

great champion of his country, and idol of public admiration each suffered at the hands of a beautiful, but unloving and disobedient wife; each endured the loss of eyesight, and ended life fallen and humiliated under the reverses of fortune. Samson represents the seemingly defeated Puritan cause in the power of the Philistinism of the Restoration, and through this medium Milton eased his own heart of its anguish and indignation.

The opening lines have chaste poetic beauty :—

“The breath of Heaven fresh blowing pure and sweet
With day-spring born ”—

brings ease to the body of the slave, but the release from toil gives no rest to the mind. It permits thoughts like a deadly swarm of hornets to throng upon the unhappy sufferer. His had been the gift of strength above that of mortal men.

“ O glorious strength
Put to the labor of a beast, debased
Lower than bondslave.”

Prediction had declared him the deliverer of God's people.

Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves.

Here indeed are the elements of deepest and darkest tragedy. It is sad when disorder clouds the eye and blots out the world of form and color, but sadder still when the inner light fails, when all is dark :—

“ Oh, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse,
Without all hope of day !”

Upon the conclusion of this splendid introduction the Chorus is brought forward to tell in words of force and beauty, in strange musical cadences, the former glories of the prostrate hero. This man, who lies so low, not caring to support his head is he who tare a lion in his might, who ran upon the army of the Philistines, and slew a thousand men with the jaw of a dead ass, who caught up the city gates of Gaza with massy posts and bars and carried all far up the hill of Hermon.

But Samson has learned by adversity what prosperity had failed to teach. Strength must ever be the servant of wisdom. Plaintive is his confession. He has not held sacredly his