ACT V.

Chief of the Ten. What debt did he owe you? 370 Lor. A long and just one; Nature's debt and mine.1 [Curtain falls.2

1. [Here the original MS. ends. The two lines which follow, were added by Gifford. In the margin of the MS. Byron has written, "If the last line should appear obscure to those who do not recollect the historical fact mentioned in the first act of Loredano's inscription in his book, of 'Doge Foscari, debtor for the deaths of my father and uncle, you may add the following lines to the conclusion of the last

> Chief of the Ten. For what has he repaid thee? For my father's And father's brother's death-by his son's and own!

Ask Gifford about this."]

Ask Gifford about this."]

2. [The Appendix to the First Edition of The Two Foscari consisted of (i.) an extract from P. Daru's Histoire de la République Française, 1821, ii. 520-537; (ii.) an extract from J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi's Histoire des Républiques Italiennes du Moyen Age, 1815, x. 36-46; and (iii.) a note in response to certain charges of plaguarism brought against the author in the Literary Gasette and elsewhere; and to Southey's indictment of the "Satanic School," which had recently appeared in the Preface to the Laureate's Vision of Judgement (Poetical Works of the Frence to the Laurente's Vision by Juggement (Voltette Works by Robert Southey, 1838, x. 202–207). See, too, the "Introduction to The Vision of Judgment, Poetical Works, 1891, iv. pp. 475-480.]

The Poetrcal Works of Lord Byran

Vol S.

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CAIN:

A MYSTERY.

"Now the Serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made,"

> Genesis, Chapter 3rd, verse 1.

INTRODUCTION TO CAIN.

CAIN was begun at Ravenna, July 16, and finished September 9, 1821 (vide MS. M.). Six months before, when he was at work on the first act of Sardanapalus, Byron had "pondered" Cain, but it was not till Sardanapalus and a second historical play, The Two Foscari, had been written, copied out, and sent to England, that he indulged his genius with a third drama—on "a metaphysical subject, something in the style of Manfred" (Letters, 1901, v. 189).

Goethe's comment on reading and reviewing Cain was that he should be surprised if Byron did not pursue the treatment of such "biblical subjects," as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Conversations, etc., 1879, p. 62); and, many years after, he told Crabb Robinson (Diary, 1869, ii. 435) that Byron should have lived "to execute his vocation ... to dramatize the Old Testament." He was better equipped for such a task than might have been imagined. A Scottish schoolboy, "from a child he had known the Scriptures," and, as his Hebrew Melodies testify, he was not unwilling to turn to the Bible as a source of poetic inspiration. Moreover, he was born with the religious temperament. Questions "of Providence, foreknowledge, will and fate," exercised his curiosity because they appealed to his imagination and moved his spirit. He was eager to plunge into controversy with friends and advisers who challenged or rebuked him, Hodgson, for instance, or Dallas; and he responded with remarkable amenity to the strictures and exhortations of such orthodox professors as Mr. Sheppard and Dr. Kennedy. He was, no doubt, from first to last a heretic, impatient, not to say contemptuous, of authority, but he was by no means indifferent to religion altogether. To "argue about it and about" was a necessity, if not an agreeable relief, to his intellectual energies. It would appear from the Ravenna diary (January 28, 1821, Letters, 1901, v. 190, 191), that the conception of Lucifer was working in his brain

before the "tragedy of Cain" was actually begun. He had been recording a "thought" which had come to him, that "at the very height of human desire and pleasure, a certain sense of doubt and sorrow"—an amari aliquid which links the future to the past, and so blots out the present—"mingles with our bliss," making it of none effect, and, by way of moral or corollary to his soliloquy, he adds three lines of verse headed, "Thought for a speech of Lucifer in the Tragedy of Cain"—

"Were Death an Evil, would I let thee live? Fool! live as I live—as thy father lives, And thy son's sons shall live for evermore."

In these three lines, which were not inserted in the play, and in the preceding "thought," we have the key-note to Cain. "Man walketh in a vain shadow "—a shadow which he can never overtake, the shadow of an eternally postponed fruition. With a being capable of infinite satisfaction, he is dooined to realize failure in attainment. In all that is best and most enjoyable, "the rapturous moment and the placid hour," there is a foretaste of "Death the Unknown"! The tragedy of Manfred lies in remorse for the inevitable past; the tragedy of Cain, in revolt against the limitations of the inexorable present.

The investigation of the "sources" of Cain does not lead to any very definite conclusion (see Lord Byron's Cain und Seine Quellen, von Alfred Schaffner, 1880). He was pleased to call his play "a Mystery," and, in his Preface (vide post, p. 207), Byron alludes to the Old Mysteries as "those very profane productions, whether in English, French, Italian, or Spanish." The first reprint of the Chester Plays was published by the Roxburghe Club in 1818, but Byron's knowledge of Mystery Plays was probably derived from Dodsley's Plays (ed. 1780, l., xxxiii.-xlii.), or from John Stevens's Continuation of Dugdale's Monasticon (vide post, p. 207), or possibly, as Herr Schaffner suggests, from Warton's History of English Poetry, ed. 1871, ii. 222-230. He may, too, have witnessed some belated Rappresentazione of the Creation and Fall at Ravenna, or in one of the remoter towns or villages of Italy. There is a superficial resemblance between the treatment of the actual encounter of Cain and Abel, and the conventional rendering of the same incident in the Ludus Coventriæ, and in the Mistère du Viel Testament; but it is unlikely that he had closely studied any one Mystery Play at first hand. On the other hand, his recollections of Gessner's Death of Abel, which "he had never read since he was eight years old," were clearer than he imagined. Not

only in such minor matters as the destruction of Cain's altar by a whirlwind, and the substitution of the Angel of the Lord for the *Deus* of the Mysteries, but in the Teutonic domesticities of Cain and Adah, and the evangelical piety of Adam and Abel, there is a reflection, if not an imitation, of the German idyll (see Gessner's *Death of Abel*, ed. 1797,

Of his indebtedness to Milton he makes no formal acknowledgment, but he was not ashamed to shelter himself behind Milton's shield when he was attacked on the score of blasphemy and profanity. "If Cain be blasphemous, Paradise Lost is blasphemous" (letter to Murray, Pisa, February 8, 1822), was, he would fain believe, a conclusive answer to his accusers. But apart from verbal parallels or coincidences, there is a genuine affinity between Byron's Lucifer and Milton's Satan. Lucifer, like Satan, is "not less than Archangel ruined," a repulsed but "unvanquished Titan," marred by a demonic sorrow, a confessor though a rival of Omnipotence. He is a majestic and, as a rule, a serious and solemn spirit, who compels the admiration and possibly the sympathy of the reader. There is, however, another strain in his ghostly attributes, which betrays a more recent consanguinity: now and again he gives token that he is of the lineage of Mephistopheles. He is sometimes, though rarely, a mocking as well as a rebellious spirit, and occasionally indulges in a grim persiflage beneath the dignity if not the capacity of Satan. It is needless to add that Lucifer has a most lifelike personality of his own. The conception of the spirit of evil justifying an eternal antagonism to the Creator from the standpoint of a superior morality, may, perhaps, be traced to a Manichean source, but it has been touched with a new emotion. Milton's devil is an abstraction of infernal pride-

"Sole Positive of Night!
Antipathist of Light!
Fate's only essence! primal scorpion rod—
The one permitted opposite of God!"

