

character. His firmness in this respect knew no fluctuations, remaining like a walled city impregnable to all assaults. Devoted and heroic, he is capable of embracing a cause and remaining attached to it, in face of trouble or failure. His devotion to his country leads him to interrupt his studies and chosen pursuits, and plunge into the life of politics in order to defend its civil and religious liberty. Impulses are often noble and generous, yet they cannot be trusted; but a fixed determination like this accompanied by a lofty ideal must result in a noble life. Milton passes beyond narrow sectarianism, and in some respects approaches the characteristics of the Cavalier party. He is passionately fond of many things hated by the Puritans such as poetry, philosophy and the fine arts. Music especially was his "darling delight." The Puritan conception of man disdained all outward attractions and involved him in sternness and gloom; but culture and refinement are necessary to the fullest type of Milton's ideal.

Passing from Milton's life to his writings, we find that his ideals are clearly mirrored here. The most cursory survey of even the titles of these works, shows the deep veneration for religion and morality, which we have already mentioned as possessed by Milton, and as forming the most striking element in his ideal. *L'Allegro* and *Il Pensero* so represent two men of widely different views of life. The one is gay and light-hearted, the other thoughtful and retiring, though by no means sad. Of the former Milton expresses doubts as to its satisfying nature; but it is not so of the latter, which doubtless more clearly represents his ideal—a life spent in sober contemplation, in the pursuit of poetry and music. So passionate is his love for liberty that, in *Lycidas*, in the midst of his mourning for his friend, he turns aside to inveigh against those "blind mouths" that intrude upon the liberties of the Church. The praises of temperance and virtue are sung in *Comus*. His writings reflect the ideal chivalry of Spencer, but with Milton, a pledge is not necessary to a life, which should spring from religion and purity. As temperance and virtue are the ideals of these early poems, so liberty is the ideal of his prose writings.

But turning from these scattered allusions, let us examine the hero of the great epic *Paradise Lost*, as illustrative of Milton's ideal. In Adam should be found those marks of perfection and stainlessness, which ought to characterize an ideal. He is intended to represent man perfect and sinless. Look at him fresh from the hand of the Creator,

"Of nobler shape, erect and tall,  
God-like erect, with native honour clad  
In native majesty"

"for in his looks divine,  
The image of his glorious Maker shone,  
Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude, severe  
and pure."