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Samson Agonistes

John Milton

([Paradise Regained](#) was published in the same volume in the first edition.)

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(title page of the first edition)

SAMSON
AGONISTES,
A
DRAMATIC POEM.

The Author
JOHN MILTON.

Aristot. Poet. Cap. 6.
Τραγωδία μιμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, &c.
Tragedia est imitatio actionis serie, &c. Per misericordiam &
metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.

LONDON,
Printed by J. M. for John Starkey at the
Mitre in Fleetstreet, near Temple-Bar.
MDCLXXI.

I

Of that sort of Dramatic Poem which
is call'd Tragedy.

TRagedy, as it was antiently compos'd, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other Poems: therefore said by Aristotle to be of power by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such like passions, that is to temper and reduce them to just with a kind of delight, stirr'd up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion: for so in Physic things of melancholic hue and quality are us'd against melancholy, sower against sower, salt to remove salt humours. Hence Philosophers and other

gravest Writers, as Cicero, Plutarch and others, frequently cite out of Tragic Poets, both to adorn and illustrate thir discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides into the Text of Holy Scripture, I Cor. 15.33. and Paraeus commenting on the Revelation, divides the whole Book as a Tragedy, into Acts distinguisht each by a Chorus of Heavenly Harpings and Song between. Heretofore Men in highest dignity have labour'd not a little to be thought able to compose a Tragedy. Of that honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious, then before of his attaining to the Tyranny. Augustus Cesar also had begun his Ajax, but unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinisht. Seneca the Philosopher is by some thought the Author of those Tragedies (at lest the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen a Father of the Church, thought it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a Tragedy, which he entitl'd, Christ suffering. This is mention'd to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day with other common Interludes; hap'ning through the Poets error of intermixing Comic stuff with Tragic sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious hath bin counted absurd; and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratifie the people. And though antient Tragedy use no Prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self defence, or explanation, that which Martial calls an Epistle; in behalf of this Tragedy coming forth after the antient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much before-hand may be Epistl'd; that Chorus is here introduc'd after the Greek manner, not antient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this Poem, with good reason, the Antients and Italians are rather follow'd, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of Verse us'd in the Chorus is of all sorts, call'd by the Greeks Monostrophic, or rather Apolelymenon, without regard had to Strophe, Antistrophe or Epod, which were a kind of Stanza's fram'd only for the Music, then us'd with the Chorus that sung; not essential to the Poem, and therefore not material; or being divided into Stanza's or Pauses, they may be call'd Allaeostropha. Division into Act and Scene referring chiefly to the Stage (to which this work never was intended) is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole Drama be found not produc't beyond the fift Act, of the style and uniformitie, and that commonly call'd the Plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such oeconomy, or disposition of the fable as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum; they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Æschulus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three Tragic Poets unequall'd yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write Tragedy. The circumscription of time wherein the whole Drama begins and ends, is according to antient rule, and best example, within the space of 24 hours.

The ARGUMENT

S Amson made Captive, Blind, and now in the Prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common work-house, on a Festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open Air, to a place nigh, somewhat retir'd there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old Father Manoa, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this Feast was proclaim'd by the Philistins as a day of Thanksgiving for thir deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistian Lords for Samson's redemption; who in the mean while is visited by other persons; and lastly by a publick Officer to require his coming to the Feast before the Lords and People, to play or shew his strength in thir presence; he at first refuses, dismissing the publick Officer with absolute denial to come; at length perswaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time great threatnings to fetch him; the Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyful hope, to procure e're long his Sons deliverance: in the midst of which discourse an Ebrew comes in haste confusedly at first; and afterward more distinctly relating the Catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistins, and by accident to himself; wherewith the Tragedy ends.

The Persons

Samson.

Harapha of Gath.

Manoa the Father of Samson.

Publick Officer

Messenger.

Dalila his Wife.

Chorus of Danites.

The Scene before the Prison in Gaza.

SAMSON

AGONISTES

Sams. **A** Little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on;
For yonder bank hath choice of Sun or shade,

There I am wont to sit, when any chance
 Relieves me from my task of servile toyl,
 Daily in the common Prison else enjoyn'd me,
 Where I a Prisoner chain'd, scarce freely draw
 The air imprison'd also, close and damp,
 Unwholsom draught: but here I feel amends,
 The breath of Heav'n fresh-blowing, pure and sweet, 10
 With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.
 This day a solemn Feast the people hold
 To Dagon thir Sea-Idol, and forbid
 Laborious works, unwillingly this rest
 Thir Superstition yields me; hence with leave
 Retiring from the popular noise, I seek
 This unfrequented place to find some ease,
 Ease to the body some, none to the mind
 From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
 Of Hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone, 20
 But rush upon me thronging, and present
 Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
 O wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold
 Twice by an Angel, who at last in sight
 Of both my Parents all in flames ascended
 From off the Altar, where an Off'ring burn'd,
 As in a fiery column charioting
 His Godlike presence, and from some great act
 Or benefit reveal'd to Abraham's race?
 Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd 30
 As of a person separate to God,
 Design'd for great exploits; if I must dye
 Betray'd, Captiv'd, and both my Eyes put out,
 Made of my Enemies the scorn and gaze;
 To grind in Brazen Fetters under task
 With this Heav'n-gifted strength? O glorious strength
 Put to the labour of a Beast, debas't
 Lower then bondslave! Promise was that I
 Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;
 Ask for this great Deliverer now, and find him 40
 Eyeless in Gaza at the Mill with slaves,
 Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke;
 Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
 Divine Prediction; what if all foretold
 Had been fulfilld but through mine own default,
 Whom have I to complain of but my self?
 Who this high gift of strength committed to me,

In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,
 Under the Seal of silence could not keep,
 But weakly to a woman must reveal it 50
 O'come with importunity and tears.
 O impotence of mind, in body strong!
 But what is strength without a double share
 Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy, burdensom,
 Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
 By weakest subtleties, not made to rule,
 But to subserve where wisdom bears command.
 God, when he gave me strength, to shew withal
 How slight the gift was, hung it in my Hair.
 But peace, I must not quarrel with the will 60
 Of highest dispensation, which herein
 Happ'ly had ends above my reach to know:
 Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
 And proves the source of all my miseries;
 So many, and so huge, that each apart
 Would ask a life to wail, but of all,
 O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
 Blind among enemies, O worse then chains,
 Dungeon, or beggery, or decrepit age!
 Light the prime work of God to me is extinct, 70
 And all her various objects of delight
 Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,
 Inferiour to the vilest now become
 Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me,
 They creep, yet see, I dark in light expos'd
 To daily fraud, contempt, abuse and wrong,
 Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
 In power of others, never in my own;
 Scarce half I seem to live, dead more then half.
 O dark, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon, 80
 Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipse
 Without all hope of day!
 O first created Beam, and thou great Word,
 Let there be light, and light was over all;
 Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree?
 The Sun to me is dark
 And silent as the Moon,
 When she deserts the night
 Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
 Since light so necessary is to life, 90
 And almost life itself, if it be true

That light is in the Soul,
 She all in every part; why was the sight
 To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd?
 So obvious and so easie to be quench't,
 And not as feeling through all parts diffus'd,
 That she might look at will through every pore?
 Then had I not been thus exil'd from light;
 As in the land of darkness yet in light,
 To live a life half dead, a living death, 100
 And buried; but O yet more miserable!
 My self, my Sepulcher, a moving Grave,
 Buried, yet not exempt
 By priviledge of death and burial
 From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,
 But made hereby obnoxious more
 To all the miseries of life,
 Life in captivity
 Among inhuman foes.
 But who are these? for with joint pace I hear 110
 The tread of many feet steering this way;
 Perhaps my enemies who come to stare
 At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,
 Thir daily practice to afflict me more.
Chor. This, this is he; softly a while,
 Let us not break in upon him;
 O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
 See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,
 With languish't head unpropt, 120
 As one past hope, abandon'd
 And by himself given over;
 In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
 O're worn and soild;
 Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be hee,
 That Heroic, that Renown'd,
 Irresistible Samson? whom unarm'd
 No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast could withstand;
 Who tore the Lion, as the Lion tears the Kid,
 Ran on embattelld Armies clad in Iron,
 And weaponless himself, 130
 Made Arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
 Of brazen shield and spear, the hammer'd Cuirass,
 Chaly bean temper'd steel, and frock of mail
 Adamantean Proof;
 But safest he who stood aloof,