Goethe's devil is an abstraction of scorn. He "maketh a mock" alike of good and evil! But Byron's devil is a spirit, yet a mortal too—the traducer, because he has suffered for his sins; the deceiver, because he is self-deceived; the hoper against hope that there is a ransom for the soul in perfect self-will and not in perfect self-sacrifice. Byron did not uphold Lucifer, but he "had passed that way," and could imagine a spiritual warfare not only against the Deux of the Mysteries or of the Book of Genesis, but against what he

believed and acknowledged to be the Author and Principle of good.

Autres temps, autres mours! It is all but impossible for the modern reader to appreciate the audacity of Cain, or to realize the alarm and indignation which it aroused by its appearance. Byron knew that he was raising a tempest, and pleads, in his Preface, "that with regard to the language of Lucifer, it was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman," and again and again he assures his correspondents (e.g. to Murray, November 23, 1821, "Cain is nothing more than a drama;" to Moore, March 4, 1822, "With respect to Religion, can I never convince you that I have no such opinions as the characters in that drama, which seems to have frightened everybody?" Letters, 1901, v. 460; vi. 30) that it is Lucifer and not Byron who puts such awkward questions with regard to the "politics of paradise" and the origin of evil. Nobody seems to have believed him. It was taken for granted that Lucifer was the mouthpiece of Byron, that the author of Don Juan was not "on the side of the angels."

Little need be said of the "literature," the pamphlets and poems which were evoked by the publication of Cain: A Mystery. One of the most prominent assailants (said to be the Rev. H. J. Todd (1763-1845), Archdeacon of Cleveland. 1832, author inter alia of Original Sin, Free Will, etc., 1818) issued A Remonstrance to Mr. John Murray, respecting a Recent Publication, 1822, signed "Oxoniensis." The sting of the Remonstrance lay in the exposure of the fact that Byron was indebted to Bayle's Dictionary for his rabbinical legends, and that he had derived from the same source his Manichean doctrines of the Two Principles, etc., and other "often-refuted sophisms" with regard to the origin of evil. Byron does not borrow more than a poet and a gentleman is at liberty to acquire by way of raw material, but it cannot be denied that he had read and inwardly digested more than one of Bayle's "most objectionable articles" (e.g. "Adam," "Eve," "Abel," "Manichees," "Paulicians," etc.). The Remonstrance was answered in A Letter to Sir Walter Scott. etc., by "Harroviensis." Byron welcomed such a "Defender of the Faith," and was anxious that Murray should print the letter together with the poem. But Murray belittled the "defender," and was upbraided in turn for his slowness of heart (letter to Murray, June 6, 1822, Letters, 1901, vi. 76).

Fresh combatants rushed into the fray: "Philo-Milton," with a Vindication of the "Paradise Lost" from the charge of exculpating "Cain: A Mystery," London, 1822; "Britannicus," with a pamphlet entitled, Revolutionary Causes, etc.,

and A Postscript containing Strictures on "Cain," etc., London, 1822, etc.; but their works, which hardly deserve to be catalogued, have perished with them. Finally, in 1830, a barrister named Harding Grant, author of Chancery Practice, compiled a work (Lord Byron's "Cain," etc., with Notes) of more than four hundred pages, in which he treats "the proceedings and speeches of Lucifer with the same carnestness as if they were existing and earthly personages." But it was "a week too late." The "Coryphæus of the Satanic School" had passed away, and the tumult had "dwindled to a calm."

Cain "appeared in conjunction with" Sardanapalus and The Two Foscari, December 19, 1821. Last but not least of the three plays, it had been announced "by a separate advertisement (Morning Chronicle, November 24, 1821), for the purpose of exciting the greater curiosity" (Memoirs of the Life, etc. [by John Watkins], 1822, p. 383), and it was no sooner published than it was pirated. In the following January, "Cain: A Mystery, by the author of Don Juan," was issued by W. Benbow, at Castle Street, Leicester Square (the notorious "Byron Head," which Southey described as "one of those preparatory schools for the brothel and the gallows, where obscenity, sedition, and blasphemy are retailed in drams for the vulgar"!).

Murray had paid Byron £2710 for the three tragedies, and in order to protect the copyright, he applied, through counsel (Lancelot Shadwell, afterwards Vice-Chancellor), for an injunction in Chancery to stop the sale of piratical editions of Cain. In delivering judgment (February 12, 1822), the Chancellor, Lord Eldon (see Courier, Wednesday, February 13), replying to Shadwell, drew a comparison between Cain and Paradise Lost, "which he had read from beginning to end during the course of the last Long Vacation-solicitæ jucunda oblivia vita." No one, he argued, could deny that the object and effects of Paradise Lost were "not to bring into disrepute," but "to promote reverence for our religion," and, per contra, no one could affirm that it was impossible to arrive at an opposite conclusion with regard to "the Preface, the poem, the general tone and manner of Cain." It was a question for a jury. A jury might decide that Cain was blasphemous, and void of copyright; and as there was a reasonable doubt in his mind as to the character of the book, and a doubt as to the conclusion at which a jury would arrive, he was compelled to refuse the injunction. According to Dr. Smiles (Memoir of John Murray, 1891, i. 428), the decision of a jury was taken, and an injunction eventually granted. If so, it was ineffectual, for Benbow issued another edition of Cain in 1824 (see Jacob's Reports, p. 474, note). See, too, the case of Murray v. Benbow and Another, as reported in the Examiner, February 17, 1822; and cases of Wolcot v. Walker, Southey v. Sherwood, Murray v. Benbow, and Lawrence v. Smith [Quarterly Review, April, 1822,

vol. xxvii. pp. 120-138].
"Cain," said Moore (February 9, 1822), "has made a sensation." Friends and champions, the press, the public "turned up their thumbs." Gifford shook his head : Hobhouse "launched out into a most violent invective" (letter to Murray, November 24, 1821); Jeffrey, in the Edinburgh, was regretful and hortatory; Heber, in the Quarterly, was fault-finding and contemptuous. The "parsons preached at it from Kentish Town to Pisa" (letter to Moore, February 20, 1822). Even "the very highest authority in the land," his Majesty King George IV., "expressed his disapprobation of the blasphemy and licentiousness of Lord Byron's writings" (Examiner, February 17, 1822). Byron himself was forced to admit that "my Mont Saint Jean seems Cain" (Don Fuan. Canto XI. stanza lvi. line 2). The many were unanimous in their verdict, but the higher court of the few reversed the

Goethe said that "Its beauty is such as we shall not see a second time in the world" (Conversations, etc., 1874, p. 261); Scott, in speaking of "the very grand and tremendous drama of Cain," said that the author had "matched Milton on his own ground" (letter to Murray, December 4, 1821, vide post, p. 206); "Cain," wrote Shelley to Gisborne (April 10, 1822), "is apocalyptic; it is a revelation never before

communicated to man.

Uncritical praise, as well as uncritical censure, belongs to the past; but the play remains, a singular exercise of "poetic energy," a confession, ex animo, of "the burthen of the mystery. . . . the heavy and the weary weight Of all this unintelligible world."

For reviews of Cain: A Mystery, vide ante, "Introduction to Sardanapalus," p. 5; see, too, Eclectic Review, May, 1822, N.S. vol. xvii. pp. 418-427; Examiner, June 2, 1822;

British Review, 1822, vol. xix. pp. 94-102.

For O'Doherty's parody of the "Pisa" Letter, February 8, 1822, see Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, February, 1822, vol. xi. pp. 215-217; and for a review of Harding Grant's Lord Byron's Cain, etc., see Fraser's Magazine, April, 1831. iii. 285-304.

