up-lifted imminent, one stroke they aimed
 That might determine, and not need repeat,
 As not of pow'r at once; nor odds appeared
 In might or swift prevention: But the sword 320
 Of Michael from the armory of God
 Was giv'n him tempered so, that neither keen
 Nor solid might resist that edge: it met

The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite
 Descending, and in half cut sheer; nor stayed,
 But with swift wheel reverse, deep ent'ring, shared
 All his right side: Then Satan first knew pain,
 And writhed him to and fro convolved; so sore
 The griding sword with discontinuous wound
 Passed through him: But th' ethereal substance closed, 330
 Not long divisible; and from the gash
 A stream of nectarous humor issuing flowed
 Sanguine, such as celestial spirits may bleed,
 And all his armor stained, ere while so bright.
 Forthwith on all sides to his aid was run
 By Angels many and strong, who interposed
 Defense, while others bore him on their shields
 Back to his chariot, where it stood retired
 From off the files of war: There they him laid
 Gnashing for anguish, and despite, and shame, 340
 To find himself not matchless, and his pride
 Humbled by such rebuke, so far beneath
 His confidence to equal God in pow'r.
 Yet soon he healed; for spirits that live throughout
 Vital in every part, not as frail Man
 In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins,
 Cannot but by annihilating die;
 Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
 Receive, no more than can the fluid air:
 All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear, 350
 All intellect, all sense; and, as they please,
 They limb themselves, and color, shape, or size
 Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.
 Meanwhile in other parts like deeds deserved
 Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought,
 And with fierce ensigns pierced the deep array
 Of Moloch, furious king; who him defied,

And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound
 Threatened, nor from the Holy One of Heav'n
 Refrained his tongue blasphemous; but anon 360
 Down cloven to the waist, with shattered arms
 And uncouth pain fled bellowing. On each wing
 Uriel, and Raphael, his vaunting foe,
 Though huge, and in a rock of diamond armed,
 Vanquished Adramelec, and Asmadai,
 Two potent Thrones, that to be less than Gods
 Disdained, but meaner thoughts learned in their flight,
 Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail.
 Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy
 The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow 370
 Ariel, and Arioch, and the violence
 Of Ramiel scorched and blasted, overthrew.
 I might relate of thousands, and their names
 Eternize here on Earth; but those elect
 Angels, contented with their fame in Heav'n,
 Seek not the praise of men: The other sort,
 In might though wondrous and in acts of war,
 Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom
 Canceled from Heav'n and sacred memory,
 Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell. 380
 For strength from truth divided, and from just,
 Illaudable, naught merits but dispraise
 And ignominy; yet to glory aspires
 Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame:
 Therefore eternal silence be their doom.

And now, their mightiest quelled, the battle swerved,
 With many an inroad gored; déformé rout
 Entered, and foul disorder; all the ground
 With shivered armor strown, and on a heap
 Chariot and charioteer lay overturned, 390
 And fiery-foaming steeds; what stood, recoiled

O'er-wearied, through the faint Satanic host
 Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surprised,
 Then first with fear surprised, and sense of pain,
 Fled ignominious, to such evil brought
 By sin of disobedience; till that hour
 Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.
 Far otherwise th' inviolable Saints,
 In cubic phalanx firm, advanced entire,
 Invulnerable, impenetrably armed;
 Such high advantages their innocence
 Gave them above their foes; not to have sinned,
 Not to have disobeyed; in fight they stood
 Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pained
 By wound, though from their place by violence moved.

400

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

410

'O now in danger tried, now known in arms
 Not to be overpow'red, companions dear,
 Found worthy not of liberty alone,
 Too mean pretense, but what we more affect,
 Honor, dominion, glory, and renown;
 Who have sustained one day in doubtful fight,
 (And if one day, why not eternal days?)
 What Heaven's Lord had pow'rfullest to send

420

Against us from about his throne, and judged
 Sufficient to subdue us to his will,
 But proves not so: Then fallible, it seems,
 Of future we may deem him, though till now
 Omniscient thought. True is, less firmly armed, 430
 Some disadvantage we endured and pain,
 Till now not known, but, known, as soon contemned;
 Since now we find this our empyreal form
 Incapable of mortal injury,
 Imperishable, and, though pierced with wound,
 Soon closing, and by native vigor healed.
 Of evil then so small as easy think
 The remedy; perhaps more valid arms,
 Weapons more violent, when next we meet,
 May serve to better us, and worse our foes, 440
 Or equal what between us made the odds,
 In nature none: If other hidden cause
 Left them superior, while we can preserve
 Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,
 Due search and consultation will disclose.

He sat; and in th' assembly next upstood
 Nisroch, of Principalities the prime;
 As one he stood escaped from cruel fight,
 Sore toiled, his riven arms to havoc hewn,
 And cloudy in aspect thus answering spake: 450
 'Deliverer from new Lords, leader to free
 Enjoyment of our right as Gods; yet hard
 For Gods, and too unequal work we find,
 Against unequal arms to fight in pain,
 Against unpained, impassive; from which evil
 Ruin must needs ensue; for what avails
 Valor or strength, though matchless, quelled with pain
 Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands
 Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well

Spare out of life perhaps, and not repine, 460
 But live content, which is the calmest life:
 But pain is perfect misery, the worst
 Of evils, and, excessive, overturns
 All patience. He, who therefore can invent
 With what more forcible we may offend
 Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm
 Ourselves with like defense, to me deserves
 No less than for deliv'rance what we owe.'

Where to with look composed Satan replied:
 'Not uninvented that, which thou aright 470
 Believ'st so main to our success, I bring.
 Which of us who beholds the bright surface
 Of this ethereous mould whereon we stand,
 This continent of spacious Heav'n, adorned
 With plant, fruit, flow'r ambrosial, gems, and gold;
 Whose eye so superficially surveys
 These things, as not to mind from whence they grow
 Deep underground, materials dark and crude,
 Of spiritous and fiery spume, till touched
 With Heaven's ray, and tempered, they shoot forth 480
 So beauteous, op'ning to the ambient light?
 These in their dark nativity the deep
 Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame;
 Which, into hollow engines, long and round,
 Thick rammed, at th' other bore with touch of fire
 Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth
 From far, with thund'ring noise, among our foes
 Such implements of mischief, as shall dash
 To pieces, and o'erwhelm whatever stands
 Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarmed 490
 The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.
 Nor long shall be our labor; yet ere Dawn,
 Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive;

Abandon fear; to strength and counsel joined
Think nothing hard, much less to be despaired.'

He ended, and his words their drooping cheer
Enlightened, and their languished hope revived.
Th' invention all admired, and each, how he
To be th' inventor missed; so easy it seemed
Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought 500
Impossible: Yet, haply, of thy race
In future days, if malice should abound,
Someone intent on mischief, or inspired
With devilish machination, might devise
Like instrument to plague the sons of men
For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.
Forthwith from council to the work they flew;
None arguing stood; innumerable hands
Were ready; in a moment up they turned
Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath 510
Th' originals of nature in their crude
Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam
They found, they mingled, and, with subtle art,
Concocted and adjusted they reduced
To blackest grain, and into store conveyed:
Part hidden veins digged up (nor hath this Earth
Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone,
Whereof to found their engines and their balls
Of missive ruin; part incentive reed
Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire. 520
So all ere day-spring, under conscious night,
Secret they finished, and in order set,
With silent circumspection, unespied.
Now when fair morn orient in Heav'n appeared,
Up rose the victor-Angels, and to arms
The matin trumpet sung: In arms they stood
Of golden panoply, refulgent host,

Soon banded; others from the dawning hills
 Look round, and scouts each coast light-arméd scour,
 Each quarter to descry the distant Foe, 530
 Where lodged, or whither fled, or if for fight,
 In motion or in halt: Him soon they met
 Under spread ensigns moving nigh, in slow
 But firm battalion; back with speediest sail
 Zophiel, of Cherubim the swiftest wing,
 Came flying, and in mid air aloud thus cried:
 ‘Arm, Warriors, arm for fight; the Foe at hand,
 Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit
 This day; fear not his flight; so thick a cloud
 He comes, and settled in his face I see 540
 Sad resolution, and secure: Let each
 His adamantine coat gird well, and each
 Fit well his helm, gripe fast his orbéd shield,
 Borne even or high; for this day will pour down,
 If I conjecture aught, no drizzling show’r,
 But rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire.’
 So warned he them, aware themselves, and soon
 In order, quit of all impediment;
 Instant without disturb they took alarm,
 And onward moved embattled: When behold, 550
 Not distant far with heavy pace the Foe
 Approaching gross and huge, in hollow cube
 Training his devilish enginery, impaled
 On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,
 To hide the fraud. At interview both stood
 A while; but suddenly at head appeared
 Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud:
 ‘Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold;
 That all may see who hate us, how we seek
 Peace and composure, and with open breast 560
 Stand ready to receive them, if they like

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

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

Which to our eyes discovered, new and strange,
 A triple mounted row of pillars laid
 On wheels (for like to pillars most they seemed,
 Or hollowed bodies made of oak or fir,
 With branches lopped, in wood or mountain felled,)
 Brass, iron, stony mould, had not their mouths
 With hideous orifice gaped on us wide,
 Portending hollow truce: At each behind
 A Seraph stood, and in his hand a reed
 Stood waving tipped with fire; while we, suspense, 580
 Collected stood within our thoughts amused,

Not long; for sudden all at once their reeds
 Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied
 With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,
 But soon obscured with smoke, all Heav'n appeared,
 From those deep-throated engines belched, whose roar
 Emboweled with outrageous noise the air,
 And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul
 Their devilish glut, chained thunderbolts and hail
 Of iron globes; which, on the victor host 590

Leveled, with such impetuous fury smote,
 That, whom they hit, none on their feet might stand,
 Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell
 By thousands, Angel on Archangel rolled;
 The sooner for their arms; unarmed, they might

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

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

To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood: 620
 ‘Leader, the terms we sent were terms of weight,
 Of hard contents, and full of force urged home;
 Such as we might perceive amused them all,
 And stumbled many: Who receives them right,
 Had need from head to foot well understand;
 Not understood, this gift they have besides,
 They show us when our foes walk not upright.’

So they among themselves in pleasant vein
 Stood scoffing, heightened in their thoughts beyond

All doubt of victory: Eternal Might 630
 To match with their inventions they presumed
 So easy, and of his thunder made a scorn,
 And all his host derided, while they stood
 A while in trouble: But they stood not long;
 Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms
 Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose.
 Forthwith (behold the excellence, the pow'r,
 Which God hath in his mighty Angels placed!)
 Their arms away they threw, and to the hills
 (For Earth hath this variety from Heav'n 640
 Of pleasure situate in hill and dale)
 Light as the lightning glimpse they ran, they flew;
 From their foundations loos'ning to and fro,
 They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,
 Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops
 Uplifting bore them in their hands: Amaze,
 Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host,
 When coming towards them so dread they saw
 The bottom of the mountains upward turned;
 Till on those curséd engines' triple-row 650
 They saw them whelmed, and all their confidence
 Under the weight of mountains buried deep;
 Themselves invaded next, and on their heads
 Main promontories flung, which in the air
 Came shadowing, and oppressed whole legions armed;
 Their armor helped their harm, crushed in and bruised
 Into their substance pent, which wrought them pain
 Implacable, and many a dolorous groan;
 Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind
 Out of such prison, though Spirits of purest light, 660
 Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.
 The rest, in imitation, to like arms
 Betook them, and the neighb'ring hills uptore:

So hills amid the air encountered hills,
 Hurl'd to and fro with jaculation dire;
 That underground they fought in dismal shade;
 Infernal noise! war seemed a civil game
 To this uproar; horrid confusion heaped
 Upon confusion rose: And now all Heav'n
 Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread; 670
 Had not th' Almighty Father, where he sits
 Shrined in his sanctuary of Heav'n secure,
 Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
 This tumult, and permitted all, advised:
 That his great purpose he might so fulfill,
 To honor his anointed Son avenged
 Upon his enemies, and to declare
 All pow'r on him transferred: Whence to his Son,
 Th' Assessor of his throne, he thus began:
 'Effulgence of my glory, Son beloved, 680
 Son, in whose face invisible is beheld
 Visibly, what by Deity I am;
 And in whose hand what by decree I do,
 Second Omnipotence, two days are past,
 Two days, as we compute the days of Heav'n,
 Since Michael and his Pow'rs went forth to tame
 These disobedient: Sore hath been their fight,
 As likeliest was, when two such foes met armed;
 For to themselves I left them; and thou know'st,
 Equal in their creation they were formed, 690
 Save what Sin hath impaired; which yet hath wrought
 Insensibly, for I suspend their doom;
 Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
 Endless, and no solution will be found:
 War wearied hath performed what war can do,
 And to disordered rage let loose the reins
 With mountains, as with weapons, armed; which makes

Wild work in Heav'n, and dangerous to the main.
 Two days are therefore past, the third is thine;
 For thee I have ordained it; and thus far 700
 Have suffered, that the glory may be thine
 Of ending this great war, since none but Thou
 Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace
 Immense I have transfused, that all may know
 In Heav'n and Hell thy pow'r above compare;
 And, this perverse commotion governed thus,
 To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir
 Of all things; to be Heir, and to be King
 By sacred unction, thy deservéd right.
 Go then, Thou Mightiest, in thy Father's might; 710
 Ascend my chariot, guide the rapid wheels
 That shake Heav'n's basis, bring forth all my war,
 My bow and thunder, my almighty arms
 Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh;
 Pursue these Sons of Darkness, drive them out
 From all Heav'n's bounds into the utter deep:
 There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
 God, and Messiah his anointed King.'

He said, and on his Son with rays direct
 Shone full; he all his Father full expressed 720
 Ineffably into his face received;
 And thus the Filial Godhead answ'ring spake:
 'O Father, O Supreme of Heav'nly Thrones,
 First, Highest, Holiest, Best; thou always seek'st
 To glorify thy Son, I always thee,
 As is most just: This I my glory account,
 My exaltation, and my whole delight,
 That thou, in me well pleased, declar'st thy will
 Fulfilled, which to fulfill is all my bliss.
 Sceptre and pow'r, thy giving, I assume, 730
 And gladlier shall resign, when in the end

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

Then shall thy Saints unmixed, and from th' impure
 Far separate, circling thy holy mount,
 Unfeignéd Halleluiahs to thee sing,
 Hymns of high praise, and I among them Chief?

So said, he, o'er his sceptre bowing, rose
 From the right hand of glory where he sat;
 And the third sacred morn began to shine,
 Dawning through Heav'n. Forth rushed with whirlwind sound
 The chariot of Paternal Deity, 750

Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
 Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed
 By four Cherubic shapes; four faces each
 Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all
 And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels
 Of beryl, and careering fires between;
 Over their heads a crystal firmament,
 Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
 Amber, and colors of the show'ry arch.
 He, in celestial panoply all armed 760

Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought,
 Ascended; at his right hand Victory
 Sat eagle-winged; beside him hung his bow
 And quiver with three-bolted thunder stored;
 And from about him fierce effusion rolled

Of smoke, and bick'ring flame, and sparkles dire:
 Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,
 He onward came; far off his coming shone;
 And twenty thousand (I their number heard)
 Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen; 770
 He on the wings of Cherub rode sublime
 On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned,
 Illustrious far and wide; but by his own
 First seen: Them unexpected joy surprised,
 When the great ensign of Messiah blazed
 Aloft by Angels borne, his sign in Heav'n;
 Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced
 His army, circumfused on either wing,
 Under their Head embodied all in one.
 Before him Pow'r Divine his way prepared; 780
 At his command th' uprooted hills retired
 Each to his place; they heard his voice, and went
 Obsequious; Heav'n his wonted face renewed,
 And with fresh flow'rets hill and valley smiled.
 This saw his hapless Foes, but stood obdured,
 And to rebellious fight rallied their Pow'rs,
 Insensate, hope conceiving from despair.
 In heav'nly Spirits could such perverseness dwell?
 But to convince the proud what signs avail,
 Or wonders move the obdurate to relent? 790
 They, hardened more by what might most reclaim,
 Grieving to see his glory, at the sight
 Took envy; and, aspiring to his height,
 Stood re-embattled fierce, by force or fraud
 Weening to prosper, and at length prevail
 Against God and Messiah, or to fall
 In universal ruin last; and now
 To final battle drew, disdaining flight,
 Or faint retreat; when the great Son of God

To all his host on either hand thus spake: 800

‘Stand still in bright array, ye Saints; here stand,
 Ye Angels armed; this day from battle rest:
 Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God
 Accepted, fearless in his righteous cause;
 And as ye have received, so have ye done,
 Invincibly: But of this curséd crew
 The punishment to other hand belongs;
 Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints:
 Number to this day’s work is not ordained,
 Nor multitude; stand only, and behold 810
 God’s indignation on these godless poured
 By me; not you, but me, they have despised,
 Yet envied; against me is all their rage,
 Because the Father, t’ whom in Heav’n supreme
 Kingdom, and pow’r, and glory appertains,
 Hath honored me, according to his will.
 Therefore to me their doom he hath assigned;
 That they may have their wish, to try with me
 In battle which the stronger proves; they all,
 Or I alone against them; since by strength 820
 They measure all, of other excellence
 Not emulous, nor care who them excels;
 Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe.’

So spake the Son, and into terror changed
 His count’nance too severe to be beheld,
 And full of wrath bent on his enemies.
 At once the four spread out their starry wings
 With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs
 Of his fierce chariot rolled, as with the sound
 Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host. 830
 He on his impious Foes right onward drove,
 Gloomy as night; under his burning wheels
 The steadfast empyrean shook throughout,

All but the throne itself of God. Full soon
 Among them he arrived; in his right hand
 Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
 Before him, such as in their souls infixed
 Plagues: They, astonished, all resistance lost,
 All courage; down their idle weapons dropped:
 O'er shields, and helms, and helméd heads he rode 840
 Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate,
 That wished the mountains now might be again
 Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.
 Nor less on either side tempestuous fell
 His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged four
 Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels
 Distinct alike with multitude of eyes;
 One spirit in them ruled; and every eye
 Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire
 Among th' accursed, that withered all their strength, 850
 And of their wonted vigor left them drained,
 Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fall'n.
 Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked
 His thunder in mid volley; for he meant
 Not to destroy, but root them out of Heav'n:
 The overthrown he raised, and as a herd
 Of goats or timorous flock together thronged
 Drove them before him thunder-struck, pursued
 With terrors, and with furies, to the bounds
 And crystal wall of Heav'n; which, op'ning wide, 860
 Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
 Into the wasteful deep: The monstrous sight
 Struck them with horror backward, but far worse
 Urged them behind: Headlong themselves they threw
 Down from the verge of Heav'n; eternal wrath
 Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.
 Hell heard th' unsufferable noise, Hell saw

Heav'n ruining from Heav'n, and would have fled
 Affrighted; but strict Fate had cast too deep
 Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound. 870
 Nine days they fell: Confounded Chaos roared,
 And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
 Through his wild anarchy, so huge a rout
 Encumbered him with ruin: Hell at last
 Yawning received them whole, and on them closed;
 Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire
 Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.
 Disburden'd Heav'n rejoiced, and soon repaired
 Her mural breach, returning whence it rolled.
 Sole Victor, from th' expulsion of his Foes, 880
 Messiah his triumphal chariot turned:
 To meet him all his Saints, who silent stood
 Eyewitnesses of his almighty acts,
 With jubilee advanced; and, as they went,
 Shaded with branching palm, each order bright,
 Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,
 Son, Heir, and Lord, to him dominion giv'n,
 Worthiest to reign: He, celebrated, rode
 Triumphant through mid Heav'n, into the courts
 And temple of his Mighty Father throned 890
 On high; who into glory him received,
 Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.
 Thus, meas'ring things in Heav'n by things on Earth,
 At thy request, and that thou may'st beware
 By what is past, to thee I have revealed
 What might have else to human race been hid;
 The discord which befell, and war in Heav'n
 Among th' angelic Pow'rs, and the deep fall
 Of those too high aspiring, who rebelled
 With Satan; he who envies now thy state,
 Who now is plotting how he may seduce 900

Thee also from obedience, that, with him
Bereaved of happiness, thou may'st partake
His punishment, eternal misery;
Which would be all his solace and revenge,
As a despite done against the Most High,
Thee once to gain companion of his woe.
But listen not to his temptations, warn
Thy weaker; let it profit thee to have heard,
By terrible example, the reward
Of disobedience; firm they might have stood,
Yet fell; remember, and fear to transgress.”

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BOOK VII

The Argument

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

Descend from Heav'n, Urania, by that name
 If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
 Foll'wing, above th' Olympian hill I soar,
 Above the flight of Pegasean wing.
 The meaning, not the name, I call: for thou
 Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
 Of old Olympus dwell'st; but, Heav'nly-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 th' Almighty Father, pleased
 With thy celestial song. Up led by thee
 Into the Heav'n of Heav'ns I have presumed,
 An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
 Thy temp'ring: with like safety guided down
 Return me to my native element:
 Lest from this flying steed unreined, (as once
 Bellerophon, though from a lower clime,)
 Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,
 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 fall'n on evil days,
 On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
 In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
 And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
 Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
 Purples the East: still govern thou my song, 30
 Urania, and fit audience find, though few.
 But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
 Of Bacchus and his revelers, the race
 Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
 In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
 To rapture, till the savage clamor drowned
 Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend
 Her son. So fail not thou, who thee implores:
 For thou art heav'nly, she an empty dream.

Say, Goddess, what ensued when Raphael, 40
 Th' affable Archangel, had forewarned
 Adam, by dire example, to beware
 Apostasy, by what befell in Heav'n
 To those apostates; lest the like befall
 In Paradise to Adam or his race,
 Charged not to touch the interdicted tree,
 If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
 So easily obeyed amid the choice
 Of all tastes else to please their appetite,
 Though wand'ring. 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 Heav'n,
 And war so near the peace of God in bliss,
 With such confusion: but the evil, soon

Driv'n 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 Heav'n and Earth conspicuous first began;
 When, and whereof created; for what cause;
 What within Eden, or without, was done
 Before his memory; as one whose drought
 Yet scarce allayed still eyes the current stream,
 Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites,
 Proceeded thus to ask his heav'nly Guest:
 "Great things, and full of wonder in our ears, 70
 Far diff'ring from this world, thou hast revealed,
 Divine Interpreter, by favor sent
 Down from the empyrean, to forewarn
 Us timely of what might else have been our loss,
 Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach;
 For which to th' Infinitely Good we owe
 Immortal thanks, and his admonishment
 Receive, with solemn purpose to observe
 Immutably his sovereign will, the end
 Of what we are. But since thou hast vouchsafed 80
 Gently, for our instruction, to impart
 Things above earthly thought, which yet concerned
 Our knowing, as to highest wisdom seemed,
 Deign to descend now lower, and relate
 What may no less perhaps avail us known,
 How first began this Heav'n which we behold
 Distant so high, with moving fires adorned
 Innumerable; and this which yields or fills
 All space, the ambient air wide interfused
 Embracing round this florid Earth; what cause 90

Moved the Creator, in his holy rest
 Through all eternity, so late to build
 In Chaos; and the work begun, how soon
 Absolved; if unforbid thou may'st unfold
 What we, not to explore the secrets ask
 Of his eternal empire, but the more
 To magnify his works, the more we know.
 And the great light of day yet wants to run
 Much of his race though steep; suspense in Heav'n,
 Held by thy voice, thy potent voice, he hears, 100
 And longer will delay to hear thee tell
 His generation, and the rising birth
 Of nature from the unapparent deep:
 Or if the star of evening and the moon
 Haste to thy audience, night with her will bring,
 Silence; and sleep, list'ning to thee, will watch;
 Or we can bid his absence, till thy song
 End, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine."

