

**L'ALLEGRO, IL  
PENSEROSO, COMUS,  
AND LYCID**

**By John Milton**

## L'ALLEGRO

HENCE, loathed Melancholy, .....Of Cerberus and blackest  
Midnight born In Stygian cave forlorn .....Mongst horrid shapes, and  
shrieks, and sights unholy! Find out some uncouth cell, .....Where  
brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings, And the night-raven  
sings; .....There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks, As ragged  
as thy locks, .....In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell. But come, thou  
Goddess fair and free, In heaven yclept Euphrosyne, And by men heart-  
easing Mirth; Whom lovely Venus, at a birth, With two sister Graces more,  
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore: Or whether (as some sager sing) The frolic  
wind that breathes the spring, Zephyr, with Aurora playing, As he met her  
once a-Maying, There, on beds of violets blue, And fresh-blown roses  
washed in dew, Filled her with thee, a daughter fair, So buxom, blithe,  
and debonair. Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee Jest, and youthful  
Jollity, Quips and cranks and wanton wiles, Nods and becks and wreathed  
smiles Such as hang on Hebe's cheek, And love to live in dimple sleek;  
Sport that wrinkled Care derides, And Laughter holding both his sides.  
Come, and trip it, as you go, On the light fantastic toe; And in thy right  
hand lead with thee The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty; And, if I give  
thee honour due, Mirth, admit me of thy crew, To live with her, and live  
with thee, In unreproved pleasures free: To hear the lark begin his flight,  
And, singing, startle the dull night, From his watch-tower in the skies, Till  
the dappled dawn doth rise; Then to come, in spite of sorrow, And at my  
window bid good-morrow, Through the sweet-briar or the vine, Or the  
twisted eglantine; While the cock, with lively din, Scatters the rear of  
darkness thin, And to the stack, or the barn-door, Stoutly struts his dames  
before: Oft listening how the hounds and horn Cheerly rouse the  
slumbering morn, From the side of some hoar hill, Through the high wood  
echoing shrill: Sometime walking, not unseen, By hedgerow elms, on  
hillocks green, Right against the eastern gate Where the great Sun begins

his state, Robed in flames and amber light, The clouds in thousand liveries  
dight; While the ploughman, near at hand, Whistles o'er the furrowed land,  
And the milkmaid singeth blithe, And the mower whets his scythe, And  
every shepherd tells his tale Under the hawthorn in the dale. Straight mine  
eye hath caught new pleasures, Whilst the landskip round it measures:  
Russet lawns, and fallows grey, Where the nibbling flocks do stray;  
Mountains on whose barren breast The labouring clouds do often rest;  
Meadows trim, with daisies pied; Shallow brooks, and rivers wide; Towers  
and battlements it sees Bosomed high in tufted trees, Where perhaps some  
beauty lies, The cynosure of neighbouring eyes. Hard by a cottage  
chimney smokes From betwixt two aged oaks, Where Corydon and  
Thyrsis met Are at their savoury dinner set Of herbs and other country  
messes, Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses; And then in haste her  
bower she leaves, With Thestylis to bind the sheaves; Or, if the earlier  
season lead, To the tanned haycock in the mead. Sometimes, with secure  
delight, The upland hamlets will invite, When the merry bells ring round,  
And the jocund rebecks sound To many a youth and many a maid Dancing  
in the chequered shade, And young and old come forth to play On a  
sunshine holiday, Till the livelong daylight fail: Then to the spicy nut-  
brown ale, With stories told of many a feat, How Faery Mab the junkets  
eat. She was pinched and pulled, she said; And he, by Friar's lantern led,  
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat To earn his cream-bowl duly set,  
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn, His shadowy flail hath threshed  
the corn That ten day-labourers could not end; Then lies him down, the  
lubber fiend, And, stretched out all the chimney's length, Basks at the fire  
his hairy strength, And crop-full out of doors he flings, Ere the first cock  
his matin rings. Thus done the tales, to bed they creep, By whispering  
winds soon lulled asleep. Towered cities please us then, And the busy hum  
of men, Where throngs of knights and barons bold, In weeds of peace,  
high triumphs hold With store of ladies, whose bright eyes Rain influence,  
and judge the prize Of wit or arms, while both contend To win her grace  
whom all commend. There let Hymen oft appear In saffron robe, with  
taper clear, And pomp, and feast, and revelry, With mask and antique

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pageantry; Such sights as youthful poets dream On summer eves by  
haunted stream. Then to the well-trod stage anon, If Jonson's learned sock  
be on, Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child, Warble his native wood-  
notes wild. And ever, against eating cares, Lap me in soft Lydian airs,  
Married to immortal verse, Such as the meeting soul may pierce, In notes  
with many a winding bout Of linked sweetness long drawn out With  
wanton heed and giddy cunning, The melting voice through mazes  
running, Untwisting all the chains that tie The hidden soul of harmony;  
That Orpheus' self may heave his head From golden slumber on a bed Of  
heaped Elysian flowers, and hear Such strains as would have won the ear  
Of Pluto to have quite set free His half-regained Eurydice. These delights  
if thou canst give, Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

