

THE PREFACE.

to make a Chaos. He tax'd not Homer, nor the Divine Virgil, for interposing their gods in the Wars of Troy and Italy: neither had he now liv'd, would he have tax'd Milton, as our false Criticks have presum'd to do, for his choice of a supernatural Argument: but he would have blam'd my Author, who was a Christian, had he introduc'd into his Poems Heathen Deities, as Tasso is condemn'd by Rapin on the like occasion: and as Camoëns, the Author of the Lusjads, ought to be censur'd by all his Readers, when he brings in Bacchus and Christ into the same Adventure of his Fable. From that which has been said, it may be collected, that the Definition of Wit (which has been so often attempted, and ever unsuccessfully by many Poets) is only this, That it is a Propriety of Thoughts and Words; or in other Terms, Thoughts and Words elegantly adapted to the Subject. If our Criticks will joyn issue on this Definition, that we may convenire in aliquo tertio; if they will take it as a granted Principle, 'twill be easie to put an end to this dispute. No Man will disagree from another's judgment, concerning the dignity of Style, in Heroick Poetry: but all reasonable Men will conclude it necessary, that sublime Subjects ought to be adorn'd with the sublimest, and (consequently often) with the most figurative expressions. In the mean time I will not run into their fault of imposing my opinions on other Men, any more than I would my Writings on their taste: I have only laid down, and that superficially enough, my present thoughts; and shall be glad to be taught better, by those who pretend to reform our Poetry.

THE

( 1 )

THE  
STATE of INNOCENCE,  
AND  
FALL of MAN.  
An OPERA.

The first Scene represents a Chaos, or a confus'd Mass of Matter; the Stage is almost wholly dark. A Symphony of Warlike Musick is heard for some time; then from the Heavens, (which are opened) fall the rebellious Angels wheeling in the Air, and seeming transfix'd with Thunderbolts. The bottom of the Stage being opened, receives the Angels, who fall out of sight. Tunes of Victory are play'd, and an Hymn sung; Angels discover'd above, brandishing their Swords. The Musick ceasing, and the Heavens being clos'd, the Scene shifts, and on a sudden represents Hell. Part of the Scene is a Lake of Brimstone or rowling Fire; the Earth of a burnt colour. The fall'n Angels appear on the Lake, lying prostrate; a Time of Horror and Lamentation is heard.

ACT. I. Scene 1.

Lucifer raising himself on the Lake.

Lucifer. **I**S this the Seat our Conqueror has given?  
And this the Climate we must change for Heav'n?  
These Regions and this Realm my Wars have got;  
This Mournful Empire is the Loser's Lot:  
In Liquid Burnings, or on Dry to dwell,  
Is all the sad Variety of Hell.  
But see, the Victor has recall'd from far,  
Th'Avenging Storms, his Ministers of War.

His.

( 2 )

His Shafts are spent, and his tir'd Thunders sleep;  
Nor longer bellow through the Boundless Deep.  
Best take th' occasion, and these Waves forsake,  
While time is giv'n. Ho, *Azmoday*, awake,  
If thou art he; but Ah! how chang'd from him,  
Companion of my Arms! how wan! how dim!  
How faded all thy Glories are! I see  
My self too well, and my own change, in thee.

*Azmoday*. Prince of the Thrones, who, in the Fields of Light,  
Led'st forth th' imbattel'd Seraphim to fight,  
Who shook the Pow'r of Heavens Eternal State,  
Had broke it too, if not upheld by Fate;  
But now those hopes are fled: thus low we lie, }  
Shut from his day, and that contended Skie; }  
And lost, as far as Heav'nly Forms can die; }  
Yet, not all perish'd: we despise him still,  
And yet wage War, with our unconquer'd Will.

*Lucif.* Strength may return.

*Azm.* Already of thy Virtus I partake,  
Erected by thy Voice.

*Lucif.* ————— See on the Lake  
Our Troops, like scatter'd Leaves in Autumn, lie:  
First let us raise our selves, and seek the drier,  
Perhaps more easie dwelling.

*Azm.* ————— From the Beach,  
Thy well-known Voice the sleeping Gods will reach,  
And wake th' Immortal Sense which Thunders noise  
Had quell'd, and Lightning, deep had driv'n within 'm.

*Lucif.* With Wings expanded wide, our selves we'll rear,  
And fly incumbent on the dusky Air:  
Hell, thy new Lord receive.  
Heaven cannot envy me an Empire here.

[Both fly to dry Land.]

*Azm.* Thus far we have prevail'd; if that be gain  
Which is but change of place, not change of pain.  
Now summon we the rest.