Thus Adam his illustrious Guest besought:
 And thus the Godlike Angel answered mild: 110
 "This also thy request, with caution asked,
 Obtain; though to recount almighty works
 What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,
 Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?
 Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve
 To glorify the Maker, and infer
 Thee also happier, shall not be withheld
 Thy hearing; such commission from above
 I have received, to answer thy desire
 Of knowledge within bounds; beyond, abstain 120
 To ask; nor let thine own inventions hope
 Things not revealed, which th' invisible King,
 Only omniscient, hath suppressed in night;
 To none communicable in Earth or Heav'n:

Enough is left besides to search and know.
 But knowledge is as food, and needs no less
 Her temperance over appetite, to know
 In measure what the mind may well contain;
 Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
 Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind. 130
 Know then, that, after Lucifer from Heav'n
 (So call him, brighter once amidst the host
 Of Angels, than that star the stars among,)
 Fell with his flaming legions through the deep
 Into his place, and the great Son returned
 Victorious with his Saints, th' Omnipotent
 Eternal Father from his throne beheld
 Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake:
 'At least our envious Foe hath failed, who thought
 All like himself rebellious, by whose aid 140
 This inaccessible high strength, the seat
 Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed,
 He trusted to have seized, and into fraud
 Drew many, whom their place knows here no more:
 Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,
 Their station; Heav'n, 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 Heav'n,
 My damage fondly deemed, I can repair
 That detriment, if such it be to lose
 Self-lost; and in a moment will create
 Another world, out of one man a race
 Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
 Not here; till, by degrees of merit raised,
 They open to themselves at length the way

Up hither, under long obedience tried;
 And Earth be changed to Heav'n, and Heav'n to Earth, 160
 One kingdom, joy and union without end.
 Meanwhile inhabit lax, ye Pow'rs of Heav'n;
 And thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee
 This I perform; speak thou, and be it done.
 My overshadowing spirit and might with thee
 I send along; ride forth, and bid the deep
 Within appointed bounds be Heav'n 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 th' Almighty, and to what he spake
 His Word, the filial Godhead, gave effect.
 Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
 Than time or motion, but to human ears
 Cannot without process of speech be told,
 So told as earthly notion can receive.
 Great triumph and rejoicing was in Heav'n, 180
 When such was heard declared th' Almighty's will;
 Glory they sung to the Most High, good will
 To future men, and in their dwellings peace;
 Glory to Him, whose just avenging ire
 Had driven out th' ungodly from his sight
 And the habitations of the just; to Him
 Glory and praise, whose wisdom had ordained
 Good out of evil to create; instead
 Of Spirits malign, a better race to bring
 Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse 190
 His good to worlds and ages infinite.
 So sang the hierarchies: Meanwhile the Son

On his great expedition now appeared,
 Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crowned
 Of majesty divine; sapience and love
 Immense, and all his Father in him shone.
 About his chariot numberless were poured
 Cherub, and Seraph, Potentates, and Thrones,
 And Virtues, wingéd spirits, and chariots winged
 From th' armory 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: Heav'n opened wide
 Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound
 On golden hinges moving, to let forth
 The King of Glory, in his pow'rful Word
 And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.
 On heav'nly 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
 Heav'n's height, and with the center mix the pole.
 'Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou deep, peace,'
 Said then th' Omnific Word; 'your discord end!
 Nor stayed; but, on the wings of Cherubim
 Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
 Far into Chaos, and the world unborn; 220
 For Chaos heard his voice: Him all his train
 Followed in bright procession, to behold
 Creation, and the wonders of his might.
 Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in his hand
 He took the golden compasses, prepared
 In God's eternal store, to circumscribe

This universe, and all created things:
 One foot he centered, 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 Heav'n created, thus the Earth,
 Matter unformed and void: Darkness profound
 Covered th' abyss: but on the wat'ry calm
 His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
 And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth
 Throughout the fluid mass; but downward purged
 The black 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 center hung.
 'Let there be light,' said God; and forthwith light
 Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
 Sprung from the deep; and from her native east
 To journey through the aerie 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 ev'n and morn:
 Nor past uncelebrated, nor unsung
 By the celestial choirs, when orient light
 Exhaling first from darkness they beheld;
 Birthday of Heav'n and Earth; with joy and shout
 The hollow universal orb they filled,
 And touched their golden harps, and hymning praised
 God and his works; Creator him they sung,
 Both when first evening was, and when first morn. 260

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

The Earth was formed, but in the womb as yet
 Of waters, embryo immature involved,
 Appeared not: over all the face of Earth
 Main ocean flowed, not idle; but, with warm
 Prolific humor soft'ning all her globe, 280
 Fermented the great mother to conceive,
 Sate with genial moisture; when God said,
 'Be gathered now ye waters under Heav'n
 Into one place, and let dry land appear.'
 Immediately the mountains huge appear
 Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
 Into the clouds; their tops ascend the sky:
 So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
 Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
 Capacious bed of waters: Thither they 290
 Hasted with glad precipitance, uprolled,
 As drops on dust conglobing from the dry:
 Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,
 For haste; such flight the great command impressed

On the swift floods: As armies at the call
 Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)
 Troop to their standard; so the wat'ry throng,
 Wave rolling after wave, where way they found,
 If steep, with torrent rapture, if through plain,
 Soft-ebbing; nor withstood them rock or hill; 300
 But they, or under ground, or circuit wide
 With serpent error wand'ring, found their way,
 And on the washy ooze deep channels wore;
 Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
 All but within those banks, where rivers now
 Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train.
 The dry land, Earth; and the great receptacle
 Of congregated waters, he called seas:
 And saw that it was good; and said, 'Let th' Earth
 Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed, 310
 And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,
 Whose seed is in herself upon the Earth.'
 He scarce had said, when the bare Earth, till then
 Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorned,
 Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad
 Her universal face with pleasant green;
 Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flow'r'd
 Op'ning their various colors, and made gay
 Her bosom, smelling sweet: and, these scarce blown,
 Forth flourished thick the clust'ring vine, forth crept 320
 The swelling gourd, up stood the corny reed
 Embattled in her field, and th' humble shrub,
 And bush with frizzled hair implicit: Last
 Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread
 Their branches hung with copious fruit, or gemmed
 Their blossoms: With high woods the hills were crowned;
 With tufts the valleys, and each fountain side;
 With borders long the rivers: that Earth now

Seemed like to Heav'n, 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 th' Earth,
 God made, and every herb, before it grew
 On the green stem: God saw that it was good:
 So ev'n and morn recorded the third day.

Again th' Almighty spake, 'Let there be lights
 High in th' 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 Heav'n,
 To give light on the Earth;' and it was so.
 And God made two great lights, great for their use
 To man, the greater to have rule by day,
 The less by night, altern; and made the stars,
 And set them in the firmament of Heav'n
 To illuminate the Earth, and rule the day 350
 In their vicissitude, and rule the night,
 And light from darkness to divide. God saw,
 Surveying his great work, that it was good:
 For of celestial bodies first the sun
 A mighty sphere he framed, unlightsome first,
 Though of ethereal mould: then formed the moon
 Globose, and every magnitude of stars,
 And sowed with stars the Heav'n, thick as a field:
 Of light by far the greater part he took,
 Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed 360
 In the sun's orb, made porous to receive
 And drink the liquid light; firm to retain

Her gathered beams, great palace now of light.
 Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
 Repairing, in their golden urns draw light,
 And hence the morning-planet gilds her horns;
 By tincture or reflection they augment
 Their small peculiar, though from human sight
 So far remote, with diminution seen,
 First in his east the glorious lamp was seen, 370
 Regent of day, and all th' horizon round
 Invested with bright rays, jocund to run
 His longitude through Heav'n's high road; the gray
 Dawn, and the Pleiades, before him danced,
 Shedding sweet influence: Less bright the moon,
 But opposite in leveled 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 Heav'n'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 their bright luminaries that set and rose,
 Glad evening and glad morn crowned the fourth day.

And God said, 'Let the waters generate
 Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul:
 And let fowl fly above the Earth, with wings
 Displayed on th' open firmament of Heav'n.' 390
 And God created the great whales, and each
 Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously
 The waters generated by their kinds;
 And every bird of wing after his kind;
 And saw that it was good, and blessed them, saying:
 'Be fruitful, multiply, and in the seas,

And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill;
 And let the fowl be multiplied, on the Earth.
 Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
 With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals 400
 Of fish that with their fins, and shining scales,
 Glide under the green wave, in sculls that oft
 Bank the mid sea: part single, or with mate,
 Graze the sea-weed their pasture, and through groves
 Of coral stray; or, sporting with quick glance,
 Show to the sun their waved coats dropped with gold;
 Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
 Moist nutriment; or under rocks their food
 In jointed armor watch: on smooth the seal
 And bended dolphins play: part huge of bulk 410
 Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,
 Tempest the ocean: there Leviathan,
 Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
 Stretched like a promontory sleeps or swims,
 And seems a moving land; and at his gills
 Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.
 Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores,
 Their brood as numerous hatch, from th' egg that soon
 Bursting with kindly rupture forth disclosed
 Their callow young; but feathered soon and fledge 420
 They summed their pens; and, soaring th' air sublime,
 With clang despised the ground, under a cloud
 In prospect; there the eagle and the stork
 On cliffs and cedar tops their eyries build:
 Part loosely wing the region, part more wise
 In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,
 Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
 Their aerie caravan, high over seas
 Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing
 Easing their flight; so steers the prudent crane 430

Her annual voyage, borne on winds; the air
 Floats as they pass, fanned with unnumbered plumes:
 From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
 Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings
 Till ev'n; 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 archéd neck,
 Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows
 Her state with oary feet; yet oft they quit 440
 The dank, and, rising on stiff pennons, tow'r
 The mid aerial sky: Others on ground
 Walked firm; the crested cock whose clarion sounds
 The silent hours, and th' other whose gay train
 Adorns him, colored with the florid hue
 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 th' Earth bring forth soul living in her kind,
 Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of th' Earth,
 Each in their kind.' The Earth obeyed, and straight
 Op'ning her fertile womb teemed at a birth
 Innumerable living creatures, perfect forms,
 Limbed and full grown: Out of the ground uprose,
 As from his lair, the wild beast where he wons
 In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den;
 Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walked:
 The cattle in the fields and meadows green: 460
 Those rare and solitary, these in flocks
 Pasturing at once, and in broad herds upsprung.
 The grassy clods now calved; now half appeared
 The tawny lion, pawing to get free

His hinder parts, then springs as broke from bonds,
 And rampant shakes his brinded mane; the ounce,
 The leopard, 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,
 Insect or worm: those waved their limber fans
 For wings, and smallest lineaments exact
 In all the liveries decked of summer's pride
 With spots of gold and purple, azure and green:
 These, as a line, their long dimension drew, 480
 Streaking the ground with sinuous trace; not all
 Minims of nature; some of serpent-kind,
 Wondrous in length and corpulence, involved
 Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept
 The parsimonious emmet, provident
 Of future; in small room large heart enclosed;
 Pattern of just equality perhaps
 Hereafter, joined in her popular tribes
 Of commonal'ty: Swarming next appeared
 The female bee, that feeds her husband drone 490
 Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells
 With honey stored: The rest are numberless,
 And thou their natures know'st, and gav'st them names,
 Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown
 The serpent, subtlest beast of all the field,
 Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes
 And hairy mane terrific, though to thee
 Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.

Now Heav'n in all her glory shone, and rolled
 Her motions, as the great first Mover's hand 500
 First wheeled their course: Earth in her rich attire
 Consummate lovely smiled; air, water, earth,
 By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walked,
 Frequent; and of the sixth day yet remained:
 There wanted yet the master-work, the end
 Of all yet done; a creature, who, not prone
 And brute as other creatures, but endued
 With sanctity of reason, might erect
 His stature, and upright with front serene
 Govern the rest, self-knowing; and from thence 510
 Magnanimous to correspond with Heav'n,
 But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
 Descends, thither with heart, and voice, and eyes
 Directed in devotion, to adore
 And worship God Supreme, who made him chief
 Of all his works: therefore th' Omnipotent
 Eternal Father (for where is not he
 Present?) thus to his Son audibly spake:
 'Let us make now man in our image, man
 In our similitude, and let them rule 520
 Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
 Beast of the field, and over all the Earth,
 And every creeping thing that creeps the ground.'
 This said, he formed thee, Adam, thee, O man,
 Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed
 The breath of life; in his own image he
 Created thee, in the image of God
 Express; and thou becam'st a living soul.
 Male he created thee; but thy consort
 Female, for race; then blessed mankind, and said, 530
 'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth;
 Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold

Over fish of the sea, and fowl of th' air,
 And every living thing that moves on th' Earth.
 Wherever thus created, for no place
 Is yet distinct by name, thence, as thou know'st,
 He brought thee into this delicious grove,
 This garden, planted with the trees of God,
 Delectable both to behold and taste;
 And freely all their pleasant fruit for food 540
 Gave thee; all sorts are here that all th' 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 di'st;
 Death is the penalty imposed; beware,
 And govern well thy appetite; lest Sin
 Surprise thee, and her black attendant Death.
 Here finished he, and all that he had made
 Viewed, and behold all was entirely good;
 So ev'n and morn accomplished the sixth day: 550
 Yet not till the Creator from his work
 Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,
 Up to the Heav'n of Heav'ns, his high abode;
 Thence to behold this new created world,
 Th' addition of his empire, how it showed
 In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,
 Answ'ring 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 Heav'ns and all the constellations rung,
 The planets in their station list'ning stood,
 While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.
 'Open, ye everlasting gates,' they sung,
 'Open, ye Heav'ns, 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 wingéd Messengers
 On errands of supernal grace.' So sung
 The glorious train ascending; He through Heav'n,
 That opened wide her blazing portals, led
 To God's eternal house direct the way;
 A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold
 And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear,
 Seen in the galaxy, that milky way,
 Which nightly, as a circling zone, thou see'st 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 Heav'n's high-seated top, th' imperial throne
 Of Godhead, fixed for ever firm and sure,
 The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down
 With his great Father; for he also went
 Invisible, yet stayed, (such privilege
 Hath omnipresence) and the work ordained, 590
 Author and End of all things; and, from work
 Now resting, blessed and hallowed the seventh day,
 As resting on that day from all his work,
 But not in silence holy kept: the harp
 Had work and rested not; the solemn pipe,
 And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,
 All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,
 Tempered soft tunings, intermixed with voice
 Choral or unison: of incense clouds,
 Fuming from golden censers, hid the mount. 600

Creation and the six days' acts they sung:

'Great are thy works, Jehovah, infinite
 Thy pow'r. What thought can measure thee, or tongue
 Relate thee. Greater now in thy return
 Than from the giant Angels: Thee that day
 Thy thunders magnified; but to create
 Is greater than created to destroy.
 Who can impair thee, Mighty King, or bound
 Thy empire? Easily the proud attempt
 Of Spirits apostate, and their counsels vain, 610
 Thou hast repelled; while impiously they thought
 Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw
 The number of thy worshipers. Who seeks
 To lessen thee, against his purpose serves
 To manifest the more thy might: his evil
 Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good.
 Witness this new-made world, another Heav'n
 From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view
 On the clear hyaline, the glassy sea;
 Of amplitude almost immense, with stars 620
 Num'rous, and every star perhaps a world
 Of destined habitation; but thou know'st
 Their seasons: among these the seat of men,
 Earth, with her nether ocean circumfused,
 Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy men,
 And sons of men, whom God hath thus advanced,
 Created in his image, there to dwell
 And worship him; and in reward to rule
 Over his works, on earth, in sea, or air,
 And multiply a race of worshipers 630
 Holy and just: Thrice happy, if they know
 Their happiness, and persevere upright.'

So sung they, and the Empyrean rung
 With Halleluiahs: Thus was Sabbath kept.

And thy request think now fulfilled, that asked
 How first this world and face of things began,
 And what before thy memory was done
 From the beginning; that posterity,
 Informed by thee, might know: If else thou seek'st
 Aught, not surpassing human measure, say."

640

BOOK VIII

The Argument

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

The Angel ended, and in Adam's ear
 So charming left his voice, that he a while
 Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear;
 Then, as new waked, thus gratefully replied:
 "What thanks sufficient, or what recompense
 Equal, have I to render thee, divine
 Historian, who thus largely hast allayed
 The thirst I had of knowledge, and vouchsafed
 This friendly condescension to relate
 Things, else by me unsearchable; now heard 10
 With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,
 With glory attributed to the high
 Creator. Something yet of doubt remains,
 Which only thy solution can resolve.
 When I behold this goodly frame, this world,
 Of Heav'n and Earth consisting; and compute
 Their magnitudes; this Earth, a spot, a grain,
 An atom, with the firmament compared
 And all her numbered stars, that seem to roll
 Spaces incomprehensible, (for such 20
 Their distance argues, and their swift return
 Diurnal,) merely to officiate light

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

So spake our Sire, and by his count'nance seemed
 Ent'ring 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 flow'rs,
 To visit how they prospered, bud and bloom,
 Her nursery; they at her coming sprung,
 And, touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.
 Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
 Delighted, or not capable her ear
 Of what was high: such pleasure she reserved, 50
 Adam relating, she sole auditress;
 Her husband the relater she preferred
 Before the Angel, and of him to ask
 Chose rather; he, she knew, would intermix
 Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
 With conjugal caresses: from his lip

Not words alone pleased her. Oh when meet now
 Such pairs, in love and mutual honor joined?
 With Goddess-like demeanor forth she went,
 Not unattended; for on her, as queen, 60
 A pomp of winning graces waited still,
 And from about her shot darts of desire
 Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.

And Raphael now, to Adam's doubt proposed,
 Benevolent and facile thus replied:
 "To ask or search, I blame thee not; for Heav'n
 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 Heav'n move or Earth, 70
 Imports not, if thou reckon right; the rest
 From man or Angel the great Architect
 Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
 His secrets to be scanned by them who ought
 Rather admire; or, if they list to try
 Conjecture, he his fabric of the Heav'ns
 Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move
 His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
 Hereafter; when they come to model Heav'n
 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 reas'ning this I guess,
 Who art to lead thy offspring, and suppos't
 That bodies bright and greater should not serve
 The less not bright, nor Heav'n 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 Heav'n, so small,
 Nor glist'ring, may of solid good contain
 More plenty than the sun that barren shines;
 Whose virtue on itself works no effect,
 But in the fruitful Earth; there first received,
 His beams, inactive else, their vigor find.
 Yet not to Earth are those bright luminaries
 Officious; but to thee, Earth's habitant.
 And for the Heav'n's wide circuit, let it speak 100
 The Maker's high magnificence, who built
 So spacious, and his line stretched out so far;
 That man may know he dwells not in his own;
 An edifice too large for him to fill,
 Lodged in a small partition; and the rest
 Ordained for uses to his Lord best known.
 The swiftness of those circles attribute,
 Though numberless, to his omnipotence,
 That to corporeal substances could add
 Speed almost spiritual: Me thou think'st not slow, 110
 Who since the morning-hour set out from Heav'n
 Where God resides, and ere midday arrived
 In Eden; distance inexpressible
 By numbers that have name. But this I urge,
 Admitting motion in the Heav'ns, to show
 Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved;
 Not that I so affirm, though so it seem
 To thee who hast thy dwelling here on Earth.
 God, to remove his ways from human sense,
 Placed Heav'n 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 center to the world; and other stars,
 By his attractive virtue and their own

Incited, dance about him various rounds?
 Their wand'ring course now high, now low, then hid,
 Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
 In six thou see'st; 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 labor, and that swift
 Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,
 Invisible else above all stars, the wheel
 Of day and night; which needs not thy belief,
 If Earth, industrious of herself, fetch day
 Traveling 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 be as a star,
 Enlight'ning her by day, as she by night
 This Earth? reciprocal, if land be there,
 Fields and inhabitants: Her spots thou see'st
 As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce
 Fruits in her softened soil for some to eat
 Allotted there; and other suns perhaps,
 With their attendant moons, thou wilt descry,
 Communicating male and female light; 150
 Which two great sexes animate the world,
 Stored in each orb perhaps with some that live.
 For such vast room in nature unpossessed
 By living soul, desert and desolate,
 Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute
 Each orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far
 Down to this habitable, which returns
 Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.

But whether thus these things, or whether not;
 But whether the sun, predominant in Heav'n, 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 ev'n,
 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; Heav'n is for thee too high
 To know what passes there; be lowly wise:
 Think only what concerns thee, and thy being;
 Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there
 Live, in what state, condition, or degree;
 Contented that thus far hath been revealed
 Not of Earth only, but of highest Heav'n."
 To whom thus Adam, cleared of doubt, replied:
 "How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure 180
 Intelligence of Heav'n, Angel serene,
 And, freed from intricacies, taught to live
 The easiest way; nor with perplexing thoughts
 To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
 God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,
 And not molest us; unless we ourselves
 Seek them with wand'ring thoughts, and notions vain.
 But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
 Unchecked, and of her roving is no end;
 Till warned, or by experience taught, she learn, 190
 That, not to know at large of things remote
 From use, obscure and subtle; but, to know

That which before us lies in daily life,
 Is the prime wisdom: What is more, is fume,
 Or emptiness, or fond impertinence:
 And renders us, in things that most concern,
 Unpracticed, unprepared, and still to seek.
 Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
 A lower flight, and speak of things at hand
 Useful; whence, haply, mention may arise 200
 Of something not unseasonable to ask,
 By sufferance, and thy wonted favor, deigned.
 Thee I have heard relating what was done
 Ere my remembrance: now, hear me relate
 My story, which perhaps thou hast not heard;
 And day is not yet spent; till then thou see'st
 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 Heav'n; 210
 And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
 Than fruits of palm tree pleasantest to thirst
 And hunger both, from labor, at the hour
 Of sweet repast; they satiate, and soon fill,
 Though pleasant; but thy words, with grace divine
 Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety."

