

‘ Wife that can save half his Revenue, and yet make a
 ‘ better Figure than any of his Neighbours of the same
 ‘ Estate, with finer bred Women, you shall have further
 ‘ notice from,

S I R,

Your courteous Readers,

Martha Busic.

Deborah Thrifty.

Alice Early.

T



N^o 333. *Saturday, March 22.*

——— *vocat in certamina Divos.*

Virg.

WE are now entring upon the sixth Book of *Paradise Lost*, in which the Poet describes the Battle of Angels; having raised his Reader's Expectation, and prepared him for it by several Passages in the preceding Books. I omitted quoting these Passages in my Observations on the former Books, having purposely reserved them for the opening of this, the Subject of which gave occasion to them. The Author's Imagination was so inflamed with this great Scene of Action, that where-ever he speaks of it, he rises, if possible, above himself. Thus where he mentions Satan in the beginning of his Poem:

——— *Him the Almighty Power
 Hurl'd Headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Sky.
 With hideous Ruin and Combustion, down
 To bottomless Perdition there to dwell
 In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,
 Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to Arms.*

WE have likewise several noble Hints of it in the Infernal Conference.

*O Prince! O Chief of many throned Powers,
 That led th' imbattel'd Seraphim to War,
 Too well I see and rue the dire Event,*

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That

*That with sad Overthrow and foul Defeat
Hath lost us Heav'n ; and all this mighty Host
In horrible Destruction laid thus low.
But see ! the angry Victor hath recall'd
His Ministers of Vengeance and pursues
Back to the Gates of Heav'n : The sulph'rous Hail
Shot after us in Storm, o'erblown, hath laid
The fiery Surge, that from the Precipice
Of Heav'n received us falling : and the Thunder,
Wing'd with red Lightning and impetuous Rage,
Perhaps hath spent his Shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.*

THERE are several other very sublime Images on the same Subject in the first Book, as also in the second.

*What when we fled amain, pursu'd and strook
With Heav'n's afflicting Thunder, and besought
The Deep to shelter us ; this Hell then seem'd
A Refuge from those Wounds —*

IN short, the Poet never mentions any thing of this Battle but in such Images of Greatness and Terror as are suitable to the Subject. Among several others I cannot forbear quoting that Passage, where the Power who is described as presiding over the Chaos, speaks in the third Book.

*Thus Satan ; and him thus the Anarch old
With faltering Speech, and Visage incompas'd,
Answer'd, I know thee, Stranger, who thou art,
That mighty leading Angel, who of late
Made head against Heav'n's King, tho' overthrown.
I saw and heard ; for such a num'rous Host
Fled not in silence through the fright'd Deep
With Ruin upon Ruin, Rout on Rout,
Confusion worse confounded ; and Heav'n's Gates
Pour'd out by Millions her victorious Bands
Pursuing —*

IT requir'd great Pregnancy of Invention, and Strength of Imagination, to fill this Battle with such Circumstances as should raise and astonish the Mind of the Reader ; and at the same time an Exactness of Judgment, to avoid every thing that might appear light or trivial. Those who look
into

into *Homer*, are surpris'd to find his Battles still rising one above another, and improving in Horroir to the Conclusion of the *Iliad*. *Milton's* Fight of Angels is wrought up with the same Beauty. It is usher'd in with such Signs of Wrath as are suitable to Omnipotence incensed. The first Engagement is carried on under a Cope of Fire, occasioned by the Flights of innumerable burning Darts and Arrows which are discharged from either Host. The second Onset is still more terrible, as it is filled with those artificial Thunders, which seem to make the Victory doubtful, and produce a kind of Consternation even in the good Angels. This is followed by the tearing up of Mountains and Promontories; till in the last place, the Messiah comes forth in the Fulness of Majesty and Terror. The Pomp of his Appearance amidst the Roarings of his Thunders, the Flashes of his Lightnings, and the Noise of his Chariot-Wheels, is described with the utmost Flights of human Imagination.

THE RE is nothing in the first and last Day's Engagement which does not appear natural, and agreeable enough to the Ideas most Readers would conceive of a Fight between two Armies of Angels.

THE second Day's Engagement is apt to startle an Imagination, which has not been raised and qualify'd for such a Description, by the reading of the ancient Poets, and of *Homer* in particular. It was certainly a very bold Thought in our Author, to ascribe the first Use of Artillery to the Rebel-Angels. But as such a pernicious Invention may be well suppos'd to have proceeded from such Authors, so it enter'd very properly into the Thoughts of that Being, who is all along describ'd as aspiring to the Majesty of his Maker. Such Engines were the only Instruments he could have made use of to imitate those Thunders, that in all Poetry, both sacred and profane, are represented as the Arms of the Almighty. The tearing up the Hills, was not altogether so daring a Thought as the former. We are, in some measure, prepared for such an Incident by the Description of the Giants War, which we meet with among the ancient Poets. What still made this Circumstance the more proper for the Poet's Use, is the Opinion of many learned Men, that the Fable of the Giants War, which makes so great a noise in Antiquity, and gave birth to the

sublimeſt Deſcription in *Hefiod's* Works was an Allegory founded upon this very Tradition of a Fight between the good and bad Angels.