When insupportably his foot advanc't,
 In scorn of thir proud arms and warlike tools,
 Spurn'd them to death by Troops. The bold Ascalonite
 Fled from his Lion ramp, old Warriors turnd
 Their plated backs under his heel; 140
 Or grovling soiled the crested helmets in the dust.
 Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
 The jaw of a dead Ass, his sword of bone,
 A thousand fore-skins fell, the flower of Palestin
 In Ramath-lechi famous to this day:
 Then by main force pull'd up, and on his shoulders bore
 The Gates of Azza, Post, and massie Bar
 Up to the Hill by Hebron, seat of Giants old,
 No journey of a Sabbath day, and loaded so;
 Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heav'n. 150
 Which shall I first bewail,
 Thy Bondage or lost Sight,
 Prison within Prison
 Inseparably dark?
 Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!
 The Dungeon of thy self; thy Soul
 (Which Men enjoying sight oft without cause complain)
 Imprison'd now indeed,
 In real darkness of the body dwells,
 Shut up from outward light 160
 To incorporate with gloomy night;
 For inward light alas
 Puts forth no visual beam.
 O mirror of our fickle state,
 Since man on earth unparallel'd!
 The rarer thy example stands,
 By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
 Strongest of mortal men,
 To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fall'n.
 For him I reckon not in high estate 170
 Whom long descent of birth
 Or the spear of fortune raises;
 But thee whose strength, while vertue was her mate
 Might have subdu'd the Earth,
 Universally crown'd with highest praises.
Sam. I hear the sound of words, thir sense the air
 Dissolves unjointed e're it reach my ear.
Chor. Hee speaks, let us draw nigh. Matchless in might, 180
 The glory late of Israel, now the grief;

We come thy friends and neighbours not unknown
 From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful Vale
 To visit or bewail thee, or if better,
 Counsel or Consolation we may bring,
 Salve to thy Sores, apt words have power to swage
 The tumors of a troubl'd mind,
 And are as Balm to fester'd wounds.

Sam. Your coming, Friends, revives me, for I learn
 Now of my own experience, not by talk,
 How counterfeit a coin they are who friends
 Bear in their Superscription (of the most
 I would be understood) in prosperous days
 They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head
 Not to be found, though sought. Yee see, O friends,
 How many evils have enclos'd me round;
 Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,
 Blindness, for had I sight, confus'd with shame,
 How could I once look up, or heave the head,
 Who like a foolish Pilot have shipwrack't,
 My Vessel trusted to me from above,
 Gloriously rigg'd; and for a word, a tear,
 Fool, have divulg'd the secret gift of God
 To a deceitful Woman: tell me Friends,
 Am I not sung and proverbd for a Fool
 In every street, do they not say, how well
 Are come upon him his deserts? yet why?
 Immeasurable strength they might behold
 In me, of wisdom nothing more then mean;
 This with the other should, at least, have paird,
 These two proportiond ill drove me transverse.

190

200

Chor. Tax not divine disposal, wisest Men
 Have err'd, and by bad Women been deceiv'd;
 And shall again, pretend they ne're so wise.
 Deject not then so overmuch thy self,
 Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides;
 Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
 Why thou shouldst wed Philistian women rather
 Then of thine own Tribe fairer, or as fair,
 At least of thy own Nation, and as noble.

210

Sam. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleas'd
 Mee, not my Parents, that I sought to wed,
 The daughter of an Infidel: they knew not
 That what I motion'd was of God; I knew
 From intimate impulse, and therefore urg'd

220

The Marriage on; that by occasion hence
 I might begin Israel's Deliverance,
 The work to which I was divinely call'd;
 She proving false, the next I took to Wife
 (O that I never had! fond wish too-late)
 Was in the Vale of Sorec, Dalila,
 That specious Monster, my accomplisht snare. 230
 I thought it lawful from my former act,
 And the same end; still watching to oppress
 Israel's oppressours: of what now I suffer
 She was not the prime cause, but I my self,
 Who vanquisht with a peal of words (O weakness!)
 Gave up my fort of silence to a Woman.

Chor. In seeking just occasion to provoke
 The Philistine, thy Countries Enemy,
 Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness:
 Yet Israel still serves with all his Sons. 240

Sam. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
 On Israel's Governours, and Heads of Tribes,
 Who seeing had great acts which God had done
 Singly by me against their Conquerours
 Acknowledg'd not, or not at all consider'd
 Deliverance offerd: I on th' other side
 Us'd no ambition to commend my deeds,
 The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the doer;
 But they persisted deaf, and would not seem

To count them things worth notice, till at length 250
 Thir Lords the Philistines with gather'd powers
 Enterd Judea seeking mee, who then
 Safe to the rock of Etham was retir'd,
 Not flying, but fore-casting in what place
 To set upon them, what advantag'd best;
 Mean while the men of Judah to prevent
 The harrass of thir Land, beset me round;
 I willingly on some conditions came

Into thir hands, and they as gladly yeild me 260
 To the uncircumcis'd a welcom prey,
 Bound with two cords; but cords to me were threds
 Toucht with the flame: on thir whole Host I flew
 Unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon fell'd
 Thir choicest youth; they only liv'd who fled.
 Had Judah that day join'd, or one whole Tribe,
 They had by this possess'd the Towers of Gath,
 And lorded over them whom now they serve;

But what more oft in Nations grown corrupt,
 And by thir vices brought to servitude,
 Then to love Bondage more then Liberty, 270
 Bondage with case then strenuous liberty;
 And to despise, or envy, or suspect
 Whom God hath of his special favour rais'd
 As thir Deliverer; if he aught begin,
 How frequent to desert him, and at last
 To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?

Chor. Thy words to my remembrance bring
 How Succoth and the Fort of Penuel
 Thir great Deliverer contemn'd,
 The matchless Gideon in pursuit 280
 Of Madian and her vanquisht Kings:
 And how ingrateful Ephraim
 Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,
 Not worse then by his shield and spear
 Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
 Had not his prowess quell'd thir pride
 In that sore battel when so many dy'd
 Without Reprieve adjudg'd to death,
 For want of well pronouncing Shibboleth.

Sam. Of such examples adde mee to the roul, 290
 Mee easily indeed mine may neglect,
 But Gods propos'd deliverance not so.

Chor. Just are the ways of God,
 And justifiable to Men;
 Unless there be who think not God at all,
 If any be, they walk obscure;
 For of such Doctrine never was there School,
 But the heart of the Fool,
 And no man therein Doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just, 300
 As to his own edicts, found contradicting,
 Then give the rains to wandring thought,
 Regardless of his glories diminution;
 Till by thir own perplexities involv'd
 They ravel more, still less resolv'd,
 But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine th' interminable,
 And tie him to his own prescript,
 Who made our Laws to bind us, not himself,
 And hath full right to exempt 310
 Whom so it pleases him by choice

From National obstruction, without taint
 Of sin, or legal debt;
 For with his own Laws he can best dispence.

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

320

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

But see here comes thy reverend Sire
 With careful step, Locks white as doune,
 Old Manoah: advise
 Forthwith how thou oughtst to receive him.

Sam. Ay me, another inward grief awak't,
 With mention of that name renews th' assault.

330

Man. Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,
 Though in this uncouth place; if old respect,
 As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
 My Son now Captive, hither hath inform'd
 Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age
 Came lagging after; say if he be here.

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

Man. O miserable change! is this the man,
 That invincible Samson, far renown'd,
 The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
 Equivalent to Angels walk'd thir streets,
 None offering fight; who single combatant
 Duell'd thir Armies rank't in proud array,
 Himself an Army, now unequal match
 To save himself against a coward arm'd
 At one spears length. O ever failing trust

340

In mortal strength! and oh what not in man
 Deceivable and vain! Nay what thing good
 Pray'd for, but often proves our woe, our bane?
 I pray'd for Children, and thought barrenness
 In wedlock a reproach; I gain'd a Son,
 And such a Son as all Men hail'd me happy;
 Who would be now a Father in my stead?