## IL PENSEROSO

HENCE, vain deluding Joys, .....The brood of Folly without father bred! How little you bested .....Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys! Dwell in some idle brain, .....And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess, As thick and numberless .....As the gay motes that people the sun-beams, Or likest hovering dreams, .....The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train. But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy! Hail, divinest Melancholy! Whose saintly visage is too bright To hit the sense of human sight, And therefore to our weaker view O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue; Black, but such as in esteem Prince Memnon's sister might beseem, Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove To set her beauty's praise above The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended. Yet thou art higher far descended: Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore To solitary Saturn bore; His daughter she; in Saturn's reign Such mixture was not held a stain. Oft in glimmering bowers and glades He met her, and in secret shades Of woody Ida's inmost grove, Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove. Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure, Sober, steadfast, and demure, All in a robe of darkest grain, Flowing with majestic train, And sable stole of cypress lawn Over thy decent shoulders drawn. Come; but keep thy wonted state, With even step, and musing gait, And looks commercing with the skies, Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes: There, held in holy passion still, Forget thyself to marble, till With a sad leaden downward cast Thou fix them on the earth as fast. And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet, Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet, And hears the Muses in a ring Aye round about Jove's altar sing; And add to these retired Leisure, That in trim gardens takes his pleasure; But, first and chiefest, with thee bring Him that yon soars on golden wing, Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne, The Cherub Contemplation; And the mute Silence hist along, 'Less Philomel will deign a song, In her sweetest saddest plight, Smoothing the rugged brow of Night, While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke Gently o'er the accustomed

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oak. Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly, Most musical, most melancholy! Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among I woo, to hear thy even-song; And, missing thee, I walk unseen On the dry smooth-shaven green, To behold the wandering moon, Riding near her highest noon, Like one that had been led astray Through the heaven's wide pathless way, And oft, as if her head she bowed, Stooping through a fleecy cloud. Oft, on a plat of rising ground, I hear the far-off curfew sound, Over some wide-watered shore, Swinging slow with sullen roar; Or, if the air will not permit, Some still removed place will fit, Where glowing embers through the room Teach light to counterfeit a gloom, Far from all resort of mirth, Save the cricket on the hearth, Or the bellman's drowsy charm To bless the doors from nightly harm. Or let my lamp, at midnight hour, Be seen in some high lonely tower, Where I may oft outwatch the Bear, With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere The spirit of Plato, to unfold What worlds or what vast regions hold The immortal mind that hath forsook Her mansion in this fleshly nook; And of those demons that are found In fire, air, flood, or underground, Whose power hath a true consent With planet or with element. Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy In sceptred pall come sweeping by, Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line, Or the tale of Troy divine, Or what (though rare) of later age Ennobled hath the buskined stage. But, O sad Virgin! that thy power Might raise Musaeus from his bower; Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing Such notes as, warbled to the string, Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek, And made Hell grant what love did seek; Or call up him that left half-told The story of Cambuscan bold, Of Camball, and of Algarsife, And who had Canace to wife, That owned the virtuous ring and glass, And of the wondrous horse of brass On which the Tartar king did ride; And if aught else great bards beside In sage and solemn tunes have sung, Of turneys, and of trophies hung, Of forests, and enchantments drear, Where more is meant than meets the ear. Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career, Till civil-suited Morn appear, Not tricked and frownced, as she was wont With the Attic boy to hunt, But kerchieft in a comely cloud While rocking winds are piping loud, Or ushered with a shower still, When the gust hath blown his fill, Ending on the rustling leaves, With

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minute-drops from off the eaves. And, when the sun begins to fling His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring To arched walks of twilight groves, And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves, Of pine, or monumental oak, Where the rude axe with heaved stroke Was never heard the nymphs to daunt, Or fright them from their hallowed haunt. There, in close covert, by some brook, Where no profaner eye may look, Hide me from day's garish eye, While the bee with honeyed thigh, That at her flowery work doth sing, And the waters murmuring, With such consort as they keep, Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep. And let some strange mysterious dream Wave at his wings, in airy stream Of lively portraiture displayed, Softly on my eyelids laid; And, as I wake, sweet music breathe Above, about, or underneath, Sent by some Spirit to mortals good, Or the unseen Genius of the wood. But let my due feet never fail To walk the studious cloister's pale, And love the high embowed roof, With antique pillars massy proof, And storied windows richly dight, Casting a dim religious light. There let the pealing organ blow, To the full-voiced quire below, In service high and anthems clear, As may with sweetness, through mine ear, Dissolve me into ecstasies, And bring all Heaven before mine eyes. And may at last my weary age Find out the peaceful hermitage, The hairy gown and mossy cell, Where I may sit and rightly spell Of every star that heaven doth shew, And every herb that sips the dew, Till old experience do attain To something like prophetic strain. These pleasures, Melancholy, give; And I with thee will choose to live.

# COMUS

A MASQUE PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634, BEFORE  
THE EARL OF BRIDGEWATER, THEN PRESIDENT OF WALES.

The Persons

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, afterwards in the habit of  
THYRSIS. COMUS, with his Crew. The LADY. FIRST BROTHER.  
SECOND BROTHER. SABRINA, the Nymph.

The Chief Persons which presented were:--

The Lord Brackley; Mr. Thomas Egerton, his Brother; The Lady Alice  
Egerton.

The first Scene discovers a wild wood. The  
ATTENDANT SPIRIT descends or enters.

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court My mansion is, where  
those immortal shapes Of bright aerial spirits live insphered In regions  
mild of calm and serene air, Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot  
Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care, Confined and  
pestered in this pinfold here, Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,  
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives, After this mortal change, to her  
true servants Amongst the enthroned gods on sainted seats. Yet some there  
be that by due steps aspire To lay their just hands on that golden key That  
opes the palace of eternity. To Such my errand is; and, but for such, I  
would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds With the rank vapours of this  
sin-worn mould.