IT may, perhaps, be worth while to conſider with what Judgment *Milton*, in this Narration, has avoided every thing that is mean and trivial in the Deſcriptions of the *Latin* and *Greek* Poets; and at the ſame time improved every great Hint which he met with in their Works upon this Subject. *Homer* in that Paſſage, which *Longinus* has celebrated for its Sublimeneſs, and which *Virgil* and *Ovid* have copied after him, tells us, that the Giants threw *Oſſa* upon *Olympus*, and *Pelion* upon *Oſſa*. He adds an Epithet to *Pelion* (εινοσίδωλος) which very much ſwells the Idea, by bringing up to the Reader's Imagination all the Woods that grew upon it. There is further a great Beauty in his ſingling out by Name theſe three remarkable Mountains, ſo well known to the *Greeks*. This laſt is ſuch a Beauty, as the Scene of *Milton's* War could not poſſibly furniſh him with. *Claudian*, in his Fragment upon the Giants War, has given full ſcope to that Wildneſs of Imagination which was natural to him. He tells us that the Giants tore up whole Iſlands by the Roots and threw them at the Gods. He deſcribes one of them in particular taking up *Lemnos* in his Arms, and whirling it to the Skies, with all *Vulcan's* Shop in the miſt of it. Another tears up Mount *Ida*, with the River *Enipeus*, which ran down the Sides of it; but the Poet, not content to deſcribe him with this Mountain upon his Shoulders, tells us that the River flow'd down his Back, as he held it up in that Poſture. It is viſible to every judicious Reader, that ſuch Ideas favour more of Burleſque, than of the Sublime. They proceed from a Wantonneſs of Imagination, and rather divert the Mind than aſtoniſh it. *Milton* has taken every thing that is ſublime in theſe ſeveral Paſſages, and compoſes out of them the following great Image.

*From their Foundations looſ'ning to and fro,
They pluck'd the ſeated Hills, with all their Load,
Rocks, Waters, Woods; and by the ſtaggy Tops
Up-ſifting bore them in their Hands ———*

WE

WE have the full Majesty of *Homer* in this short Description, improv'd by the Imagination of *Claudian*, without its Puerilities.

I need not point out the Description of the fallen Angels seeing the Promontories hanging over their Heads in such a dreadful manner, with the other numberless Beauties in this Book, which are so conspicuous, that they cannot escape the Notice of the most ordinary Reader.

THERE are indeed so many wonderful Strokes of Poetry in this Book, and such a Variety of sublime Ideas, that it would have been impossible to have given them a place within the Bounds of this Paper. Besides that, I find it in a great measure done to my hand at the End of my Lord *Roscommon's* Essay on translated Poetry. I shall refer my Reader thither for some of the Master-strokes in the sixth Book of *Paradise Lost*, tho' at the same time there are many others which that noble Author has not taken notice of.

MILTON, notwithstanding the sublime Genius he was master of, has in this Book drawn to his Assistance all the Helps he could meet with among the ancient Poets. The Sword of *Michael*, which makes so great a havock among the bad Angels, was given him, we are told, out of the Armory of God.

————— *But the Sword*
Of Michael from the Armory of God,
Was giv'n him temper'd so, that neither keen
Nor solid might resist that Edge: It met
The Sword of Satan, with steep Force to smite
Descending, and in half cut sheer —————

THIS Passage is a Copy of that in *Virgil*, wherein the Poet tells us, that the Sword of *Aeneas*, which was given him by a Deity, broke into Pieces the Sword of *Turnus*, which came from a mortal Forge. As the Moral in this Place is divine, so by the way we may observe, that the bestowing on a Man who is favour'd by Heaven such an allegorical Weapon, is very conformable to the old Eastern way of thinking. Not only *Homer* has made use of it, but we find the *Jewish* Hero in the Book of *Maccabees*, who had fought the Battles of the chosen People with so much Glory and Success, receiving in his Dream a Sword from

the Hand of the Prophet *Jeremiah*. The following Passage, wherein Satan is described as wounded by the Sword of *Michael*, is in Imitation of *Homer*.