To whom thus Raphael answered heav'nly meek:
 "Nor are thy lips ungraceful, Sire of men,
 Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
 Abundantly his gifts hath also poured 220
 Inward and outward both, his image fair:
 Speaking, or mute, all comeliness and grace
 Attends thee; and each word, each motion, forms;
 Nor less think we in Heav'n of thee on Earth
 Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire
 Gladly into the ways of God with man:

For God, we see, hath honored thee, and set
 On man his equal love: Say therefore on;
 For I that day was absent, as befell,
 Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure, 230
 Far on excursion toward the gates of Hell;
 Squared in full legion (such command we had)
 To see that none thence issued forth a spy,
 Or enemy, while God was in his work;
 Lest he, incensed at such eruption bold,
 Destruction with Creation might have mixed.
 Not that they durst without his leave attempt;
 But us he sends upon his high behests
 For state, as Sovereign 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
 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 flow’ry herb I found me laid,
 In balmy sweat; which with his beams the Sun
 Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed.
 Straight toward Heaven my wond’ring eyes I turned,
 And gazed a while th’ ample sky; till, raised
 By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,
 As thitherward endeav’ring, and upright 260

Stood on my feet: about me round I saw
 Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
 And liquid lapse of murm'ring streams; by these,
 Creatures that lived and moved, and walked, or flew;
 Birds on the branches warbling; all things smiled;
 With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.
 Myself I then perused, and limb by limb
 Surveyed, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
 With supple joints, as lively vigor led:
 But who I was, or where, or from what cause, 270
 Knew not; to speak I tried, and forthwith spake;
 My tongue obeyed, and readily could name
 Whate'er I saw. 'Thou sun,' said I, 'fair light,
 And thou enlightened Earth, so fresh and gay,
 Ye hills, and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
 And ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell,
 Tell, if ye saw, how I came thus, how here?
 Not of myself; by some great Maker then,
 In goodness and in pow'r pre-eminent:
 Tell me, how may I know him, how adore, 280
 From whom I have that thus I move and live,
 And feel that I am happier than I know.'
 While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither,
 From where I first drew air, and first beheld
 This happy light; when, answer none returned,
 On a green shady bank, profuse of flow'rs,
 Pensive I sat me down: There gentle sleep
 First found me, and with soft oppression seized
 My droused sense, untroubled, though I thought
 I then was passing to my former state 290
 Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:
 When suddenly stood at my head a dream,
 Whose inward apparition gently moved
 My fancy to believe I yet had being,

And lived: One came, methought, of shape divine,
 And said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise,
 First man, of men innumerable ordained
 First Father, called by thee, I come thy guide
 To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.'
 So saying, by the hand he took me raised, 300
 And over fields and waters, as in air
 Smooth-sliding without step, last led me up
 A woody mountain; whose high top was plain,
 A circuit wide, enclosed, with goodliest trees
 Planted, with walks, and bow'rs; that what I saw
 Of Earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each tree,
 Loaden with fairest fruit that hung to th' 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 wand'ring, had not he, who was my guide
 Up hither, from among the trees appeared,
 Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,
 In adoration at his feet I fell
 Submiss: He reared me, and 'Whom thou sought'st I am,'
 Said mildly, 'Author of all this thou see'st
 Above, or round about thee, or beneath.
 This Paradise I give thee, count it thine
 To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat: 320
 Of every tree that in the garden grows
 Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth:
 But of the tree whose operation brings
 Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
 The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
 Amid the garden by the Tree of Life,
 Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste,
 And shun the bitter consequence: for know,

The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
 Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die, 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
 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
 Of fish within their watery residence,
 Not hither summoned, since they cannot change
 Their element, to draw the thinner air.'
 As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold
 Approaching two and two; these cowering low 350
 With blandishment; each bird stooped on his wing.
 I named them, as they passed, and understood
 Their nature, with such knowledge God endued
 My sudden apprehension: But in these
 I found not what methought I wanted still;
 And to the heav'nly Vision thus presumed:
 'Oh, by what name, for thou above all these,
 Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,
 Surpassest far my naming; how may I
 Adore thee, Author of this universe, 360
 And all this good to man? For whose well being
 So amply, and with hands so liberal,

Thou hast provided all things: But with me
 I see not who partakes. In solitude
 What happiness, who can enjoy alone,
 Or, all enjoying, what contentment find?
 Thus I presumptuous; and the Vision bright,
 As with a smile more brightened, thus replied:

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

‘Let not my words offend thee, Heav’nly Pow’r;
 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
 Giv’n and received; but, in disparity
 The one intense, the other still remiss,
 Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
 Tedious alike: Of fellowship I speak
 Such as I seek, fit to participate 390
 All rational delight: wherein the brute
 Cannot be human consort: They rejoice
 Each with their kind, lion with lioness;
 So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined:
 Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl
 So well converse, nor with the ox the ape;

Worse then can man with beast, and least of all.'

Whereto th' Almighty answered, not displeased:

'A nice and subtle happiness, I see,

Thou to thyself propose'st, in the choice

400

Of thy associates, Adam, and wilt taste

No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.

What think'st thou then of me, and this my state?

Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed

Of happiness, or not? who am alone

From all eternity; for none I know

Second to me or like, equal much less.

How have I then with whom to hold converse,

Save with the creatures which I made, and those

To me inferior, infinite descents

410

Beneath what other creatures are to thee?

He ceased; I lowly answered: 'To attain

The height and depth of thy eternal ways

All human thoughts come short, Supreme of things.

Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee

Is no deficiency found: Not so is man,

But in degree; the cause of his desire

By conversation with his like to help

Or solace his defects. No need that thou

Should'st propagate, already infinite;

420

And through all numbers absolute, though one:

But man by number is to manifest

His single imperfection, and beget

Like of his like, his image multiplied,

In unity defective; which requires

Collateral love, and dearest amity.

Thou in thy secrecy although alone,

Best with thyself accompanied, seek'st not

Social communication; yet, so pleased,

Canst raise thy creature to what height thou wilt

430

Of union or communion, deified:

I, by conversing, cannot these erect

From prone; nor in their ways complacence find.’

Thus I emboldened spake, and freedom used

Permissive, and acceptance found; which gained

This answer from the gracious Voice Divine:

‘Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased;

And find thee knowing, not of beasts alone,

Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself;

Expressing well the spirit within thee free, 440

My image, not imparted to the brute;

Whose fellowship therefore unmeet for thee

Good reason was thou freely should’st dislike;

And be so minded still: I, ere thou spak’st,

Knew it not good for man to be alone;

And no such company as then thou saw’st

Intended thee; for trial only brought,

To see how thou could’st 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 heav’nly overpowered,

Which it had long stood under, strained to the height

In that celestial colloquy sublime,

As with an object that excels the sense

Dazzled and spent, sunk down; and sought repair

Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, called

By Nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.

Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell 460

Of fancy, my internal sight; by which,

Abstract as in a trance, methought I saw,

Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape

Still glorious before whom awake I stood:

Who stooping opened my left side, and took
 From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,
 And life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,
 But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed:
 The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands;
 Under his forming hands a creature grew, 470
 Man-like, but different sex; so lovely fair,
 That what seemed fair in all the world, seemed now
 Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained
 And in her looks; which from that time infused
 Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,
 And into all things from her air inspired
 The spirit of love and amorous delight.
 She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked
 To find her, or for ever to deplore
 Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure: 480
 When out of hope, behold her, not far off,
 Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned
 With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow
 To make her amiable: On she came,
 Led by her Heav'nly Maker, though unseen,
 And guided by his voice; nor uninformed
 Of nuptial sanctity, and marriage rites:
 Grace was in all her steps, Heav'n 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 envi'st. I now see
 Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself
 Before me: Woman is her name; of man
 Extracted: for this cause he shall forego
 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 more desirable; or, to say all,

Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,

Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turned:

I followed her; she what was honor knew,

And with obsequious majesty approved

My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bow'r 510

I led her blushing like the morn: All Heav'n,

And happy constellations, on that hour

Shed their selectest influence; the Earth

Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill;

Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs

Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings

Flung rose, flung odors from the spicy shrub,

Disporting, till the amorous bird of night

Sung spousal, and bid haste the evening star

On his hill top, to light the bridal lamp. 520

Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought

My story to the sum of earthly bliss,

Which I enjoy; and must confess to find

In all things else delight indeed, but such

As, used or not, works in the mind no change,

Nor vehement desire; these delicacies

I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flow'rs,

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 pow'rful glance.
 Or nature failed in me, and left some part
 Not proof enough such object to sustain;
 Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps
 More than enough; at least on her bestowed
 Too much of ornament, in outward show
 Elaborate, of inward less exact.

For well I understand in the prime end 540
 Of nature her th' 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 giv'n
 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 discount'nanced, and like folly shows;
 Authority and reason on her wait,
 As one intended first, not after made
 Occasionally; and, to consummate all,
 Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
 About her, as a guard angelic placed."

To whom the Angel with contracted brow: 560
 "Accuse not Nature, she hath done her part;
 Do thou but thine; and be not diffident
 Of Wisdom; she deserts thee not, if thou
 Dismiss not her, when most thou need'st her nigh,
 By attributing overmuch to things
 Less excellent, as thou thyself perceive'st.

For, what admire'st thou, what transports thee so,
 An outside? Fair, no doubt, and worthy well
 Thy cherishing, thy hon'ring, and thy love;
 Not thy subjection: Weigh with her thyself; 570
 Then value: Oft-times nothing profits more
 Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right
 Well managed; of that skill the more thou know'st,
 The more she will acknowledge thee her head,
 And to realities yield all her shows:
 Made so adorn for thy delight the more,
 So awful, that with honor 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 vouchsafed
 To cattle and each beast; which would not be
 To them made common and divulged, if aught
 Therein enjoyed were worthy to subdue
 The soul of man, or passion in him move.
 What higher in her society thou find'st
 Attractive, human, rational, love still;
 In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
 Wherein true love consists not: Love refines
 The thoughts, and heart enlarges; hath his seat 590
 In reason, and is judicious; is the scale
 By which to heav'nly love thou may'st ascend,
 Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause,
 Among the beasts no mate for thee was found."
 To whom thus, half abashed, Adam replied:
 "Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught
 In procreation common to all kinds,
 (Though higher of the genial bed by far,
 And with mysterious reverence I deem,)
 So much delights me, as those graceful acts, 600

Those thousand decencies, that daily flow
 From all her words and actions mixed with love
 And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned
 Union of mind, or in us both one soul;
 Harmony to behold in wedded pair
 More grateful than harmonious sound to th' 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 Heav'n, is both the way and guide;
 Bear with me then, if lawful what I ask:
 Love not the heav'nly Spirits, and how their love
 Express they? By looks only? Or do they mix
 Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?"

To whom the Angel, with a smile that glowed
 Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,
 Answered: "Let it suffice thee that thou know'st 620
 Us happy, and without love no happiness.
 Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st,
 (And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
 In eminence; and obstacle find none
 Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars;
 Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,
 Total they mix, union of pure with pure
 Desiring, nor restrained conveyance need,
 As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.
 But I can now no more; the parting sun 630
 Beyond the Earth's green cape and verdant isles
 Hesperian sets, my signal to depart.
 Be strong, live happy, and love, but first of all
 Him, whom to love is to obey, and keep

His great command; take heed lest passion sway
 Thy judgment to do aught, which else free will
 Would not admit: thine, and of all thy sons,
 The weal or woe in thee is placed; beware!
 I in thy persevering shall rejoice,
 And all the blest: Stand fast; to stand or fall 640
 Free in thine own arbitrament it lies.
 Perfect within, no outward aid require;
 And all temptation to transgress repel.”

So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus
 Followed with benediction: “Since to part,
 Go, heav’nly Guest, ethereal Messenger,
 Sent from whose sovereign goodness I adore.
 Gentle to me and affable hath been
 Thy condescension, and shall be honored e’er
 With grateful memory: Thou to mankind 650
 Be good and friendly still, and oft return.”

So parted they; the Angel up to Heav’n
 From the thick shade, and Adam to his bow’r.

BOOK IX

The Argument

Satan, having compassed the Earth, with meditated guile returns as a mist by night into Paradise, enters into the serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labors, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each laboring apart: Adam consents not, alleging the danger lest that enemy, of whom they were forewarned, should attempt her found alone; Eve, loath 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 awhile whether to impart thereof to Adam or not, at last brings him the fruit, relates what persuaded her to eat thereof; Adam, at first amazed but perceiving her lost, resolves through vehemence of love to perish with her and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit. The effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover their nakedness, then fall to variance and accusation of one another.

No more of talk where God or Angel Guest
 With man, as with his friend, familiar used,
 To sit indulgent, and with him partake
 Rural repast; permitting him the while
 Venial discourse unblamed. I now must change
 Those notes to tragic; foul distrust, and breach
 Disloyal on the part of man, revolt,
 And disobedience: on the part of Heav'n
 Now alienated, distance and distaste,
 Anger and just rebuke, and judgment giv'n,

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

Climate, or years, damp my intended wing
 Depressed; and much they may, if all be mine,
 Not hers, who brings it nightly to my ear.

The sun was sunk, and after him the star
 Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring
 Twilight upon the Earth, short arbiter 50
 Twixt day and night, and now from end to end
 Night's hemisphere had veiled th' horizon round:
 When Satan, who late fled before the threats
 Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved
 In meditated fraud and malice, bent
 On Man's destruction, maugre what might hap
 Of heavier on himself, fearless returned.
 By night he fled, and at midnight returned
 From compassing the Earth; cautious of day,
 Since Uriel, Regent of the sun, descried 60
 His entrance, and forewarned the Cherubim
 That kept their watch; thence full of anguish driv'n,
 The space of seven continued nights he rode
 With darkness; thrice the equinoctial line
 He circled; four times crossed the car of night
 From pole to pole, traversing each colure;
 On th' eighth returned; and, on the coast averse
 From entrance or cherubic watch, by stealth
 Found unsuspected way. There was a place,
 Now not, though Sin, not Time, first wrought the change, 70
 Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise,
 Into a gulf shot under ground, till part
 Rose up a fountain by the Tree of Life:
 In with the river sunk, and with it rose
 Satan, involved in rising mist; then sought
 Where to lie hid; sea he had searched, and land,
 From Eden over Pontus and the pool
 Maeotis, up beyond the river Ob;

Downward as far Antarctic; and in length,
 West from Orontes to the ocean barred 80
 At Darien ; thence to the land where flows
 Ganges and Indus: Thus th' orb he roamed
 With narrow search; and with inspection deep
 Considered every creature, which of all
 Most opportune might serve his wiles; and found
 The serpent subtlest beast of all the field.
 Him after long debate, irresolute
 Of thoughts revolved, his final sentence chose
 Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom
 To enter, and his dark suggestions hide 90
 From sharpest sight: for, in the wily snake
 Whatever sleights, none would suspicious mark,
 As from his wit and native subtlety
 Proceeding; which, in other beasts observed,
 Doubt might beget of diabolic pow'r
 Active within, beyond the sense of brute.
 Thus he resolved, but first from inward grief
 His bursting passion into plaints thus poured:
 "More justly, seat worthier of Gods, as built
 With second thoughts, reforming what was old. 100
 Oh Earth, how like to Heav'n, if not preferred
 For what God, after better, worse would build?
 Terrestrial Heav'n, danced round by other Heav'ns
 That shine, yet bear their bright officious lamps,
 Light above light, for thee alone, as seems,
 In thee concent'ring all their precious beams
 Of sacred influence. As God in Heav'n
 Is center, yet extends to all; so thou,
 Cent'ring, receiv'st from all those orbs: in thee,
 Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears 110
 Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth
 Of creatures animate with gradual life

Of growth, sense, reason, all summed up in man.
 With what delight could I have walked thee round,
 If I could joy in aught, sweet interchange
 Of hill, and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,
 Now land, now sea and shores with forest crowned,
 Rocks, dens, and caves. But I in none of these
 Find place or refuge; and the more I see
 Pleasures about me, so much more I feel 120
 Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
 Of contraries: all good to me becomes
 Bane, and in Heav'n much worse would be my state.
 But neither here seek I, no nor in Heav'n
 To dwell, unless by mast'ring Heav'n's Supreme;
 Nor hope to be myself less miserable
 By what I seek, but others to make such
 As I, though thereby worse to me redound:
 For only in destroying I find ease
 To my relentless thoughts; and, him destroyed, 130
 Or won to what may work his utter loss,
 For whom all this was made, all this will soon
 Follow, as to him linked in weal or woe;
 In woe then; that destruction wide may range:
 To me shall be the glory sole among
 Th' infernal Pow'rs, 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
 Th' angelic name, and thinner left the throng
 Of his adorers: He, to be avenged,
 And to repair his numbers thus impaired,
 Whether such virtue spent of old now failed
 More Angels to create, if they at least

Are his created, or, to spite us more,
 Determined to advance into our room
 A creature formed of Earth, and him endow,
 Exalted from so base original, 150
 With heav'nly spoils, our spoils: What he decreed,
 He effected; man he made, and for him built
 Magnificent this world, and Earth his seat,
 Him Lord pronounced; and, O indignity!
 Subjected to his service angel-wings,
 And flaming ministers to watch and tend
 Their earthly charge: Of these the vigilance
 I dread; and, to elude, thus wrapped in mist
 Of midnight vapor 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.
 Oh foul descent! that I, who erst contended
 With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
 Into a beast; and, mixed with bestial slime,
 This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
 That to the height 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 favorite
 Of Heav'n, this man of clay, son of despite,
 Whom, us the more to spite, his Maker raised
 From dust: Spite then with spite is best repaid."
 So saying, through each thicket dank or dry,
 Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on 180

His midnight-search, where soonest he might find
 The Serpent; him fast-sleeping soon he found
 In labyrinth of many a round self-rolled,
 His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles:
 Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
 Nor nocent yet; but, on the grassy herb,
 Fearless unfeared he slept: in at his mouth
 The Devil entered; and his brutal sense,
 In heart or head, possessing, soon inspired
 With act intelligential; but his sleep 190
 Disturbed not, waiting close th' approach of morn.
 Now, when as sacred light began to dawn
 In Eden on the humid flow'rs, that breathed
 Their morning incense, when all things, that breathe,
 From th' Earth's great altar send up silent praise
 To the Creator, and his nostrils fill
 With grateful smell, forth came the human pair,
 And joined their vocal worship to the choir
 Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake
 The season prime for sweetest scents and airs: 200
 Then commune, how that day they best may ply
 Their growing work: for much their work out-grew
 The hands' dispatch of two gard'ning so wide,
 And Eve first to her Husband thus began:
 "Adam, well may we labor still to dress
 This garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flow'r,
 Our pleasant task enjoined; but, till more hands
 Aid us, the work under our labor 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 bear what to my mind first thoughts present:
 Let us divide our labors; thou, where choice

Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind
 The woodbine round this arbor, 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 object new
 Casual discourse draw on; which intermits
 Our day's work, brought to little, though begun
 Early, and th' hour of supper comes unearned?"

To whom mild answer Adam thus returned:
 "Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond
 Compare above all living creatures dear,
 Well hast thou motioned, well thy thoughts employed,
 How we might best fulfill 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
 Labor, 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 bow'rs doubt not but our joint hands
 Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide
 As we need walk, till younger hands ere long
 Assist us; But, if much converse perhaps
 Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield:

For solitude sometimes is best society,
 And short retirement urges sweet return. 250
 But other doubt possesses me, lest harm
 Befall thee severed from me; for thou know'st
 What hath been warned us, what malicious Foe
 Envyng our happiness, and of his own
 Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame
 By sly assault; and somewhere nigh at hand
 Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find
 His wish and best advantage, us asunder;
 Hopeless to circumvent us joined, where each
 To other speedy aid might lend at need: 260
 Whether his first design be to withdraw
 Our fealty from God, or to disturb
 Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss
 Enjoyed by us excites his envy more;
 Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side
 That gave thee being, still shades thee, and protects.
 The Wife, where danger or dishonor 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 Heav'n and Earth, and all Earth's Lord,
 That such an Enemy we have, who seeks
 Our ruin, both by thee informed I learn,
 And from the parting Angel over-heard,
 As in a shady nook I stood behind,
 Just then returned at shut of evening flow'rs.
 But, that thou should'st my firmness therefore doubt
 To God or thee, because we have a Foe 280
 May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
 His violence thou fear'st not, being such

As we, not capable of death or pain,
 Can either not receive, or can repel.
 His fraud is then thy fear; which plain infers
 Thy equal fear, that my firm faith and love
 Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced;
 Thoughts, which how found they harbor 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
 Th' attempt itself, intended by our Foe.
 For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
 The tempted with dishonor 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 labor to avert

From thee alone, which on us both at once
 The Enemy, though bold, will hardly dare;
 Or daring, first on me th' assault shall light.
 Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn;
 Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce
 Angels; nor think superfluous other's 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 over-reached,
 Would utmost vigor raise, and raised unite.
 Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel
 When I am present, and thy trial choose

With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?"

So spake domestic Adam in his care
 And matrimonial love; but Eve, who thought
 Less attributed to her faith sincere, 320
 Thus her reply with accent sweet renewed:
 "If this be our condition, thus to dwell
 In narrow circuit straitened by a Foe,
 Subtle or violent, we not endued
 Single with like defense, wherever met;
 How are we happy, still in fear of harm?
 But harm precedes not sin: only our Foe,
 Tempting, affronts us with his foul esteem
 Of our integrity: his foul esteem
 Sticks no dishonor on our front, but turns 330
 Foul on himself; then wherefore shunned or feared
 By us? Who rather double honor gain
 From his surmise proved false; find peace within,
 Favor from Heav'n, our witness, from th' event.
 And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed
 Alone, without exterior help sustained?
 Let us not then suspect our happy state
 Left so imperfect by the Maker wise,
 As not secure to single or combined.
 Frail is our happiness, if this be so, 340
 And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed."