*Lucif.* Dominions, Pow'rs, ye Chiefs of Heav'n's bright Host,  
(Of Heav'n's, once yours; but now, in Battel, lost)

. Wake

( 3 )

Wake from your slumber: Are your Beds of Down?  
Sleep you so easie there? or fear the frown  
Of him who threw you thence, and joys to see  
Your abject state confess his Victory?  
Rise, rise, e're from his Battlements he view  
Your prostrate postures, and his Bolts renew,  
To strike you deeper down.

*Azm.* ————— They wake, they hear,  
Shake off their slumber first, and next their fear;  
And only for th' appointed Signal stay.

*Lucif.* Rise from the Flood, and hither wing your way.

*Mol.* from the Lake. Thine to command, our part 'tis to obey. }  
The rest of the Devils rise up, }  
and fly to the Land. }

*Lucif.* So, now we are our selves again, an Host  
Fit to tempt Fate, once more, for what we lost.  
T' o'erleap th' Etherial Fence, or if so high  
We cannot climb, to undermine his Skie,  
And blow him up, who justly rules us now,  
Because more strong: should he be forc'd to bow,  
The right were ours again: 'Tis just to win  
The highest place; t' attempt, and fail, is sin.

*Mol.* Chang'd as we are, we're yet from Homage free;  
We have, by Hell, at least gain'd Liberty:  
That's worth our Fall; thus low tho' we are driv'n,  
Better to rule in Hell, than serve in Heav'n.

*Lucif.* There spoke the better half of *Lucifer!*

*Azm.* 'This fit in frequent Senate we confer,  
And then determine how to steer our course;  
To wage new War by Fraud, or open Force.  
The Doom's now past; Submission were in vain.

*Mol.* And, were it not, such baseness I disdain.  
I would not stoop, to purchase all above;  
And should condemn a Pow'r whom Pray'r could move,  
As one unworthy to have conquer'd me.

*Beelzebub.* *Moloch*, in that, all are resolv'd like thee.  
The means are unpropos'd; but 'tis not fit  
Our dark *Divan* in publick view should sit.

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( 4 )

Or what we plot against the Thunderer,  
Th' Ignoble Crowd of Vulgar Devils hear.  
*Lucif.* A Golden Palace let be rais'd on high;  
To imitate? No, to out-shine the Skie!  
All Mines are ours, and Gold above the rest:  
Let this be done, and quick as 'twas exprest.

[A Palace rises, where sit as in a Council,  
*Lucifer, Asmoday, Moloch, Belial,*  
*Beelzebub and Satban.*

Most high and mighty Lords, who better fell  
From Heav'n, to rise States-General of Hell;  
Nor yet repent, though ruin'd and undone,  
Our upper Provinces already won,  
(Such Pride there is in Souls created free,  
Such hate of Universal Monarchy;)  
Speak, (for we therefore meet) —  
If Peace you chuse, your Suffrages declare;  
Or means propound, to carry on the War.

*Mol.* My Sentence is for War; that open too:  
Unskill'd in Stratagems, plain force I know:  
Treaties are vain to Losers; nor would we,  
Should Heav'n grant Peace, submit to Sovereignty.  
We can no caution give, we will adore;  
And He above is warn'd to trust no more.  
What then remains but Battel?

*Satban.* I agree,  
With this brave Vote; and if in Hell there be  
Ten more such Spirits, Heav'n is our own again:  
We venture nothing, and may all obtain.  
Yet who can hope but well, since ev'n Success  
Makes Foes secure, and makes our danger less.  
*Seraph* and *Cherub* careless of their Charge,  
And wanton, in full ease now live at large,  
Ungarded leave the passes of the Skie,  
And all dissolv'd in *Hallelujahs* lie.

*Mol.* Grant that our hazardous attempt prove vain;  
We feel the worst, secur'd from greater pain:

perhaps

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Perhaps we may provoke the Conqu'ring Foe  
To make us nothing; yet, ev'n then, we know }  
That not to be, is not to be in woe.

*Belial.* That Knowledge which, as Spirits, we obtain,  
Is to be valu'd in the midst of pain:  
Annihilation were to lose Heav'n more:  
We are not quite exil'd, where thought can soar.  
Then cease from Arms; —

Tempt him not farther to pursue his blow;  
And be content to bear those pains we know.  
If what we had we could not keep, much less  
Can we regain what those above possess.