But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway Of  
every salt flood and each ebbing stream, Took in by lot, 'twixt high and  
nether Jove, Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles That, like to rich and  
various gems, inlay The unadorned bosom of the deep; Which he, to grace  
his tributary gods, By course commits to several government, And gives  
them leave to wear their sapphire crowns And wield their little tridents.  
But this Isle, The greatest and the best of all the main, He quarters to his  
blue-haired deities; And all this tract that fronts the falling sun A noble  
Peer of mickle trust and power Has in his charge, with tempered awe to

guide An old and haughty nation, proud in arms: Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore, Are coming to attend their father's state, And new-intrusted sceptre. But their way Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood, The nodding horror of whose shady brows Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger; And here their tender age might suffer peril, But that, by quick command from sovran Jove, I was despatched for their defence and guard: And listen why; for I will tell you now What never yet was heard in tale or song, From old or modern bard, in hall or bower. Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape Crushed the sweet poison of misused wine, After the Tuscan mariners transformed, Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed, On Circe's island fell. (Who knows not Circe, The daughter of the Sun, whose charmed cup Whoever tasted lost his upright shape, And downward fell into a grovelling swine?) This Nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks, With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth, Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son Much like his father, but his mother more, Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus named: Who, ripe and frolic of his full-grown age, Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields, At last betakes him to this ominous wood, And, in thick shelter of black shades imbowered, Excels his mother at her mighty art; Offering to every weary traveller His orient liquor in a crystal glass, To quench the drouth of Phoebus; which as they taste (For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst), Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance, The express resemblance of the gods, is changed Into some brutish form of wolf or bear, Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat, All other parts remaining as they were. And they, so perfect is their misery, Not once perceive their foul disfigurement, But boast themselves more comely than before, And all their friends and native home forget, To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty. Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove Chances to pass through this adventurous glade, Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy, As now I do. But first I must put off These my sky-robcs, spun out of Iris' woof, And take the weeds and likeness of a swain That to the service of this house belongs, Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song, Well knows to

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still the wild winds when they roar, And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith And in this office of his mountain watch Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid Of this occasion. But I hear the tread Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

COMUS enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other: with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistering. They come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.

COMUS. The star that bids the shepherd fold Now the top of heaven doth hold; And the gilded car of day His glowing axle doth allay In the steep Atlantic stream; And the slope sun his upward beam Shoots against the dusky pole, Pacing toward the other goal Of his chamber in the east. Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast, Midnight shout and revelry, Tipsy dance and jollity. Braid your locks with rosy twine, Dropping odours, dropping wine. Rigour now is gone to bed; And Advice with scrupulous head, Strict Age, and sour Severity, With their grave saws, in slumber lie. We, that are of purer fire, Imitate the starry quire, Who, in their nightly watchful spheres, Lead in swift round the months and years. The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove, Now to the moon in wavering morrice move; And on the tawny sands and shelves Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves. By dimpled brook and fountain-brim, The wood-nymphs, decked with daisies trim, Their merry wakes and pastimes keep: What hath night to do with sleep? Night hath better sweets to prove; Venus now wakes, and wakens Love. Come, let us our rights begin; 'T is only daylight that makes sin, Which these dun shades will ne'er report. Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport, Dark-veiled Cotytto, to whom the secret flame Of midnight torches burns! mysterious dame, That ne'er art called but when the dragon womb Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom, And makes one blot of all the air! Stay thy cloudy ebon chair, Wherein thou ridest with Hecat', and befriend Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end Of all thy dues be done, and none left out, Ere the blabbing eastern scout, The nice Morn on the Indian steep, From her cabined loop-hole peep, And to the tell-tale Sun descry Our concealed solemnity. Come, knit hands, and

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beat the ground In a light fantastic round.

The Measure.

Break off, break off! I feel the different pace Of some chaste footing near about this ground. Run to your shrouds within these brakes and trees; Our number may affright. Some virgin sure (For so I can distinguish by mine art) Benighted in these woods! Now to my charms, And to my wily trains: I shall ere long Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl My dazzling spells into the spongy air, Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion, And give it false presentments, lest the place And my quaint habits breed astonishment, And put the damsel to suspicious flight; Which must not be, for that's against my course. I, under fair pretence of friendly ends, And well-placed words of glozing courtesy, Baited with reasons not unplausible, Wind me into the easy-hearted man, And hug him into snares. When once her eye Hath met the virtue of this magic dust, I shall appear some harmless villager Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear. But here she comes; I fairly step aside, And hearken, if I may her business hear.

The LADY enters.

LADY. This way the noise was, if mine ear be true, My best guide now. Methought it was the sound Of riot and ill-managed merriment, Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe Stirs up among the loose unlettered hinds, When, for their teeming flocks and granges full, In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan, And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth To meet the rudeness and swilled insolence Of such late wassailers; yet, oh! where else Shall I inform my unacquainted feet In the blind mazes of this tangled wood? My brothers, when they saw me wearied out With this long way, resolving here to lodge Under the spreading favour of these pines, Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket-side To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit As the kind hospitable woods provide. They left me then when the grey-hooded Even, Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed, Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phoebus' wain. But where they are, and why they came not back, Is now the labour of my thoughts. TTis likeliest They had engaged their wandering steps too

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far; And envious darkness, ere they could return, Had stole them from me. Else, O thievish Night, Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end, In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps With everlasting oil to give due light To the misled and lonely traveller? This is the place, as well as I may guess, Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear; Yet nought but single darkness do I find. What might this be ? A thousand fantasies Begin to throng into my memory, Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire, And airy tongues that syllable men's names On sands and shores and desert wildernesses. These thoughts may startle well, but not astound The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended By a strong siding champion, Conscience. O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope, Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings, And thou unblemished form of Chastity! I see ye visibly, and now believe That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill Are but as slavish officers of vengeance, Would send a glistering guardian, if need were, To keep my life and honour unassailed. . . . Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud Turn forth her silver lining on the night? I did not err: there does a sable cloud Turn forth her silver lining on the night, And casts a gleam over this tufted grove. I cannot hallo to my brothers, but Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest I'll venture; for my new-enlivened spirits Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

Song.