To whom thus Adam fervently replied:
 "O woman, best are all things as the will
 Of God ordained them: His creating hand
 Nothing imperfect or deficient left
 Of all that he created, much less man,
 Or aught that might his happy state secure,
 Secure from outward force; within himself
 The danger lies, yet lies within his pow'r:
 Against his will he can receive no harm. 350

But God left free the will; for what obeys
 Reason, is free; and reason he made right,
 But bid her well be ware, and still erect;
 Lest, by some fair-appearing good surprised,
 She dictate false; and misinform the will
 To do what God expressly hath forbid.
 Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins,
 That I should mind thee oft; and mind thou me.
 Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve;
 Since reason not impossibly may meet 360
 Some specious object by the Foe suborned,
 And fall into deception unaware,
 Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warned.
 Seek not temptation then, which to avoid
 Were better, and most likely if from me
 Thou sever not: Trial will come unsought.
 Wouldst thou approve thy constancy, approve
 First thy obedience; the other who can know,
 Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?
 But, if thou think, trial unsought may find 370
 Us both securer than thus warned thou seem'st,
 Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more;
 Go in thy native innocence, rely
 On what thou hast of virtue; summon all
 For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine."

So spake the Patriarch of mankind; but Eve
 Persisted; yet submiss, though last, replied:
 "With thy permission then, and thus forewarned
 Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
 Touched only; that our trial, when least sought, 380
 May find us both perhaps far less prepared,
 The willinger I go, nor much expect
 A Foe so proud will first the weaker seek;
 So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse."

Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand
 Soft she withdrew; and, like a Wood-Nymph light,
 Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train,
 Betook her to the groves; but Delia's self
 In gait surpassed, and Goddess-like deport,
 Though not as she with bow and quiver armed, 390
 But with such gard'ning tools as art yet rude,
 Guiltless of fire, had formed, or Angels brought.
 To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorned,
 Likest she seemed, Pomona when she fled
 Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her prime,
 Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.
 Her long with ardent look his eye pursued
 Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
 Oft he to her his charge of quick return
 Repeated; she to him as oft engaged 400
 To be returned by noon amid the bow'r,
 And all things in best order to invite
 Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.
 O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve,
 Of thy presumed return event perverse!
 Thou never from that hour in Paradise
 Found'st either sweet repast, or sound repose;
 Such ambush, hid among sweet flow'rs and shades,
 Waited with hellish rancor 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
 The whole included race, his purposed prey.
 In bow'r 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,
 Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round
 About her glowed, oft stooping to support
 Each flow'r of slender 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 flow'r,
 From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.
 Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed
 Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm;
 Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen,
 Among thick-woven arborets, and flow'rs
 Imbordered on each bank, the hand of Eve:
 Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned
 Or of revived Adonis, or renowned 440
 Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son;
 Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king
 Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.
 Much he the place admired, the person more.
 As one who long in populous city pent,
 Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
 Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
 Among the pleasant villages and farms
 Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight;
 The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine, 450
 Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound;
 If chance, with Nymph-like step, fair virgin pass,

What pleasing seemed, for her now pleases more;
 She most, and in her look sums all delight:
 Such pleasure took the Serpent to behold
 This flow'ry plat, the sweet recess of Eve
 Thus early, thus alone: Her Heav'nly 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,
 Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge:
 But the hot Hell that always in him burns,
 Though in mid Heav'n, soon ended his delight,
 And tortures him now more, the more he sees
 Of pleasure, not for him ordained: then soon 470
 Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts
 Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites;
 "Thoughts, whither have ye led me, with what sweet
 Compulsion thus transported, to forget
 What hither brought us, hate, not love; nor hope
 Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste
 Of pleasure; but all pleasure to destroy,
 Save what is in destroying; other joy
 To me is lost. Then, let me not let pass
 Occasion which now smiles; behold alone 480
 The woman, opportune to all attempts,
 Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
 Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
 And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
 Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould;
 Foe not formidable, exempt from wound,

I not; so much hath Hell debased, and pain
 Enfeebled me, to what I was in Heav'n.
 She fair, divinely fair, fit love for Gods,
 Not terrible, though terror be in love 490
 And beauty, not approached by stronger hate,
 Hate stronger, under show of love well feigned;
 The way which to her ruin now I tend."

So spake the Enemy of mankind, enclosed
 In Serpent, inmate bad, and toward Eve
 Addressed his way: not with indented wave,
 Prone on the ground, as since; but on his rear,
 Circular base of rising folds, that tow'r'd
 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 of Serpent-kind
 Lovelier, not those that in Illyria changed,
 Hermione and Cadmus, or the God
 In Epidaurus; nor to which transformed
 Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline, was seen;
 He with Olympias; this with her who bore
 Scipio, the height of Rome. With tract oblique 510
 At first, as one who sought access, but feared
 To interrupt, side-long he works his way.
 As when a ship, by skillful steersmen wrought
 Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind
 Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail:
 So varied he, and of his tortuous train
 Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
 To lure her eye; she, busied, heard the sound
 Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used
 To such disport before her through the field, 520

From every beast; more duteous at her call,
 Than at Circean call the herd disguised.
 He, bolder now, uncalled before her stood,
 But as in gaze admiring; oft he bowed
 His turret crest, and sleek enameled neck,
 Fawning; and licked the ground whereon she trod.
 His gentle dumb expression turned at length
 The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad
 Of her attention gained, with Serpent-tongue
 Organic, or impulse of vocal air,
 His fraudulent temptation thus began:

530

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

540

So glozed the Tempter, and his proem tuned:
 Into the heart of Eve his words made way,
 Though at the voice much marveling; 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?

550

The first, at least, of these I thought denied
 To beasts; whom God, on their creation-day,
 Created mute to all articulate sound:
 The latter I demur; for in their looks
 Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.
 Thee, Serpent, subtlest beast of all the field 560
 I knew, but not with human voice endued;
 Redouble then this miracle, and say,
 How cam'st thou speakable of mute, and how
 To me so friendly grown above the rest
 Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight?
 Say, for such wonder claims attention due."

To whom the guileful Tempter thus replied:
 "Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve,
 Easy to me it is to tell thee all
 What thou command'st; and right thou should'st be obeyed: 570
 I was at first as other beasts that graze
 The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,
 As was my food; nor aught but food discerned
 Or sex, and apprehended nothing high:
 Till, on a day roving the field, I chanced
 A goodly Tree far distant to behold
 Loaden with fruit of fairest colors mixed,
 Ruddy and gold: I nearer drew to gaze;
 When from the boughs a savory odor 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 ev'n,
 Unsucked of lamb or kid, that tend their play.
 To satisfy the sharp desire I had
 Of tasting those fair apples, I resolved
 Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once,
 Pow'rful persuaders, quickened at the scent
 Of that alluring fruit, urged me so keen.

About the mossy trunk I wound me soon;
 For, high from ground, the branches would require 590
 Thy utmost reach or Adam's: Round the tree
 All other beasts that saw, with like desire
 Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.
 Amid the Tree now got, where plenty hung
 Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill
 I spared not; for, such pleasure till that hour,
 At feed or fountain, never had I found.
 Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
 Strange alteration in me, to degree
 Of reason in my inward pow'rs; 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 Heav'n,
 Or Earth, or middle; all things fair and good:
 But all that fair and good in thy divine
 Semblance, and in thy beauty's Heav'nly 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
 Sovereign of creatures, universal dame!"

So talked the spirited sly Snake; and Eve,
 Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied:
 "Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
 The virtue of that fruit, in thee first proved:
 But say, where grows the tree? 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 birth."

To whom the wily Adder, blithe and glad:
"Empress, the way is ready, and not long;
Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,
Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past
Of blowing myrrh and balm: if thou accept
My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon." 630

"Lead then," said Eve. He, leading, swiftly rolled
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
Brightens his crest; as when a wand'ring fire,
Compact of unctuous vapor, which the night
Condenses, and the cold environs round,
Kindled through agitation to a flame,
Which oft, they say, some Evil Spirit attends,
Hov'ring and blazing with delusive light,
Misleads th' amazed night-wanderer from his way 640
To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool;
There swallowed up and lost, from succor far.
So glistered the dire Snake, and into fraud
Led Eve, our credulous Mother, to the Tree
Of prohibition, root of all our woe;
Which when she saw, thus to her Guide she spake:

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

To whom the Tempter guilefully replied:
"Indeed! Hath God then said that of the fruit

Of all these garden trees ye shall not eat,
Yet Lords declared of all in Earth or air?"

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

She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold
The Tempter, but with show of zeal and love
To man, and indignation at his wrong,
New part puts on; and, as to passion moved,
Fluctuates disturbed, yet comely and in act
Raised, as of some great matter to begin.
As when of old some orator renowned, 670
In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence
Flourished, since mute, to some great cause addressed,
Stood in himself collected; while each part,
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue;
Sometimes in height began, as no delay
Of preface brooking, through his zeal of right:
So standing, moving, or to height up grown,
The Tempter, all impassioned, thus began:

"Oh sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving plant,
Mother of science, now I feel thy pow'r 680
Within me clear; not only to discern
Things in their causes, but to trace the ways
Of highest agents, deemed however wise.
Queen of this Universe, do not believe
Those rigid threats of Death: ye shall not die:
How should you? By the fruit? It gives you Life
To Knowledge; by the threat'ner? Look on me,
Me, who have touched and tasted; yet both live,
And life more perfect have attained than fate
Meant me, by vent'ring higher than my lot. 690

Shall that be shut to man, which to the beast
 Is open? Or will God incense his ire
 For such a petty trespass? And not praise
 Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
 Of Death denounced, whatever thing Death be,
 Deterred not from achieving what might lead
 To happier Life, knowledge of good and evil;
 Of good, how just? Of evil, if what is evil
 Be real, why not known, since easier shunned?
 God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just; 700
 Not just, not God; not feared then, nor obeyed:
 Your fear itself of Death removes the fear.
 Why then was this forbid? Why, but to awe;
 Why, but to keep ye low and ignorant,
 His worshipers? He knows that in the day
 Ye eat thereof, your eyes that seem so clear,
 Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
 Opened and cleared, and ye shall be as Gods,
 Knowing both good and evil, as they know.
 That ye shall be as Gods, since I as man, 710
 Internal man, is but proportion meet;
 I, of brute, human; ye, of human, Gods.
 So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off
 Human, to put on Gods; Death to be wished,
 Though threatened, which no worse than this can bring.
 And what are Gods, that man may not become
 As they, participating God-like 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
 Th' 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 heav'nly breasts? These, these, and many more 730
 Causes import your need of this fair fruit.
 Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste."

He ended; and his words, replete with guile,
 Into her heart too easy entrance won:
 Fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
 Might tempt alone; and in her ears the sound
 Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd
 With reason, to her seeming, and with truth:
 Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
 An eager appetite, raised by the smell 740
 So savory of that fruit, which with desire,
 Inclenable 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,
 Though kept from man, and worthy to be admired;
 Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay
 Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
 The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise:
 Thy praise he also, who forbids thy use, 750
 Conceals not from us, naming thee the Tree
 Of knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil;
 Forbids us then to taste, but his forbidding
 Commends thee more, while it infers the good
 By thee communicated, and our want:
 For good unknown sure is not had; or, had
 And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
 In plain then, what forbids he but to know,

Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?
 Such prohibitions bind not. But, if Death 760
 Bind us with after-bands, what profits then
 Our inward freedom? In the day we eat
 Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die.
 How dies the Serpent? He hath eat'n and lives,
 And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,
 Irrational till then. For us alone
 Was Death invented? Or to us denied
 This intellectual food, for beasts reserved?
 For beasts it seems: yet that one beast which first
 Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy 770
 The good befall'n him, author unsuspect,
 Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile.
 What fear I then? Rather, what know to fear
 Under this ignorance of good and evil,
 Of God or Death, of law or penalty?
 Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,
 Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
 Of virtue to make wise: What hinders then
 To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?"
 So saying, her rash hand in evil hour 780
 Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate.
 Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat,
 Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
 That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
 The guilty Serpent; and well might; for Eve,
 Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else
 Regarded; such delight till then, as seemed,
 In fruit she never tasted, whether true
 Or fancied so, through expectation high
 Of knowledge; not was Godhead from her thought. 790
 Greedily she engorged without restraint,
 And knew not eating Death: Sate at length,

And heightened as with wine, jocund and boon,
Thus to herself she pleasingly began:

“O sovereign, virtuous, precious of all Trees
In Paradise! of operation blest
To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed.
And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end
Created; but henceforth my early care,
Not without song, each morning, and due praise, 800
Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease
Of thy full branches offered free to all;
Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature
In knowledge, as the Gods, who all things know;
Though others envy what they cannot give:
For, had the gift been theirs, it had not here
Thus grown. Experience, next, to thee I owe,
Best guide; not foll’wing thee, I had remained
In ignorance; thou op’nst wisdom’s way,
And giv’st access, though secret she retire. 810
And I perhaps am secret: Heav’n is high,
High, and remote to see from thence distinct
Each thing on Earth; and other care perhaps
May have diverted from continual watch
Our great Forbidder, safe with all his spies
About him. But to Adam in what sort
Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake
Full happiness with me, or rather not,
But keep the odds of knowledge in my pow’r 820
Without copartner? So to add what wants
In female sex, the more to draw his love,
And render me more equal; and perhaps,
A thing not undesirable, sometime
Superior; for, inferior, who is free
This may be well: But what if God have seen,

And Death ensue? Then I shall be no more,
 And Adam, wedded to another Eve,
 Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct;
 A Death to think! Confirmed then I resolve, 830
 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 Pow'r
 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 flow'rs a garland, to adorn 840
 Her tresses, and her rural labors crown;
 As reapers oft are wont their harvest-queen.
 Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new
 Solace in her return, so long delayed:
 Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill,
 Misgave him; he the falt'ring 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 too prompt;
 Which, with bland words at will, she thus addressed:

"Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay?
 Thee I have missed, and thought it long, deprived
 Thy presence; agony of love till now
 Not felt, nor shall be twice; for never more
 Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought, 860

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

Thus Eve with count'nance blithe her story told;
 But in her cheek distemper flushing glowed.
 On th' 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 dropped, and all the faded roses shed:
 Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length

First to himself he inward silence broke:

“Oh 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, deflow’red, and now to Death devote!
 Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress
 The strict forbiddance, how to violate
 The sacred fruit forbidden? Some cursed fraud
 Of Enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,
 And me with thee hath ruined; for with thee
 Certain my resolution is to die:
 How can I live without thee? How forego
 Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly joined,
 To live again in these wild woods forlorn? 910
 Should God create another Eve, and I
 Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
 Would never from my heart. No, no! I feel
 The link of Nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
 Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
 Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.”

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

“Bold deed thou hast presumed, advent’rous Eve,
 And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared,
 Had it been only coveting to eye
 That sacred fruit, sacred to abstinence,
 Much more to taste it under ban to touch.
 But past who can recall, or done undo?
 Not God Omnipotent, nor fate; yet so
 Perhaps thou shalt not die, perhaps the fact

Is not so heinous now, foretasted fruit,
 Profaned first by the Serpent, by him first 930
 Made common, and unhallowed, ere our taste;
 Nor yet on him found deadly; yet he lives;
 Lives, as thou said'st, and gains to live, as man,
 Higher degree of life; inducement strong
 To us, as likely tasting to attain
 Proportional ascent; which cannot be
 But to be Gods, or Angels, Demigods.
 Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,
 Though threat'ning, 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,
 Dependant made; so God shall uncreate,
 Be frustrate, do, undo, and labor lose;
 Not well conceived of God, who, though his pow'r
 Creation could repeat, yet would be loath
 Us to abolish, lest the Adversary
 Triumph, and say, 'Fickle their state whom God
 Most favors; who can please him long? Me first
 He ruined, now mankind; whom will he next?' 950
 Matter of scorn, not to be giv'n the Foe.
 However I with thee have fixed my lot,
 Certain to undergo like doom: If Death
 Consort with thee, Death is to me as Life;
 So forcible within my heart I feel
 The bond of Nature draw me to my own;
 My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
 Our state cannot be severed; we are one,
 One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself."
 So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied: 960
 "O glorious trial of exceeding love,
 Illustrious evidence, example high!

Engaging me to emulate; but, short
 Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
 Adam, from whose dear side I boast me sprung,
 And gladly of our union hear thee speak,
 One heart, one soul in both; whereof good proof
 This day affords, declaring thee resolved,
 Rather than Death, or aught than Death more dread,
 Shall separate us, linked in love so dear, 970
 To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,
 If any be, of tasting this fair fruit;
 Whose virtue for of good still good proceeds,
 Direct, or by occasion, hath presented
 This happy trial of thy love, which else
 So eminently never had been known?
 Were it I thought Death menaced would ensue
 This my attempt, I would sustain alone
 The worst, and not persuade thee, rather die
 Deserted, than oblige thee with a fact 980
 Pernicious to thy peace; chiefly assured
 Remarkably so late of thy so true,
 So faithful, love unequalled: but I feel
 Far otherwise th' event; not Death, but Life
 Augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys,
 Taste so divine, that what of sweet before
 Hath touched my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh.
 On my experience, Adam, freely taste,
 And fear of Death deliver to the winds."

So saying, she embraced him, and for joy 990
 Tenderly wept; much won, that he his love
 Had so ennobled, as of choice to incur
 Divine displeasure for her sake, or Death.
 In recompense for such compliance bad
 Such recompense best merits from the bough
 She gave him of that fair enticing fruit

With liberal hand: he scrupled not to eat,
 Against his better knowledge; not deceived,
 But fondly overcome with female charm.
 Earth trembled from her entrails, as again 1000
 In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan;
 Sky low'red; and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
 Wept at completing of the mortal sin
 Original: while Adam took no thought,
 Eating his fill; nor Eve to iterate
 Her former trespass feared, the more to sooth
 Him with her loved society; that now,
 As with new wine intoxicated both,
 They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
 Divinity within them breeding wings, 1010
 Wherewith to scorn the Earth: But that false fruit
 Far other operation first displayed,
 Carnal desire inflaming; he on Eve
 Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him
 As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn:
 Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move;
 "Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,
 And elegant, of sapience no small part;
 Since to each meaning savor 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 forbidd'n, it might be wished,
 For this one Tree had been forbidden ten.
 But come, so well refreshed, now let us play,
 As meet is, after such delicious fare;
 For never did thy beauty, since the day
 I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned 1030

With all perfections, so inflame my sense
 With ardor to enjoy thee, fairer now
 Than ever; bounty of this virtuous Tree.”

So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
 Of amorous intent; well understood
 Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.
 Her hand he seized; and to a shady bank,
 Thick over-head with verdant roof embow’red,
 He led her nothing loath; flow’rs 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,
 Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit,
 That with exhilarating vapor bland
 About their spirits had played, and inmost pow’rs
 Made err, was now exhaled; and grosser sleep,
 Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams 1050
 Encumbered, now had left them; up they rose
 As from unrest; and, each the other viewing,
 Soon found their eyes how opened, and their minds
 How darkened; innocence, that as a veil
 Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone;
 Just confidence, and native righteousness,
 And honor, 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 Philistine Delilah, and awaked
 Shorn of his strength. They destitute and bare
 Of all their virtue: Silent, and in face
 Confounded, long they sat, as stricken mute:

Till Adam, though not less than Eve abashed,
At length gave utt'rance to these words constrained:

“Oh 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 honor void,
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained,
And in our faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store;
Even shame, the last of evils; of the first
Be sure then. How shall I behold the face 1080
Henceforth of God or Angel, erst with joy
And rapture so oft beheld? Those Heav'nly shapes
Will dazzle now this earthly with their blaze
Insufferably bright. Oh might I here
In solitude live savage; in some glade
Obscured, where highest woods, impenetrable
To star or sun-light, spread their umbrage broad
And brown as evening: Cover me, ye pines,
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more. 1090
But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
What best may for the present serve to hide
The parts of each from other, that seem most
To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen;
Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves together sewed,
And girded on our loins, may cover round
Those middle parts; that this new comer, shame,
There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.”

So counseled he, and both together went
 Into the thickest wood; there soon they chose 1100
 The fig-tree; not that kind for fruit renowned,
 But such as at this day, to Indians known,
 In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms
 Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
 The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
 About the mother tree, a pillared shade
 High over-arched, and echoing walks between:
 There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
 Shelters in cool, and tends his past'ring 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 cov'ring, if to hide
 Their guilt and dreaded shame. Oh, how unlike
 To that first naked glory! Such of late
 Columbus found th' American, so girt
 With feathered cincture; naked else, and wild
 Among the trees on isles and woody shores.
 Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part
 Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind, 1120
 They sat them down to weep; nor only tears
 Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within
 Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
 Mistrust, suspicion, discord; and shook sore
 Their inward state of mind, calm region once
 And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent:
 For understanding ruled not, and the ill
 Heard not her lore; both in subjection now
 To sensual appetite, who from beneath
 Usurping over sovereign reason claimed 1130
 Superior sway: From thus distempered breast,
 Adam, estranged in look and altered style,

Speech intermitted thus to Eve renewed:

“Would thou had’st hearkened to my words, and stayed
 With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
 Desire of wand’ring, 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
 Of wand’ring, 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 th’ attempt, thou could’st 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 ne’er parted from thy side?
 As good have grown there still a lifeless rib.
 Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,
 Command me absolutely not to go,
 Going into such danger, as thou said’st?
 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, ungrateful Eve! expressed
 Immutable, when thou wert lost, not I;
 Who might have lived, and joyed immortal bliss,

Yet willingly chose rather Death with thee?
 And am I now upbraided as the cause
 Of thy transgressing? Not enough severe,
 It seems, in thy restraint: What could I more 1170
 I warned thee, I admonished thee, foretold
 The danger, and the lurking Enemy
 That lay in wait; beyond this, had been force;
 And force upon free will hath here no place.
 But confidence then bore thee on; secure
 Either to meet no danger, or to find
 Matter of glorious trial; and perhaps
 I also erred, in overmuch admiring
 What seemed in thee so perfect, that I thought
 No Evil durst attempt thee; but I rue 1180
 The error now, which is become my crime,
 And thou th' accuser. Thus it shall befall
 Him, who, to worth in Women overtrusting,
 Lets her will rule: restraint she will not brook;
 And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
 She first his weak indulgence will accuse."
 Thus they in mutual accusation spent
 The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;
 And of their vain contest appeared no end. 1189

BOOK X

The Argument

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

Meanwhile the heinous and spiteful act
 Of Satan, done in Paradise; and how
 He, in the Serpent, had perverted Eve,
 Her Husband she, to taste the fatal fruit,
 Was known in Heav'n; for what can 'scape the eye

Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart
 Omniscient? Who, in all things wise and just,
 Hindered not Satan to attempt the mind
 Of Man, with strength entire and free will armed,
 Complete to have discovered and repulsed 10
 Whatever wiles of Foe or seeming Friend.
 For still they knew, and ought t' have still remembered,
 The high injunction, not to taste that fruit,
 Whoever tempted; which they not obeying,
 (Incurred what could they less?) the penalty;
 And, manifold in sin, deserved to fall.
 Up into Heav'n from Paradise in haste
 Th' angelic guards ascended, mute, and sad,
 For man; for of his state by this they knew,
 Much wond'ring how the subtle Fiend had stol'n 20
 Entrance unseen. Soon as th' unwelcome news
 From Earth arrived at Heaven-gate, displeased
 All were who heard; dim sadness did not spare
 That time celestial visages, yet, mixed
 With pity, violated not their bliss.
 About the new-arrived, in multitudes
 Th' ethereal people ran, to hear and know
 How all befell: They towards the throne supreme,
 Accountable, made haste, to make appear,
 With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance 30
 And easily approved; when the Most High
 Eternal Father, from his secret cloud,
 Amidst in thunder uttered thus his voice:
 "Assembled Angels, and ye Pow'rs returned
 From unsuccessful charge; be not dismayed,
 Nor troubled at these tidings from the Earth,
 Which your sincerest care could not prevent;
 Foretold so lately what would come to pass,
 When first this Tempter crossed the gulf from Hell.