*The girding Sword with discontinuous Wound
Pass'd thro' him ; but th' Ethereal Substance clos'd
Not long divisible ; and from the Gash
A Stream of Nectarous Humour issuing flow'd
Sanguine, (such as celestial Spirits may bleed)
And all his Armour stain'd —*

HOMER tells us in the same manner, that upon *Dionides* wounding the Gods, there flow'd from the Wound an *Ichor*, or pure kind of blood, which was not bred from mortal Viands ; and that tho' the Pain was exquisitely great, the Wound soon closed up and healed in those Beings who are vested with Immortality.

I question not but *Milton* in his Description of his furious *Moloch* flying from the Battle, and bellowing with the Wound he had received, had his Eye on *Mars* in the *Iliad* ; who, upon his being wounded, is represented as retiring out of the Fight, and making an Outcry louder than that of a whole Army when it begins the Charge. *Homer* adds, that the *Greeks* and *Trojans* who were engaged in a general Battle, were terrify'd on each side with the bellowing of this wounded Deity. The Reader will easily observe how *Milton* has kept all the Horrour of this Image, without running into the Ridicule of it.

*— Where the Might of Gabriel fought,
And with fierce Ensigns pierc'd the deep Array
Of Moloch, furious King ! who him defy'd,
And at his Chariot-wheels to drag him bound
Threaten'd, nor from the Holy One of Heav'n
Refrain'd his Tongue blasphemous : but anon
Down cloven to the Waste, with shatter'd Arms
And uncouth Pain fled bellowing —*

MILTON has likewise rais'd his Description in this Book with many Images taken out of the poetical Parts of Scripture. The Messiah's Chariot, as I have before taken notice, is formed upon a Vision of *Ezekiel*, who, as *Grotius* observes, has very much in him of *Homer's* Spirit in the Poetical Parts of his Prophecy.

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THE following Lines in that glorious Commission which is given the Messiah to extirpate the Host of Rebel Angels, is drawn from a sublime Passage in the Psalms.

*Go then, thou Mightiest, in thy Father's Might!
Ascend my Chariot, guide the rapid Wheels
That shake Heav'n's Basis; bring forth all my War,
My Bow, my Thunder, my almighty Arms,
Gird on thy Sword on thy puissant Thigh.*

THE Reader will easily discover many other Strokes of the same nature.

THERE is no Question but *Milton* had heated his Imagination with the Fight of the Gods in *Homer*, before he enter'd upon this Engagement of the Angels. *Homer* there gives us a Scene of Men, Heroes, and Gods, mix'd together in Battle. *Mars* animates the contending Armies, and lifts up his Voice in such a manner, that it is heard distinctly amidst all the Shouts and Confusion of the Fight. *Jupiter* at the same time thunders over their Heads; while *Neptune* raises such a Tempest, that the whole Field of Battle and all the Tops of the Mountains shake about them. The Poet tells us, that *Pluto* himself, whose Habitation was in the very Centre of the Earth, was so affrighted at the Shock, that he leapt from his Throne. *Homer* afterwards describes *Vulcan* as pouring down a Storm of Fire upon the River *Xanthus*, and *Minerva* as throwing a Rock at *Mars*; who, he tells us, cover'd seven Acres in his Fall.

AS *Homer* has introduced into his Battle of the Gods every thing that is great and terrible in Nature, *Milton* has filled his Fight of good and bad Angels with all the like Circumstances of Horrour. The Shout of Armies, the Rattling of Brazen Chariots, the Hurling of Rocks and Mountains, the Earthquake, the Fire, the Thunder, are all of them employed to lift up the Reader's Imagination, and give him a suitable Idea of so great an Action. With what Art has the Poet represented the whole Body of the Earth trembling, even before it was created.

*All Heaven resounded, and had Earth been then,
All Earth had to its Centre shook —————*

IN how sublime and just a manner does he afterwards describe the whole Heaven shaking under the Wheels of

the Messiah's Chariot, with that Exception to the Throne of God ?

—— Under his burning Wheels
The stedfast Empyrean shook throughout,
All but the Throne it self of God ——

NOTWITHSTANDING the Messiah appears clothed with so much Terrour and Majesty, the Poet has still found means to make his Readers conceive an Idea of him, beyond what he himself is able to describe.

*Yet half his Strength he put not forth, but cheekt
His Thunder in mid Volley ; for he meant
Not to destroy, but root them out of Heaven.*

IN a word, *Milton's* Genius, which was so great in it self, and so strengthned by all the helps of Learning, appears in his Book every way equal to his Subject, which was the most sublime that could enter into the Thoughts of a Poet. As he knew all the Arts of affecting the Mind, he knew it was necessary to give it certain Resting-places, and Opportunities of recovering it self from time to time : he has therefore with great Address interspersed several Speeches, Reflexions, Similitudes, and the like Reliefs to diversify his Narration, and ease the Attention of the Reader, that he might come fresh to his great Action, and by such a Contrast of Ideas, have a more lively taste of the nobler Parts of his Description.

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Monday,