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen  
Within thy airy shell By slow Meander's margent green, And  
in the violet-embroidered vale Where the love-lorn nightingale  
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well: Canst thou not tell me of a  
gentle pair That likest thy Narcissus are?  
O, if thou have Hid them in some flowery cave,  
Tell me but where, Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the  
Sphere! So may'st thou be translated to the skies, And give  
resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies!

COMUS. Can any mortal mixture of earthUs mould

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Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment? Sure something holy lodges in that breast, And with these raptures moves the vocal air To testify his hidden residence. How sweetly did they float upon the wings Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night, At every fall smoothing the raven down Of darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard My mother Circe with the Sirens three, Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades, Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs, Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul, And lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept, And chid her barking waves into attention, And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause. Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense, And in sweet madness robbed it of itself; But such a sacred and home-felt delight, Such sober certainty of waking bliss, I never heard till now. I'll speak to her, And she shall be my queen. QHail, foreign wonder! Whom certain these rough shades did never breed, Unless the goddess that in rural shrine Dwell'st here with Pan or Sylvan, by blest song Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

LADY. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise That is addressed to unattending ears. Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift How to regain my severed company, Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo To give me answer from her mossy couch.

COMUS: What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?

LADY. Dim darkness and this leafy labyrinth.

COMUS. Could

that divide you from near-ushering guides?

LADY. They left

me weary on a grassy turf.

COMUS. By falsehood, or

discourtesy, or why?

LADY. To seek i' the valley some cool

friendly spring.

COMUS. And left your fair side all unguarded,

Lady?

LADY. They were but twain, and purposed quick return.

COMUS. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.

LADY.

How easy my misfortune is to hit!

COMUS. Imports their loss,

beside the present need?

LADY. No less than if I should my

brothers lose.

COMUS. Were they of manly prime, or youthful

bloom?

LADY. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazored lips.

COMUS. Two such I saw, what time the laboured ox In his loose traces

from the furrow came, And the swinked hedger at his supper sat. I saw

them under a green mantling vine, That crawls along the side of yon small hill, Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots; Their port was more than human, as they stood. I took it for a faery vision Of some gay creatures of the element, That in the colours of the rainbow live, And play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-strook, And, as I passed, I worshiped. If those you seek, It were a journey like the path to Heaven To help you find them.

LADY.

Gentle villager,

What readiest way would bring me to that place?

COMUS.

Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

LADY. To find out

that, good shepherd, I suppose, In such a scant allowance of star-light, Would overtask the best land-pilot's art, Without the sure guess of well-practised feet.

COMUS. I know each lane, and every alley green, Dingle, or bushy dell, of this wild wood, And every bosky bourn from side to side, My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood; And, if your stray attendance be yet lodged, Or shroud within these limits, I shall know Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise, I can conduct you, Lady, to a low But loyal cottage, where you may be safe Till further quest.

LADY.

Shepherd,

I take thy word, And trust thy honest-offered courtesy, Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds, With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls And courts of princes, where it first was named, And yet is most pretended. In a place Less warranted than this, or less secure, I cannot be, that I should fear to change it. Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial To my proportioned strength! Shepherd, lead on.

The TWO BROTHERS.

ELD. BRO. Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon, That wont'st to love the traveller's benison, Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud, And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here In double night of darkness and of shades; Or, if your influence be quite dammed up With black usurping mists, some gentle taper, Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole Of some clay habitation, visit us With thy long levelled rule of streaming light, And thou shalt be our star of Arcady, Or Tyrian Cynosure.

SEC. BRO.

Or, if our eyes Be barred that

happiness, might we but hear  
The folded flocks, penned in their wattled  
cotes, Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,  
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock  
Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,  
'T would be some solace yet, some little cheering,  
In this close dungeon of innumerable boughs.  
But, oh, that hapless virgin, our lost sister!  
Where may she wander now, whither betake her  
From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles  
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,  
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm  
Leans her unpillowed head, fraught with sad fears.  
What if in wild amazement and affright,  
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp  
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat!  
ELD. BRO. Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite  
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;  
For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,  
What need a man forestall his date of grief,  
And run to meet what he would most avoid?  
Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,  
How bitter is such self-delusion!  
I do not think my sister so to seek,  
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,  
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,  
As that the single want of light and noise  
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)  
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,  
And put them into misbecoming plight.  
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would  
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon  
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self  
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,  
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,  
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,  
That, in the various bustle of resort,  
Were all to-ruffled, and sometimes impaired.  
He that has light within his own clear breast  
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:  
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts  
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;  
Himself is his own dungeon.  
SEC. BRO.