I told ye then he should prevail, and speed 40
 On his bad errand; man should be seduced,
 And flattered out of all, believing lies
 Against his Maker; no decree of mine
 Concurring to necessitate his fall,
 Or touch with lightest moment of impulse
 His free will, to her own inclining left
 In even scale. But fall'n he is; and now
 What rests, but that the mortal sentence pass
 On his transgression, Death denounced that day?
 Which he presumes already vain and void, 50
 Because not yet inflicted, as he feared,
 By some immediate stroke; but soon shall find
 Forbearance no acquittance, ere day end.
 Justice shall not return as bounty scorned.
 But whom send I to judge them? Whom but thee,
 Vicegerent Son? To thee I have transferred
 All judgment, whether in Heav'n, or Earth, or Hell.
 Easy it may be seen that I intend
 Mercy colleague with justice, sending thee
 Man's Friend, his Mediator, his designed 60
 Both Ransom and Redeemer voluntary,
 And destined Man himself to judge man fall'n."
 So spake the Father; and, unfolding bright
 Toward the right hand his glory, on the Son
 Blazed forth unclouded Deity: He full
 Resplendent all his Father manifest
 Expressed, and thus divinely answered mild:
 "Father Eternal, thine is to decree;
 Mine, both in Heav'n and Earth, to do thy will
 Supreme; that thou in me, thy Son beloved, 70
 May'st ever rest well pleased. I go to judge
 On Earth these thy transgressors; but thou know'st,
 Whoever judged, the worst on me must light,

When time shall be; for so I undertook
 Before thee; and, not repenting, this obtain
 Of right, that I may mitigate their doom
 On me derived; yet I shall temper so
 Justice with mercy, as may illustrate most
 Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.
 Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none
 Are to behold the judgment, but the judged,
 Those two; the third best absent is condemned,
 Convict by flight, and rebel to all law:
 Conviction to the serpent none belongs.”

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Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose
 Of high collateral glory: Him Thrones, and Pow'rs,
 Princedoms, and Dominations ministrant,
 Accompanied to Heaven-gate; from whence
 Eden, and all the coast, in prospect lay.
 Down he descended straight; the speed of God's
 Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes winged.
 Now was the Sun in western cadence low
 From noon, and gentle airs, due at their hour,
 To fan the Earth now waked, and usher in
 The evening cool; when he, from wrath more cool,
 Came the mild Judge, and Intercessor both,
 To sentence man: The voice of God they heard
 Now walking in the Garden, by soft winds
 Brought to their ears, while day declined; they heard,
 And from his presence hid themselves among
 The thickest trees, both man and wife; till God,
 Approaching, thus to Adam called aloud:

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“Where art thou, Adam, wont with joy to meet
 My coming seen far off? I miss thee here,
 Not pleased, thus entertained with solitude,
 Where obvious duty ere while appeared unsought:
 Or come I less conspicuous, or what change

Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come forth.”
 He came; and with him Eve, more loath, though first
 T’ offend; discount’nanced both, and discomposed; 110
 Love was not in their looks, either to God,
 Or to each other; but apparent guilt,
 And shame, and perturbation, and despair,
 Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile.
 Whence Adam, falt’ring long, thus answered brief:
 “I heard thee in the Garden, and of thy voice
 Afraid, being naked, hid myself.” To whom
 The gracious Judge without revile replied:
 “My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not feared,
 But still rejoiced; how is it now become 120
 So dreadful to thee? That thou art naked, who
 Hath told thee? Hast thou eaten of the Tree,
 Whereof I gave thee charge thou should’st not eat?”
 To whom thus Adam sore beset replied:
 “Oh Heav’n! in evil strait this day I stand
 Before my Judge; either to undergo
 Myself the total crime, or to accuse
 My other self, the partner of my life;
 Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,
 I should conceal, and not expose to blame 130
 By my complaint: but strict necessity
 Subdues me, and calamitous constraint;
 Lest on my head both sin and punishment,
 However insupportable, be all
 Devolved; though should I hold my peace, yet thou
 Wouldst easily detect what I conceal.
 This woman, whom thou mad’st to be my help,
 And gav’st me as thy perfect gift, so good,
 So fit, so acceptable, so divine,
 That from her hand I could suspect no ill, 140
 And what she did, whatever in itself,

Her doing seemed to justify the deed;
 She gave me of the Tree, and I did eat.”

To whom the Sovereign Presence thus replied:
 “Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey
 Before his voice? Or was she made thy guide,
 Superior, or but equal, that to her
 Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place
 Wherein God set thee above her made of thee,
 And for thee, whose perfection far excelled 150
 Hers in all real dignity? Adorned
 She was indeed, and lovely, to attract
 Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts
 Were such, as under government well seemed;
 Unseemly to bear rule; which was thy part
 And person, hadst thou known thyself aright.”

So having said, he thus to Eve in few:
 “Say, Woman, what is this which thou hast done?”

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

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

“Because thou hast done this, thou art accursed

Above all cattle, each beast of the field;
 Upon thy belly grov'ling thou shalt go,
 And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.
 Between thee and the woman I will put
 Enmity, and between thine and her Seed; 180
 Her Seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel."

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

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

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

So judged he man, both Judge and Savior sent;

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

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

"Oh Son, why sit we here each other viewing
 Idly, while Satan, our great Author, thrives
 In other worlds, and happier seat provides
 For us, his offspring dear? It cannot be
 But that success attends him; if mishap,
 Ere this he had returned, with fury driv'n 240
 By his avengers; since no place like this
 Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.
 Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,

Wings growing, and dominion giv'n me large
 Beyond this deep; whatever draws me on,
 Or sympathy, or some connatural force,
 Pow'rful at greatest distance to unite,
 With secret amity, things of like kind,
 By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade
 Inseparable, must with me along; 250
 For Death from Sin no pow'r can separate.
 But, lest the difficulty of passing back
 Stay his return perhaps over this gulf
 Impassable, impervious; let us try
 Advent'rous work, yet to thy pow'r and mine
 Not unagreeable, to found a path
 Over this main from Hell to that new world,
 Where Satan now prevails; a monument
 Of merit high to all th' infernal host,
 Easing their passage hence, for intercourse, 260
 Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.
 Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn
 By this new-felt attraction and instinct."

Whom thus the meager shadow answered soon:
 "Go, whither fate, and inclination strong,
 Leads thee; I shall not lag behind, nor err
 The way, thou leading; such a scent I draw
 Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste
 The savor of Death from all things there that live:
 Nor shall I to the work thou enterpris't 270
 Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid."

So saying, with delight he snuffed the smell
 Of mortal change on Earth. As when a flock
 Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,
 Against the day of battle, to a field,
 Where armies lie encamped, come flying, lured
 With scent of living carcasses designed

For Death, the foll'wing day, in bloody fight:
 So scented the grim feature, and upturned
 His nostril wide into the murky air; 280
 Sagacious of his quarry from so far.
 Then both from out Hell-gates, into the waste
 Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,
 Flew diverse; and with pow'r (their pow'r was great)
 Hov'ring upon the waters, what they met
 Solid or slimy, as in raging sea
 Tossed up and down, together crowded drove,
 From each side shoaling towards the mouth of Hell;
 As when two polar winds, blowing adverse
 Upon the Cronian sea, together drive 290
 Mountains of ice, that stop th' imagined way
 Beyond Petsora eastward, to the rich
 Cathaian coast. The aggregated soil
 Death with his mace petrific, cold and dry,
 As with a trident, smote; and fixed as firm
 As Delos, floating once; the rest his look
 Bound with Gorgonian rigor not to move;
 And with asphaltic slime, broad as the gate,
 Deep to the roots of Hell the gathered beach
 They fastened, and the mole immense wrought on 300
 Over the foaming deep high-arched, a bridge
 Of length prodigious, joining to the wall
 Immoveable of this now fenceless world,
 Forfeit to Death; from hence a passage broad,
 Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to Hell.
 So, if great things to small may be compared,
 Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke,
 From Susa, his Memnonian palace high,
 Came to the sea: and, over Hellespont
 Bridging his way, Europe with Asia joined, 310
 And scourged with many a stroke th' indignant waves.

Now had they brought the work by wondrous art
 Pontifical, a ridge of pendant rock,
 Over the vexed abyss, foll'wing the track
 Of Satan to the self-same place where he
 First lighted from his wing, and landed safe
 From out of Chaos, to the outside bare
 Of this round world: With pins of adamant
 And chains they made all fast, too fast they made
 And durable. And now in little space 320
 The confines met of empyrean Heav'n,
 And of this world; and, on the left hand, Hell
 With long reach interposed; three several ways
 In sight, to each of these three places led.
 And now their way to Earth they had descried,
 To Paradise first tending; when, behold,
 Satan, in likeness of an Angel bright,
 Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering
 His zenith, while the Sun in Aries rose:
 Disguised he came; but those his children dear 330
 Their parent soon discerned, though in disguise.
 He, after Eve seduced, unminded slunk
 Into the wood fast by; and, changing shape,
 T^o observe the sequel, saw his guileful act
 By Eve, though all unwitting, seconded
 Upon her husband; saw their shame that sought
 Vain covertures; but when he saw descend
 The Son of God to judge them, terrified
 He fled; not hoping to escape, but shun
 The present; fearing, guilty, what his wrath 340
 Might suddenly inflict; that past, returned
 By night, and list'ning where the hapless pair
 Sat in their sad discourse, and various plaint,
 Thence gathered his own doom; which understood
 Not instant, but of future time, with joy

And tidings fraught, to Hell he now returned;
 And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
 Of this new wondrous pontifice, unhop'd
 Met, who to meet him came, his offspring dear.
 Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight 350
 Of that stupendous bridge his joy increased.
 Long he admiring stood, till Sin, his fair
 Enchanting Daughter, thus the silence broke:
 "Oh Parent, these are thy magnific deeds,
 Thy trophies, which thou view'st as not thine own;
 Thou art their author, and prime architect:
 For I no sooner in my heart divin'd,
 My heart, which by a secret harmony
 Still moves with thine, joined in connection sweet,
 That thou on Earth hadst prospered, which thy looks 360
 Now also evidence, but straight I felt,
 Though distant from thee worlds between, yet felt,
 That I must after thee, with this thy Son;
 Such fatal consequence unites us three.
 Hell could no longer hold us in our bounds,
 Nor this unvoyagable gulf obscure
 Detain from foll'wing thy illustrious track.
 Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined
 Within Hell-gates till now; thou us empow'r'd
 To fortify thus far, and overlay, 370
 With this portentous bridge, the dark abyss.
 Thine now is all this world; thy virtue hath won
 What thy hands buildd not; thy wisdom gained
 With odds what war hath lost, and fully avenged
 Our foil in Heav'n; here thou shalt Monarch reign,
 There didst not; there let him still victor sway,
 As battle hath adjudg'd; from this new world
 Retiring, by his own doom alienated;
 And henceforth monarchy with thee divide

Of all things, parted by th' empyreal bounds, 380
 His quadrature, from thy orbicular world;
 Or try thee now more dangerous to his throne."

Whom thus the Prince of Darkness answered glad:
 "Fair Daughter, and thou Son and Grandchild both;
 High proof ye now have giv'n to be the race
 Of Satan (for I glory in the name,
 Antagonist of Heav'n's Almighty King,
 Amply have merited of me, of all
 Th' infernal empire, that so near Heav'n's door
 Triumphal with triumphal act have met, 390
 Mine, with this glorious work; and made one realm,
 Hell and this world, one realm, one continent
 Of easy thorough-fare. Therefore, while I
 Descend through darkness, on your road with ease,
 To my associate pow'rs, them to acquaint
 With these successes, and with them rejoice;
 You two this way, among these numerous orbs,
 All yours, right down to Paradise descend;
 There dwell, and reign in bliss; thence on the Earth
 Dominion exercise and in the air, 400
 Chiefly on man, sole lord of all declared;
 Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.
 My substitutes I send ye, and create
 Plenipotent on Earth, of matchless might
 Issuing from me: on your joint vigor now
 My hold of this new kingdom all depends,
 Through Sin to Death exposed by my exploit.
 If your joint pow'r prevail, th' affairs of Hell
 No detriment need fear; go, and be strong."

So saying he dismissed them; they with speed 410
 Their course through thickest constellations held,
 Spreading their bane; the blasted stars looked wan,
 And planets, planet-struck, real eclipse

Then suffered. Th' other way Satan went down
 The causey to Hell-gate: On either side
 Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaimed,
 And with rebounding surge the bars assailed,
 That scorned his indignation: Through the gate,
 Wide open and unguarded, Satan passed,
 And all about found desolate; for those, 420
 Appointed to sit there, had left their charge,
 Flown to the upper world; the rest were all
 Far to th' inland retired, about the walls
 Of Pandemonium; city and proud seat
 Of Lucifer, so by allusion called
 Of that bright star to Satan paragoned;
 There kept their watch the legions, while the grand
 In council sat, solicitous what chance
 Might intercept their Emp'ror sent; so he
 Departing gave command, and they observed. 430
 As when the Tartar from his Russian foe,
 By Astracan, over the snowy plains,
 Retires; or Bactrian Sophi, from the horns
 Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond
 The realm of Aladule, in his retreat
 To Taurus or Casbeen: So these, the late
 Heav'n-banished host, left desert utmost Hell
 Many a dark league, reduced in careful watch
 Round their metropolis; and now expecting
 Each hour their great adventurer, from the search 440
 Of foreign worlds: He through the midst unmarked,
 In show plebeian Angel militant
 Of lowest order, passed; and from the door
 Of that Plutonian hall, invisible
 Ascended his high throne; which, under state
 Of richest texture spread, at th' upper end
 Was placed in regal luster. Down a while

He sat, and round about him saw unseen:
 At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head
 And shape star-bright appeared, or brighter; clad 450
 With what permissive glory since his fall
 Was left him, or false glitter: All amazed
 At that so sudden blaze the Stygian throng
 Bent their aspect, and whom they wished beheld,
 Their mighty Chief returned: loud was th' acclaim:
 Forth rushed in haste the great consulting peers,
 Raised from their dark divan, and with like joy
 Congratulant approached him; who with hand
 Silence, and with these words attention, won:
 "Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Pow'rs; 460
 For in possession such, not only of right,
 I call ye, and declare ye now; returned
 Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth
 Triumphant out of this infernal pit
 Abominable, accursed, the house of woe,
 And dungeon of our tyrant: Now possess,
 As lords, a spacious world, to our native Heav'n
 Little inferior, by my adventure hard
 With peril great achieved. Long were to tell
 What I have done; what suffered; with what pain 470
 Voyaged the unreal, vast, unbounded deep
 Of horrible confusion; over which
 By Sin and Death a broad way now is paved,
 To expedite your glorious march; but I
 Toiled out my uncouth passage, forced to ride
 Th' untractable abyss, plunged in the womb
 Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild;
 That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed
 My journey strange, with clamorous uproar
 Protesting fate supreme; thence how I found 480
 The new created world, which fame in Heav'n

Long had foretold, a fabric wonderful
 Of absolute perfection. Therein man
 Placed in a Paradise, by our exile
 Made happy: Him by fraud I have seduced
 From his Creator; and, the more t' increase
 Your wonder, with an apple; he, thereat
 Offended, worth your laughter, hath giv'n up
 Both his beloved man, and all his world,
 To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us, 490
 Without our hazard, labor, or alarm;
 To range in, and to dwell, and over man
 To rule, as over all he should have ruled.
 True is, me also he hath judged, or rather
 Me not, but the brute serpent in whose shape
 Man I deceived: that which to me belongs,
 Is enmity which he will put between
 Me and mankind; I am to bruise his heel;
 His seed, when is not set, shall bruise my head:
 A world who would not purchase with a bruise, 500
 Or much more grievous pain? Ye have th' account
 Of my performance: What remains, ye Gods,
 But up, and enter now into full bliss?"

So having said, a while he stood, expecting
 Their universal shout, and high applause,
 To fill his ear; when, contrary, he hears
 On all sides, from innumerable tongues,
 A dismal universal hiss, the sound
 Of public scorn; he wondered, but not long
 Had leisure, wond'ring at himself now more, 510
 His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare;
 His arms clung to his ribs; his legs entwining
 Each other, till supplanted down he fell
 A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,
 Reluctant, but in vain; a greater pow'r

Now ruled him, punished in the shape he sinned,
 According to his doom: he would have spoke,
 But hiss for hiss returned with forkéd tongue
 To forkéd tongue; for now were all transformed
 Alike, to serpents all, as accessories 520
 To his bold riot: Dreadful was the din
 Of hissing through the hall, thick swarming now
 With complicated monsters head and tail,
 Scorpion, and Asp, and Amphisbaena dire,
 Cerastes horned, Hydrus, and Elops drear,
 And Dipsas (not so thick swarmed once the soil
 Bedropped with blood of Gorgon, or the isle
 Ophiusa), but still greatest he the midst,
 Now Dragon grown, larger than whom the sun
 Engendered in the Pythian vale or slime, 530
 Huge Python, and his pow'r no less he seemed
 Above the rest still to retain; they all
 Him followed, issuing forth to th' open field,
 Where all yet left of that revolted rout,
 Heav'n-fall'n, in station stood or just array;
 Sublime with expectation when to see
 In triumph issuing forth their glorious Chief;
 They saw, but other sight instead, a crowd
 Of ugly Serpents; horror on them fell,
 And horrid sympathy; for, what they saw, 540
 They felt themselves, now changing; down their arms,
 Down fell both spear and shield; down they as fast;
 And the dire hiss renewed, and the dire form
 Caught, by contagion; like in punishment,
 As in their crime. Thus was th' applause they meant,
 Turned to exploding hiss, triumph to shame
 Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There stood
 A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,
 His will who reigns above, to aggravate

Their penance, laden with fair fruit, like that 550
 Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve
 Used by the Tempter: on that prospect strange
 Their earnest eyes they fixed, imagining
 For one forbidden tree a multitude
 Now risen, to work them further woe or shame;
 Yet, parched with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,
 Though to delude them sent, could not abstain;
 But on they rolled in heaps, and, up the trees
 Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks
 That curled Megaera: greedily they plucked 560
 The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew
 Near that bituminous lake where Sodom flamed;
 This more delusive, not the touch, but taste
 Deceived; they, fondly thinking to allay
 Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit
 Chewed bitter ashes, which th' offended taste
 With spatt'ring noise rejected: oft they assayed,
 Hunger and thirst constraining; drugged as oft,
 With hatefulest disrelish writhed their jaws,
 With soot and cinders filled; so oft they fell 570
 Into the same illusion, not as man
 Whom they triumphed once lapsed. Thus were they plagued
 And worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss,
 Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed;
 Yearly enjoined, some say, to undergo,
 This annual humbling certain numbered days,
 To dash their pride, and joy, for man seduced.
 However, some tradition they dispersed
 Among the heathen, of their purchase got,
 And fabled how the Serpent, whom they called 580
 Ophion, with Eurynome, the wide
 Encroaching Eve perhaps, had first the rule
 Of high Olympus; thence by Saturn driv'n

And Ops, ere yet Dictæan Jove was born.

Meanwhile in Paradise the Hellish pair
Too soon arrived; Sin, there in pow'r before,
Once actual; now in body, and to dwell
Habitual habitant; behind her Death,
Close foll'wing pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horse: to whom Sin thus began:

590

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

Whom thus the Sin-born monster answered soon:

“To me, who with eternal famine pine,
Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heav’n;
There best, where most with ravine I may meet;
Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems
To stuff this maw, this vast unhide-bound corps.”

