



## Life, Literature and Education.



**John Milton.**

John Milton was born in London on the 9th of December, 1608. His grandfather was an ardent Catholic who had disowned his son, the poet's father, for becoming a Protestant. This elder John Milton then became a lawyer in London, and labored strongly and well at his accustomed work. The younger Milton inherited from his father that stern, unbending religious nature which had resulted in the father's disinheritor, but also from him came some of the gaiety, the intellectual culture and the love of music which the poet possessed. The boy's education was most carefully looked after by his father, who advised him to add Italian and French to the Greek, Latin and Hebrew which he learned at school, and who took care that his son should have also a knowledge of English literature. He went to Cambridge, and was designed for the church, but the corruption of the episcopacy of the time was so great that Milton refused to become a priest whose ministry could only be bought "with servitude and forswearing."

He left Cambridge and went to the new home his father had found at Horton, a little village in the neighborhood of Windsor, and there devoted himself to his studies and writing. During his college life, when in his twenty-first year, he had written his noble "Hymn on the Nativity," than which we have no nobler poem on the birth of Christ in the English language. During the six years he lived in Horton he wrote a great deal, "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Arcades," "Comus," and "Lycidas," being the chief works of that period. In April, 1638, he left home and travelled for fifteen months in France and Italy, where he enjoyed the society of the choicest wits and met many of the celebrities of the day, including Galileo, whom he visited in the prison at Florence.

In 1643 he married Mary Powell, the daughter of a cavalier, of Oxfordshire. The marriage was not an ideal one, though he treated both his wife and her parents with great generosity. They went to London, where he wrote many pamphlets on

religious, social and moral topics, one of them, "Areopagitica," a speech for the liberty of unlicensed printing, being considered the noblest of his prose works. In 1649, owing to his knowledge of Latin, he was appointed foreign or Latin Secretary to Cromwell's council of state. It fell to his lot to send the letters to the Duke of Savoy, expressing English indignation at the massacre of the Vaudois Protestants, and his own horror of the deed is expressed in a sonnet which begins:

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine Mountains cold;  
Even them who kept thy truth so pure  
Of old;  
When all our fathers worshipped stocks  
and stones."

But for ten years his eyesight had been failing, and in 1652 he became totally blind. His daughters read and wrote for him, and so he was able still to express the thoughts that surged through his great mind in his comparative isolation from his fellows. The Restoration of the Stuarts in 1660 deprived him of his office of secretary, but gave him more time for the consideration of the epic poem which he had resolved to attempt. The result was "Paradise Lost," the grandest epic of our language, and one in which the whole powers of its author were expressed.

Beside being an expression of the poet, this epic has a wider scope. It is the expression of the Puritanism of England, displaying the highest and best of the Puritan mind of that day in its nobleness of conception, in its purity and strength. But not only does it picture to us the high and noble qualities of Puritanism, but its defects are set before us also, the lack of that fine large sympathy with humanity as a whole which marked them as a people, the repression of all outward signs of emotion or tenderness. The story is "of man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste brought death into the world and all our woe," and the genius of the man is shown in the splendor and melody which Milton evolved from the meagre outlines supplied by Hebrew history. The problem of it is the problem over which many a Puritan spent hours of anguished thought, of sin and redemption, and Milton's "Satan" is but a composite of the many forms of evil so passionately hated by the true Puritan.

Four years after "Paradise Lost" was published, "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes" were written, but great as these works were, their greatness was totally eclipsed by their predecessor, and did not receive the attention that was really due to their merits.

### Evening in Paradise, from "Paradise Lost."

"Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray  
Had in her sober livery all things clad;  
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,  
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests  
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;

She all night long her amorous descant  
Sung;  
Silence was pleased. Now glowed the firmament  
With living sapphires; Hesperus, that led  
The starry hosts, rode brightest; till the moon,  
Rising in clouded majesty, at length  
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,  
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw;  
When Adam thus to Eve: Fair consort,  
The hour  
Of night, and all things now retired to rest,  
Mind us of like repose; since God hath set  
Labor and rest, as day and night, to men  
Successive, and the timely dew of sleep,  
Now falling with soft slumbrous weight,  
Inclines  
Our eyelids. . . . .  
To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned:  
My author and disposer, what thou biddest  
Unargued I obey. So God ordains:  
God is thy law, thou mine: to know  
no more  
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.  
With thee conversing I forget all time,  
All seasons and their change; all  
please alike.  
Sweet is the breath of Morn, her  
rising sweet,  
With charm of earliest birds; pleasant  
the Sun  
When first on this delightful land he  
spreads  
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit,  
and flower,  
Glistening with dew; and sweet the  
coming-on  
Of grateful Evening mild; then silent  
Night,  
With this her solemn bird, and this fair  
Moon,  
And these the gems of Heaven, her  
starry train:  
But neither breath of Moon, when she  
ascends  
With charm of earliest birds; nor rising  
Sun  
On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit,  
flower,  
Glistening with dew; nor fragrance  
after showers;  
Nor grateful Evening mild; nor silent  
Night,  
With this her solemn bird; nor walk by  
Moon  
Or Glittering starlight, without thee is  
sweet.

Thus at their shady lodge arrived, both  
stood,  
Both turned, and under open sky  
adored  
The God that made both Sky, Air,  
Earth, and Heaven,  
Which they beheld, the Moon's resplendent globe,  
And starry Pole: Thou also madest  
Night,  
Maker Omnipotent; and Thou the Day,  
Which we, in our appointed work employed,  
Have finished, happy in our mutual  
help  
And mutual love, the crown of all our  
bliss  
Ordained by thee; and this delicious  
place,  
For us too large, where Thy abundance  
wants  
Partakers, and uncropt falls to the  
ground.

But Thou hast promised from us two a  
race  
To fill the Earth, who shall with us  
extol  
Thy goodness infinite, both when we  
wake,  
And when we seek, as now, Thy gift of  
sleep."



**Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.**

The new Prime Minister of Great Britain and First Lord of the Treasury.

The new Premier, the second son of Sir James Campbell, of Forfarshire, was born Sept. 7th, 1836. He added the surname of his mother to his name, when, in 1872, he succeeded to property under the will of his uncle, Henry Bannerman. Sir Henry was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, taking his degree in 1858. His parliamentary career began in 1868, when he was elected for Stirling, a strongly Liberal district. He has held many offices under the Government: Financial Secretary of War, Chief Secretary for Ireland, Secretary of State for War, and since 1893 has been the leader of Liberal Opposition in the House of Commons. Sir Henry has made no attempt to achieve fame as a speaker in Parliament. He is no orator, but he has worked and thought, and when the time for speech was ripe, his utterances were wise and earnest. Unflinching courage and unadorned common sense are his chief characteristics.

### The Inter-church Federation.

Of all the wonderful conferences which have been held in America, the Federal Congress of Churches, which has recently been held in New York City, is the most wonderful. A meeting of five hundred representatives, appointed by the national bodies of the principal Protestant denominations and representing about eight million communicants, is an affair of no slight importance. The object of this impressive gathering has been to formulate a plan of federation which shall be practicable. The business of the representatives will then be to refer this plan to their respective denominations to be discussed in their separate denominational conventions. The last of these denominations will have met and had an opportunity to discuss the matter by 1908, after which the