

I am peerless and prince of pride,
For God himself shines not so sheen.

The revolt and punishment of the archangel, and the mutual recriminations of the fallen fiends are conceived in quite a Miltonic spirit.

Next follow the Creation and the Fall of Man. Adam's prophetic vision as he looks down the vista of the future and beholds the heritage of woe he has bequeathed to his posterity, is exceedingly impressive. This scene is also the basis of one of the finest episodes in Milton. Eve's yearning affection for her "sweete children, darlings deare," and her agonized grief on the death of Abel, are expressed with strong human sympathy. The earth refuses to cover the body of the first victim of murder, and rejects it from the grave. Upon the death of Adam, Seth returns to Paradise for a branch of the tree of life to plant on his father's grave. From this, in the course of time was derived the wood of the cross. According to another legend, this was the aspen tree, which ever since has shuddered with horror at the woeful deed of which it was the instrument.

A good deal of humour is introduced into the account of the flood, by the contumacy of Noah's wife, who refuses to obey her liege lord's commands.

NOAH.—Wife, come in ; why standest thou there?
Thou art ever forwar" — dare well swear ;
Come in, come in ! full time it were,
For fear lest that we drown.

WIFE.—Yea, sir, set up your sail,
And row forth with evil hail,
For withouten fail
I will not out of this town ;
But I have my gossips everyone
One foot.further I will not gone ;
They shall not drown, by Saint John !
An I may save their life.
But thou let them into thy chest,
Else row thou where thou wist,
And get thes a new wife.

The story of the offering up of Isaac is skilfully told. Isaac piteously entreats :

If I have trespassed in any degree,
With a rod you may beat me ;