600

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

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

610

“See, with what heat these dogs of Hell advance
To waste and havoc yonder world, which I

So fair and good created; and had still
 Kept in that state, had not the folly of man
 Let in these wasteful Furies, who impute 620
 Folly to me; so doth the Prince of Hell
 And his adherents, that with so much ease
 I suffer them to enter and possess
 A place so heav'nly; and, conniving, seem
 To gratify my scornful enemies,
 That laugh, as if, transported with some fit
 Of passion, I to them had quitted all,
 At random yielded up to their misrule;
 And know not that I called, and drew them thither,
 My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth 630
 Which man's polluting sin with taint hath shed
 On what was pure; till, crammed and gorged, nigh burst
 With sucked and glutted offal, at one sling
 Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,
 Both Sin, and Death, and yawning Grave, at last,
 Through Chaos hurled, obstruct the mouth of Hell
 For ever, and seal up his rav'nous jaws.
 Then Heav'n and Earth renewed shall be made pure
 To sanctity, that shall receive no stain:
 Till then, the curse pronounced on both precedes." 640

He ended, and the heav'nly audience loud
 Sung Halleluiah, as the sound of seas,
 Through multitude that sung: "Just are thy ways,
 Righteous are thy decrees on all thy works;
 Who can extenuate thee? Next, to the Son,
 Destined Restorer of mankind, by whom
 New Heav'n and Earth shall to the ages rise,
 Or down from Heav'n descend." Such was their song;
 While the Creator, calling forth by name
 His mighty Angels, gave them several charge, 650
 As sorted best with present things. The sun

Had first his precept so to move, so shine,
 As might affect the Earth with cold and heat
 Scarce tolerable; and from the north to call
 Decrepit winter; from the south to bring
 Solstitial summer's heat. To the blank moon
 Her office they prescribed; to th' other five
 Their planetary motions, and aspects,
 In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite,
 Of noxious efficacy, and when to join 660
 In synod unbenign; and taught the fixed
 Their influence malignant when to show'r,
 Which of them rising with the sun, or falling,
 Should prove tempestuous: To the winds they set
 Their corners, when with bluster to confound
 Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll
 With terror through the dark aerial hall.
 Some say, he bid his Angels turn askance
 The poles of Earth, twice ten degrees and more,
 From the Sun's axle; they with labor pushed 670
 Oblique the centric globe: Some say, the sun
 Was bid turn reins from th' equinoctial road
 Like distant breadth to Taurus with the seven
 Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins,
 Up to the Tropic Crab: thence down amain
 By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,
 As deep as Capricorn; to bring in change
 Of seasons to each clime; else had the spring
 Perpetual smiled on Earth with vernant flow'rs,
 Equal in days and nights, except to those 680
 Beyond the polar circles; to them day
 Had unbenighted shone, while the low sun,
 To recompense his distance, in their sight
 Had rounded still th' horizon, and not known
 Or east or west; which had forbid the snow

From cold Estotiland, and south as far
 Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit
 The sun, as from Thyestean banquet, turned
 His course intended; else, how had the World
 Inhabited, though sinless, more than now, 690
 Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?
 These changes in the Heav'ns, though slow, produced
 Like change on sea and land; sidereal blast,
 Vapor, and mist, and exhalation hot,
 Corrupt and pestilent: Now from the north
 Of Norumbega, and the Samoed shore,
 Bursting their brazen dungeon, armed with ice,
 And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw,
 Boreas, and Caecias, and Argestes loud,
 And Thrascias, rend the woods, and seas upturn; 700
 With adverse blast upturns them from the south
 Notus, and Afer black with thund'rous clouds
 From Serraliona; thwart of these, as fierce,
 Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent winds,
 Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise,
 Sirocco and Libeccio. Thus began
 Outrage from lifeless things; but Discord first,
 Daughter of Sin, among th' irrational
 Death introduced, through fierce antipathy:
 Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl, 710
 And fish with fish; to graze the herb all leaving,
 Devour'd each other; nor stood much in awe
 Of man, but fled him; or, with count'nance grim,
 Glared on him passing. These were from without
 The growing miseries, which Adam saw
 Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
 To sorrow abandoned, but worse felt within;
 And, in a troubled sea of passion tossed,
 Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint:

“O miserable of happy, is this the end 720
 Of this new glorious world, and me so late
 The glory of that glory, who now become
 Accursed, of blessed? hide me from the face
 Of God, whom to behold was then my height
 Of happiness! Yet well, if here would end
 The misery; I deserved it, and would bear
 My own deservings; but this will not serve:
 All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
 Is propagated curse. Oh voice, once heard
 Delightfully, increase and multiply; 730
 Now death to hear, for what can I increase,
 Or multiply, but curses on my head?
 Who of all ages to succeed, but, feeling
 The evil on him brought by me, will curse
 My head? Ill fare our Ancestor impure,
 For this we may thank Adam, but his thanks
 Shall be the execration: so, besides
 Mine own that bide upon me, all from me
 Shall with a fierce reflux on me rebound;
 On me, as on their natural center, light 740
 Heavy, though in their place. Oh fleeting joys
 Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes.
 Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
 To mould me man? Did I solicit thee
 From darkness to promote me, or here place
 In this delicious Garden? As my will
 Concurred not to my being, it were but right
 And equal to reduce me to my dust;
 Desirous to resign and render back
 All I received; unable to perform 750
 Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
 The good I sought not. To the loss of that,
 Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added

The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
 Thy justice seems; yet to say truth, too late,
 I thus contest; then should have been refused
 Those terms whatever, when they were proposed:
 Thou didst accept them, wilt thou enjoy the good,
 Then cavil the conditions? And though God
 Made thee without thy leave, what if thy Son 760
 Prove disobedient, and reprov'd, retort,
 Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not
 Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee
 That proud excuse? Yet him not thy election,
 But natural necessity begot.
 God made thee of choice his own, of his own
 To serve him, thy reward was of his grace,
 Thy punishment then justly is at his will.
 Be it so, for I submit, his doom is fair,
 That dust I am, and shall to dust return: 770
 O welcome hour whenever! Why delays
 His hand to execute what his decree
 Fixed on this day? Why do I overlive?
 Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened out
 To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet
 Mortality my sentence, and be Earth
 Insensible. How glad would lay me down
 As in my Mother's lap. There I should rest,
 And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more
 Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse 780
 To me, and to my offspring, would torment me
 With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt
 Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die;
 Lest that pure breath of life, the spirit of man
 Which God inspired, cannot together perish
 With this corporeal clod; then, in the Grave,
 Or in some other dismal place, who knows

But I shall die a living death? Oh thought
 Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath
 Of life that sinned; what dies but what had life 790
 And sin? The body properly had neither,
 All of me then shall die: let this appease
 The doubt, since human reach no further knows.
 For though the Lord of all be infinite,
 Is his wrath also? Be it, man is not so,
 But mortal doomed. How can he exercise
 Wrath without end on man, whom death must end?
 Can he make deathless death? That were to make
 Strange contradiction, which to God himself
 Impossible is held; as argument 800
 Of weakness, not of pow'r. Will he draw out,
 For anger's sake, finite to infinite,
 In punished man, to satisfy his rigor,
 Satisfied never? That were to extend
 His sentence beyond dust and nature's law;
 By which all causes else, according still
 To the reception of their matter, act;
 Not to th' extent of their own sphere. But say
 That death be not one stroke, as I supposed,
 Bereaving sense, but endless misery 810
 From this day onward; which I feel begun
 Both in me, and without me; and so last
 To perpetuity; Ay me! that fear
 Comes thund'ring back with dreadful revolution
 On my defenseless head; both death and I
 Am found eternal, and incorporate both;
 Nor I on my part single; in me all
 Posterity stands cursed: Fair patrimony
 That I must leave ye, sons! Oh, were I able
 To waste it all myself, and leave ye none! 820
 So disinherited, how would you bless

Me, now your curse. Ah, why should all mankind,
 For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemned,
 It guiltless? But from me what can proceed,
 But all corrupt; both mind and will depraved
 Not to do only, but to will the same
 With me? How can they then acquitted stand
 In sight of God? Him, after all disputes,
 Forced I absolve: all my evasions vain,
 And reas'nings, though through mazes, lead me still 830
 But to my own conviction: first and last
 On me, me only, as the source and spring
 Of all corruption, all the blame lights due;
 So might the wrath. Fond wish! Could'st thou support
 That burden, heavier than th' Earth to bear;
 Than all the world much heavier, though divided
 With that bad woman? Thus, what thou desir'st,
 And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope
 Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
 Beyond all past example and future; 840
 To Satan only like both crime and doom.
 O conscience, into what abyss of fears
 And horrors hast thou driv'n me; out of which
 I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged!"

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

To end me? Shall truth fail to keep her word,
 Justice divine not hasten to be just?
 But death comes not at call; justice divine
 Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries,
 Oh woods, oh fountains, hillocks, dales, and bow'rs, 860
 With other echo late I taught your shades
 To answer, and resound far other song."
 Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld,
 Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh,
 Soft words to his fierce passion she assayed:
 But her with stern regard he thus repelled:
 "Out of my sight, thou Serpent! That name best
 Befits thee with him leagued, thyself as false
 And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy shape,
 Like his, and color serpentine, may show 870
 Thy inward fraud; to warn all creatures from thee
 Henceforth; lest that too heav'nly form, pretended
 To Hellish falsehood, snare them! But for thee
 I had persisted happy; had not thy pride
 And wand'ring vanity, when least was safe,
 Rejected my forewarning, and disdained
 Not to be trusted; longing to be seen,
 Though by the Devil himself; him overweening
 To over-reach; but, with the Serpent meeting,
 Fooled and beguiled; by him thou, I by thee 880
 To trust thee from my side; imagined wise,
 Constant, mature, proof against all assaults;
 And understood not all was but a show,
 Rather than solid virtue; all but a rib
 Crooked by nature, bent, as now appears,
 More to the part sinister, from me drawn;
 Well if thrown out, as supernumerary
 To my just number found. O, why did God,
 Creator wise, that peopled highest Heav'n

With spirits masculine, create at last 890
 This novelty on Earth, this fair defect
 Of Nature, and not fill the World at once
 With men, as Angels, without feminine;
 Or find some other way to generate
 Mankind? This mischief had not been befall'n,
 And more that shall befall; innumerable
 Disturbances on Earth through female snares,
 And strait conjunction with this sex: for either
 He never shall find out fit mate, but such
 As some misfortune brings him, or mistake; 900
 Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain
 Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained
 By a far worse; or, if she love, withheld
 By parents; or his happiest choice too late
 Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound
 To a fell adversary, his hate or shame:
 Which infinite calamity shall cause
 To human life, and household peace confound."

He added not, and from her turned; but Eve,
 Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing 910
 And tresses all disordered, at his feet
 Fell humble; and, embracing them, besought
 His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint:
 "Forsake me not thus, Adam, witness Heav'n
 What love sincere, and reverence in my heart
 I bear thee, and unwitting have offended,
 Unhappily deceived. Thy suppliant
 I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not,
 Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
 Thy counsel, in this uttermost distress, 920
 My only strength and stay: Forlorn of thee,
 Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
 While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,

Between us two let there be peace; both joining,
 As joined in injuries, one enmity
 Against a Foe by doom express assigned us,
 That cruel Serpent: On me exercise not
 Thy hatred for this misery befall'n;
 On me already lost, me than thyself
 More miserable. Both have sinned; but thou 930
 Against God only; I against God and thee;
 And to the place of judgment will return,
 There with my cries importune Heav'n; that all
 The sentence, from thy head removed, may light
 On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe;
 Me, me only, just object of his ire."

She ended weeping; and her lowly plight,
 Immoveable, till peace obtained from fault
 Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
 Commiseration: Soon his heart relented 940
 Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
 Now at his feet submissive in distress;
 Creature so fair his reconciliation seeking,
 His counsel, whom she had displeased, his aid:
 As one disarmed, his anger all he lost,
 And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon:

"Unwary, and too desirous, as before,
 So now of what thou know'st not, who desir'st
 The punishment all on thyself; alas!
 Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain 950
 His full wrath, whose thou feel'st as yet least part,
 And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers
 Could alter high decrees, I to that place
 Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
 That on my head all might be visited;
 Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiv'n,
 To me committed, and by me exposed.

But rise; let us no more contend, nor blame
 Each other, blamed enough elsewhere; but strive
 In offices of love, how we may lighten 960
 Each other's burden, in our share of woe;
 Since this day's death denounced, if aught I see,
 Will prove no sudden, but a slow-paced Evil;
 A long day's dying, to augment our pain;
 And to our seed (O hapless seed!) derived."
 To whom thus Eve, recov'ring heart, replied:
 "Adam, by sad experiment I know
 How little weight my words with thee can find,
 Found so erroneous; thence by just event
 Found so unfortunate: Nevertheless 970
 Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place
 Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain
 Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart
 Living or dying, from thee I will not hide
 What thoughts in my unquiet breast are ris'n,
 Tending to some relief of our extremes,
 Or end; though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,
 As in our evils, and of easier choice.
 If care of our descent perplex us most,
 Which must be born to certain woe, devoured 980
 By death at last; and miserable it is
 To be to others cause of misery,
 Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring
 Into this curséd world a woeful race,
 That after wretched life must be at last
 Food for so foul a monster; in thy pow'r
 It lies, yet ere conception to prevent
 The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.
 Childless thou art, childless remain: so death
 Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two 990
 Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.

But if thou judge it hard and difficult,
 Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain
 From love's due rights, nuptial embraces sweet;
 And with desire to languish without hope,
 Before the present object languishing
 With like desire; which would be misery
 And torment less than none of what we dread;
 Then, both ourselves and seed at once to free
 From what we fear for both, let us make short, 1000
 Let us seek death; or, he not found, supply
 With our own hands his office on ourselves:
 Why stand we longer shiv'ring under fears,
 That show no end but death, and have the pow'r,
 Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,
 Destruction with destruction to destroy?"

She ended here, or vehement despair
 Broke off the rest: so much of death her thoughts
 Had entertained, as dyed her cheeks with pale.
 But Adam, with such counsel nothing swayed, 1010
 To better hopes his more attentive mind
 Lab'ring had raised; and thus to Eve replied:

"Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
 To argue in thee something more sublime
 And excellent, than what thy mind contemns;
 But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes
 That excellence thought in thee; and implies,
 Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret
 For loss of life and pleasure overloved.
 Or if thou covet death, as utmost end 1020
 Of misery, so thinking to evade
 The penalty pronounced; doubt not but God
 Hath wiselier armed his vengeful ire, than so
 To be forestalled; much more I fear lest death,
 So snatched, will not exempt us from the pain

We are by doom to pay; rather, such acts
 Of contumacy will provoke the High'st
 To make death in us live: Then let us seek
 Some safer resolution, which methinks
 I have in view, calling to mind with heed 1030
 Part of our sentence, that thy Seed shall bruise
 The Serpent's head; piteous amends, unless
 Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand Foe,
 Satan; who, in the serpent, hath contrived
 Against us this deceit: To crush his head
 Would be revenge indeed, which will be lost
 By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
 Resolved, as thou propos'st; so our Foe
 Shall 'scape his punishment ordained, and we
 Instead shall double ours upon our heads. 1040
 No more be mentioned then of violence
 Against ourselves; and willful barrenness,
 That cuts us off from hope; and savors only
 Rancor and pride, impatience and despite,
 Reluctance against God and his just yoke
 Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild
 And gracious temper he both heard, and judged,
 Without wrath or reviling; we expected
 Immediate dissolution, which we thought
 Was meant by death that day; when lo, to thee 1050
 Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,
 And bringing forth; soon recompensed with joy,
 Fruit of thy womb: On me the curse aslope
 Glanced on the ground; with labor I must earn
 My bread; what harm? Idleness had been worse;
 My labor will sustain me; and, lest cold
 Or heat should injure us, his timely care
 Hath, unbesought, provided; and his hands
 Clothed us unworthy, pitying while he judged;

How much more, if we pray him, will his ear 1060
 Be open, and his heart to pity incline,
 And teach us further by what means to shun
 Th' inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow,
 Which now the sky, with various face, begins
 To show us in this mountain; while the winds
 Blow moist and keen, shatt'ring the graceful locks
 Of these fair spreading trees; which bids us seek
 Some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish
 Our limbs benumbed, ere this diurnal star
 Leave cold the night, how we his gathered beams 1070
 Reflected may with matter sere foment;
 Or, by collision of two bodies, grind
 The air attrite to fire; as late the clouds
 Jostling, or pushed with winds, rude in their shock,
 Tine the slant lightning; whose thwart flame, driv'n down
 Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine;
 And sends a comfortable heat from far,
 Which might supply the sun: Such fire to use,
 And what may else be remedy or cure
 To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought, 1080
 He will instruct us praying, and of grace
 Beseeching him; so as we need not fear
 To pass commodiously this life, sustained
 By him with many comforts, till we end
 In dust, our final rest and native home.
 What better can we do, than, to the place
 Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall
 Before him reverent; and there confess
 Humbly our faults, and pardon beg; with tears
 Wat'ring the ground, and with our sighs the air 1090
 Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
 Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek.
 Undoubtedly he will relent and turn

From his displeasure; in whose look serene,
When angry most he seemed and most severe,
What else but favor, grace, and mercy shone?"

So spake our Father penitent, nor Eve
Felt less remorse: they forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell
Before him reverent; and there confessed
Humbly their faults, and pardon begged; with tears
Wat'ring the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek.

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BOOK XI

The Argument

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

Thus they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood
 Praying; for from the mercy-seat above
 Prevenient grace descending had removed
 The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
 Regenerate grow instead; that sighs now breathed
 Unutterable; which the spirit of prayer
 Inspired, and winged for Heav'n with speedier flight
 Than loudest oratory: Yet their port
 Not of mean suitors; nor important less
 Seemed their petition, than when the ancient pair 10
 In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
 Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
 The race of mankind drowned, before the shrine
 Of Themis stood devout. To Heav'n their prayers
 Flew up, nor missed the way, by envious winds
 Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they passed
 Dimensionless through Heav'nly doors; then clad
 With incense, where the golden altar fumed,
 By their great Intercessor, came in sight
 Before the Father's throne: them the glad Son 20

Presenting, thus to intercede began:

“See, Father, what first-fruits on Earth are sprung
 From thy implanted grace in man; these sighs
 And prayers, which in this golden censer mixed
 With incense, I thy Priest before thee bring;
 Fruits of more pleasing savor, from thy seed
 Sown with contrition in his heart, than those
 Which, his own hand manuring, all the trees
 Of Paradise could have produced, ere fall’n
 From innocence. Now therefore, bend thine ear 30
 To supplication; hear his sighs, though mute;
 Unskillful with what words to pray, let me
 Interpret for him; me, his advocate
 And propitiation; all his works on me,
 Good, or not good, ingraft; my merit those
 Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.
 Accept me; and, in me, from these receive
 The smell of peace toward mankind: let him live
 Before thee reconciled, at least his days
 Numbered, though sad; till death, his doom, (which I 40
 To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse,)
 To better life shall yield him: where with me
 All my redeemed may dwell in joy and bliss;
 Made one with me, as I with thee am one.”

To whom the Father, without cloud, serene:
 “All thy request for man, accepted Son,
 Obtain; all thy request was my decree:
 But, longer in that Paradise to dwell,
 The law I gave to Nature him forbids:
 Those pure immortal elements, that know, 50
 No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,
 Eject him, tainted now; and purge him off,
 As a distemper, gross, to air as gross,
 And mortal food; as may dispose him best

For dissolution wrought by sin, that first
 Distempered all things, and of incorrupt
 Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts
 Created him endowed; with happiness,
 And immortality: that fondly lost,
 This other served but to eternize woe; 60
 Till I provided death: so death becomes
 His final remedy; and, after life,
 Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined
 By faith and faithful works, to second life,
 Waked in the renovation of the just,
 Resigns him up with Heav'n and Earth renewed.
 But let us call to synod all the blest,
 Through Heav'n's wide bounds: from them I will not hide
 My judgments; how with mankind I proceed,
 As how with peccant Angels late they saw, 70
 And in their state, though firm, stood more confirmed."

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

"Oh Sons, like one of us man is become
 To know both good and evil, since his taste
 Of that defended fruit; but let him boast
 His knowledge of good lost, and evil got;
 Happier had it sufficed him to have known

Good by itself, and evil not at all.
 He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite, 90
 My motions in him; longer than they move,
 His heart I know, how variable and vain,
 Self-left. Lest therefore his now bolder hand
 Reach also of the Tree of Life, and eat,
 And live forever, dream at least to live
 For ever, to remove him I decree,
 And send him from the Garden forth to till
 The ground whence he was taken, fitter soil.
 Michael, this my behest have thou in charge;
 Take to thee from among the Cherubim 100
 Thy choice of flaming Warriors, lest the Fiend,
 Or in behalf of man, or to invade
 Vacant possession, some new trouble raise:
 Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God
 Without remorse drive out the sinful pair;
 From hallowed ground th' unholy; and denounce
 To them, and to their progeny, from thence
 Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint
 At the sad sentence rigorously urged,
 (For I behold them softened, and with tears 110
 Bewailing their excess,) all terror hide.
 If patiently thy bidding they obey,
 Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal
 To Adam what shall come in future days,
 As I shall thee enlighten; intermix
 My cov'nant in the Woman's Seed renewed;
 So send them forth, though sorr'wing, yet in peace:
 And on the east side of the Garden place,
 Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
 Cherubic watch; and of a sword the flame 120
 Wide-waving; all approach far off to fright,
 And guard all passage to the Tree of Life:

Lest Paradise a receptacle prove
 To Spirits foul, and all my trees their prey;
 With whose stol'n fruit man once more to delude."

He ceased; and th' archangelic Pow'r prepared
 For swift descent; with him the cohort bright
 Of watchful Cherubim: four faces each
 Had, like a double Janus; all their shape
 Spangled with eyes more numerous than those 130
 Of Argus, and more wakeful than to drowse,
 Charmed with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed
 Of Hermes, or his opiate rod. Meanwhile,
 To re-salute the world with sacred light,
 Leucothea waked; and with fresh dews embalmed
 The Earth; when Adam and first matron Eve
 Had ended now their orisons, and found
 Strength added from above; new hope to spring
 Out of despair; joy, but with fear yet linked;
 Which thus to Eve his welcome words renewed: 140

"Eve, easily may faith admit, that all
 The good which we enjoy from Heav'n descends;
 But, that from us aught should ascend to Heav'n
 So prevalent as to concern the mind
 Of God high-blest, or to incline his will,
 Hard to belief may seem; yet this will prayer
 Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne
 Ev'n to the seat of God. For since I sought
 By prayer th' offended Deity t' appease;
 Kneeled, and before him humbled all my heart; 150
 Methought I saw him placable and mild,
 Bending his ear; persuasion in me grew
 That I was heard with favor; peace returned
 Home to my breast, and to my memory
 His promise, that thy Seed shall bruise our Foe;
 Which, then not minded in dismay, yet now

Assures me that the bitterness of Death
 Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee,
 Eve rightly called, Mother of all mankind,
 Mother of all things living, since by thee 160
 Man is to live; and all things live for man."

To whom thus Eve with sad demeanor meek:
 "Ill-worthy I such title should belong
 To me transgressor; who, for thee ordained
 A help, became thy snare; to me reproach
 Rather belongs, distrust, and all dispraise:
 But infinite in pardon was my Judge,
 That I, who first brought death on all, am graced
 The source of life; next favorable thou,
 Who highly thus t' entitle me vouchsaf'st, 170
 Far other name deserving. But the field
 To labor calls us, now with sweat imposed,
 Though after sleepless night; for see, the morn,
 All unconcerned with our unrest, begins
 Her rosy progress smiling: let us forth;
 I never from thy side henceforth to stray,
 Where'er our day's work lies, though now enjoined
 Laborious, till day droop; while here we dwell,
 What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks?
 Here let us live, though in fall'n state, content." 180

So spake, so wished much humbled Eve; but fate
 Subscribed not: Nature first gave signs, impressed
 On bird, beast, air; air suddenly eclipsed,
 After short blush of morn; nigh in her sight
 The bird of Jove, stooped from his aerie tour,
 Two birds of gayest plume before him drove;
 Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods,
 First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace,
 Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind;
 Direct to th' eastern gate was bent their flight. 190

Adam observed, and with his eye the chase
Pursuing, not unmoved, to Eve thus spake:

“Oh Eve, some further change awaits us nigh,
Which Heav’n, by these mute signs in Nature, shows
Forerunners of his purpose; or to warn
Us, haply too secure, of our discharge
From penalty, because from death released
Some days: how long, and what till then our life,
Who knows? or more than this, that we are dust,
And thither must return, and be no more?”

200

Why else this double object in our sight
Of flight pursued in th’ air, and o’er the ground,
One way the self-same hour? why in the east
Darkness ere day’s mid-course, and morning-light
More orient in yon western cloud, that draws
O’er the blue firmament a radiant white,
And slow descends with something heav’nly fraught?’