TO

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.,

THIS MYSTERY OF CAIN

IS INSCRIBED.

BY HIS OBLIGED PRIEND

AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

1. ["On the 13th December [1821] Sir Walter received a copy of Cain, as yet unpublished, from Murray, who had been instructed to ask whether he had any objection to having the "Mystery" dedicated to him. He replied in these words-

" Edinburgh, 4th December, 1821. "MY DEAR SIR,-I accept, with feelings of great obligation, the flattering proposal of Lord Byron to prefix my name to the very grand and tremendous drama of 'Cain.' * I may be partial to it, and you will

ciation of Cain in December, 1821 (vide supra); while the allusion to "a man of quality" is to be found in an article contributed to the

Quarterly Review in 1816!

^{* [&}quot;However, the praise often given to Byron has been so exaggerated as to provoke, perhaps, a reaction in which he is unduly disparaged. 'As various in composition as Shakespeare himself, Lord Byron has embraced, says Sir Walter Scott, 'every topic of human life, and sounded every string on the divine harp, from its slightest to its most powerful and heart-astounding tones. . . . In the very grand and tremendous drama of Cain, etc. . . . 'And Lord Byron has done all this, Scott adds, 'while managing his pen with the careless and negligent ease of a man of quality.'"—Poetry of Byron, chosen and arranged by Matthew Arnold, 1881, p. xiii.

Scott does not add anything of the kind. The comparison with Shakespeare was written after Byron's death in May, 1824; the apprenaition of Carin When the state of the kind.

allow I have cause: but I do not know that his Muse has ever taken so lofty a flight amid her former soarings. He has certainly matched Milton on his own ground. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers, whose line will be adopted by others out of affectation or envy. But then they must condemn the 'Paradise Lost,' if they have a mind to be consistent. The fiend-like reasoning and bold blasphemy of the fiend and of his pupil lead exactly to the point which was to be expected,—the commission of the first murder,

and the ruin and despair of the perpetrator.

"I do not see how any one can accuse the author himself of Manicheism. The Devil talks the language of that sect, doubtless; because, not being able to deny the existence of the Good Principle, he endeavours to exalt himself—the Evil Principle—to a seeming equality with the Good; but such arguments, in the mouth of such a being, can only be used to deceive and to betray. Lord Byron might have made this more evident, by placing in the mouth of Adam, or of some good and protecting spirit, the reasons which render the existence of moral evil consistent with the general benevolence of the Deity. The great key to the mystery is, perhaps, the imperfection of our own faculties, which see and feel strongly the partial evils which press upon us, but know too little of the general system of the universe, to be aware how the existence of these is to be reconciled with the benevolence of the great Creator.

"To drop these speculations, you have much occasion for some mighty spirit, like Lord Byron, to come down and trouble the waters; for, excepting 'The John Bull,' you seem stagnating strangely in

"Yours, my dear Sir, "Very truly,
"WALTER SCOTT.

"To John Murray, Esq."-Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, by J. G. Lockhart, Esq., 1838, iii. 92, 93.]

PREFACE.

THE following scenes are entitled "A Mystery," in conformity with the ancient title annexed to dramas upon similar subjects, which were styled "Mysteries, or Moralities." 1 The author has by no means taken the same liberties with his subject which were common formerly, as may be seen by any reader curious enough to refer to those very profane productions, whether in English, French, Italian, or Spanish. The author has endeavoured to preserve the language adapted to his characters; and where it is (and this is but rarely) taken from actual Scripture, he has made as little alteration. even of words, as the rhythm would permit. The reader will recollect that the book of Genesis does not state

1. ["Mysteries," or Mystery Plays, were prior to and distinct from "Moralities." Byron seems to have had some acquaintance with the archæology of the drama, but it is not easy to divine the source or extent of his knowledge. He may have received and read the Roxburghe reprint of the Chester Plays, published in 1818; but it is most probable that he had read the pages devoted to mystery plays in Warton's History of Poetry, or that he had met with a version of the Ludus Coventria (reprinted by J. O. Halliwell Phillipps, in 1841), printed in Stevens's continuation of Dugdale's Monasticon, 1722, i. 139-153. There is a sixteenth-century edition of Le Mistère du Viel Testament, which was reprinted by the Baron James de Rothschild, in 1878 (see for "De la Mort d'Abel et de la Malediction Cayn," pp. 103-113); but it is improbable that it had come under Byron's notice. For a quotation from an Italian Mystery Play, vide post, p. 264; and for Spanish "Mystery Plays," see Teatro Completo de Juan del Encina, "Proemio," Madrid, 1893, and History of Spanish Literature, by George Ticknor, 1888, i. 257. For instances of the profanity of Mystery Plays, see the Towneley Plays ("Mactacio Abel," p. 7), first published by the Surtees Society in 1836, and republished by the Early English Text Society, 1897, E.S. No. lxxi.]

^{* [}The first number of John Bull, "For God, the King, and the People," was published Sunday, December 17, 1820. Theodore Hook was the editor, and it is supposed that he owed his appointment to the intervention of Sir Walter Scott. The raison d'être of John Bull was to write up George IV., and to write down Queen Caroline. "The national movement (in favour of the Queen) was arrested; and George IV. had mainly John Bull to thank for that result." -- A Sketch, by J. G. Lockhart], 1852, p. 45.]

that Eve was tempted by a demon, but by "the Serpent;" 1 and that only because he was "the most subtil of all the beasts of the field." Whatever interpretation the Rabbins and the Fathers may have put upon this, I take the words as I find them, and reply, with Bishop Watson 2 upon similar occasions, when the Fathers were quoted to him as Moderator in the schools of Cambridge, "Behold the Book!"—holding up the Scripture. It is to be recollected, that my present subject has nothing to do with the New Testament, to which no reference can be here made without anachronism. With the poems upon similar topics I have not been recently familiar. Since I was twenty I have never read Milton; but I had read him so frequently before, that this may make little difference. Gesner's "Death of Abel" I have never read since I was eight years of age, at Aberdeen. The

1. [For the contention that "the snake was the snake"—no more (vide post, p. 211), see La Bible enfin Expliquée, etc.; Œuvres Complètes de Voltaire, Paris, 1837, vi. 338, note. "La conversation de la femme et du serpent n'est point racontée comme une chose surnaturelle et incroyable, comme un miracle, ou comme une allégorie." See, too, Bayle (Hist. and Crit. Dictionary, 1735, ii. 851, art. "Eve," note A), who quotes Josephus, Paracelsus, and "some Rabbins," to the effect that it was an actual serpent which tempted Eve; and compare Critical Remarks on the Hebrew Scriptures, by the Rev. Alexander Geddes, L.L.D., 1800, p. 42.]

2. [Richard Watson (1737-1816). Bishop of Llandaff, 1782, was appointed Moderator of the Schools in 1762, and Regius Professor of Divinity October 31, 1771. According to his own story (Anecdotes of the Life of Richard Watson, 1817, p. 39), "I determined to study nothing but my Bible. . . I had no prejudice against, no predilection for, the Church of England, but a sincere regard for the Church of Christ, and an insuperable objection to every degree of doginatical intolerance. I never troubled myself with answering any arguments which the opponents in the Divinity Schools brought against the articles of the Church, . . but I used on such occasions to say to them, holding the New Testament in my hand, 'En sacrum codicem! Here is the foundation of truth! Why do you follow the streams derived from it by the sophistry, or polluted by the passions, of man?" It may be conceived that Watson's appeal to "Scripture" was against the sentence of orthodoxy. His authority as "a school Divine" is on a par with that of the author of Cain, or of an earlier theologian who "quoted Genesis like a very learned clerk"!