350

O wherefore did God grant me my request,
 And as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd?
 Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
 Our earnest Prayers, then giv'n with solemn hand
 As Graces, draw a Scorpions tail behind? 360

For this did the Angel twice descend? for this
 Ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a Plant;
 Select, and Sacred, Glorious for a while,
 The miracle of men: then in an hour
 Ensnar'd, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
 Thy Foes derision, Captive, Poor, and Blind
 Into a Dungeon thrust, to work with Slaves?
 Alas methinks whom God hath chosen once
 To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
 He should not so o'whelm, and as a thrall 370
 Subject him to so foul indignities,
 Be it but for honours sake of former deeds.

Sam. Appoint not heavenly disposition, Father,
 Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me
 But justly; I my self have brought them on,
 Sole Author I, sole cause: if aught seem vile,
 As vile hath been my folly, who have profan'd
 The mystery of God givn me under pledge
 Of vow, and have betray'd it to a woman,
 A Canaanite, my faithless enemy. 380

This well I knew, nor was at all surpris'd,
 But warn'd by oft experience: did not she
 Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
 The secret wrested from me in her highth
 Of Nuptial Love profest, carrying it strait
 To them who had corrupted her, my Spies,
 And Rivals? In this other was there found
 More Faith? who also in her prime of love,
 Spousal embraces, vitiated with Gold,
 Though offer'd only, by the sent conceiv'd 390
 Her spurious first-born; Treason against me?
 Thrice she assay'd with flattering prayers and sighs,
 And amorous reproaches to win from me
 My capital secret, in what part my strength
 Lay stor'd in what part summ'd, that she might know:
 Thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to sport
 Her importunity, each time perceiving
 How openly, and with what impudence
 She purpos'd to betray me, and (which was worse

Then undissembl'd hate) with what contempt 400
 She sought to make me Traytor to my self;
 Yet the fourth time, when mustring all her wiles,
 With blandisht parlies, feminine assaults,
 Tongue-batteries, she surceas'd not day nor night
 To storm me over-watch't, and wearied out.
 At times when men seek most repose and rest,
 I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,
 Who with a grain of manhood well resolv'd
 Might easily have shook off all her snares:
 But foul effeminacy held me yok't 410
 Her Bond-slave; O indignity, O blot
 To Honour and Religion! servil mind
 Rewarded well with servil punishment!
 The base degree to which I now am fall'n,
 These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base
 As was my former servitude. ignoble,
 Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
 True slavery, and that blindness worse then this,
 That saw not how degeneratly I serv'd.

Man. I cannot praise thy Marriage choises, Son, 420
 Rather approv'd them not; but thou didst plead
 Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st
 Find some occasion to infest our Foes.
 I state not that; this I am sure; our Foes
 Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
 Thir Captive, and thir triumph; thou the sooner
 Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms
 To violate the sacred trust of silence
 Deposited within thee; which to have kept
 Tacit, was in thy power; true; and thou hear'st 430
 Enough, and more the burden of that fault;
 Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paving
 That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains,
 This day the Philistines a popular Feast
 Here celebrate in Gaza; and proclaim
 Great Pomp, and Sacrifice, and Praises loud
 To Dagon, as their God who hath deliver'd
 Thee Samson bound and blind into thir hands,
 Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
 So Dagon shall be magnifi'd, and God, 440
 Besides whom is no God, compar'd with Idols,
 Disglorifi'd, blasphem'd, and had in scorn
 By th' Idolatrous rout amidst thir wine;

Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
 Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
 Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
 Could have befall'n thee and thy Fathers house.

Sam. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
 That I this honour, I this pomp have brought
 To Dagon, and advanc'd his praises high
 Among the Heathen round; to God have brought
 Dishonour, obloquie, and op't the mouths
 Of Idolists, and Atheists; have brought scandal
 To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
 In feeble hearts, propense anough before
 To waver, or fall off and joyn with Idols:
 Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
 The anguish of my Soul, that suffers not
 Mine eie to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.

450

This only hope relieves me, that the strife
 With me hath end; all the contest is now
 'Twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath presum'd,
 Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
 His Deity comparing and preferring
 Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
 Will not connive, or linger, thus provok'd,
 But will arise and his great name assert:
 Dagon must stoop, and shall e're long receive
 Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
 Of all these boasted Trophies won on me,
 And with confusion blank his Worshippers.

460

470

Man. With cause this hope relieves thee, and these words
 I as a Prophecy receive: for God,
 Nothing more certain, will not long defer
 To vindicate the glory of his name
 Against all competition, nor will long
 Endure it, doubtful whether God be Lord,
 Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done?
 Thou must not in the mean while here forgot
 Lie in this miserable loathsom plight
 Neglected. I already have made way
 To some Philistian Lords, with whom to treat
 About thy ransom: well they may by this
 Have satisfi'd thir utmost of revenge
 By pains and slaveries, worse then death inflicted
 On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

480

Sam. Spare that proposal, Father, spare the trouble

Of that sollicitation; let me here,
 As I deserve, pay on my punishment;
 And expiate, possible, my crime, 490
 Shameful garrulity. To have reveal'd
 Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,
 How hainous had the fact been, how deserving
 Contempt, and scorn of all, to be excluded
 All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
 The mark of fool set on his front?
 But I Gods counsel have not kept, his holy secret
 Presumptuously have publish'd, impiously,
 Weakly at least, and shamefully: A sin
 That Gentiles in thir Parables condemn 500
 To thir abyss and horrid pains confin'd.
Man. Be penitent and for thy fault contrite,
 But act not in thy own affliction, Son,
 Repent the sin, but if the punishment
 Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids;
 Or th' execution leave to high disposal,
 And let another hand, not thine, exact
 Thy penal forfeit from thy self; perhaps
 God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;
 Who evermore approves and more accepts 510
 (Best pleas'd with humble and filial submission)
 Him who imploring mercy sues for life,
 Then who self-rigorous chooses death as due;
 Which argues over-just, and self-displeas'd
 For self-offence, more then for God offended.
 Reject not then what offerd means, who knows
 But God hath set before us, to return the
 Home to thy countrey and his sacred house,
 Where thou mayst bring thy off'rings, to avert
 His further ire, with praiers and vows renew'd. 520
Sam. His pardon I implore; but as for life,
 To what end should I seek it? when in strength
 All mortals I excell'd, and great in hopes
 With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts
 Of birth from Heav'n foretold and high exploits,
 Full of divine instinct, after some proof
 Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
 The Sons of Anac, famous now and blaz'd,
 Fearless of danger, like a petty God
 I walk'd about admir'd of all and dreaded 530
 On hostile ground, none daring my affront.

Then swoll'n with pride into the snare I fell
 Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
 Softn'd with pleasure and voluptuous life;
 At length to lay my head and hallow'd pledge
 Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
 Of a deceitful Concubine who shore me
 Like a tame Weather, all my precious fleece,
 Then turn'd me out ridiculous, despoil'd,
 Shav'n, and disarm'd among my enemies. 540

Chor. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
 Which many a famous Warriour overturns,
 Thou couldst repress, nor did the dancing Rubie
 Sparkling, out-pow'rd, the flavor, or the smell,
 Or taste that cheers the heart of Gods and men,
 Allure thee from the cool Crystalline stream.

Sam. Where ever fountain or fresh current flow'd
 Against the Eastern ray, translucent, pure,
 With touch aethereal of Heav'ns fiery rod
 I drank, from the clear milkie juice allaying 550
 Thirst, and refresht; nor envy'd them the grape
 Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

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

Sam. But what avail'd this temperance, not compleat
 Against another object more enticing?
 What boots it at one gate to make defence 560
 And at another to let in the foe

Effeminatly vanquish't? by which means,
 Now blind, disheartn'd, sham'd, dishonour'd, quell'd,
 To what can I be useful, wherein serve
 My Nation, and the work from Heav'n impos'd,
 But to sit idle on the household hearth,
 A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze,
 Or pitied object, these redundant locks
 Robustious to no purpose clustring down,
 Vain monument of strength; till length of years 570
 And sedentary numness craze my limbs
 To a contemptible old age obscure.

Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,
 Till vermin or the draff of servil food
 Consume me, and oft-invocated death

Hast'n the welcom end of all my pains.

Man. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that gift
Which was expresly giv'n thee to annoy them?
Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,
Inglorious, unemploy'd, with age out-worn. 580
But God who caus'd a fountain at thy prayer
From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay
After the brunt of battel, can as easie
Cause light again within thy eies to spring,
Wherewith to serve him better then thou hast;
And I perswade me so; why else this strength
Miraculous yet remaining in those locks)
His might continues in thee not for naught,
Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

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

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

Sam. O that torment should not be confin'd
To the bodies wounds and sores
With maladies innumerable
In heart, head, brest, and reins;
But must secret passage find 610
To th' inmost mind,
There exercise all his fierce accidents,
And on her purest spirits prey,
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
With answerable pains, but more intense,
Though void of corporal sense.

My griefs not only pain me
As a lingring disease,
But finding no redress, ferment and rage,

Nor less then wounds immedicable 620
 Ranckle, and fester, and gangrene,
 To black mortification.
 Thoughts my Tormenters arm'd with deadly stings
 Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
 Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
 Dire inflammation which no cooling herb
 Or medicinal liquor can asswage,
 Nor breath of Vernal Air from snowy Alp.
 Sleep hath forsook and giv'n me o're
 To deaths benumbing Opium as my only cure. 630
 Thence faintings, swounings of despair,
 And sense of Heav'ns desertion.
 I was his nursling once and choice delight,
 His destin'd from the womb,
 Promisd by Heavenly message twice descending.
 Under his special eie
 Abstemious I grew up and thriv'd amain;
 He led me on to mightiest deeds
 Above the nerve of mortal arm
 Against the uncircumcis'd, our enemies. 640
 But now hath cast me off as never known,
 And to those cruel enemies,
 Whom I by his appointment had provok't,
 Left me all helpless with th' irreparable loss
 Of sight, reserv'd alive to be repeated
 The subject of thir cruelty, or scorn.
 Nor am I in the list of them that hope;
 Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless;
 This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
 No long petition, speedy death, 650
 The close of all my miseries, and the balm.
Chor. Many are the sayings of the wise
 In antient and in modern books enroll'd;
 Extolling Patience as the truest fortitude;
 And to the bearing well of all calamities,
 All chances incident to mans frail life
 Consolatories writ
 With studied argument, and much perswasion sought
 Lenient of grief and anxious thought,
 But with th' afflicted in his pangs thir sound 660
 Little prevails, or rather seems a tune,
 Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint,
 Unless he feel within

Some source of consolation from above;
 Secret refreshings, that repair his strength,
 And fainting spirits uphold.

God of our Fathers, what is man!
 That thou towards him with hand so various,
 Or might I say contrarious,
 Temperst thy providence through his short course,
 Not evenly, as thou rul'st
 The Angelic orders and inferiour creatures mute,
 Irrational and brute.

670

Nor do I name of men the common rout,
 That wandring loose about
 Grow up and perish, as the summer flie,
 Heads without name no more rememberd,
 But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
 With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd
 To some great work, thy glory,
 And peoples safety, which in part they effect:
 Yet toward these thus dignifi'd, thou oft
 Amidst thir highth of noon,
 Changest thy countenance, and thy hand with no regard
 Of highest favours past
 From thee on them, or them to thee of service.

680

Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
 To life obscur'd, which were a fair dismissal,
 But throw'st them lower then thou didst exalt them high,
 Unseemly falls in human eie,
 Too grievous for the trespass or omission,
 Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword
 Of Heathen and prophane, thir carkasses
 To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captiv'd:
 Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
 And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.

690

If these they scape, perhaps in poverty
 With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
 Painful diseases and deform'd,
 In crude old age;
 Though not disordinate, yet causless suffring
 The punishment of dissolute days, in fine,
 just or unjust, alike seem miserable,
 For oft alike, both come to evil end.

700

So deal not with this once thy glorious Champion,
 The Image of thy strength, and mighty minister.
 What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?

Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end. 710

But who is this, what thing of Sea or Land?

Femal of sex it seems,

That so bedeckt, ornate, and gay,

Comes this. way sailing

Like a stately Ship

Of Tarsus, bound for th' Isles

Of Javan or Gadier

With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,

Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,

Courted by all the winds that hold them play,

An Amber sent of odorous perfume 720

Her harbinger, a damsel train behind;

Some rich Philistian Matron she may seem,

And now at nearer view, no other certain

Than Dalila thy wife.

Sam. My Wife, my Traytress, let her not come near me.

Cho. Yet on she moves, now stands & eies thee fixt,

About t' have spoke, but now, with head declin'd

Like a fair flower surcharg'd with dew, she weeps

And words address seem into tears dissolv'd,

Wetting the borders of her silk'n veil: 730

But now again she makes address to speak.

Dal. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution

I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,

Which to have merited, without excuse,

I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears

May expiate (though the fact more evil drew

In the perverse event then I foresaw)

My penance hath not slack'n'd, though my pardon

No way assur'd. But conjugal affection

Prevailing over fear, and timerous doubt 740

Hath led me on desirous to behold

Once more thy face, and know of thy estate.

If aught in my ability may serve

To light'n what thou suffer'st, and appease

Thy mind with what amends is in my power,

Though late, yet in some part to recompense

My rash but more unfortunate misdeed.

Sam. Out, out Hyaena; these are thy wonted arts,

And arts of every woman false like thee,

To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray, 750

Then as repentant to submit, beseech,

And reconcilment move with feign'd remorse,
 Confess, and promise wonders in her change,
 Not truly penitent, but chief to try
 Her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears,
 His vertue or weakness which way to assail:
 Then with more cautious and instructed skil
 Again transgresses, and again submits;
 That wisest and best men full oft beguil'd
 With goodness principl'd not to reject 760
 The penitent, but ever to forgive,
 Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
 Entangl'd with a poysnous bosom snake,
 If not quick destruction soon cut off
 As I by thee, to Ages an example.

Dal. Yet hear me Samson; not that I endeavour
 To lessen or extenuate my offence,
 But that on th' other side if it be weigh'd
 By it self, with aggravations not surcharg'd,
 Or else with just allowance counterpois'd 770
 I may, if possible, thy pardon find
 The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
 First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
 In me, but incident to all our sex,
 Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
 Of secrets, then with like infirmity
 To publish them, both common female faults:

Was it not weakness also to make known
 For importunity, that is for naught, 780
 Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?
 To what I did thou shewdst me first the way.
 But I to enemies reveal'd, and should not.
 Nor shouldst thou have trusted that to womans frailty
 E're I to thee, thou to thy self wast cruel.
 Let weakness then with weakness come to parl
 So near related, or the same of kind,
 Thine forgive mine; that men may censure thine
 The gentler, if severely thou exact not

More strength from me, then in thy self was found. 790
 And what if Love, which thou interpret'st hate,
 The jealousie of Love, powerful of sway
 In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
 Caus'd what I did? I saw thee mutable
 Of fancy, feard lest one day thou wouldst leave me
 As her at Timna, sought by all means therefore

How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest:
 No better way I saw then by importuning
 To learn thy secrets, get into my power
 Thy key of strength and safety: thou wilt say,
 Why then reveal'd? I was assur'd by those 800
 Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd
 Against thee but safe custody, and hold:
 That made for me, I knew that liberty
 Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
 While I at home sate full of cares and fears
 Wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed;
 Here I should still enjoy thee day and night
 Mine and Loves prisoner, not the Philistines,
 Whole to my self, unhazarded abroad,
 Fearless at home of partners in my love. 810
 These reasons in Loves law have past for good,
 Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps:
 And Love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much wo,
 Yet always pity or pardon hath obtain'd.
 Be not unlike all others, not austere
 As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
 If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
 In uncompassionate anger do not so.