He erred not; for by this the heav’nly bands
Down from a sky of jasper lighted now
In Paradise, and on a hill made halt;

210

A glorious apparition, had not doubt
And carnal fear that day dimmed Adam’s eye.
Not that more glorious, when the Angels met
Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw
The field pavilioned with his Guardians bright;
Nor that, which on the flaming mount appeared
In Dothan, covered with a camp of fire,
Against the Syrian king, who to surprise
One man, assassin-like, had levied war,
War unproclaimed. The princely Hierarch
In their bright stand there left his pow’rs, to seize
Possession of the Garden; he alone,
To find where Adam sheltered, took his way,
Not unperceived of Adam; who to Eve,

220

While the great visitant approached, thus spake:

“Eve, now expect great tidings, which perhaps
Of us will soon determine, or impose
New laws to be observed; for I descry,
From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,
One of the Heav’nly host; and, by his gait, 230
None of the meanest; some great Potentate
Or of the Thrones above; such majesty
Invests him coming, yet not terrible,
That I should fear; nor sociably mild,
As Raphael, that I should much confide;
But solemn and sublime; whom not t’ offend,
With rev’rence I must meet, and thou retire.”

He ended: and th’ Archangel soon drew nigh,
Not in his shape celestial, but as man
Clad to meet man; over his lucid arms 240
A military vest of purple flowed,
Livelier than Meliboean, or the grain
Of Sarra, worn by kings and heroes old
In time of truce; Iris had dipped the woof;
His starry helm unbuckled showed him prime
In manhood where youth ended; by his side,
As in a glist’ring zodiac, hung the sword,
Satan’s dire dread; and in his hand the spear.

Adam bowed low; he, kingly, from his state
Inclined not, but his coming thus declared: 250

“Adam, Heav’n’s high behest no preface needs:
Sufficient that thy prayers are heard; and death,
Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,
Defeated of his seizure many days
Giv’n thee of grace; wherein thou may’st repent,
And one bad act with many deeds well done
May’st cover: Well may then thy Lord, appeased,
Redeem thee quite from death’s rapacious claim;

But longer in this Paradise to dwell
 Permits not: to remove thee I am come, 260
 And send thee from the Garden forth to till
 The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil."

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

"O unexpected stroke, worse than of death!
 Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? Thus leave
 Thee, native soil, these happy walks and shades, 270
 Fit haunt of Gods? Where I had hope to spend,
 Quiet though sad, the respite of that day
 That must be mortal to us both. Oh flow'rs,
 That never will in other climate grow,
 My early visitation, and my last
 At ev'n, which I bred up with tender hand
 From the first op'ning bud, and gave ye names.
 Who now shall rear ye to the Sun, or rank
 Your tribes, and water from th' ambrosial fount?
 Thee lastly, nuptial bow'r, by me adorned 280
 With what to sight or smell was sweet, from thee
 How shall I part, and whither wander down
 Into a lower world; to this obscure
 And wild? how shall we breathe in other air
 Less pure, accustomed to immortal fruits?"

Whom thus the Angel interrupted mild:
 "Lament not, Eve, but patiently resign
 What justly thou hast lost, nor set thy heart,
 Thus over-fond, on that which is not thine:
 Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes 290
 Thy husband; whom to follow thou art bound;
 Where he abides, think there thy native soil."

Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp
 Recov'ring, and his scattered spirits returned,
 To Michael thus his humble words addressed:

“Celestial, whether among the Thrones, or named
 Of them the highest; for such of shape may seem
 Prince above Princes, gently hast thou told
 Thy message, which might else in telling wound,
 And in performing end us; what besides 300
 Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,
 Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring,
 Departure from this happy place, our sweet
 Recess, and only consolation left
 Familiar to our eyes, all places else
 Inhospitable appear, and desolate;
 Nor knowing us, nor known: And, if by prayer
 Incessant I could hope to change the will
 Of Him who all things can, I would not cease
 To weary him with my assiduous cries: 310
 But prayer against his absolute decree
 No more avails than breath against the wind,
 Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth:
 Therefore to his great bidding I submit.
 This most afflicts me, that, departing hence,
 As from his face I shall be hid, deprived
 His blessed count'nance: Here I could frequent
 With worship place by place where he vouchsafed
 Presence Divine; and to my sons relate,
 ‘On this mount he appeared; under this tree 320
 Stood visible; among these pines his voice
 I heard; here with him at this fountain talked’:
 So many grateful altars I would rear
 Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone
 Of luster from the brook, in memory,
 Or monument to ages; and thereon

Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flow'rs:
 In yonder nether world where shall I seek
 His bright appearances, or foot-step trace?
 For though I fled him angry, yet recalled 330
 To life prolonged and promised race, I now
 Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts
 Of glory; and far off his steps adore."

To whom thus Michael with regard benign:
 "Adam, thou know'st Heav'n his, and all the Earth;
 Not this rock only; his omnipresence fills
 Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives,
 Fomented by his virtual Pow'r and warmed:
 All th' Earth he gave thee to possess and rule,
 No despicable gift; surmise not then 340
 His presence to these narrow bounds confined
 Of Paradise, or Eden: this had been
 Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread
 All generations; and had hither come
 From all the ends of th' Earth, to celebrate
 And reverence thee, their great progenitor.
 But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down
 To dwell on even ground now with thy sons:
 Yet doubt not but in valley, and in plain,
 God is, as here; and will be found alike 350
 Present; and of his presence many a sign
 Still foll'wing thee, still compassing thee round
 With goodness and paternal love, his face
 Express, and of his steps the track divine.
 Which that thou mayest believe, and be confirmed
 Ere thou from hence depart; know, I am sent
 To show thee what shall come in future days
 To thee, and to thy offspring: good with bad
 Expect to hear; supernal grace contending
 With sinfulness of men; thereby to learn 360

True patience, and to temper joy with fear
 And pious sorrow; equally inured
 By moderation either state to bear,
 Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead
 Safest thy life, and best prepared endure
 Thy mortal passage when it comes. Ascend
 This hill; let Eve (for I have drenched her eyes)
 Here sleep below; while thou to foresight wak'st;
 As once thou slept'st, while she to life was formed."

To whom thus Adam gratefully replied: 370
 "Ascend, I follow thee, safe Guide, the path
 Thou lead'st me; and to the hand of Heav'n submit,
 However chast'ning; to the evil turn
 My obvious breast; arming to overcome
 By suff'ring, and earn rest from labor won,
 If so I may attain." So both ascend
 In the visions of God. It was a hill,
 Of Paradise the highest; from whose top
 The hemisphere of Earth, in clearest ken,
 Stretched out to th' amplest reach of prospect lay. 380
 Not higher that hill, nor wider looking round,
 Whereon, for different cause, the Tempter set
 Our second Adam, in the wilderness;
 To show him all Earth's kingdoms, and their glory.
 His eye might there command wherever stood
 City of old or modern fame, the seat
 Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls
 Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,
 And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,
 To Paquin of Sinaean kings; and thence 390
 To Agra and Lahor of great Mogul,
 Down to the golden Chersonese; or where
 The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since
 In Hispahan; or where the Russian Czar

In Moscow; or the Sultan in Bizance,
 Turkestan-born; nor could his eye not ken
 The empire of Negus to his utmost port
 Ercoco, and the less maritime kings
 Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melind,
 And Sofala, thought Ophir, to the realm 400
 Of Congo, and Angola farthest south;
 Or thence from Niger flood to Atlas mount
 The kingdoms of Almansor, Fez and Sus,
 Morocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen;
 On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway
 The world: in spirit perhaps he also saw
 Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezuma,
 And Cuzco in Peru, the richer seat
 Of Atabalipa; and yet unspoiled
 Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons 410
 Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights
 Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed,
 Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight
 Had bred; then purged with euphrasy and rue
 The visual nerve, for he had much to see;
 And from the Well of Life three drops instilled.
 So deep the pow'r of these ingredients pierced,
 E'en to the inmost seat of mental sight,
 That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes,
 Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranced; 420
 But him the gentle Angel by the hand
 Soon raised, and his attention thus recalled:
 "Adam, now ope thine eyes; and first behold
 Th' effects, which thy original crime hath wrought
 In some to spring from thee; who never touched
 Th' excepted Tree; nor with the Snake conspired;
 Nor sinned thy sin; yet from that sin derive
 Corruption, to bring forth more violent deeds."

His eyes he opened, and beheld a field,
 Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves 430
 New reaped; the other part sheep-walks and folds;
 I' the midst an altar as the land-mark stood,
 Rustic, of grassy sward; thither anon
 A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought
 First fruits, the green ear, and the yellow sheaf,
 Unculled, as came to hand; a shepherd next,
 More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,
 Choicest and best; then, sacrificing, laid
 The inwards and their fat, with incense strewed,
 On the cleft wood, and all due rights performed: 440
 His offering soon propitious fire from Heav'n
 Consumed with nimble glance, and grateful steam;
 The other's not, for his was not sincere;
 Whereat he inly raged, and, as they talked,
 Smote him into the midriff with a stone
 That beat out life; he fell; and, deadly pale,
 Groaned out his soul with gushing blood effused.
 Much at that sight was Adam in his heart
 Dismayed, and thus in haste to th' Angel cried:
 "Oh Teacher, some great mischief hath befall'n 450
 To that meek man, who well had sacrificed;
 Is piety thus and pure devotion paid?"
 To whom Michael thus, also moved, replied:
 "These two are brethren, Adam, and to come
 Out of thy loins; th' unjust the just hath slain,
 For envy that his brother's off'ring found
 From Heav'n acceptance; but the bloody fact
 Will be avenged; and th' other's faith, approved,
 Lose no reward; though here thou see him die,
 Rolling in dust and gore." To which our Sire: 460
 "Alas, both for the deed, and for the cause!
 But have I now seen death? Is this the way

I must return to native dust? Oh sight
 Of terror, foul and ugly to behold,
 Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!"

To whom thus Michael: "Death thou hast seen
 In his first shape on man; but many shapes
 Of death, and many are the ways that lead
 To his grim cave, all dismal; yet to sense
 More terrible at th' entrance, than within. 470
 Some, as thou saw'st, by violent stroke shall die;
 By fire, flood, famine, by intemp'rance more
 In meats and drinks, which on the Earth shall bring
 Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
 Before thee shall appear; that thou may'st know
 What misery th' inabstinence of Eve
 Shall bring on men." Immediately a place
 Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark;
 A lazarus-house it seemed; wherein were laid
 Numbers of all diseased; all maladies 480
 Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
 Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
 Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
 Intestine stone and ulcer, colic-pangs,
 Demoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,
 And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
 Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
 Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.
 Dire was the tossing, deep the groans; Despair
 Tended the sick busiest from couch to couch; 490
 And over them triumphant Death his dart
 Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoked
 With vows, as their chief good, and final hope.
 Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
 Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,
 Though not of woman born; compassion quelled

His best of man, and gave him up to tears
A space, till firmer thoughts restrained excess;
And, scarce recov'ring words, his plaint renewed:

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

“Their Maker's image,” answered Michael, “then
Forsook them, when themselves they vilified
To serve ungoverned appetite; and took
His image whom they served, a brutish vice,
Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.
520 Therefore so abject is their punishment,
Disfig'ring not God's likeness, but their own;
Or if his likeness, by themselves defaced;
While they pervert pure nature's healthful rules
To loathsome sickness; worthily, since they
God's image did not rev'rence in themselves.”

“I yield it just,” said Adam, “and submit.
But is there yet no other way, besides
These painful passages, how we may come
To death, and mix with our connatural dust?”

“There is,” said Michael, “if thou well observe 530

The rule of not too much; by temp'rance taught,
 In what thou eat'st and drink'st; seeking from thence
 Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,
 Till many years over thy head return:
 So may'st thou live; till, like ripe fruit, thou drop
 Into thy mother's lap; or be with ease
 Gathered, nor harshly plucked; for death mature:
 This is old age; but then, thou must outlive
 Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty; which will change
 To withered, weak, and gray; thy senses then, 540
 Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forego,
 To what thou hast; and, for the air of youth,
 Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign
 A melancholy damp of cold and dry
 To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume
 The balm of life." To whom our Ancestor:

"Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong
 Life much; bent rather, how I may be quit,
 Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge;
 Which I must keep till my appointed day 550
 Of rend'ring up, and patiently attend
 My dissolution." Michael replied:

"Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou liv'st
 Live well; how long, or short, permit to Heav'n:
 And now prepare thee for another sight."

He looked, and saw a spacious plain, whereon
 Were tents of various hue; by some, were herds
 Of cattle grazing; others, whence the sound
 Of instruments, that made melodious chime,
 Was heard, of harp and organ; and, who moved 560
 Their stops and chords, was seen; his volant touch,
 Instinct through all proportions, low and high,
 Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.
 In other part stood one who, at the forge

Lab'ring, two massy clods of iron and brass
 Had melted, (whether found where casual fire
 Had wasted woods on mountain or in vale,
 Down to the veins of Earth; thence gliding hot
 To some cave's mouth; or whether washed by stream
 From underground;) the liquid ore he drained 570
 Into fit moulds prepared; from which he formed
 First his own tools; then, what might else be wrought
 Fusil or grav'n in metal. After these,
 But on the hither side, a different sort
 From the high neighb'ring hills, which was their seat,
 Down to the plain descended; by their guise
 Just men they seemed, and all their study bent
 To worship God aright, and know his works
 Not hid; nor those things last, which might preserve
 Freedom and peace to men; they on the plain 580
 Long had not walked, when from the tents, behold,
 A bevy of fair women, richly gay
 In gems and wanton dress; to th' harp they sung
 Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on:
 The men, though grave, eyed them; and let their eyes
 Rove without rein; till, in th' amorous net
 Fast caught, they liked; and each his liking chose;
 And now of love they treat, till th' evening star,
 Love's harbinger, appeared; then, all in heat
 They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke 590
 Hymen, then first to marriage rites invoked:
 With feast and music all the tents resound.
 Such happy interview, and fair event
 Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flow'rs,
 And charming symphonies, attached the heart
 Of Adam, soon inclined t' admit delight,
 The bent of Nature; which he thus expressed:
 "True op'ner of mine eyes, prime Angel blest;

Much better seems this vision, and more hope
 Of peaceful days portends, than those two past; 600
 Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse;
 Here Nature seems fulfilled in all her ends."

To whom thus Michael: "Judge not what is best
 By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet;
 Created, as thou art, to nobler end
 Holy and pure, conformity divine.
 Those tents thou saw'st so pleasant, were the tents
 Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race
 Who slew his brother; studious they appear 610
 Of arts that polish life, inventors rare;
 Unmindful of their Maker, though his spirit
 Taught them; but they his gifts acknowledged none.
 Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget;
 For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seemed
 Of Goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
 Yet empty of all good wherein consists
 Woman's domestic honor and chief praise;
 Bred only and completed to the taste
 Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,
 To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye: 620
 To these that sober race of men, whose lives
 Religious titled them the Sons of God,
 Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame
 Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles
 Of these fair atheists; and now swim in joy,
 Ere long to swim at large; and laugh, for which
 The world ere long a world of tears must weep."

To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft:
 "Oh pity and shame, that they, who to live well
 Entered so fair, should turn aside to tread 630
 Paths indirect, or in the mid way faint.
 But still I see the tenor of man's woe

Holds on the same, from woman to begin.”

“From man’s effeminate slackness it begins,”
Said th’ Angel, “who should better hold his place
By wisdom, and superior gifts received.
But now prepare thee for another scene.”

He looked, and saw wide territory spread
Before him, towns, and rural works between;
Cities of men with lofty gates and tow’rs, 640
Concourse in arms, fierce faces threat’ning war,
Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise;
Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,
Single or in array of battle ranged
Both horse and foot, nor idly must’ring stood;
One way a band select from forage drives
A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine,
From a fat meadow ground; or fleecy flock,
Ewes and their bleating lambs over the plain,
Their booty; scarce with life the shepherds fly, 650
But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray;
With cruel tournament the squadrons join;
Where cattle pastured late, now scattered lies
With carcasses and arms th’ ensanguined field,
Deserted: Others to a city strong
Lay siege, encamped; by battery, scale, and mine,
Assaulting; others from the wall defend
With dart and javelin, stones, and sulph’rous fire;
On each hand slaughter, and gigantic deeds.
In other part the sceptred heralds call 660
To council, in the city-gates; anon
Gray-headed men and grave, with warriors mixed,
Assemble, and harangues are heard; but soon,
In factious opposition; till at last,
Of middle age one rising, eminent
In wise deport, spake much of right and wrong,

Of justice, or religion, truth, and peace,
 And judgment from above: him old and young
 Exploded, and had seized with violent hands,
 Had not a cloud descending snatched him thence 670
 Unseen amid the throng: so violence
 Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law,
 Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.
 Adam was all in tears, and to his guide
 Lamenting turned full sad: "O what are these,
 Death's ministers, not men? Who thus deal death
 Inhumanly to men, and multiply
 Ten thousandfold the sin of him who slew
 His brother: for of whom such massacre
 Make they, but of their brethren; men of men 680
 But who was that just man, whom had not Heav'n
 Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost?"

To whom thus Michael: "These are the product
 Of those ill-mated marriages thou saw'st;
 Where good with bad were matched, who of themselves
 Abhor to join; and, by imprudence mixed,
 Produce prodigious births of body or mind.
 Such were these Giants, men of high renown;
 For in those days might only shall be admired,
 And valour and heroic virtue called; 690
 To overcome in battle, and subdue
 Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
 Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
 Of human glory; and for glory done
 Of triumph, to be styled great conquerors
 Patrons of mankind, Gods, and Sons of Gods;
 Destroyers rightlier called, and plagues of men.
 Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on Earth;
 And what most merits fame, in silence hid.
 But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheld'st 700

The only righteous in a world perverse,
 And therefore hated, therefore so beset
 With foes, for daring single to be just,
 And utter odious truth, that God would come
 To judge them with his Saints; him the Most High
 Rapt in a balmy cloud with wingéd steeds
 Did, as thou saw'st, receive, to walk with God
 High in salvation and the climes of bliss,
 Exempt from death; to show thee what reward
 Awaits the good; the rest what punishment; 710
 Which now direct thine eyes and soon behold."

He looked, and saw the face of things quite changed;
 The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar;
 All now was turned to jollity and game,
 To luxury and riot, feast and dance;
 Marrying or prostituting, as befell,
 Rape or adultery, where passing fair
 Allured them; thence from cups to civil broils.
 At length a reverend Sire among them came,
 And of their doings great dislike declared, 720
 And testified against their ways; he oft
 Frequented their assemblies, whereso met,
 Triumphs or festivals; and to them preached
 Conversion and repentance, as to souls
 In prison, under judgments imminent:
 But all in vain: which when he saw, he ceased
 Contending, and removed his tents far off;
 Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall,
 Began to build a vessel of huge bulk;
 Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and height; 730
 Smeared round with pitch; and in the side a door
 Contrived; and of provisions laid in large,
 For man and beast: when lo, a wonder strange!
 Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,

Came sevens, and pairs; and entered in as taught
 Their order: last the Sire and his three sons,
 With their four wives; and God made fast the door.
 Meanwhile the south-wind rose, and, with black wings
 Wide-hov'ring, all the clouds together drove
 From under Heav'n; the hills to their supply 740
 Vapor, and exhalation dusk and moist,
 Sent up amain; and now the thickened sky
 Like a dark ceiling stood; down rushed the rain
 Impetuous; and continued, till the Earth
 No more was seen: the floating vessel swum
 Uplifted, and secure with beakéd prow
 Rode tilting o'er the waves; all dwellings else
 Flood overwhelmed, and them with all their pomp
 Deep underwater rolled; sea covered sea,
 Sea without shore; and in their palaces, 750
 Where luxury late reigned, sea-monsters whelped
 And stabled; of mankind, so num'rous late,
 All left, in one small bottom swum embarked.
 How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
 The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
 Depopulation! Thee another flood,
 Of tears and sorrow a flood, thee also drowned,
 And sunk thee as thy sons; till, gently reared
 By th' Angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last,
 Though comfortless; as when a father mourns 760
 His children, all in view destroyed at once;
 And scarce to th' Angel uttered'st thus thy plaint:
 "O visions ill foreseen! Better had I
 Lived ignorant of future, so had borne
 My part of Evil only, each day's lot
 Enough to bear; those now, that were dispensed
 The burden of many ages, on me light
 At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth

Abortive, to torment me ere their being,
 With thought that they must be. Let no man seek 770
 Henceforth to be foretold, what shall befall
 Him or his children; evil he may be sure,
 Which neither his foreknowing can prevent;
 And he the future evil shall no less
 In apprehension than in substance feel,
 Grievous to bear: but that care now is past,
 Man is not whom to warn: those few escaped
 Famine and anguish will at last consume,
 Wandr'ing that wat'ry desert: I had hope,
 When violence was ceased, and war on Earth, 780
 All would have then gone well; peace would have crowned
 With length of happy days the race of man;
 But I was far deceived; for now I see
 Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.
 How comes it thus? Unfold, celestial Guide,
 And whether here the race of man will end."

To whom thus Michael: "Those, whom last thou saw'st
 In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they
 First seen in acts of prowess eminent
 And great exploits, but of true virtue void; 790
 Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste
 Subduing nations, and achieved thereby
 Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey;
 Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
 Surfeit, and lust; till wantonness and pride
 Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.
 The conquered also, and enslaved by war,
 Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose
 And fear of God; from whom their piety feigned
 In sharp contest of battle found no aid 800
 Against invaders; therefore, cooled in zeal,
 Thenceforth shall practice how to live secure,

Worldly or dissolute, on what their lords
 Shall leave them to enjoy; for th' Earth shall bear
 More than enough, that temp'rance may be tried:
 So all shall turn degenerate, all depraved;
 Justice and temperance, truth and faith, forgot;
 One man except, the only son of light
 In a dark age, against example good,
 Against allurement, custom, and a world 810
 Offended: fearless of reproach and scorn,
 Or violence, he of their wicked ways
 Shall them admonish; and before them set
 The paths of righteousness, how much more safe
 And full of peace; denouncing wrath to come
 On their impenitence; and shall return
 Of them derided, but of God observed
 The one just man alive; by his command
 Shall build a wondrous ark, as thou beheld'st,
 To save himself, and household, from amidst 820
 A world devote to universal wrack.
 No sooner he, with them of man and beast
 Select for life, shall in the ark be lodged,
 And sheltered round; but all the cataracts
 Of Heav'n set open on the Earth shall pour
 Rain, day and night; all fountains of the deep,
 Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp
 Beyond all bounds; till inundation rise
 Above the highest hills: Then shall this mount
 Of Paradise by might of waves be moved 830
 Out of his place, pushed by the hornéd flood,
 With all his verdure spoiled, and trees adrift,
 Down the great river to the op'ning gulf,
 And there take root an island salt and bare,
 The haunt of seals, and orcs, and sea-mews' clang:
 To teach thee that God attributes to place

No sanctity, if none be thither brought
By men who there frequent, or therein dwell.
And now, what further shall ensue, behold.”