'Tis most true That musing  
meditation most affects  
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,  
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,  
And sits as safe as in a senate house  
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,  
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,  
Or do his grey hairs any violence?  
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree  
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard  
Of dragon-watch with unenchanted eye  
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,

From the rash hand of bold Incontinence. You may as well spread out the  
unsunned heaps Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den, And tell me it is  
safe, as bid me hope Danger will wink on Opportunity, And let a single  
helpless maiden pass Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste. Of night or  
loneliness it recks me not; I fear the dread events that dog them both, Lest  
some ill-greeting touch attempt the person Of our unowned sister.

ELD. BRO.

I do not, brother, Infer as if I thought my sister's  
state Secure without all doubt or controversy; Yet, where an equal poise of  
hope and fear Does arbitrate the event, my nature is That I incline to hope  
rather than fear, And gladly banish squint suspicion. My sister is not so  
defenceless left As you imagine; she has a hidden strength, Which you  
remember not.

SEC. BRO..

What hidden strength, Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?  
ELD. BRO. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength, Which, if Heaven  
gave it, may be termed her own. 'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity: She  
that has that is clad in complete steel, And, like a quivered nymph with  
arrows keen, May trace huge forests, and unharboured heaths, Infamous  
hills, and sandy perilous wilds; Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,  
No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer, Will dare to soil her virgin  
purity. Yea, there where very desolation dwells, By grotts and caverns  
shagged with horrid shades, She may pass on with unblenched majesty, Be  
it not done in pride, or in presumption. Some say no evil thing that walks  
by night, In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen, Blue meagre hag, or  
stubborn unlaid ghost, That breaks his magic chains at curfew time, No  
goblin or swart faery of the mine, Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.  
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call Antiquity from the old schools of  
Greece To testify the arms of chastity? Hence had the huntress Dian her  
dread bow Fair silver-shafted queen for ever chaste, Wherewith she tamed  
the brinded lioness And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought The  
frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men Feared her stern frown, and she was  
queen o' the woods. What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield That wise  
Minerva wore, unconquered virgin, Wherewith she freezed her foes to  
congealed stone, But rigid looks of chaste austerity, And noble grace that

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dashed brute violence With sudden adoration and blank awe? So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity That, when a soul is found sincerely so, A thousand liveried angels lackey her, Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt, And in clear dream and solemn vision Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear; Till oft converse with heavenly habitants Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape, The unpolluted temple of the mind, And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence, Till all be made immortal. But, when lust, By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk, But most by lewd and lavish act of sin, Lets ill defilement to the inward parts, The soul grows clotted by contagion, Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite loose The divine property of her first being. Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres, Lingered and sitting by a new-made grave, As loth to leave the body that it loved, And linked itself by carnal sensuality To a degenerate and degraded state. SEC. BRO. How charming is divine Philosophy! Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose, But musical as is Apollo's lute, And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets, Where no crude surfeit reigns. Eld. Bro. List! list! I hear Some far-off hallo break the silent air. SEC. BRO. Methought so too; what should it be? ELD. BRO. For certain. Either some one, like us, night-founded here, Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst, Some roving robber calling to his fellows. SEC. BRO. Heaven keep my sister! Again, again, and near! Best draw, and stand upon our guard. ELD. BRO. I'll hallo! If he be friendly, he comes well: if not, Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us!

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, habited like a shepherd.

That hallo I should know. What are you? speak. Come not too near; you fall on iron stakes else. SPIR. What voice is that? my young Lord? speak again. SEC. BRO. O brother, Tt is my father's Shepherd, sure. ELD. BRO. Thyrsis! whose artful strains have of delayed The huddling brook to hear his madrigal, And sweetened every musk-rose of the dale. How camest thou here, good swain? Hath any ram Slipped from the fold, or young kid lost his dam, Or

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straggling wether the pent flock forsook? How couldst thou find this dark sequestered nook?

SPIR. O my loved master's heir, and his next joy, I came not here on such a trivial toy As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought To this my errand, and the care it brought. But, oh ! my virgin Lady, where is she? How chance she is not in your company?

ELD. BRO. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.

SPIR. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.

ELD. BRO. What

fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee briefly shew.

SPIR. I'll tell ye. 'T

is not vain or fabulous (Though so esteemed by shallow igrlorance) What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse, Storied of old in high immortal verse Of dire Chimeras and enchanted isles, And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell; For such there be, but unbelief is blind. Within the navel of this hideous wood, Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells, Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus, Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries, And here to every thirsty wanderer By sly enticement gives his baneful cup, With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison The visage quite transforms of him that drinks, And the inglorious likeness of a beast Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage Charactered in the face. This have I learnt Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts That brow this bottom glade; whence night by night He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey, Doing abhorred rites to Hecate In their obscured haunts of inmost bowers. Yet have they many baits and guileful spells To inveigle and invite the unwary sense Of them that pass unweeting by the way. This evening late, by then the chewing flocks Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold, I sat me down to watch upon a bank With ivy canopied, and interwove With flaunting honeysuckle, and began, Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy, To meditate my rural minstrelsy, Till fancy had her fill. But ere a close The wonted roar was up amidst the woods, And filled the air with barbarous dissonance; At which I ceased, and listened them awhile, Till an unusual stop of sudden silence

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Gave respite to the drowsy-flighted steeds That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep. At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes, And stole upon the air, that even Silence Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might Deny her nature, and be never more, Still to be so displaced. I was all ear, And took in strains that might create a soul Under the ribs of Death. But, oh! ere long Too well I did perceive it was the voice Of my most honoured Lady, your dear sister. Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear; And RO poor hapless nightingale," thought I, How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!" Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste, Through paths and turnings often trod by day, Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise (For so by certain signs I knew), had met Already, ere my best speed could prevent, The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey; Who gently asked if he had seen such two, Supposing him some neighbour villager. Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung Into swift flight, till I had found you here; But further know I not. SEC. BRO.

