unhappily suffered a good Chamber and Study to lye idle as long. My Books (except those I have taken to sleep upon) have been totally neglected, and my Lord Coke and other vasterable Authors were never so slighted in their Lives. I spend most of the Day at a Neighbouring Coffee-House, where we have what I may call a lacy Club. We generally come in Night-Caps, with our stickings about our Heads, and sometimes but one. Our Salutation at Dinner is a Yawn and a Stretch, and then without more Ceremony we take our Place at the Rolling-Table, where our Discourse is, what I fear you would not read out, therefore shall not insert, but I assure you Sir, I heartily lament this Loss of Time, and am now resolved (if possible, with double Diligence) to retrieve it, being effectually awakened by the Arguements of Mr. Slack out of the senseless Stupidity that has so long possessed me. And to demonstrate, that Penitence accompanies my Confession, and Constancy my Resolutions, I have locked my Door for a Year, and desire you would let my Company know I am not within. I am with great Respect.

Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,
N. L.

No. 321.
[ADDITION.]
No sale et publico esse possunt, spectatorem autem—Itter.

THOSE who know how many Volumes have been written on the Poems of Homer and Virgil, will easily pardon the Length of my Discourse upon Milton. The Paradise Lost is looked upon, by the best Judges, as the greatest Production, or at least the noblest Work of Genius, in our Language, and therefore deserves to be set before an English Reader in its full Beauty. For this Reason, tho' I have endeavoured to give a general Idea of its Grace and Perfections in my six first Papers, I thought my self obliged to bestow one upon every Book in particular. The Three first Books I have already dispatched, and am now entering upon the Fourth.
an heroic Poem, when they run out into an unnecessary Length; the Description of Paradise would have been fully, had not the Poet been very particular in it, not only as it is the Scene of the principal Action, but as it is requisite to give us an Idea of that Happiness from which our first Parents fell. The Plea of it is wonderfully beautiful, and founded upon the short Sketch which we have of it, in Holy Writ. Milton’s Embrace of the Imagination, has poured forth such a redundancy of Ornaments on this Seat of Happiness and Innocence, that it would be endless to point out each particular.

I must not quit this Head, without further observation, that there is a more Speech of Adam and Eve in this whole Poem, wherein the Sentiments and Allusions are not taken from this their delightful Habitation. The Reader, during their whole Course of Action, always finds himself in the Walls of Paradise. In short, as the Critics have remarked, that in these Poems, wherein Shepherds are Actors, the Thoughts ought always to take a Tincture from the Words, Fields and Rivers; so we may observe, that our first Parents seldom lose Sight of their happy Station in any Thing they speak or do; and if the Reader will give me Leave to use the Expression, that their Thoughts are always concentric.

We are in the next Place to consider the Machines of the Fourth Book; Satan being now within Prospect of Eden, and looking round upon the Glories of the Creation, is filled with Sentiments different from those, which he discovered whilst he was in Hell. The Place inspires him with Thoughts more adapted to his. He reflects upon the happy Condition from whence he fell, and breaks into a Speech that is filled with several Touches of Remorse and Self-Annihilation. But at length, he confirms himself in Impenitence, and in his Design of drawing Man into his own State of Guilt and Misery. This Conflict of Passions is raised with a great deal of Art, as the Opening of his Speech to the Sun is very bold and noble.

THE SPECTATOR

O thou that wost surpassing Glory crowned
Look from thy seat with dominion in the Sky
Of this new World, where shines Eternity
How on its Wondrous plains, where I sit
Blest with an friendly Voice, and add the Name
O Sin, to tell thee how I hate the Beams
That belong to any Firebrand from what Sun
I fell, how glorious since above the Spheres.