He looked, and saw the ark hull on the flood, 840
Which now abated; for the clouds were fled,
Driv’n by a keen north-wind, that, blowing dry,
Wrinkled the face of deluge, as decayed;
And the clear sun on his wide wat’ry glass
Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,
As after thirst; which made their flowing shrink
From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole
With soft foot towards the deep; who now had stopped
His sluices, as the Heav’n his windows shut.
The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground, 850
Fast on the top of some high mountain fixed.
And now the tops of hills, as rocks, appear;
With clamor thence the rapid currents drive,
Towards the retreating sea, their furious tide.
Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies,
And after him, the surer messenger,
A dove sent forth once and again to spy
Green tree or ground, whereon his foot may light:
The second time returning, in his bill
An olive-leaf he brings, pacific sign: 860
Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark
The ancient Sire descends, with all his train;
Then with uplifted hands, and eyes devout,
Grateful to Heaven, o’er his head beholds
A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow
Conspicuous with three lifted colors gay,
Betokening peace from God, and covenant new.
Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad,
Greatly rejoiced; and thus his joy broke forth:
“O thou, who future things canst represent 870

As present, heav'nly Instructor, I revive
 At this last sight; assured that man shall live,
 With all the creatures, and their seed preserve.
 Far less I now lament for one whole world
 Of wicked sons destroyed, than I rejoice
 For one man found so perfect, and so just,
 That God vouchsafes to raise another world
 From him, and all his anger to forget.
 But say, what mean those colored streaks in Heav'n
 Distended, as the brow of God appeased? 880
 Or serve they, as a flow'ry verge, to bind
 The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,
 Lest it again dissolve, and show'r the Earth?"

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

BOOK XII

The Argument

The Angel Michael continues from the flood to relate what shall succeed; then, in mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain who that seed of the woman shall be which was promised Adam and Eve in the fall: his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension; the state of the church till his second coming. Adam, greatly satisfied and recomfited by these relations and promises, descends the hill with Michael; wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them, and the Cherubim taking their stations to guard the place.

As one who in his journey bates at noon,
 Though bent on speed; so here th' Archangel paused
 Betwixt the world destroyed and world restored,
 If Adam aught perhaps might interpose;
 Then, with transition sweet, new speech resumes:
 "Thus thou hast seen one world begin, and end;
 And man, as from a second stock, proceed.
 Much thou hast yet to see; but I perceive
 Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine
 Must needs impair and weary human sense:
 Henceforth what is to come I will relate;
 Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.
 This second source of men, while yet but few,
 And while the dread of judgment past remains
 Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,
 With some regard to what is just and right
 Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace;
 Lab'ring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,
 Corn, wine, and oil; and, from the herd or flock,

10

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

Quite out their native language; and, instead,
 To sow a jangling noise of words unknown:
 Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud,
 Among the builders; each to other calls
 Not understood; till hoarse, and all in rage,
 As mocked they storm: great laughter was in Heav'n,
 And looking down, to see the hubbub strange, 60
 And hear the din: Thus was the building left
 Ridic'ulous, and the work 'Confusion' named."

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

To whom thus Michael: "Justly thou abhor'st
 That Son, who on the quiet state of men 80
 Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
 Rational liberty; yet know withal,
 Since thy original lapse, true liberty
 Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
 Twinned, and from her hath no 'dividual being:
 Reason in man obscured, or not obeyed,
 Immediately inordinate desires,

And upstart passions, catch the government
 From reason; and to servitude reduce
 Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits 90
 Within himself unworthy pow'rs to reign
 Over free reason, God, in judgment just,
 Subjects him from without to violent lords;
 Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
 His outward freedom: Tyranny must be;
 Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.
 Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
 From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
 But justice, and some fatal curse annexed,
 Deprives them of their outward liberty; 100
 Their inward lost: Witness th' irreverent son
 Of him who built the ark; who, for the shame
 Done to his father, heard this heavy curse,
 Servant of servants, on his vicious race.
 Thus will this latter, as the former world,
 Still tend from bad to worse; till God at last,
 Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw
 His presence from among them, and avert
 His holy eyes; resolving from thenceforth
 To leave them to their own polluted ways; 110
 And one peculiar nation to select
 From all the rest, of whom to be invoked,
 A nation from one faithful man to spring:
 Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,
 Bred up in idol-worship: O, that men
 (Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,
 While yet the Patriarch lived, who 'scaped the flood,
 As to forsake the living God, and fall
 To worship their own work in wood and stone
 For Gods! Yet him God the Most High vouchsafes 120
 To call by vision, from his father's house,

His kindred, and false Gods, into a land
 Which he will show him; and from him will raise
 A mighty nation; and upon him show'r
 His benediction so, that in his Seed
 All nations shall be blest: he straight obeys;
 Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes:
 I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith
 He leaves his Gods, his friends, and native soil,
 Ur of Chaldea, passing now the ford 130
 To Haran; after him a cumbrous train
 Of herds and flocks, and num'rous servitude;
 Not wand'ring poor, but trusting all his wealth
 With God, who called him, in a land unknown.
 Canaan he now attains; I see his tents
 Pitched about Sechem, and the neighb'ring plain
 Of Moreh; there by promise he receives
 Gift to his progeny of all that land,
 From Hameth northward to the desert south;
 (Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed;) 140
 From Hermon east to the great western sea;
 Mount Hermon, yonder Sea; each place behold
 In prospect, as I point them; on the shore
 Mount Carmel; here, the double-founted stream,
 Jordan, true limit eastward; but his sons
 Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills.
 This ponder, that all nations of the Earth
 Shall in his Seed be blessed: By that Seed
 Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise
 The Serpent's head; whereof to thee anon 150
 Plainlier shall be revealed. This Patriarch blest,
 Whom faithful Abraham due time shall call,
 A son, and of his son a grand-child, leaves;
 Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown:
 The grand-child, with twelve sons increased, departs

From Canaan, to a land hereafter called
 Egypt, divided by the river Nile;
 See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths
 Into the sea: To sojourn in that land
 He comes, invited by a younger son 160
 In time of dearth; a son, whose worthy deeds
 Raise him to be the second in that realm
 Of Pharaoh: There he dies, and leaves his race
 Growing into a nation, and now grown
 Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks
 To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests
 Too num'rous; whence of guests he makes them slaves
 Inhospitably, and kills their infant males:
 Till by two brethren (these two brethren call
 Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim 170
 His people from enthrallment, they return,
 With glory and spoil, back to their promised land.
 But first, the lawless tyrant, who denies
 To know their God, or message to regard,
 Must be compelled by signs and judgments dire;
 To blood unshed the rivers must be turned;
 Frogs, lice, and flies, must all his palace fill
 With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land;
 His cattle must of rot and murrain die;
 Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss, 180
 And all his people; thunder mixed with hail,
 Hail mixed with fire, must rend th' Egyptian's sky,
 And wheel on th' Earth, devouring where it rolls;
 What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,
 A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down
 Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green;
 Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,
 Palpable darkness, and blot out three days;
 Last, with one midnight stroke, all the first-born

Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds 190
 The river-dragon tamed at length submits
 To let his sojourners depart, and oft
 Humbles his stubborn heart; but still, as ice
 More hardened after thaw; till, in his rage
 Pursuing whom he late dismissed, the sea
 Swallows him with his host; but them lets pass,
 As on dry land, between two crystal walls;
 Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand
 Divided, till his rescued gain their shore:
 Such wondrous pow'r God to his Saint will lend, 200
 Though present in his Angel; who shall go
 Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire;
 By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire;
 To guide them in their journey, and remove
 Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues:
 All night he will pursue; but his approach
 Darkness defends between till morning watch;
 Then through the fiery pillar, and the cloud,
 God looking forth will trouble all his host,
 And craze their chariot-wheels: when by command 210
 Moses once more his potent rod extends
 Over the sea; the sea his rod obeys;
 On their embattled ranks the waves return,
 And overwhelm their war: The race elect
 Safe toward Canaan from the shore advance
 Through the wild desert, not the readiest way;
 Lest, ent'ring on the Canaanite alarmed,
 War terrify them inexpert, and fear
 Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather
 Inglorious life with servitude; for life 220
 To noble and ignoble is more sweet
 Untrained in arms, where rashness leads not on.
 This also shall they gain by their delay

In the wide wilderness; there they shall found
 Their government, and their great senate choose
 Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordained:
 God from the Mount of Sinai, whose gray top
 Shall tremble, he descending, will himself
 In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpets' sound,
 Ordain them laws; part, such as appertain 230
 To civil justice; part, religious rites
 Of sacrifice; informing them, by types
 And shadows, of that destined Seed to bruise
 The Serpent, by what means he shall achieve
 Mankind's deliv'rance. But the voice of God
 To mortal ear is dreadful: They beseech
 That Moses might report to them his will,
 And terror cease; he grants what they besought,
 Instructed that to God is no access
 Without Mediator, whose high office now 240
 Moses in figure bears; to introduce
 One greater, of whose day he shall foretell,
 And all the Prophets in their age the times
 Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus, laws and rites
 Established, such delight hath God in men
 Obedient to his will, that he vouchsafes
 Among them to set up his tabernacle;
 The Holy One with mortal men to dwell:
 By his prescript a sanctuary is framed
 Of cedar, overlaid with gold; therein 250
 An ark, and in the ark his testimony,
 The records of his cov'nant; over these
 A mercy-seat of gold, between the wings
 Of two bright Cherubim; before him burn
 Seven lamps as in a zodiac representing
 The heav'nly fires; over the tent a cloud
 Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night;

Save when they journey, and at length they come,
 Conducted by his Angel, to the land
 Promised to Abraham and his Seed: The rest 260
 Were long to tell; how many battles fought
 How many kings destroyed; and kingdoms won;
 Or how the sun shall in mid Heav'n stand still
 A day entire, and night's due course adjourn,
 Man's voice commanding, 'Sun, in Gibeon stand,
 And thou moon in the vale of Aialon,
 Till Israel overcome,' so call the third
 From Abraham, son of Isaac; and from him
 His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win."

Here Adam interposed: "Oh sent from Heav'n, 270
 Enlight'ner of my darkness, gracious things
 Thou hast revealed; those chiefly, which concern
 Just Abraham and his Seed: now first I find
 Mine eyes true-op'ning, and my heart much eased;
 Erewhile perplexed with thoughts, what would become
 Of me and all mankind: But now I see
 His day, in whom all nations shall be blest;
 Favor unmerited by me, who sought
 Forbidden knowledge by forbidden means.
 This yet I apprehend not, why to those 280
 Among whom God will deign to dwell on Earth
 So many and so various laws are giv'n;
 So many laws argue so many sins
 Among them; how can God with such reside?"

To whom thus Michael: "Doubt not but that sin
 Will reign among them, as of thee begot;
 And therefore was law giv'n them, to evince
 Their natural 'pravity, by stirring up
 Sin against law to fight: that when they see
 Law can discover sin, but not remove, 290
 Save by those shadowy expiations weak,

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

Of David (so I name this king) shall rise
 A son, the Woman's Seed to thee foretold,
 Foretold to Abraham, as in whom shall trust
 All nations; and to kings foretold, of kings
 The last; for of his reign shall be no end. 330
 But first, a long succession must ensue;
 And his next son, for wealth and wisdom famed,
 The clouded ark of God, till then in tents
 Wand'ring, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.
 Such follow him, as shall be registered
 Part good, part bad; of bad the longer scroll;
 Whose foul idolatries, and other faults
 Heaped to the popular sum, will so incense
 God, as to leave them, and expose their land,
 Their city, his temple, and his holy ark, 340
 With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey
 To that proud city, whose high walls thou saw'st
 Left in confusion; Babylon thence called.
 There in captivity he lets them dwell
 The space of seventy years; then brings them back,
 Rememb'ring mercy, and his cov'nant sworn
 To David, 'stablished as the days of Heav'n.
 Returned from Babylon by leave of kings
 Their lords, whom God disposed, the house of God
 They first re-edify; and for a while 350
 In mean estate live moderate; till, grown
 In wealth and multitude, factious they grow;
 But first among the Priests dissension springs,
 Men who attend the altar, and should most
 Endeavor peace: their strife pollution brings
 Upon the temple itself: at last they seize
 The sceptre, and regard not David's sons;
 Then lose it to a stranger, that the true
 Anointed King Messiah might be born

Barred of his right; yet at his birth a star, 360
 Unseen before in Heav'n, proclaims him come;
 And guides the eastern Sages, who inquire
 His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold:
 His place of birth a solemn Angel tells
 To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night;
 They gladly thither haste, and by a choir
 Of squadroned Angels hear his carol sung.
 A Virgin is his Mother, but his Sire
 The Pow'r of the Most High: He shall ascend
 The throne hereditary, and bound his reign 370
 With Earth's wide bounds, his glory with the Heav'ns."

He ceased, discerning Adam with such joy
 Surcharged, as had like grief been dewed in tears,
 Without the vent of words; which these he breathed:
 "O Prophet of glad tidings, finisher
 Of utmost hope, now clear I understand
 What oft my steadiest thoughts have searched in vain;
 Why our great Expectation should be called
 The Seed of Woman: Virgin Mother, hail,
 High in the love of Heav'n; yet from my loins 380
 Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the Son
 Of God Most High: so God with man unites!
 Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise
 Expect with mortal pain: Say where and when
 Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victor's heel."

To whom thus Michael: "Dream not of their fight,
 As of a duel, or the local wounds
 Of head or heel: Not therefore joins the Son
 Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
 Thy Enemy; nor so is overcome 390
 Satan, whose fall from Heav'n, a deadlier bruise,
 Disabled, not to give thee thy death's wound:
 Which he, who comes thy Savior, shall recur,

Not by destroying Satan, but his works
 In thee, and in thy Seed: Nor can this be,
 But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
 Obedience to the law of God, imposed
 On penalty of death, and suff'ring death;
 The penalty to thy transgression due,
 And due to theirs which out of thine will grow: 400
 So only can high Justice rest appaid.
 The law of God exact he shall fulfill
 Both by obedience and by love, though love
 Alone fulfill the law; thy punishment
 He shall endure, by coming in the flesh
 To a reproachful life, and curséd death;
 Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
 In his redemption; and that his obedience,
 Imputed, becomes theirs by faith; his merits 410
 To save them, not their own, though legal, works.
 For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,
 Seized on by force, judged, and to death condemned
 A shameful and accursed, nailed to the cross
 By his own nation; slain for bringing life:
 But to the cross he nails thy enemies,
 The law that is against thee, and the sins
 Of all mankind, with him there crucified,
 Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
 In this his satisfaction; so he dies,
 But soon revives; death over him no pow'r 420
 Shall long usurp; ere the third dawning light
 Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise
 Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,
 Thy ransom paid, which man from death redeems,
 His death for man, as many as offered life
 Neglect not, and the benefit embrace
 By faith not void of works: This God-like act

Annuls thy doom, the death thou should'st have died,
 In sin for ever lost from life; this act
 Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength, 430
 Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms;
 And fix far deeper in his head their stings
 Than temporal death shall bruise the Victor's heel,
 Or theirs whom he redeems; a death, like sleep,
 A gentle wafting to immortal life.
 Nor after resurrection shall he stay
 Longer on Earth, than certain times t' appear
 To his Disciples, men who in his life
 Still followed him; to them shall leave in charge
 To teach all nations what of him they learned 440
 And his salvation; them who shall believe
 Baptizing in the profluent stream, the sign
 Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
 Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,
 For death, like that which the Redeemer died.
 All nations they shall teach; for, from that day,
 Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins
 Salvation shall be preached, but to the sons
 Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world;
 So in his Seed all nations shall be blest. 450
 Then to the Heav'n of Heav'ns he shall ascend
 With victory, triumphing through the air
 Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise
 The Serpent, Prince of Air, and drag in chains
 Through all his realm, and there confounded leave;
 Then enter into glory, and resume
 His seat at God's right hand, exalted high
 Above all names in Heav'n; and thence shall come,
 When this world's dissolution shall be ripe,
 With glory and pow'r to judge both quick and dead; 460
 To judge th' unfaithful dead, but to reward

His faithful, and receive them into bliss,
 Whether in Heav'n or Earth; for then the Earth
 Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
 Than this of Eden, and far happier days."

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

"Oh goodness infinite, goodness immense!
 That all this good of evil shall produce, 470
 And evil turn to good; more wonderful
 Than that which by creation first brought forth
 Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
 Whether I should repent me now of sin
 By me done, and occasioned; or rejoice
 Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring;
 To God more glory, more goodwill to men
 From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.
 But say, if our Deliverer up to Heav'n
 Must re-ascend, what will betide the few 480
 His faithful, left among th' unfaithful herd,
 The enemies of truth? Who then shall guide
 His people, who defend? Will they not deal
 Worse with his foll'wers than with him they dealt?"

"Be sure they will," said th' Angel; "but from Heav'n
 He to his own a Comforter will send,
 The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
 His Spirit within them; and the law of faith,
 Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
 To guide them in all truth; and also arm 490
 With spiritual armor, able to resist
 Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts;
 What man can do against them, not afraid,
 Though to the death; against such cruelties
 With inward consolations recompensed,

And oft supported so as shall amaze
 Their proudest persecutors: For the Spirit,
 Poured first on his Apostles, whom he sends
 T' evangelize the nations, then on all
 Baptized, shall them with wondrous gifts endue 500
 To speak all tongues, and do all miracles,
 As did their Lord before them. Thus they win
 Great numbers of each nation to receive
 With joy the tidings brought from Heav'n: At length
 Their ministry performed, and race well run,
 Their doctrine and their story written left,
 They die; but in their room, as they forewarn,
 Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
 Who all the sacred mysteries of Heav'n
 To their own vile advantages shall turn 510
 Of lucre and ambition; and the truth
 With superstitions and traditions taint,
 Left only in those written records pure,
 Though not but by the Spirit understood.
 Then shall they seek t' avail themselves of names,
 Places, and titles, and with these to join
 Secular pow'r; though feigning still to act
 By spiritual, to themselves appropriating
 The Spirit of God, promised alike and giv'n
 To all believers; and, from that pretense, 520
 Spiritual laws by carnal pow'r shall force
 On every conscience; laws which none shall find
 Left them enrolled, or what the Spirit within
 Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then
 But force the Spirit of grace itself, and bind
 His consort liberty? what, but unbuild
 His living temples, built by faith to stand,
 Their own faith, not another's? For, on Earth,
 Who against faith and conscience can be heard

Infallible? Yet many will presume: 530
 Whence heavy persecution shall arise
 On all, who in the worship persevere
 Of Spirit and Truth; the rest, far greater part,
 Will deem in outward rites and specious forms
 Religion satisfied; truth shall retire
 Bestuck with sland'rous darts, and works of faith
 Rarely be found: So shall the world go on,
 To good malignant, to bad men benign;
 Under her own weight groaning; till the day
 Appear of respiration to the just, 540
 And vengeance to the wicked, at return
 Of him so lately promised to thy aid,
 The Woman's Seed; obscurely then foretold,
 Now ampler known thy Savior and thy Lord;
 Last, in the clouds, from Heav'n to be revealed
 In glory of the Father, to dissolve
 Satan with his perverted world; then raise
 From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined,
 New Heav'ns, new Earth, ages of endless date,
 Founded in righteousness, and peace, and love; 550
 To bring forth fruits, joy and eternal bliss."

He ended; and thus Adam last replied:
 "How soon hath thy prediction, seer blest,
 Measured this transient world, the race of time,
 Till time stand fixed. Beyond is all abyss,
 Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.
 Greatly instructed I shall hence depart;
 Greatly in peace of thought; and have my fill
 Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain;
 Beyond which was my folly to aspire. 560
 Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
 And love with fear the only God; to walk
 As in his presence; ever to observe

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

To whom thus also th' Angel last replied:
 "This having learned, thou hast attained the sum
 Of Wisdom; hope no higher, though all the stars
 Thou knew'st by name, and all th' ethereal pow'rs,
 All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
 Or works of God in Heav'n, air, Earth, or sea,
 And all the riches of this world enjoyed'st, 580
 And all the rule, one empire; only add
 Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add Faith,
 Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,
 By name to come called charity, the soul
 Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath
 To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
 A Paradise within thee, happier far.
 Let us descend now therefore from this top
 Of speculation; for the hour precise
 Exacts our parting hence; and see the Guards, 590
 By me encamped on yonder hill, expect
 Their motion; at whose front a flaming sword,
 In signal of remove, waves fiercely round:
 We may no longer stay: go, waken Eve;
 Her also I with gentle dreams have calmed
 Portending good, and all her spirits composed
 To meek submission: thou, at season fit,

Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard;
 Chiefly what may concern her faith to know,
 The great deliv'rance by her Seed to come 600
 (For by the Woman's Seed) on all mankind:
 That ye may live, which will be many days,
 Both in one faith unanimous, though sad,
 With cause, for evils past; yet much more cheered
 With meditation on the happy end."

He ended, and they both descend the hill;
 Descended, Adam to the bow'r, where Eve
 Lay sleeping, ran before; but found her waked;
 And thus with words not sad she him received:
 "Whence thou return'st, and whither went'st, I know; 610
 For God is also in sleep; and dreams advise,
 Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
 Presaging, since with sorrow and heart's distress
 Wearied I fell asleep: But now lead on;
 In me is no delay; with thee to go,
 Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
 Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me
 Art all things under Heav'n, all places thou,
 Who for my willful crime art banished hence.
 This further consolation yet secure 620
 I carry hence; though all by me is lost,
 Such favor I unworthy am vouchsafed,
 By me the Promised Seed shall all restore."

So spake our Mother Eve; and Adam heard
 Well pleased, but answered not: For now, too nigh
 Th' Archangel stood; and, from the other hill
 To their fixed station, all in bright array
 The Cherubim descended; on the ground
 Gliding meteorous, as evening-mist
 Risen from a river o'er the marsh glides, 630
 And gathers ground fast at the laborer's heel

Homeward returning High in front advanced,
The brandished sword of God before them blazed,
Fierce as a comet; which with torrid heat,
And vapor as the Libyan air adust,
Began to parch that temperate clime; whereat
In either hand the hast'ning Angel caught
Our ling'ring parents, and to th' eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain; then disappeared. 640
They, looking back, all th' eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces thronged, and fiery arms:
Some nat'ral tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their Guide:
They, hand in hand, with wand'ring steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way. 649

THE END