O night and shades, How are ye joined with hell in triple knot Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin, Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence You gave me, brother? ELD. BRO.

Yes, and keep it still; Lean on it safely; not a period Shall be unsaid for me. Against the threats Of malice or of sorcery, or that power Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm: Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt, Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled; Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm Shall in the happy trial prove most glory. But evil on itself shall back recoil, And mix no more with goodness, when at last, Gathered like scum, and settled to itself, It shall be in eternal restless change Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail, The pillared firmament is rottenness, And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on! Against the opposing will and arm of heaven May never this just sword be lifted up; But, for that damned magician, let him be girt With all the griesly legions that troop Under the sooty flag of Acheron, Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms 'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out, And force

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him to return his purchase back, Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,  
Cursed as his life. SPIR. Alas! good venturous  
youth, I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise; But here thy sword can do  
thee little stead. Far other arms and other weapons must Be those that  
quell the might of hellish charms. He with his bare wand can unthread thy  
joints, And crumble all thy sinews. ELD. BRO.  
Why, prithee, Shepherd, How durst thou then thyself approach so near As  
to make this relation? SPIR.  
Care and utmost shifts How to secure the Lady from surprisal Brought to  
my mind a certain shepherd lad, Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled  
In every virtuous plant and healing herb That spreads her verdant leaf to  
the morning ray. He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing; Which  
when I did, he on the tender grass Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy,  
And in requital ope his leathern scrip, And show me simples of a thousand  
names, Telling their strange and vigorous faculties. Amongst the rest a  
small unsightly root, But of divine effect, he culled me out. The leaf was  
darkish, and had prickles on it, But in another country, as he said, Bore a  
bright golden flower, but not in this soil: Unknown, and like esteemed, and  
the dull swain Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon; And yet more  
med'cinal is it than that Moly That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave. He  
called it Haemony, and gave it me, And bade me keep it as of sovran use  
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp, Or ghastly Furies'  
apparition. I pursed it up, but little reckoning made, Till now that this  
extremity compelled. But now I find it true; for by this means I knew the  
foul enchanter, though disguised, Entered the very lime-twigs of his spells,  
And yet came off. If you have this about you (As I will give you when we  
go), you may Boldly assault the necromancer's hall; Where if he be, with  
dauntless hardihood And brandished blade rush on him: break his glass,  
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground; But seize his wand. Though  
he and his curst crew Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high, Or, like  
the sons of Vulcan, vomit smoke, Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.  
ELD. BRO. Thyrsis, lead on apace; I'll follow thee; And some good angel  
bear a shield before us!

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The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music, tables spread with all dainties. Comus appears with his rabble, and the LADY set in an enchanted chair; to whom he offers his glass; which she puts by, and goes about to rise.

COMUS. Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand, Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster, And you a statue, or as Daphne was, Root-bound, that fled Apollo. LADY.

Fool, do not boast. Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind With all thy charms, although this corporal rind Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good.

COMUS. Why are you vexed, Lady? why do you frown? Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts, When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns Brisk as the April buds in primrose season. And first behold this cordial julep here, That flames and dances in his crystal bounds, With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed. Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena Is of such power to stir up joy as this, To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst. Why should you be so cruel to yourself, And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent For gentle usage and soft delicacy? But you invert the covenants of her trust, And harshly deal, like an ill borrower, With that which you received on other terms, Scorning the unexempt condition By which all mortal frailty must subsist, Refreshment after toil, ease after pain, That have been tired all day without repast, And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin, This will restore all soon. LADY.

'T will not, false traitor! 'T will not restore the truth and honesty That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies. Was this the cottage and the safe abode Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these, These oughly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me! Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver! Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence With vizored falsehood and base forgery? And would'st thou seek again to trap me here With liquorish baits, fit to ensnare a brute? Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets, I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None But such as are good men can give good things;

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And that which is not good is not delicious To a well-governed and wise appetite.

COMUS. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur, And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub, Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence! Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth With such a full and unwithdrawing hand, Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks, Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable, But all to please and sate the curious taste? And set to work millions of spinning worms, That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk, To deck her sons; and, that no corner might Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins She hatched the all-worshipped ore and precious gems, To store her children with. If all the world Should, in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse, Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze, The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised, Not half his riches known and yet despised; And we should serve him as a grudging master, As a penurious niggard of his wealth, And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons, Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight, And strangled with her waste fertility: The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with plumes, The herds would over-multitude their lords; The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought diamonds Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep, And so bestud with stars, that they below Would grow inured to light, and come at last To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows. List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozened With that same vaunted name, Virginitie. Beauty is Nature's coin; must not be hoarded, But must be current; and the good thereof Consists in mutual and partaken bliss, Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself. If you let slip time, like a neglected rose It withers on the stalk with languished head. Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities, Where most may wonder at the workmanship. It is for homely features to keep home; They had their name thence: coarse complexions And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool. What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that, Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn? There was another meaning in these gifts; Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet. LADY. I

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had not thought to have unlocked my lips In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes, Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb. I hate when vice can bolt her arguments And virtue has no tongue to check her pride. Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature, As if she would her children should be riotous With her abundance. She, good cateress, Means her provision only to the good, That live according to her sober laws, And holy dictate of spare Temperance. If every just man that now pines with want Had but a moderate and beseeming share Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury Now heaps upon some few with vast excess, Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed In unsuperfluous even proportion, And she no whit encumbered with her store; And then the Giver would be better thanked, His praise due paid: for swinish gluttony Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast, But with besotted base ingratitude Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on Or have I said enow? To him that dares Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words Against the sun-clad power of chastity Fain would I something say;--yet to what end? Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend The sublime notion and high mystery That must be uttered to unfold the sage And serious doctrine of Virginitie; And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know More happiness than this thy present lot. Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric, That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence; Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced. Yet, should I try, the uncontrolled worth Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits To such a flame of sacred vehemence That dumb things would be moved to sympathise, And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake, Till all thy magic structures, reared so high, Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.