Sam. How cunningly the sorceress displays 820
 Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine!
 That malice not repentance brought thee hither,
 By this appears: I gave, thou say'st, th' example,
 I led the way; bitter reproach, but true,
 I to my self was false e're thou to me,
 Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
 Take to thy wicked deed: which when thou seest
 Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
 Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
 Confess it feign'd, weakness is thy excuse,
 And I believe it, weakness to resist 830
 Philistian gold: if weakness may excuse,
 What Murtherer, what Traytor, Parricide,
 Incestuous, Sacrilegious, but may plead it?
 All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore
 With God or Man will gain thee no remission.
 But Love constrain'd thee; call it furious rage
 To satisfie thy lust: Love seeks to have Love;
 My love how couldst thou hope, who tookst the way
 To raise in me inexpiable hate,

Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betray'd? 840
 In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
 Or by evasions thy crime uncoverst more.
Dal. Since thou determinst weakness for no plea
 In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
 Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
 What sieges girt me round, e're I consented;
 Which might have aw'd the best resolv'd of men,
 The constantest to have yielded without blame.
 It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
 That wrought with me: thou know'st the Magistrates 850
 And Princes of my countrey came in person,
 Solicited, commanded, threatn'd, urg'd,
 Adjur'd by all the bonds of civil Duty
 And of Religion, press'd how just it was,
 How honourable, how glorious to entrap
 A common enemy, who had destroy'd
 Such numbers of our Nation: and the Priest
 Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
 Preaching how meritorious with the gods
 It would be to ensnare an irreligious 860
 Dishonourer of Dagon: what had I
 To oppose against such powerful arguments?
 Only my love of thee held long debate;
 And combated in silence all these reasons
 With hard contest: at length that grounded maxim
 So rife and celebrated in the mouths
 Of wisest men; that to the public good
 Private respects must yield; with grave authority
 Took full possession of me and prevail'd;
 Vertue, as I thought, truth, duty so enjoyning. 870
Sam. I thought where all thy circling wiles would end;
 In feign'd Religion, smooth hypocrisie.
 But had thy love, still odiously pretended,
 Bin, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
 Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
 I before all the daughters of my Tribe
 And of my Nation chose thee from among
 My enemies, lov'd thee, as too well thou knew'st,
 Too well, unbosom'd all my secrets to thee,
 Not out of levity, but over-powr'd 880
 By thy request, who could deny thee nothing;
 Yet now am judg'd an enemy. Why then
 Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband?

Then, as since then, thy countries foe profest:
 Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
 Parents and countrey; nor was I their subject,
 Nor under their protection but my own,
 Thou mine, not theirs: if aught against my life
 Thy countrey sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
 Against the law of nature, law of nations, 890
 No more thy countrey, but an impious crew
 Of men conspiring to uphold thir state
 By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
 For which our countrey is a name so dear;
 Not therefore to be obey'd. But zeal mov'd thee;
 To please thy gods thou didst it; gods unable
 To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
 But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
 Of their own deity, Gods cannot be:
 Less therefore to be pleas'd, obey'd, or fear'd, 900
 These false pretexts and varnish'd colours failing,
 Bare in thy guilt how foul must thou appear?
Dal. In argument with men a woman ever
 Goes whatever the her whatever be her cause.
Sam. For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath,
 Witness when I was worried with thy peals.
Dal. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
 In what I thought would have succeeded best.
 Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson,
 Afford me place to shew what recompence 910
 Towards thee I intend for what I have misdome,
 Misguided: only what remains past cure
 Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
 To afflict thy self in vain: though sight be lost,
 Life yet hath many solaces, enjoy'd
 Where other senses want not their delights
 At home in leisure and domestic ease,
 Exempt from many a care and chance to which
 Eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.
 I to the Lords will intercede, not doubting 920
 Thir favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
 From forth this loathsom prison-house, to abide
 With me, where my redoubl'd love and care
 With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
 May ever tend about thee to old age
 With all things grateful chear'd, and so suppli'd,
 That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

Sam. No, no, of my condition take no care;
 It fits not; thou and I long since are twain;
 Nor think me so unwary or accurst 930
 To bring my feet again into the snare
 Where once I have been caught; I know thy trains
 Though dearly to my cost, thy ginns, and toys;
 Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms
 No more on me have power, their force is null'd,
 So much of Adders wisdom I have learn't
 To fence my ear against thy sorceries.
 If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
 Lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone could hate me
 Thy Husband, slight me, sell me, and forgo me; 940
 How wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby
 Deceiveable, in most things as a child
 Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd,
 And last neglected? How wouldst thou insult
 When I must live uxorious to thy will
 In perfet thraldom, how again betray me,
 Bearing my words and doings to the Lords
 To gloss upon, and censuring, frown or smile?
 This Gaol I count the house of Liberty
 To thine whose doors my feet shall never enter. 950
Dal. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.
Sam. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
 My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
 At distance I forgive thee, go with that;
 Bewail thy falshood, and the pious works
 It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
 Among illustrious women, faithful wives:
 Cherish thy hast'n'd widowhood with the gold
 Of Matrimonial treason: so farwel.
Dal. I see thou art implacable, more deaf 960
 To prayers, then winds and seas, yet winds to seas
 Are reconcil'd at length, and Sea to Shore:
 Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
 Eternal tempest never to be calm'd.
 Why do I humble thus my self, and suing
 For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate?
 Bid go with evil omen and the brand
 Of infamy upon my name denounc't?
 To mix with thy concernments I desist
 Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own. 970
 Fame if not double-fac't is double-mouth' d,

And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds,
 On both his wings, one black, th' other white,
 Bears greatest names in his wild aerie flight.

My name perhaps among the Circumcis'd
 In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering Tribes,
 To all posterity may stand defam'd,
 With malediction mention'd, and the blot
 Of falshood most unconjugal traduc't.

But in my country where I most desire,
 In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath
 I shall be nam'd among the famousest
 Of Women, sung at solemn festivals,
 Living and dead recorded, who to save
 Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose
 Above the faith of wedlock-bands, my tomb
 With odours visited and annual flowers.

980

Not less renown'd then in Mount Ephraim,
 Jael, who with inhospitable guile
 Smote Sisera sleeping through the Temples nail'd.
 Nor shall I count it hainous to enjoy
 The public marks of honour and reward
 Conferr'd upon me, for the piety
 Which to my country I was judg'd to have shewn.
 At this who ever envies or repines
 I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

990

Chor. She's gone, a manifest Serpent by her sting
 Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

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

1000

Chor. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,
 After offence returning, to regain
 Love once possest, nor can be easily
 Repuls't, without much inward passion felt
 And secret sting of amorous remorse.

Sam. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,
 Not wedlock-trechery endangering life.

1010

Chor. It is not vertue, wisdom, valour, wit,
 Strength, comliness of shape, or amplest merit
 That womans love can win or long inherit;
 But what it is, hard is to say,
 Harder to hit,
 (Which way soever men refer it)

Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day
 Or seven, though one should musing sit;
 If any of these or all, the Timnian bride
 Had not so soon preferr'd 1020
 Thy Paranymp, worthless to thee compar'd,
 Successour in thy bed,
 Nor both so loosly disally'd
 Thir nuptials, nor this last so trecherously
 Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
 Is it for that such outward ornament
 Was lavish't on thir Sex, that inward gifts
 Were left for hast unfinish't, judgment scant,
 Capacity not rais'd to apprehend
 Or value what is best
 In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong? 1030
 Or was too much of self-love mixt,
 Of constancy no root infixt,
 That either they love nothing, or not long?
 What e're it be, to wisest men and best
 Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
 Soft, modest, meek, demure,
 Once join'd, the contrary she proves, a thorn
 Intestin, far within defensive arms
 A cleaving mischief, in his way to vertue
 Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms 1040
 Draws him awry enslav'd
 With dotage, and his sense deprav'd
 To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends.
 What Pilot so expert but needs must wreck
 Embarqu'd with such a Stears-mate at the Helm?
 Favour'd of Heav'n who finds
 One vertuous rarely found,
 That in domestic good combines:
 Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:
 But vertue which breaks through all opposition, 1050
 And all temptation can remove,
 Most shines and most is acceptable above.
 Therefore Gods universal Law
 Gave to the man despotic power
 Over his female in due awe,
 Nor from that right to part an hour,
 Smile she or lowre:
 So shall he least confusion draw
 On his whole life, not sway'd