3. [Byron breaks through his self-imposed canon with regard to the New Testament. There are allusions to the doctrine of the Atonement, act i. sc. 1, lines 163-166: act iii. sc. 1, lines 85-88; to the descent into Hades, act i. sc. 1, lines 541, 542; and to the miraculous walking on the Sea of Galilee, act ii. sc. 1, lines 16-20.]

general impression of my recollection is delight; but of the contents I remember only that Cain's wife was called Mahala, and Abel's Thirza; in the following pages I have called them "Adah" and "Zillah," the earliest female names which occur in Genesis. They were those of Lamech's wives: those of Cain and Abel are not called by their names. Whether, then, a coincidence of subject may have caused the same in expression, I know nothing, and care as little. [I am prepared to be accused of Manicheism,2 or some other hard name ending in ism, which makes a formidable figure and awful sound in the eyes and ears of those who would be as much puzzled to explain the terms so bandied about, as the liberal and pious indulgers in such epithets. Against such I can defend myself, or, if necessary, I can attack in turn. "Claw for claw, as Conan said to Satan and the deevil take the shortest nails" (Waverley),3]

The reader will please to bear in mind (what few choose to recollect), that there is no allusion to a future state in any of the books of Moses, nor indeed in the Old Testament. For a reason for this extraordinary omission he may consult Warburton's "Divine Legation;" 4

1. [The words enclosed in brackets are taken from an original draft of the Preface.]

2. [The Manichæans (the disciples of Mani or Manes, third century A.D.) held that there were two co-eternal Creators—a God of Darkness who made the body, and a God of Light who was responsible for the soul—and that it was the aim and function of the good spirit to rescue the soul, the spiritual part of man, from the possession and grasp of the body, which had been created by and was in the possession of the spirit of evil. St. Augustine passed through a stage of Manicheism, and in after-life exposed and refuted the heretical tenets which he had advocated, and with which he was familiar. See, for instance, his account of the Manichæan heresy "de duplici terrå, de regno lucis et regno tenebrarum" (Opera, 1700, viii. 484, c; vide ibid., i. 693, 717; x. 893, d. etc.).]

3. [Conan the Jester, a character in the Irish ballads, was "a kind of Thersites, but brave and daring even to rashness. He had made a vow that he would never take a blow without returning it; and having . . . descended to the infernal regions, he received a cuff from the arch-fiend, which he instantly returned, using the expression in the text ('blow for blow')." Sometimes the proverb is worded thus: "'Claw for claw, and the devil take the shortest nails,' as Conan said to the devil."—Waverley Novels, 1829 (notes to chap. xxii. of Waverley), i. 241, note 1; see, too. ibid. p. 220.]

i. 241, note 1; see, too, ibid., p. 220.]
4. [The full title of Warburton's book runs thus: The Divine VOL. V.

whether satisfactory or not, no better has yet been assigned. I have therefore supposed it new to Cain,

without, I hope, any perversion of Holy Writ.

With regard to the language of Lucifer, it was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subjects; but I have done what I could to restrain him within the bounds of spiritual politeness. If he disclaims having tempted Eve in the shape of the Serpent, it is only because the book of Genesis has not the most distant allusion to anything of the kind, but merely to the Serpent in his serpentine capacity.

Note.—'The reader will perceive that the author has partly adopted in this poem the notion of Cuvier, that the world had been destroyed several times before the creation of man. This speculation, derived from the different strata and the bones of enormous and unknown animals found in them, is not contrary to the Mosaic account, but rather confirms it; as no human bones have yet been discovered in those strata, although those of many known animals are found near the remains of the unknown. The assertion of Lucifer, that the pre-Adamite world was also peopled by rational beings much more intelligent than man, and proportionably powerful to the mammoth, etc., etc., is, of course, a poetical fiction to help him to make out his case.

I ought to add, that there is a "tramelogedia" of

Legation of Moses Demonstrated on the Principles of a Religious Deist; from the omission of the Doctrine of a Future State of Reward and Punishment in the Jewish Dispensation. (See, more particularly (ed. 1741), Vol. II. pt. ii. bk. v. sect. 5, pp. 449-461, and bk. vi. pp. 569-678.) Compare the following passage from *Dieu et les Hommes* (*Œuvres, etc.*, de Voltaire; 1837, vi. 236, chap. xx.): "Notre Warburton s'est épuise à ramasser dans son fatras de la Divine légation, toutes les preuves que l'auteur du Pentaleuque, n'a jamais parlé d'une vie à venir, et il n'a pas eu grande peine; mais il en tire une plaisante conclusion, et digne d'un esprit aussi faux que le sien."]

I. [See Recherches sur les Ossemens Fossiles, par M. le Bon G. Cuvier, Paris, 1821, i., "Discours Préliminaire," pp. iv., vii.; and for the thesis, "Il n'y a point d'os humaines fossiles," see p. lxiv.; see, too, Cuvier's Discours sur les révolutions de la surface du globe, ed. 1825, p. 282: "Si l'on peut en juger par les differens ordres d'animaux dont on y trouve les dépouilles, ils avaient peut-être subi jusqu' à deux ou trois irruptions de la mer." It is curious to note that Moore thought that Cuvier's book was "a most desolating one in the conclusions to which it may lead some minds" (Life, p. 554).]

Alfieri, called "Abele." I have never read that, nor any other of the posthumous works of the writer, except his Life.

RAVENNA, Sept. 20, 1821.

1. [Alfieri's Abele was included in his Opere inediti, published by the

Countess of Albany and the Abbé Calma in 1804.
"In a long Preface . . . dated April 25, 1796, Alfieri gives a curious account of the reasons which induced him to call it . . . 'Tramelogedy.' He says that Abel is neither a tragedy, a comedy, a drama, a tragicomedy, nor a Greek tragedy, which last would, he thinks, be correctly described as melo-tragedy. Opera-tragedy would, in his opinion, be a fitting name for it; but he prefers interpolating the word 'melo' into the middle of the word 'tragedy,' so as not to spoil the ending, although by so doing he has cut in two . . . the root of the wordτραγος."-The Tragedies of Vittorio Alfieri, edited by E. A. Bowring, C.B., 1876, ii. 472.

There is no resemblance whatever between Byron's Cain and Alfieri's

10 May 2

ADAM.

CAIN.

ABEL.

SPIRITS.

ANGEL OF THE LORD. LUCIFER.

WOMEN.

EVE.

ADAH.

ZILLAH.

CAIN:

A MYSTERY.

ACT I.

Scene I .- The Land without Paradise .- Time, Sunrise.

Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Adah, Zillah, offering a Sacrifice.

Adam. God, the Eternal! Infinite! All-wise!—Who out of darkness on the deep didst make Light on the waters with a word—All Hail! Jehovah! with returning light—All Hail!

Eve. God! who didst name the day, and separate Morning from night, till then divided never—Who didst divide the wave from wave, and call Part of thy work the firmament—All Hail!

Abel. God! who didst call the elements into Earth, ocean, air and fire—and with the day And night, and worlds which these illuminate, Or shadow, madest beings to enjoy them, And love both them and thee—All Hail! All Hail!

Adah. God! the Eternal parent of all things!
Who didst create these best and beauteous beings,
To be beloved, more than all, save thee—
Let me love thee and them:—All Hail! All Hail!
Zillah. Oh, God! who loving, making, blessing all,

Yet didst permit the Serpent to creep in, And drive my father forth from Paradise, 10

. .