This Speech is, I think, the finest that is ascribed to Satan in the whole Poem. The Evil Spirit afterwords proceeds to make his Discourses concerning our first Parents, and to learn what Manner they may be most attack'd. His brandishing over the Walls of Paradise, his sitting in the Shape of a Cormorant upon the Tree of Life, which stood in the Center of it, and over-shadowing all the other Trees of the Garden, his alighting among the Herd of Animals, which are so beautifully represented as playing about Adam and Eve, together with his transforming himself into different Shapes in order to hear their Conversation, are Circumstances that give an agreeable Surprise to the Reader, and are devised with great Art, to connect that Series of Adventures in which the Poet has engaged this Artificer of Ruin.

The Thought of Satan's Transformation into a Cormorant, and placing himself on the Tree of Life, seems raised upon that Passage in the Psalm, where two Dwellers are described, as perching on the Top of an Oak in the Shape of Vultures. His placing himself at the Ear of Eve under the Form of a Toad in order to procure vain Dreams and Imagination, is a Circumstance of the same Nature as his starting up in his own Form is wonderfully fine, both in the Literary Description, and in the Moral which is concealed under it. His Answer upon his being discovered, and demanded to give an Account of himself, is conformable to the Bride and Impedibility of his Character.

Know ye not then, said Satan, S2 4 with Scare.
Know ye not? to know me was no more.
For you, those evil where you don't set about;
Not to know me requires yourselves under
The least of your thoughts.———

Zephura's
I must however observe, in this Place, that the break No. 32d, of the Combat between Gabriel and Satan, by the Spectator, having out of the golden States in Heaven, in a Reflexion upon Homer's Thoughts, who tells us, that before the Battle between Hector and Achilles, Jupiter weighed the Event of it in a Pair of Scales. The Reader may see the whole Passage in the 21st Iliad. Virgil, before the last decisive Combat, describes Jupiter in the same Manner, as weighing the Fates of Turnus and Aeneas. Milton, though he fished this beautiful circumstance from the Iliad and Aeneid, does not only inser it as a poetical Embellishment, like the Anglers above-mentioned; but makes an artful Use of it for the proper carrying on of his Tale, and for the breaking off the Combat between the two Warriors, who were upon the point of engaging. To this we may farther add, that Milton is the more justified in this Passage, as we find the same noble Allusion in Holy Writ, where a wicked Prince is said to have been weighed in the Scales, and to have been found wanting. I must here take Notice under the Head of the Machines, that Uriel's sliding down to the Earth upon a Stone, with the Poet's Device to make him dexterous, as well in his Return to the Sun, as in coming from it, is a Perfection that might have been admired in a little fanciful Poet, but seems below the Genius of Milton. The Description of the Host of wondrous Angels walking their nightly Round in Paradise, is of another Spirit: So easy, we can be led to thisentrée here.

O DEAN the Moon,

as that Account of the Hymns which our first Parents used to hear them sing in those their Midnight-Walks, is altogether Divine, and inexplicably amusing to the Imagination.

We see, in the last place, to consider the Para, which Adam and Eve sit in the fourth Book. The Description of them as they first appeared to Satan, is strikingly drawn, and sufficient to make the fallen Angel gaze upon them with all that Astonishment, and those Emotions of Eryry, in which he is represented.

Two
I shall close my Reflections upon this Book, with
observing the Moverly Transition which the Poet makes
to their Evening Worship, in the following Lines.

Thus in their midst rides vantage, both sound,
with neck, and under snow, the winter.
The God that made both you, see Earth, and Heaven
Which they behold, the Moon comprehended Globe
And Storms Bites! Thus also make the Night
Majesty Omnipotent, and thus the Fury, &c.

Most of the modern heroic Poets have imitated the
Ancients, in beginning a Speech without premising
that the Person said thus, or thus; but as it is easy to
imitate the Ancients in the Omission of two or three
Words, it requires judgment to do it in such a Manner
as they shall not be missed, and that the Speech may
begin naturally without them. There is a fine Instance
of this Kind out of Homer, in the Twenty Third Chapter
of Longinus.

NOTES

The End of the Fourth Volume.