By female usurpation, nor dismay'd. 1060
 But had we best retire, I see a storm?
Sam. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.
Chor. But this another kind of tempest brings.
Sam. Be less abstruse, my riddling days are past.
Chor. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
 The bait of honied words; a rougher tongue
 Draws hitherward, I know him by his stride,
 The Giant Harapha of Gath, his look
 Haughty as is his pile high-built and proud.
 Comes he in peace? what wind hath blown him hither 1070
 I less conjecture then when first I saw
 The sumptuous Dalila floating this way:
 His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.
Sam. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.
Chor. His fraught we soon shall know, he now arrives.
Har. I come not Samson, to condole thy chance,
 As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,
 Though no friendly intent. I am of Gath,
 Men call me Harapha, of stock renown'd
 As Og or Anak and the Emims old 1080
 That Kiriathaim held, thou knowst me now
 If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
 Of thy prodigious might and feats perform'd
 Incredible to me, in this displeas'd,
 That I was never present on the place
 Of those encounters, where we might have tri'd
 Each others force in camp or listed field:
 And now am come to see of whom such noise
 Hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey,
 If thy appearance answer loud report. 1090
Sam. The way to know were not to see but taste.
Har. Dost thou already single me; I thought
 Gives and the Mill had tam'd thee? O that fortune
 Had brought me to the field where thou art fam'd
 To have wrought such wonders with an Asses Jaw;
 I should have forc'd thee soon with other arms,
 Or left thy carkass where the Ass lay thrown:
 So had the glory of Prowess been recover'd
 To Palestine, won by a Philistine
 From the unforeskinn'd race, of whom thou bear'st 1100
 The highest name for valiant Acts, that honour
 Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
 I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

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

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

Sam. Such usage as your honourable Lords
Afford me assassinated and betray'd, 1110
Who durst not with thir whole united powers

In fight withstand me single and unarm'd,
Nor in the house with chamber Ambushes
Close-banded durst attaque me, no not sleeping,
Till they had hir'd a woman with their gold
Breaking her Marriage Faith to circumvent me.
Therefore without feign'd shifts let be assign'd
Some narrow place enclos'd, where sight may give thee,
Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;

Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy Helmet 1120
And Brigandine of brass, thy broad Habergeon,
Vant-brass and Greves, and Gauntlet, add thy Spear

A Weavers beam, and seven-times-folded shield,
I only with an Oak'n staff will meet thee,
And raise such out-cries on thy clatter'd Iron,
Which long shall not with-hold mee from thy head,
That in a little time while breath remains thee,
Thou oft shalt wish thy self at Gath to boast
Again in safety what thou wouldst have done
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

Har. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms 1130
Which greatest Heroes have in battel worn,

Thir ornament and safety, had not spells
And black enchantments, some Magicians Art
Arm'd thee or charm'd thee strong, which thou from Heaven
Feigndst at thy birth was giv'n thee in thy hair,
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
Were bristles rang'd like those that ridge the back
Of chaf't wild Boars, or ruffl'd Porcupines.

Sam. I know no Spells, use no forbidden Arts; 1140
My trust is in the living God who gave me

At my Nativity this strength, diffus'd
No less through all my sinews, joints and bones,
Then thine, while I preserv'd these locks unshorn,
The pledge of my unviolated vow.
For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,
Go to his Temple, invoke his aid
With solemnest devotion, spread before him

How highly it concerns his glory now
 To frustrate and dissolve these Magic spells,
 Which I to be the power of Israel's God 1150
 Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
 Offering to combat thee his Champion bold,
 With th' utmost of his Godhead seconded:
 Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow
 Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.
Har. Presume not on thy God, what e're he be,
 Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
 Quite from his people, and delivered up
 Into thy Enemies hand, permitted them
 To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd send thee 1160
 Into the common Prison, there to grind
 Among the Slaves and Asses thy comrades,
 As good for nothing else, no better service
 With those thy boyst'rous locks, no worthy match
 For valour to assail, nor by the sword
 Of noble Warriour, so to stain his honour,
 But by the Barbers razor best subdu'd.
Sam. All these indignities, for such they are
 From thine, these evils I deserve and more,
 Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me 1170
 Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon
 Whose ear is ever open; and his eye
 Gracious to re-admit the suppliant;
 In confidence whereof I once again
 Defie thee to the trial of mortal fight,
 By combat to decide whose god is God,
 Thine or whom I with Israel's Sons adore.
Har. Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting
 He will accept thee to defend his cause,
 A Murtherer, a Revolter, and a Robber. 1180
Sam. Tongue-doubtie Giant, how dost thou prove me these?
Har. Is not thy Nation subject to our Lords?
 Thir Magistrates confest it, when they took thee
 As a League-breaker and deliver'd bound
 Into our hands: for hadst thou not committed
 Notorious murder on those thirty men
 At Askalon, who never did thee harm,
 Then like a Robber stripdst them of thir robes?
 The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
 Went up with armed powers thee only seeking, 1190
 To others did no violence nor spoil.

Sam. Among the Daughters of the Philistines
 I chose a Wife, which argu'd me no foe;
 And in your City held my Nuptial Feast:
 But your ill-meaning Politician Lords,
 Under pretence of Bridal friends and guests,
 Appointed to await me thirty spies,
 Who threatning cruel death constrain'd the bride
 To wring from me and tell to them my secret,
 That solv'd the riddle which I had propos'd. 1200

When I perceiv'd all set on enmity,
 As on my enemies, where ever chanc'd,
 I us'd hostility, and took thir spoil
 To pay my underminers in thir coin.
 My Nation was subjected to your Lords.
 It was the force of Conquest; force with force
 Is well ejected when the Conquer'd can.
 But I a private person, whom my Countrey
 As a league-breaker gave up bound, presum'd
 Single Rebellion and did Hostile Acts. 1210

I was no private but a person rais'd
 With strength sufficient and command from Heav'n
 To free my Countrey; if their servile minds
 Me their Deliverer sent would not receive,
 But to thir Masters gave me up for nought,
 Th' unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.
 I was to do my part from Heav'n assign'd,
 And had perform'd it if my known offence
 Had not disabl'd me, not all your force:
 These shifts refuted, answer thy appellat 1220

Though by his blindness maim'd for high attempts,
 Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
 As a petty enterprise of small enforce.

Har. With thee a Man condemn'd, a Slave enrol'd,
 Due by the Law to capital punishment?
 To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

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

Har. O Baal-zebub! can my ears unus'd
 Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

Sam. No man with-holds thee, nothing from thy hand
 Fear I incurable; bring up thy van,
 My heels are fetter'd, but my fist is free.

Har. This insolence other kind of answer fits.

Sam. Go baffl'd coward, lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the Air, then dash thee down
To the hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.

1240

Har. By Astaroth e're long thou shalt lament
These braveries in Irons loaden on thee.

Chor. His Giantship is gone somewhat crestfall'n,
Stalking with less unconsci'nable strides,
And lower looks, but in a sultrie chafe.

Sam. I dread him not, nor all his Giant-brood,
Though Fame divulge him Father of five Sons
All of Gigantic size, Goliah chief.

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

1250

Sam. He must allege some cause, and offer'd fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept the offer or not,
And that he durst not plain enough appear'd.
Much more affliction then already felt

They cannot well impose, nor I sustain;
If they intend advantage of my labours
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
With no small profit daily to my owners.

1260

But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,
The worst that he can give, to me the best.

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

Chor. Oh how comely it is and how reviving
To the Spirits of just men long opprest!