ACT I.

Keep us from further evil:—Hail! All Hail! Adam. Son Cain! my first-born—wherefore art thou silent? Cain. Why should I speak? Adam. To pray. Cain. Have ye not prayed? Adam. We have, most fervently. Cain. And loudly: I Have heard you. Adam. So will God, I trust. Abel. Amen! Adam. But thou my eldest born? art silent still? Cain. 'Tis better I should be so. Adam. Wherefore so? Cain. I have nought to ask Adam. Nor aught to thank for? Cain. Adam. Dost thou not live? Cain. Must I not die? Eve. Alas! The fruit of our forbidden tree begins 30 To fall. Adam. And we must gather it again. Oh God! why didst thou plant the tree of knowledge? Cain. And wherefore plucked ye not the tree of life? Ye might have then defied him. Adam. Oh! my son, Blaspheme not: these are Serpent's words. Cain. Why not? The snake spoke truth; it was the Tree of Knowledge; It was the Tree of Life; knowledge is good, And Life is good; and how can both be evil? Eve. My boy! thou speakest as I spoke in sin. Before thy birth: let me not see renewed 40 My misery in thine. I have repented. Let me not see my offspring fall into The snares beyond the walls of Paradise. Which even in Paradise destroyed his parents. Content thee with what is. Had we been so, Thou now hadst been contented.—Oh, my son!

Adam. Our orisons completed, let us hence,

Each to his task of toil-not heavy, though Needful: the earth is young, and yields us kindly Her fruits with little labour. Cain-my son-50 Eve. Behold thy father cheerful and resigned-Exeunt ADAM and EVE. And do as he doth. Wilt thou not, my brother? Zillah. Abel. Why wilt thou wear this gloom upon thy brow, Which can avail thee nothing, save to rouse The Eternal anger? My belovéd Cain Adah. Wilt thou frown even on me? No, Adah! no; Cain. I fain would be alone a little while. Abel, I'm sick at heart; but it will pass; Precede me, brother-I will follow shortly. 60 And you, too, sisters, tarry not behind; Your gentleness must not be harshly met: I'll follow you anon. If not, I will Adah. Return to seek you here. The peace of God Abel. Be on your spirit, brother! [Exeunt ABEL, ZILLAH, and ADAH. And this is Cain (solus). Life?-Toil! and wherefore should I toil?-because My father could not keep his place in Eden? What had I done in this?—I was unborn: I sought not to be born; nor love the state To which that birth has brought me. Why did he Yield to the Serpent and the woman? or 70 Yielding-why suffer? What was there in this? The tree was planted, and why not for him? If not, why place him near it, where it grew The fairest in the centre? They have but One answer to all questions, "Twas his will, And he is good." How know I that? Because He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow? I judge but by the fruits-and they are bitter-Which I must feed on for a fault not mine. Whom have we here?—A shape like to the angels

CAIN.

Which speaks within you.

Yet of a sterner and a sadder aspect Of spiritual essence: why do I quake? Why should I fear him more than other spirits, Whom I see daily wave their fiery swords Before the gates round which I linger oft, In Twilight's hour, to catch a glimpse of those Gardens which are my just inheritance. Ere the night closes o'er the inhibited walls And the immortal trees which overtop The Cherubim-defended battlements? 90 If I shrink not from these, the fire-armed angels, Why should I quail from him who now approaches? Yet—he seems mightier far than them, nor less Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful As he hath been, and might be: sorrow seems Half of his immortality.1 And is it So? and can aught grieve save Humanity? He cometh.

Enter LUCIFER.

Lucifer. Mortal!

Cain. Spirit.

Spirit, who art thou?

Lucifer. Master of spirits.

Cain. And being so, canst thou

Leave them, and walk with dust?

Lucifer. I know the thoughts 100

Of dust, and feel for it, and with you.

Cain.

How!

You know my thoughts?

Lucifer. They are the thoughts of all Worthy of thought;—'tis your immortal part'

I. [Compare-

"... his form had not yet lost All her original brightness, nor appears Less than Arch-angel mind, and the excess Of glory obscure."

Paradise Lost, i. 591-593.

Compare, too---

Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care Sat on his faded cheek."

Ibid., i. 600-602.]

2. [According to the Manichicans, the divinely created and immortal

What immortal part? Cain. This has not been revealed: the Tree of Life Was withheld from us by my father's folly, While that of Knowledge, by my mother's haste, Was plucked too soon; and all the fruit is Death! Lucifer. They have deceived thee; thou shalt live. I live, Cain. But live to die; and, living, see no thing 110 To make death hateful, save an innate clinging, A loathsome, and yet all invincible Instinct of life, which I abhor, as I Despise myself, yet cannot overcome— And so I live. Would I had never lived! Lucifer. Thou livest-and must live for ever. Think The Earth, which is thine outward cov'ring, is Existence—it will cease—and thou wilt be— No less than thou art now. No less / and why Cain. No more? 120 Lucifer. It may be thou shalt be as we. Cain. And ye? Are everlasting. Lucifer. Are ye happy? Cain. Lucifer. We are mighty. Are ye happy? Cain. No: art thou? Lucifer. Cain. How should I be so? Look on me! Poor clay! And thou pretendest to be wretched! Thou! Cain. I am:—and thou, with all thy might, what art Lucifer. One who aspired to be what made thee, and Would not have made thee what thou art. Ah! Cain. Thou look'st almost a god; and-I am none: Lucifer.

And having failed to be one, would be nought

between soul and body.]

soul is imprisoned in an alien and evil body. There can be no harmony

CAIN.

Save what I am. He conquered; let him reign! Cain. Who? Lucifer. Thy Sire's maker—and the Earth's. Cain. And Heaven's. And all that in them is. So I have heard His Seraphs sing; and so my father saith. Lucifer. They say—what they must sing and say, on Of being that which I am,—and thou art— Of spirits and of men. Cain. And what is that? Lucifer. Souls who dare use their immortality-Souls who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in His everlasting face, and tell him that His evil is not good! If he has made, As he saith—which I know not, nor believe— But, if he made us—he cannot unmake: We are immortal |-- nav. he'd have us so. That he may torture :- let him! He is great-But, in his greatness, is no happier than We in our conflict! Goodness would not make Evil; and what else hath he made? But let him Sit on his vast and solitary throne-Creating worlds, to make eternity Less burthensome to his immense existence 150 And unparticipated solitude; 1 Let him crowd orb on orb: he is alone Indefinite, Indissoluble Tyrant: Could he but crush himself, 'twere the best boon He ever granted: but let him reign on l And multiply himself in misery 18 Spirits and Men, at least we sympathise-And, suffering in concert, make our pangs

1. [Compare-

"Let him unite above Star upon star, moon, Sun; And let his God-head toil To re-adorn and re-illume his Heaven, Since in the end derision Shall prove his works and all his efforts vain." Adam, a Sacred Drama, by Giovanni Battista Andreini; Cowper's Milton, 1810, iii. 24, sqq.] Innumerable, more endurable, By the unbounded sympathy of all . 160 With all! But He! so wretched in his height, So restless in his wretchedness, must still Create, and re-create—perhaps he'll make 1 One day a Son unto himself—as he Gave you a father—and if he so doth, Mark me! that Son will be a sacrifice! Cain. Thou speak'st to me of things which long have In visions through my thought: I never could Reconcile what I saw with what I heard. My father and my mother talk to me 170 Of serpents, and of fruits and trees: I see The gates of what they call their Paradise Guarded by fiery-sworded Cherubim, Which shut them out-and me: I feel the weight Of daily toil, and constant thought: I look Around a world where I seem nothing, with Thoughts which arise within me, as if they Could master all things—but I thought alone This misery was mine. My father is 180 Tamed down; my mother has forgot the mind Which made her thirst for knowledge at the risk Of an eternal curse; my brother is A watching shepherd boy,2 who offers up The firstlings of the flock to him who bids The earth yield nothing to us without sweat;

i. A drudging husbandman who offers up The first fruits of the earth to him who made That earth - MS. M. erased.

