

cratic proclivities in Church and State. The debauches and buffoonery of James I.'s Court only deepened the new Puritan conviction, and when the hollow graces and deep rooted immorality of the Court and aristocracy revealed themselves full-grown under Charles I. Puritanism stood forth as the political palladium and moral salvation of England.

Of this great movement towards high seriousness of life, towards a worthy conception of the ends of man's existence, Milton was the supreme exponent, and he imparted to it a breath of idealism, a spirit finely touched to fine issues, a largeness of view, a sense both of exaltation and of emancipation which, in the absence of his magnificent genius, that movement might have lacked. Superficial chatter can only look at the sour, sad side of this movement, which has really created the England we care for. But all movements must be judged by their highest products, and in Milton we see the crown and flower of Puritanism, the genius who has justified it for all time. We know that he was not in all respects at one with either Puritan doctrine or discipline. His theological views diverged in important particulars from the Westminster Confession. His "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce" could not have found favor in many Puritan households. His entire absence from religious service would have subjected him to severe censure in a New England Puritan township. But he stood supremely for the high temper, the strong, firm outlines of the Puritan character; he stood supremely for political and intellectual liberty; and he was able to present to England these lofty ideals in the terms of a gorgeous and consummate literary expression, unsurpassed in his way, and never likely to be sur-

passed in the English tongue. To call Milton a politician or a moralist or even a reformer, would be to apply to him words stunted, dessicated; in a sense he was all these, but he was more. No Englishman who ever lived has so fully realized the idea of what Israel meant by a prophet. Yet he was a prophet who was also a poet, versed in the finest details of his art. In him the sons of Zion and the sons of Greece were reconciled; in him was seen all the learning of his age, the most ardent yet most delicate service of the Muses, but all his vast and varied accomplishments were fused in the supreme devotion to truth and liberty, and the desire to make of England a worthy temple to these divinities. There has been no such combination of gifts, no such diverse powers incarnated in one person in England's history.

For England herself Milton mainly desired the embodiment of these ideals: intellectual freedom, the position of the leader of the cause of liberty in Europe, and that worthy and noble inner life in the absence of which the outer forms of liberty are worthless. The "Areopagitica" is the greatest plea for the freedom of the mind ever written, let alone its splendor as a piece of prose; and though we have had our reactions since its production, in effect it killed the despotism over the mind. During the whole of the seventeenth century a Machiavellian despotism was desolating Western Europe, and preparing the way for unutterable tragedy in France. Milton, who had lived in the land of Machiavelli, and who saw with prophetic insight what this meant, roused England and Europe (he proudly asserts, with a noble egoism akin to that of Dante, of his work that "Europe talks from side to side" of this great task) to a sense of the danger. In "Paradise Regained",