When God into the hands of thir deliverer
Puts invincible might

1270

To quell the mighty of the Earth, th' oppressour,
The brute and boist'rous force of violent men
Hardy and industrious to support

Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous and all such as honour Truth;
He all thir Ammunition

And feats of War defeats
With plain Heroic magnitude of mind

And celestial vigour arm'd 1280
 Thir Armories and Magazins contemns,
 Renders them useless, while
 With winged expedition
 Swift as the lightning glance he executes
 His errand on the wicked, who surpris'd
 Lose thir defence distracted and amaz'd.
 But patience is more oft the exercise
 Of Saints, the trial of thir fortitude,
 Making them each his own Deliverer,
 And Victor over all 1290
 That tyrannie or fortune can inflict,
 Either of these is in thy lot,
 Samson, with might endu'd
 Above the Sons of men; but sight bereav'd
 May chance to number thee with those
 Whom Patience finally must crown.
 This Idols day hath bin to thee no day of rest,
 Labouring thy mind
 More then the day thy hands,
 And yet perhaps more trouble is behind. 1300
 For I descry this way
 Some other tending, in his hand
 A Scepter or quaint staff he bears,
 Comes on amain, speed in his look.
 By his habit I discern him now
 A Public Officer, and now at hand.
 His message will be short and voluble.
 Off. Ebrews, the Pris'ner Samson here I seek.
Chor. His manacles remark him, there he sits.
Off. Samson, to thee our Lords thus bid me say; 1310
 This day to Dagon is a solemn Feast,
 With Sacrifices, Triumph, Pomp, and Games;
 Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
 And now some public proof thereof require
 To honour this great Feast, and great Assembly;
 Rise therefore with all speed and come along,
 Where I will see thee heartn'd and fresh clad
 To appear as fits before th' illustrious Lords.
Sam. Thou knowst I am an Ebrew, therefore tell them,
 Our Law forbids at thir Religious Rites 1320
 My presence; for that cause I cannot come.
Off. This answer, be assur'd, will not content them.
Sam. Have they not Sword-players, and ev'ry sort

Of Gymnic Artists, Wrestlers, Riders, Runners,
 Juglers and Dancers, Antics, Mummings, Mimics,
 But they must pick me out with shackles tir'd,
 And over-labour'd at thir publick Mill,
 To make them sport with blind activity?
 Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels
 On my refusal to distress me more, 1330
 Or make a game of my calamities?
 Return the way thou cam'st, I will not come.

Off. Regard thy self, this will offend them highly.

Sam. My self? my conscience and internal peace.

Can they think me so broken, so debas'd
 With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
 Will condescend to such absurd commands?
 Although thir drudge, to be thir fool or jester,
 And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief
 To shew them feats, and play before thir god, 1340
 The worst of all indignities, yet on me
 Joyn'd with extream contempt? I will not come.

Off. My message was impos'd on me with speed,
 Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?

Sam. So take it with what speed thy message needs.

Off. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

Sam. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

Chor. Consider, Samson; matters now are strain'd
 Up to the highth, whether to hold or break;
 He's gone, and who knows how he may report 1350
 Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?
 Expect another message more imperious,
 More Lordly thund'ring then thou well wilt bear.

Sam. Shall I abuse this Consecrated gift
 Of strength, again returning with my hair
 After my great transgression, so requite
 Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin
 By prostituting holy things to Idols;
 A Nazarite in place abominable
 Vaunting my strength in honour to thir Dagon? 1360
 Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,
 What act more execrably unclean, prophane?

Chor. Yet with this strength thou serv'st the Philistines,
 Idolatrous, uncircumcis'd, unclean.

Sam. Not in thir Idol-worship, but by labour
 Honest and lawful to deserve my food
 Of those who have me in thir civil power.

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

Sam. Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds;
But who constrains me to the Temple of Dagon, 1370
Not dragging? the Philistian Lords command.
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely; venturing to displease
God for the fear of Man, and Man prefer,
Set God behind: which in his jealousy
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
Yet that he may dispense with me or thee
Present in Temples at Idolatrous Rites
For some important cause, thou needst not doubt.

Chor. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach. 1380

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

Chor. In time thou hast resolv'd, the man returns. 1390

Off. Samson, this second message from our Lords
To thee I am bid say. Art thou our Slave,
Our Captive, at the public Mill our drudge,
And dar'st thou at our sending and command
Dispute thy coming? come without delay;
Or we shall find such Engines to assail
And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
Though thou wert firmlier fastn'd then a rock.

Sam. I could be well content to try thir Art,
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious. 1400
Yet knowing thir advantages too many,
Because they shall not trail me through thir streets
Like a wild Beast, I am content to go.
Masters commands come with a power resistless
To such as owe them absolute subjection;
And for a life who will not change his purpose?
(So mutable are all the ways of men)
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
Scandalous or forbidden in our Law.

Off. I praise thy resolution, doff these links: 1410
By this compliance thou wilt win the Lords

To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

Sam. Brethren farewell, your company along
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
To see me girt with Friends; and how the sight
Of me as of a common Enemy,
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them
I know not. Lords are Lordliest in thir wine;
And the well-feasted Priest then soonest fir'd
With zeal, if aught Religion seem concern'd:
No less the people on thir Holy-days
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable;
Happ'n what may, of me expect to hear
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our Law, my Nation, or my self,
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

1420

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

1430

For never was from Heaven imparted
Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,
As in thy wond'rous actions hath been seen.
But wherefore comes old Manoa in such hast
With youthful steps? much livelier than e're while
He seems: supposing here to find his Son,
Or of him bringing to us some glad news?

1440

Man. Peace with you brethren; my inducement hither
Was not at present here to find my Son,
By order of the Lords new parted hence
To come and play before them at thir Feast.
I heard all as I came, the City rings
And numbers thither flock, I had no will,
Lest I should see him forc't to things unseemly.
But that which moved my coming now, was chiefly
To give ye part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.

1450

Chor. That hope would much rejoyce us to partake

With thee; say reverend Sire, we thirst to hear.

Man. I have attempted one by one the Lords
 Either at home, or through the high street passing,
 With supplication prone and Fathers tears
 To accept of ransom for my Son thir pris'ner, 1460
 Some much averse I found and wondrous harsh,
 Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
 That part most reverenc'd Dagon and his Priests,
 Others more moderate seeming, but thir aim
 Private reward, for which both God and State
 They easily would set to sale, a third
 More generous far and civil, who confess'd
 They had enough reveng'd, having reduc't
 Thir foe to misery beneath thir fears,
 The rest was magnanimity to remit, 1470
 If some convenient ransom were propos'd.
 What noise or shout was that? it tore the Skie.

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

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

Chor. Fathers are wont to lay up for thir Sons,
 Thou for thy Son art bent to lay out all;
 Sons wont to nurse thir Parents in old age,
 Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy Son,
 Made older then thy age through eye-sight lost.

Man. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes, 1490
 And view him sitting in the house, enobl'd
 With all those high exploits by him atchiev'd,
 And on his shoulders waving down those locks,
 That of a Nation arm'd the strength contain'd:
 And I perswade me God had not permitted
 His strength again to grow up with his hair
 Garrison'd round about him like a Camp
 Of faithful Souldiery, were not his purpose
 To use him further yet in some great service,

Not to sit idle with so great a gift 1500
 Useless, and thence ridiculous about him.
 And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
 God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.
Chor. Thy hopes are not ill founded nor seem vain
 Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon
 Conceiv'd, agreeable to a Fathers love,
 In both which we, as next participate.
Man. I know your friendly minds and-O what noise!
 Mercy of Heav'n what hideous noise was that!
 Horribly loud unlike the former shout. 1510
Chor. Noise call you it or universal groan
 As if the whole inhabitation perish'd,
 Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,
 Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.
Man. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise,
 Oh it continues, they have slain my Son.
Chor. Thy Son is rather slaying them, that outcry
 From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.
Man. Some dismal accident it needs must be;
 What shall we do, stay here or run and see? 1520
Chor. Best keep together here, lest running thither
 We unawares run into dangers mouth.
 This evil on the Philistines is fall'n,
 From whom could else a general cry be heard)
 The sufferers then will scarce molest us here,
 From other hands we need not much to fear.
 What if his eye-sight (for to Israels God
 Nothing is hard) by miracle restor'd,
 He now be dealing dole among his foes,
 And over heaps of slaughter'd walk his way? 1530
Man. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.
Chor. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
 For his people of old; what hinders now?
Man. He can I know, but doubt to think he will;
 Yet Hope would fain subscribe, and tempts Belief.
 A little stay will bring some notice hither.
Chor. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;
 For evil news rides post, while good news baits.
 And to our wish I see one hither speeding,
 An Ebrew, as I guess, and of our Tribe. 1540
Mess. O whither shall I run, or which way flie
 The sight of this so horrid spectacle
 Which earst my eyes beheld and yet behold;

For dire imagination still persues me.
 But providence or instinct of nature seems,
 Or reason though disturb'd, and scarce consulted
 To have guided me aright, I know not how,
 To thee first reverend Manoa, and to these
 My Countreymen, whom here I knew remaining,
 As at some distance from the place of horrour, 1550
 So in the sad event too much concern'd.