Own and beloved-she, too, understands not

The mind which overwhelms me: never till

My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn Than the birds' matins; and my Adah—my

1. [Lines 163-166 ("perhaps"... "sacrifice"), which appear in the MS., were omitted from the text in the first and all subsequent editions. In the edition of 1832, etc. (xiv. 27), they are printed as a variant in a footnote. The present text follows the MS.]

2. [According to the Encyclopædia Biblica, the word "Abel" signifies "shepherd" or "herdman." The Mussorites give "breath," or " vanity," as an equivalent.]

SCENE I.

Now met I aught to sympathise with me.

220

190

Been seen.

Cain.

Lucifer. But must be undergone.

Saith that? It is not written so on high:

Though man's vast fears and little vanity

Would make him cast upon the spiritual nature

In nature being earth also-more in wisdom,

His own low failing. The snake was the snake—

No more; 1 and yet not less than those he tempted,

The proud One will not so far falsify,

220

'Tis well—I rather would consort with spirits. Lucifer. And hadst thou not been fit by thine own soul For such companionship, I would not now Have stood before thee as I am: a serpent Had been enough to charm ye, as before. Cain. Ah! didst thou tempt my mother? Lucifer. I tempt none, Save with the truth: was not the Tree, the Tree Of Knowledge? and was not the Tree of Life Still fruitful? Did I bid her pluck them not? Did I plant things prohibited within 200 The reach of beings innocent, and curious By their own innocence? I would have made ye Gods; and even He who thrust ve forth, so thrust ve Because "ye should not eat the fruits of life. "And become gods as we." Were those his words? Cain. They were, as I have heard from those who heard them. In thunder. Lucifer. Then who was the Demon? He Who would not let ye live, or he who would Have made ye live for ever, in the joy And power of Knowledge? Cain. Would they had snatched both 210 The fruits, or neither ! Lucifer. One is yours already, The other may be still. Cain. How so? Lucifer. By being Yourselves, in your resistance. Nothing can Quench the mind, if the mind will be itself And centre of surrounding things—'tis made To sway, Cain. But didst thou tempt my parents? Lucifer. Poor clay—what should I tempt them for, or how?

Since he could overcome them, and foreknew The knowledge fatal to their narrow joys. Think'st thou I'd take the shape of things that die? Cain. But the thing had a demon? He but woke one In those he spake to with his forky tongue. I tell thee that the Serpent was no more Than a mere serpent: ask the Cherubim Who guard the tempting tree. When thousand ages Have rolled o'er your dead ashes, and your seed's, The seed of the then world may thus array Their earliest fault in fable, and attribute To me a shape I scorn, as I scorn all That bows to him, who made things but to bend Before his sullen, sole eternity; But we, who see the truth, must speak it. Thy Fond parents listened to a creeping thing, And fell. For what should spirits tempt them? What Was there to envy in the narrow bounds Of Paradise, that spirits who pervade Space—but I speak to thee of what thou know'st not, With all thy Tree of Knowledge. But thou canst not Speak aught of Knowledge which I would not know, And do not thirst to know, and bear a mind To know. Lucifer. And heart to look on? Be it proved. Lucifer. Darest thou look on Death? He has not yet 250 Cain.

1. [Vide ante, "Preface," p. 208.]

My father

Cain. They say the Serpent was a spirit. Who

i. Have stood before thee as I am; but chosen The serpent's charming symbol. - [MS. M. erased.]

Lucifer.

No.

Says he is something dreadful, and my mother Weeps when he's named; and Abel lifts his eyes To Heaven, and Zillah casts hers to the earth, And sighs a prayer; and Adah looks on me, And speaks not. Lucifer. And thou?

Cain.

Thoughts unspeakable Crowd in my breast to burning, when I hear

Of this almighty Death, who is, it seems, Inevitable. Could I wrestle with him?

I wrestled with the lion, when a boy,

260 In play, till he ran roaring from my gripe.

Lucifer. It has no shape; but will absorb all things That bear the form of earth-born being.

I thought it was a being: who could do Such evil things to beings save a being?

Lucifer. Ask the Destroyer.

Cain. Who?

Lucifer. The Maker—Call him

Which name thou wilt: he makes but to destroy. Cain. I knew not that, yet thought it, since I heard

Of Death: although I know not what it is-

Yet it seems horrible. I have looked out

In the vast desolate night in search of him;

And when I saw gigantic shadows in

The umbrage of the walls of Eden, chequered

By the far-flashing of the Cherubs' swords, I watched for what I thought his coming; for

With fear rose longing in my heart to know

What 'twas which shook us all—but nothing came.

And then I turned my weary eyes from off

Our native and forbidden Paradise,

Up to the lights above us, in the azure,

Which are so beautiful: shall they, too, die?

Lucifer. Perhaps-but long outlive both thine and

thee.

Cain. I'm glad of that: I would not have them die-They are so lovely. What is Death? I fear, I feel, it is a dreadful thing; but what, I cannot compass: 'tis denounced against us,

Both them who sinned and sinned not, as an ill-What ill?

Lucifer. To be resolved into the earth.

Cain. But shall I know it?

Lucifer. As I know not death,

I cannot answer.1

SCENE I.]

Cain. Were I quiet earth,

That were no evil: would I ne'er had been

Aught else but dust!

Lucifer. That is a grovelling wish,

Less than thy father's—for he wished to know!

Cain. But not to live—or wherefore plucked he not

The Life-tree?

Lucifer. He was hindered.

Deadly error! Cain.

Not to snatch first that fruit:—but ere he plucked

The knowledge, he was ignorant of Death.

Alas! I scarcely now know what it is,

And yet I fear it-fear I know not what!

Lucifer. And I, who know all things, fear nothing;

What is true knowledge.

Cain. Wilt thou teach me all?

Lucifer. Aye, upon one condition.

Cain.

Name it. Lucifer.

That Stupid Condition Thou dost fall down and worship me-thy Lord,

Cain. Thou art not the Lord my father worships.

Lucifer.

Cain. His equal?

Lucifer. No :—I have nought in common with him!

Nor would: I would be aught above-beneath-

Aught save a sharer or a servant of

His power. I dwell apart; but I am great:—

Many there are who worship me, and more

Who shall—be thou amongst the first.

r. [Compare-

"If, as thou sayst thine essence be as ours, We have replied in telling thee, the thing Mortals call Death hath nought to do with us." Manfred, act i. sc. 1, lines 161-163, Poetical Works, 1901, iv. 90.] ACT I.

224

I never As yet have bowed unto my father's God.

Although my brother Abel oft implores That I would join with him in sacrifice:

Why should I bow to thee?

Lucifer.

Hast thou ne'er bowed

To him?

Cain. Have I not said it?—need I say it? Could not thy mighty knowledge teach thee that?

Lucifer. He who bows not to him has bowed to me.1

Cain. But I will bend to neither.