COMUS. She fables not. I feel that I do fear Her words set off by some superior power; And, though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble, And try her yet more strongly.--Come, no more ! This is mere moral babble, and direct Against the canon laws of our foundation. I must not suffer this; yet 't is but the lees And settlings of a melancholy blood.

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But this will cure all straight; one sip of this Will bathe the drooping spirits  
in delight Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.

The BROTHERS rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his  
hand, and break it against the ground: his rout make sign of resistance, but  
are all driven in. The ATTENDANT SPIRIT comes in. SPIR .

What! have you let the false enchanter scape? O ye mistook; ye should  
have snatched his wand, And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,  
And backward mutters of dissevering power, We cannot free the Lady that  
sits here In stony fetters fixed and motionless. Yet stay: be not disturbed;  
now I bethink me, Some other means I have which may be used, Which  
once of Meliboeus old I learnt, The soothest shepherd that e'er piped on  
plains.

There is a gentle Nymph not far from hence, That with  
moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream: Sabrina is her name: a virgin  
pure; Whilom she was the daughter of Loctrine, That had the sceptre from  
his father Brute. She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit Of her  
enraged stepdame, Guendolen, Commended her fair innocence to the  
flood That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course. The water-  
nymphs, that in the bottom played, Held up their pearled wrists, and took  
her in, Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall; Who, piteous of her woes,  
reared her lank head, And gave her to his daughters to imbathe In nectared  
lavers strewed with asphodil, And through the porch and inlet of each  
sense Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived, And underwent a quick  
immortal change, Made Goddess of the river. Still she retains Her maiden  
gentleness, and oft at eve Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,  
Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs That the shrewd meddling elf  
delights to make, Which she with precious vial'd liquors heals: For which  
the shepherds, at their festivals, Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,  
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream Of pansies, pinks, and  
gaudy daffodils. And, as the old swain said, she can unlock The clasping  
charm, and thaw the numbing spell, If she be right invoked in warbled  
song; For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift To aid a virgin, such as  
was herself, In hard-besetting need. This will I try, And add the power of  
some adjuring verse.

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SONG.

Sabrina fair, Listen where thou art  
sitting Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,  
In twisted braids of lilies knitting The loose train of thy amber-  
dropping hair; Listen for dear honour's sake,  
Goddess of the silver lake, Listen and save!

Listen, and appear to us, In name of great Oceanus. By the earth-  
shaking Neptune's mace, And Tethys' grave majestic pace; By hoary  
Nereus' wrinkled look, And the Carpathian wizard's hook; By scaly  
Triton's winding shell, And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell; By Leucothea's  
lovely hands, And her son that rules the strands; By Thetis' tinsel-slipped  
feet, And the songs of Sirens sweet; By dead Parthenope's dear tomb, And  
fair Ligea's golden comb, Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks Sleeking  
her soft alluring locks; By all the Nymphs that nightly dance Upon thy  
streams with wily glance; Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head From thy  
coral-paven bed, And bridle in thy headlong wave, Till thou our summons  
answered have. Listen and save!

SABRINA rises, attended by water-nymphs, and sings.

By the rushy-fringed bank, Where grows the willow and the osier dank,  
My sliding chariot stays, Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen Of  
turkis blue, and emerald green, That in the channel strays;  
Whilst from off the waters fleet Thus I set my printless feet O'er the  
cowslip's velvet head, That bends not as I tread. Gentle swain,  
at thy request I am here!

SPIR. Goddess dear, We implore thy powerful hand To  
undo the charmed band Of true virgin here distressed Through the force  
and through the wile Of unblessed enchanter vile. SABR.  
Shepherd, 't is my office best To help ensnared chastity. Brightest Lady,  
look on me. Thus I sprinkle on thy breast Drops that from my fountain  
pure I have kept of precious cure; Thrice upon thy finger's tip, Thrice upon  
thy rubied lip: Next this marble venom'd seat, Smear'd with gums of  
glutinous heat, I touch with chaste palms moist and cold. Now the spell

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hath lost his hold; And I must haste ere morning hour To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

SABRINA descends, and the LADY rises out of her seat.

SPIR. Virgin, daughter of Loctrine, Sprung of old Anchises' line, May thy brimmed waves for this Their full tribute never miss From a thousand petty rills, That tumble down the snowy hills: Summer drouth or singed air Never scorch thy tresses fair, Nor wet October's torrent flood Thy molten crystal fill with mud; May thy billows roll ashore The beryl and the golden ore; May thy lofty head be crowned With many a tower and terrace round, And here and there thy banks Upon With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

Come, Lady; while Heaven lends us grace, Let us fly this cursed place, Lest the sorcerer us entice With some other new device. Not a waste or needless sound Till we come to holier ground. I shall be your faithful guide Through this gloomy covert wide; And not many furlongs thence Is your Father's residence, Where this night are met in state Many a friend to gratulate His wished presence, and beside All the swains that there abide With jigs and rural dance resort. We shall catch them at their sport, And our sudden coming there Will double all their mirth and cheer. Come, let us haste; the stars grow high, But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town, and the PresidentUs Castle: then come in Country Dancers; after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, with the two BROTHERS and the LADY.