Man. The accident was loud, & here before thee
 With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not,
 No Preface needs, thou seest we long to know.

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

Man. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

Mess. Gaza yet stands, but all her Sons are fall'n,
 All in a moment overwhelm'd and fall'n.

Man. Sad, but thou knowst to Israelites not saddest 1560
 The desolation of a Hostile City.

Mess. Feed on that first, there may in grief be surfet.

Man. Relate by whom.

Mess. By Samson.

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

Mess. Ah Manoa I refrain, too suddenly
 To utter what will come at last too soon;
 Lest evil tidings with too rude irruption
 Hitting thy aged ear should pierce too deep.

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

Mess. Then take the worst in brief, Samson is dead. 1570

Man. The worst indeed, O all my hope's defeated
 To free him hence! but death who sets all free
 Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
 What windy joy this day had I conceiv'd
 Hopeful of his Delivery, which now proves
 Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
 Nipt with the lagging rear of winters frost.
 Yet e're I give the rains to grief, say first,
 How dy'd he? death to life is crown or shame.
 All by him fell thou say'st, by whom fell he, 1580
 What glorious hand gave Samson his deaths wound?

Mess. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

Man. Wearied with slaughter then or how? explain.

Mess. By his own hands.

Man. Self-violence? what cause

Brought him so soon at variance with himself
Among his foes?

Mess. Inevitable cause

At once both to destroy and be destroy'd;
The Edifice where all were met to see him
Upon thir heads and on his own he pull'd

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

Mess. Occasions drew me early to this City,
And as the gates I enter'd with Sun-rise,
The morning Trumpets Festival proclaim'd
Through each high street: little I had dispatch't
When all abroad was rumour'd that this day 1600
Samson should be brought forth to shew the people
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games;
I sorrow'd at his captive state, but minded
Not to be absent at that spectacle.

The building was a spacious Theatre
Half round on two main Pillars vaulted high,
With seats where all the Lords and each degree
Of sort, might sit in order to behold,
The other side was op'n, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds under Skie might stand; 1610
I among these aloof obscurely stood.

The Feast and noon grew high, and Sacrifice
Had fill'd thir hearts with mirth, high chear, & wine,
When to thir sports they turn'd. Immediately
Was Samson as a public servant brought,
In thir state Livery clad; before him Pipes
And Timbrels, on each side went armed guards,
Both horse and foot before him and behind
Archers, and Slingers, Cataphracts and Spears.

At sight of him the people with a shout 1620
Rifted the Air clamouring thir god with praise,
Who had made thir dreadful enemy thir thrall.
He patient but undaunted where they led him,
Came to the place, and what was set before him
Which without help of eye, might be assay'd,
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still perform'd
All with incredible, stupendious force,

None daring to appear Antagonist.
 At length for intermission sake they led him
 Between the pillars; he his guide requested 1630
 (For so from such as nearer stood we heard)
 As over-tir'd to let him lean a while
 With both his arms on those two massie Pillars
 That to the arched roof gave main support.
 He unsuspecting led him;-which when Samson
 Felt in his arms, with head a while enclin'd,
 And eyes fast fixt he stood, as one who pray'd,
 Or some great matter in his mind revolv'd.
 At last with head erect thus cryed aloud,
 Hitherto, Lords, what your commands impos'd 1640
 I have perform'd, as reason was, obeying,
 Not without wonder or delight beheld.
 Now of my own accord such other tryal
 I mean to shew you of my strength, yet greater;
 As with amaze shall strike all who behold.
 This utter'd, straining all his nerves he bow'd,
 As with the force of winds and waters pent,
 When Mountains tremble, those two massie Pillars
 With horrible convulsion to and fro,
 He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came and drew 1650
 The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
 Upon the heads of all who sate beneath,
 Lords, Ladies, Captains, Councillors, or Priests,
 Thir choice nobility and flower, not only
 Of this but each Philistian City round
 Met from all parts to solemnize this Feast.
 Samson with these immixt, inevitably
 Pulld down the same destruction on himself;
 The vulgar only scap'd who stood without.
Chor. O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious! 1660
 Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd
 The work for which thou wast foretold
 To Israel, and now ly'st victorious
 Among thy slain self-kill'd
 Not willingly, but tangl'd in the fold
 Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoin'd
 Thee with thy slaughter'd foes in number more
 Then all thy life had slain before.
 Semichor. While thir hearts were jocund and sublime,
 Drunk with Idolatry, drunk with Wine, 1670
 And fat regorg'd of Bulls and Goats,

Chaunting thir Idol, and preferring
 Before our living Dread who dwells
 In Silo his bright Sanctuary:
 Among them he a spirit of phrenzie sent,
 Who hurt thir minds,
 And urg'd them on with mad desire
 To call in hast for thir destroyer;
 They only set on sport and play
 Unweetingly importun'd 1680
 Thir own destruction to come speedy upon them.

So fond are mortal men
 Fall'n into wrath divine,
 As thir own ruin on themselves to invite,
 Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
 And with blindness internal struck.
Semichor. But he though blind of sight,
 Despis'd and thought extinguish't quite,
 With inward eyes illuminated
 His fierie vertue rous'd 1690

From under ashes into sudden flame,
 And as an ev'ning Dragon came,
 Assailant on the perched roosts,
 And nests in order rang'd
 Of tame villatic Fowl; but as an Eagle
 His cloudless thunder bolted on thir heads.
 So vertue giv'n for lost,
 Deprest, and overthrown, as seem'd,
 Like that self-begott'n bird
 In the Arabian woods embost 1700
 That no second knows nor third,
 And lay e're while a Holocaust,
 From out her ashie womb now teem'd
 Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most
 When most unactive deem'd,
 And though her body die, her fame survives,
 A secular bird ages of lives.

Man. Come, come, no time for lamentation now,
 Nor much more cause, Samson hath quit himself
 Like Samson, and heroicly hath finish'd 1710
 A life Heroic, on his Ene'mies
 Fully reveng'd, hath left them years of mourning,
 And lamentation to the Sons of Capthor
 Through all Philistian bounds. To Israel
 Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them

Find courage to lay hold on this occasion,
 To himself and Fathers house eternal fame;
 And which is best and happiest yet, all this
 With God not parted from him, as was feard,
 But favouring and assisting to the end. 1720

Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
 Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
 Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
 And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

Let us go find the body where it lies
 Sok't in his enemies blood, and from the stream
 With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off
 The clotted gore. I with what speed the while
 (Gaza is not in plight to say us nay)

Will send for all my kindred, all my friends 1730

To fetch him hence and solemnly attend
 With silent obsequie and funeral train
 Home to his Fathers house: there will I build him
 A Monument, and plant it round with shade
 Of Laurel ever green, and branching Palm,
 With all his Trophies hung, and Acts enroll'd
 In copious Legend, or sweet Lyric Song.

Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
 And from his memory inflame thir breasts
 To matchless valour, and adventures high: 1740

The Virgins also shall on feastful days
 Visit his Tomb with flowers, only bewailing
 His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
 From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

Chor. All is best, though we oft doubt,
 What th' unsearchable dispose
 Of highest wisdom brings about,
 And ever best found in the close.

Oft he seems to hide his face,
 But unexpectedly returns 1750

And to his faithful Champion hath in place
 Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns
 And all that band them to resist
 His uncontrollable intent,
 His servants he with new acquist
 Of true experience from this great event
 With peace and consolation hath dismiss,
 And calm of mind all passion spent.

THE END.

This etext was typed by Judy Boss in Omaha, Nebraska.
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