Lucifer. Ne'er the less, 1, 100K

Thou art my worshipper: not worshipping

Him makes thee mine the same.

Cain. And what is that? 320

Lucifer. Thou'lt know here—and hereafter. Cain. Let me but

Be taught the mystery of my being.

Lucifer.

Where I will lead thee.

But I must retire

Cain. To till the earth—for I had promised— What?

Cain. To cull some first-fruits.

Lucifer. Cain.

Why? To offer up

Follow

With Abel on an altar.

Lucifer. Said'st thou not

Thou ne'er hadst bent to him who made thee?

But Abel's earnest prayer has wrought upon me;

The offering is more his than mine—and Adah——

Lucifer. Why dost thou hesitate?

Cain.

She is my sister, 330

Yes-

1. [Dr. Arnold, speaking of Cain, used to say, "There is something to me almost awful in meeting suddenly, in the works of such a man, so great and solemn a truth as is expressed in that speech of Lucifer, "He who bows not to God hath bowed to me" (Stanley's Life of Arnold, ed. 1887, i. 263, note). It may be awful, but it is not strange. Byron was seldom at a loss for a text, and must have been familiar with the words, "He that is not with Me is against Me," Moreover, he was a man of genius!

SCENE I.]

CAIN.

Born on the same day, of the same womb; and She wrung from me, with tears, this promise; and Rather than see her weep, I would, methinks, Bear all—and worship aught,

Lucifer. Cain. I will. Then follow me!

Enter ADAH.

My brother, I have come for thee; Adah. It is our hour of rest and joy-and we Have less without thee. Thou hast laboured not This morn; but I have done thy task: the fruits Are ripe, and glowing as the light which ripens: Come away.

Cain. Seest thou not?

I see an angel; Adah.

We have seen many: will he share our hour

Of rest?—he is welcome.

But he is not like Cain.

The angels we have seen.

Are there, then, others? Adah.

But he is welcome, as they were: they deigned

To be our guests-will he?

Cain (to Lucifer). Wilt thou? Lucifer.

Thee to be mine.

Cain. I must away with him. And me? she duesn's

Adah. And leave us?

Cain.

Adah.

Cain.

Adah. Let me go with thee.

Lucifer.

Adah. Art thou that steppest between heart and heart?

Cain. He is a God. Adah.

How know'st thou?

He speaks like Cain.

Adah. So did the Serpent, and it lied.

35 I

want to be left.

Lucifer can only

Who insignifant

when he is

alone

VOL. V.

Q

I ask

No, she must not.

390

400

410

Lucifer. Thou errest, Adah!—was not the Tree that

Of Knowledge?

Adah. Ave-to our eternal sorrow.

Lucifer. And yet that grief is knowledge-so he lied

And if he did betray you, 'twas with Truth: And Truth in its own essence cannot be But good.

Adah. But all we know of it has gathered Evil on ill; expulsion from our home, And dread, and toil, and sweat, and heaviness; Remorse of that which was—and hope of that Which cometh not. Cain! walk not with this Spirit. Bear with what we have borne, and love me—I Love thee.

Lucifer. More than thy mother, and thy sire? Adah. I do. Is that a sin, too? Lucifer. No, not yet;

It one day will be in your children.

What!

Must not my daughter love her brother Enoch? Lucifer. Not as thou lovest Cain.

Adah. Oh, my God! Shall they not love and bring forth things that love Out of their love? have they not drawn their milk Out of this bosom? was not he, their father. Born of the same sole womb, in the same hour With me? did we not love each other? and In multiplying our being multiply Things which will love each other as we love Them?—And as I love thee, my Cain! go not Forth with this spirit; he is not of ours.

Lucifer. The sin I speak of is not of my making, And cannot be a sin in you—whate'er It seem in those who will replace ye in

Mortality.1 380 What is the sin which is not Adah. Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin Or virtue?—if it doth, we are the slaves

Lucifer. Higher things than ye are slaves: and higher Than them or ve would be so, did they not Prefer an independency of torture To the smooth agonies of adulation, In hymns and harpings, and self-seeking prayers, To that which is omnipotent, because It is omnipotent, and not from love, But terror and self-hope.

Adah. Must be all goodness.

SCENE I.

Was it so in Eden?

Omnipotence

Lucifer. Adah. Fiend! tempt me not with beauty; thou art

Than was the Serpent, and as false.

As true. Ask Eve, your mother: bears she not the knowledge

Of good and evil? Oh, my mother! thou Adah.

Hast plucked a fruit more fatal to thine offspring Than to thyself; thou at the least hast passed Thy youth in Paradise, in innocent

And happy intercourse with happy spirits: But we, thy children, ignorant of Eden,

Are girt about by demons, who assume The words of God, and tempt us with our own

Dissatisfied and curious thoughts—as thou Wert worked on by the snake, in thy most flushed

And heedless, harmless wantonness of bliss.

I cannot answer this immortal thing

Which stands before me; I cannot abhor him;

I look upon him with a pleasing fear,

And yet I fly not from him: in his eye There is a fastening attraction which

1. [It is impossible not to be struck with the resemblance between many of these passages and others in Manfred, e.g. act ii. sc. 1, lines 24-28, Poetical Works, 1901, iv. 99, note 1.]

I. ["The most common opinion is that a son and daughter were born together; and they go so far as to tell us the very name of the daughters. Cain's twin sister was called Calmana (see, too, Le Mistère du Viel Testament, lines 1883-1926, ed. 1878), or Caimana, or Debora, or Azzrum; that of Abel was named Delbora or Awina."— Bayle's Dictionary, 1735, ii. 854, art. " Eve," D.]

Fixes my fluttering eyes on his; my heart Beats quick: he awes me, and yet draws me near, Nearer and nearer: Cain-Cain-save me from him! Cain. What dreads my Adah? This is no ill spirit. Adah. He is not God—nor God's: I have beheld The Cherubs and the Seraphs; he looks not Like them. Cain. But there are spirits loftier still-The archangels. Lucifer. And still loftier than the archangels. Adah. Aye-but not blesséd. Lucifer. If the blessedness Consists in slavery-no. Adah. I have heard it said. 420 The Seraphs love most—Cherubim know most—1 And this should be a Cherub-since he loves not. Lucifer. And if the higher knowledge quenches love, What must he be you cannot love when known?" Since the all-knowing Cherubim love least, The Seraphs' love can be but ignorance: That they are not compatible, the doom Of thy fond parents, for their daring, proves. Choose betwixt Love and Knowledge-since there is No other choice: your sire hath chosen already: His worship is but fear. Adah. Oh, Cain I choose Love. Cain. For thee, my Adah, I choose not-It was Born with me-but I love nought else. Our parents? Adah. Cain. Did they love us when they snatched from the That which hath driven us all from Paradise?

i. What can he be who places love in ignorance ?- [MS. M.]

Should we not love them—and our children, Cain?

Adah. We were not born then—and if we had been,

r. ["One of the second order of angels of the Dionysian hierarchy, reputed to excel specially in knowledge (as the seraphim in love). See Bacon's Advancement of Learning, i. 28: 'The first place is given to the Angels of love, which are tearmed Seraphim, the second to the Angels of light, which are tearmed Cherubim,'"—N. Eng. Dict., art, "Cherub."]

The more you know, the less you love.