SONG.

SPIR. Back, shepherds, back! Enough your play Till next sun-shine holiday. Here be, without duck or nod, Other trippings to be trod Of lighter toes, and such court guise As Mercury did first devise With the mincing Dryades On the lawns and on the leas.

The second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.

Noble Lord and Lady bright, I have brought ye new delight. Here behold so goodly grown Three fair branches of your own. Heaven hath timely tried their youth, Their faith, their patience, and their truth, And sent them here through hard assays With a crown of deathless praise,

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To triumph in victorious dance O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

The dances ended, the SPIRIT epiloguizes.

SPIR. To the ocean now I fly, And those happy climes that lie  
Where day never shuts his eye, Up in the broad fields of the sky. There  
I suck the liquid air, All amidst the gardens fair Of Hesperus, and his  
daughters three That sing about the golden tree. Along the crisped shades  
and bowers Revels the spruce and jocund Spring; The Graces and the  
rosy-bosomed Hours Thither all their bounties bring. There eternal  
Summer dwells; And west winds with musky wing About the cedarn  
alleys fling Nard and cassia's balmy smells. Iris there with humid bow  
Waters the odorous banks, that blow Flowers of more mingled hue Than  
her purpled scarf can shew, And drenches with Elysian dew (List, mortals,  
if your ears be true) Beds of hyacinth and roses, Where young Adonis oft  
reposes, Waxing well of his deep wound, In slumber soft, and on the  
ground Sadly sits the Assyrian queen. But far above, in spangled sheen,  
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced Holds his dear Psyche, sweet  
entranced After her wandering labours long, Till free consent the gods  
among Make her his eternal bride, And from her fair unspotted side Two  
blissful twins are to be born, Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.  
But now my task is smoothly done: I can fly, or I can run, Quickly to the  
green earth's end, Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend, And from  
thence can soar as soon To the corners of the moon. Mortals, that would  
follow me, Love virtue; she alone is free. She can teach ye how to climb  
Higher than the spherie chime; Or, if Virtue feeble were, Heaven itself  
would stoop to her.

## LYCIDAS

In this Monody the author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and, by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more, Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere, I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude, And with forced fingers rude Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year. Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear Compels me to disturb your season due; For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime, Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer. Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme. He must not float upon his watery bier Unwept, and welter to the parching wind, Without the meed of some melodious tear. Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring; Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string. Hence with denial vain and coy excuse: So may some gentle Muse With lucky words favour my destined urn, And as he passes turn, And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill, Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill; Together both, ere the high lawns appeared Under the opening eyelids of the Morn, We drove a-field, and both together heard What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn, Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night, Oft till the star that rose at evening bright Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel. Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute; Tempered to the oaten flute, Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel From the glad sound would not be absent long; And old Damoetas loved to hear our song. But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone, Now thou art gone and never must return! Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves, With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown, And all their echoes, mourn. The willows, and the hazel copses green, Shall now no more be seen Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays. As killing as the canker to the



eclipse, and rigged with curses dark, That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next, Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow, His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge, Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe. Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, Rmy dearest pledge?" Last came, and last did go, The Pilot of the Galilean Lake; Two massy keys he bore of metals twain. (The golden opes, the iron shuts amain). He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:-- RHow well could I have spared for thee, young swain, Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake, Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold! Of other care they little reckoning make Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast, And shove away the worthy bidden guest. Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least That to the faithful herdman's art belongs! What recks it them? What need they? They are sped: And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw; The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed, But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw, Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread; Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw Daily devours apace, and nothing said. But that two-handed engine at the door Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past That shrunk thy streams; return Sicilian Muse, And call the vales, and bid them hither cast Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues. Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks, On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks, Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes, That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers, And purple all the ground with vernal flowers. Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies, The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine, The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet, The glowing violet, The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine, With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head, And every flower that sad embroidery wears; Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed, And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies. For so, to interpose a little ease, Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise, Ay me! whilst thee the

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shores and sounding seas Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;  
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides, Where thou perhaps under the  
whelming tide Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world; Or whether thou,  
to our moist vows denied, Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old, Where the  
great Vision of the guarded mount Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's  
hold. Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth: And, O ye  
dolphins, waft the hapless youth. Weep no more, woeful  
shepherds, weep no more, For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead, Sunk  
though he be beneath the watery floor. So sinks the day-star in the ocean  
bed, And yet anon repairs his drooping head, And tricks his beams, and  
with new-spangled ore Flames in the forehead of the morning sky: So  
Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high, Through the dear might of Him that  
walked the waves, Where, other groves and other streams along, With  
nectar pure his oozy locks he laves, And hears the unexpressive nuptial  
song, In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love. There entertain him all  
the Saints above, In solemn troops, and sweet societies, That Sing, and  
singing in their glory move, And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.  
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more; Henceforth thou art the  
Genius of the shore, In thy large recompense, and shalt be good To all that  
wander in that perilous flood. Thus sang the uncouth swain to  
the oaks and rills, While the still morn went out with sandals grey: He  
touched the tender stops of various quills, With eager thought warbling his  
Doric lay: And now the sun had stretched out all the hills, And now was  
dropt into the western bay. At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:  
Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.