*Beelzebub.* Heav'n sleeps not; from one wink a breach would  
In the full Circle of Eternity. (be

Long pains, with use of bearing, are half eas'd;  
Heav'n unprovok'd, at length may be appeas'd.  
By War, we cannot scape our wretched lot;  
And may, perhaps, not warring, be forgot.

*Asm.* Could we repent, or did not Heav'n well know  
Rebellion once forgiv'n, would greater grow:  
I should, with *Belial*, chuse ignoble ease;  
But neither will the Conquerour give Peace,  
Nor yet so lost in this low state we are,  
As to despair of a well-manag'd War.

Nor need we tempt those heights which Angels keep,  
Who fear no force, or ambush from the Deep.  
What if we find some easier Enterprize?  
There is a place, if ancient Prophecies  
And Fame if Heav'n not err, the blest Abode  
Of some new Race, call'd Man, a Demy-God,  
Whom, near this time, th' Almighty must create;  
He swore it, shook the Heav'ns, and made it Fate.

*Lucif.* I heard it; through all Heav'n the rumour ran,  
And much the talk of this intended Man:  
Of form Divine; but less in excellence  
Than we; endu'd with Reason lodg'd in Sense:  
The Soul pure Fire, like ours of equal force;  
But, pent in Flesh, must issue by Discourse:

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( 6 )

We see what is; to Man Truth must be brought  
By Sense, and drawn by a long Chain of thought:  
By that faint Light, to will, and understand;  
For made less knowing, he's at more command.

*Asm.* Though Heav'n be shut, that World if it be made  
As nearest Heav'n, lies open to invade:  
Man therefore must be known, his Strength, his State,  
And by what Tenure he holds all of Fate.  
Him let us then seduce, or overthrow:  
The first is easiest; and makes Heav'n his Foe.  
Advise, if this attempt be worth our care.

*Belial.* Great is th' advantage, great the hazards are.  
Some one (but who that task dares undertake?)  
Of this new Creature must discovery make.  
Hell's Brazen Gates he first must break, then far  
Must wander through old Night, and through the War  
Of antique Chaos; and, when these are past,  
Meet Heav'n's Out-guards who scout upon the waste:  
At every Station must be bid to stand,  
And forc'd to answer every strict demand.

*Mol.* This glorious Enterprise— [Rising up.

*Lucif.*—Rash Angel, stay; [Rising, and laying his Scepter on Moloch his head.]

That Palm is mine, which none shall take away.  
Hot Braves, like thee, may fight; but know not well  
To manage this, the last great Stake of Hell.  
Why am I rank'd in State above the rest,  
If while I stand of Sovereign Power possess,  
Another dares, in danger, farther go?  
Kings are not made for ease, and Pageant-show.  
Who would be Conquerour, must venture all:  
He merits not to rise, who dares not fall.

*Asm.* The praise, and danger, then, be all your own.

*Lucif.* On this Foundation I erect my Throne:  
Through Brazen Gates, vast Chaos, and old Night,  
I'll force my way; and upwards steer my flight:  
Discover this new World, and newer Man;  
Make him my Foot-step to mount Heav'n again:

Then,

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Then, in the clemency of upward Air,  
We'll scour our spots, and the dire Thunders fear,  
With all the remnants of th' unlucky War,  
And once again grow bright, and once again grow fair.

*Asm.* Mean time the Youth of Hell strict guard may keep,  
And set their Centries to the utmost Deep,  
That no Etherial Parasite may come  
To spie our Ills, and tell glad Tales at home.

*Lucif.* Before yon' Brimstone-Lake thrice ebb and flow,  
(Alas, that we must measure Time by woe!)  
I shall return: (my mind prelates well)  
And outward lead the Colonies of Hell.  
Your care I much approve; what time remains,  
With Sports and Musick, in the Vales and Fields,  
And whate'er Joy so sad a Climate yields,  
Seek to forget, at least divert your pains.

*Betwixt the first Act and the second, while the Chiefs sit in the Palace, may be expressed the Sports of the Devils; as Flights and Dancing in Grotesque Figures; and a Song expressing the change of their Condition; what they enjoy'd before; and how they fell bravely in Battel, having deserved Victory by their Valour; and what they would have done if they had conquer'd.*

Act. II. Scene 1. A Champain Country.

*Adam, as newly created, laid on a Bed of Moss and Flowers, by a Rock.*

*Adam.* [Rising.]  
**W**Hat am I? or from whence? For that I am,  
I know, because I think; but whence I came,  
Or how this Frame of mine began to be,  
What other Being can disclose to me?  
I move, I see; I speak; discourse, and know;  
Though now I am, I was not always so.

D 2

Then

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