What point does it. Cain. My little Enoch! and his lisping sister! Serve for Enuch's Could I but deem them happy, I would half 440 Sister to Forget--but it can never be forgotten have a lispi Through thrice a thousand generations! never Shall men love the remembrance of the man Who sowed the seed of evil and mankind In the same hour! They plucked the tree of science And sin-and, not content with their own sorrow, Begot me-thee-and all the few that are, And all the unnumbered and innumerable Multitudes, millions, myriads, which may be, To inherit agonies accumulated By ages !-- and I must be sire of such things! 450 Thy beauty and thy love-my love and joy, The rapturous moment and the placid hour, All we love in our children and each other, But lead them and ourselves through many years Of sin and pain-or few, but still of sorrow, Interchecked with an instant of brief pleasure, To Death-the unknown! Methinks the Tree of Knowledge Hath not fulfilled its promise: -- if they sinned, At least they ought to have known all things that are Of knowledge—and the mystery of Death. What do they know?—that they are miserable. What need of snakes and fruits to teach us that? Adah. I am not wretched, Cain, and if thou Wert happy – Be thou happy, then, alone— Cain. I will have nought to do with happiness, Which humbles me and mine. Alone I could not, Adah. Nor would be happy; but with those around us I think I could be so, despite of Death, Which, as I know it not, I dread not, though It seems an awful shadow-if I may 470 Judge from what I have heard. And thou couldst not Lucifer. Alone, thou say'st, be happy? Alone! Oh, my God! Adah.

i. But it was a lie no doubt .- [MS. M. erased.]

CAIN.

Who could be happy and alone, or good? To me my solitude seems sin; unless When I think how soon I shall see my brother, His brother, and our children, and our parents. Lucifer. Yet thy God is alone; and is he happy? Lonely, and good? Adah. He is not so; he hath The angels and the mortals to make happy, And thus becomes so in diffusing joy. 480 What else can joy be, but the spreading joy? Lucifer. Ask of your sire, the exile fresh from Eden; Or of his first-born son: ask your own heart; It is not tranquil. Adah. Alas! no! and you— Are you of Heaven? Lucifer. If I am not, enquire The cause of this all-spreading happiness (Which you proclaim) of the all-great and good Maker of life and living things; it is His secret, and he keeps it. We must bear, And some of us resist—and both in vain, 490 His Seraphs say: but it is worth the trial, Since better may not be without: there is A wisdom in the spirit, which directs To right, as in the dim blue air the eye Of you, young mortals, lights at once upon The star which watches, welcoming the morn. Adah. It is a beautiful star; I love it for Its beauty. Lucifer. And why not adore? Adah. Our father Adores the Invisible only. Lucifer. But the symbols Of the Invisible are the loveliest 500 Of what is visible; and you bright star Is leader of the host of Heaven. Our father Saith that he has beheld the God himself Who made him and our mother. Hast thou seen him? Lucifer.

i. What else can be joy !---. [MS. M.]

Adah. Yes-in his works. But in his being? Lucifer. No-Adah. Save in my father, who is God's own image; Or in his angels, who are like to thee-And brighter, yet less beautiful and powerful In seeming: as the silent sunny noon, All light, they look upon us; but thou seem'st 510 Like an ethereal night,1 where long white clouds Streak the deep purple, and unnumbered stars Spangle the wonderful mysterious vault With things that look as if they would be suns; So beautiful, unnumbered, and endearing, Not dazzling, and yet drawing us to them, They fill my eyes with tears, and so dost thou. Thou seem'st unhappy: do not make us so, And I will weep for thee. Alas! those tears! Lucifer. Couldst thou but know what oceans will be shed ____ 520 Adah. By me? By all. Lucifer. What all? Adah. The million millions-Lucifer. The myriad myriads—the all-peopled earth— The unpeopled earth-and the o'er-peopled Hell, Of which thy bosom is the germ. O Cain! Adah. This spirit curseth us. Let him say on; Cain. Him will I follow. Whither? Adah. To a place Lucifer. Whence he shall come back to thee in an hour; But in that hour see things of many days.

CAIN.

SCENE I.

1. [Compare—
"She walks in Beauty like the night."

Hebrew Melodies, i. 1, Poetical Works, 1900, iii. 381.]

Out of old worlds this new one in few days?

And cannot I, who aided in this work,

Did not your Maker make

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Adah. How can that be?

Lucifer.

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Show in an hour what he hath made in many, Or hath destroyed in few? Cain. Lead on.

Adah. In sooth, return within an hour?

He shall,

Will he,

With us acts are exempt from time, and we Can crowd eternity into an hour,

Or stretch an hour into eternity:

We breathe not by a mortal measurement— But that 's a mystery. Cain, come on with me.

Adah. Will he return?

Aye, woman! he alone 540 Of mortals from that place (the first and last

Who shall return, save ONE), shall come back to

To make that silent and expectant world As populous as this: at present there Are few inhabitants.

Adah. Where dwellest thou?

Lucifer. Throughout all space. Where should I dwell? Where are

Thy God or Gods-there am I: all things are Divided with me: Life and Death-and Time-Eternity-and heaven and earth-and that Which is not heaven nor earth, but peopled with Those who once peopled or shall people both-These are my realms! so that I do divide His, and possess a kingdom which is not His.1 If I were not that which I have said, Could I stand here? His angels are within Your vision.

Adah. So they were when the fair Serpent Spoke with our mother first.

Lucifer. Cain! thou hast heard. If thou dost long for knowledge, I can satiate That thirst; nor ask thee to partake of fruits Which shall deprive thee of a single good 560 The Conqueror has left thee. Follow me. Cain. Spirit, I have said it. Exeunt Lucifer and Cain. Adah (follows exclaiming). Cain! my brother! Cain!

CAIN.

ACT II.

Scene I .- The Abyss of Space.

Cain. I tread on air, and sink not-yet I fear To sink.

Lucifer. Have faith in me, and thou shalt be ie: Realize I Borne on the air, of which I am the Prince.

Cain. Can I do so without impiety?

Lucifer. Believe-and sink not! doubt-and perish!

thus Would run the edict of the other God, Who names me Demon to his angels; they Echo the sound to miserable things, Which, knowing nought beyond their shallow senses, Worship the word which strikes their ear, and deem Evil or good what is proclaimed to them In their abasement. I will have none such: Worship or worship not, thou shalt behold The worlds beyond thy little world, nor be Amerced for doubts beyond thy little life, With torture of my dooming. There will come An hour, when, tossed upon some water-drops, to A man shall say to a man, "Believe in me, And walk the waters;" and the man shall walk The billows and be safe. I will not say, 20 Believe in me, as a conditional creed To save thee; but fly with me o'er the gulf Of space an equal flight, and I will show What thou dar'st not deny,—the history Of past—and present, and of future worlds.

- i. An hour, when walking on a petty lake .- [MS. M. erased.]
- I. ["According to the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2).]

^{1. [}Lucifer was evidently indebted to the Manichæans for his theory of the duplex terra-an infernal as well as a celestial kingdom.]

Cain. Oh God! or Demon! or whate'er thou art, Is you our earth? Lucifer. Dost thou not recognise The dust which formed your father? Can it be? You small blue circle, swinging in far ether, t With an inferior circlet purpler it still,1 Which looks like that which lit our earthly night? Is this our Paradise? Where are its walls, And they who guard them? Lucifer. Point me out the site Of Paradise. Cain. How should I? As we move Like sunbeams onward, it grows small and smaller, And as it waxes little, and then less, Gathers a halo round it, like the light Which shone the roundest of the stars, when I

Gathers a halo round it, like the light
Which shone the roundest of the stars, when I
Beheld them from the skirts of Paradise:
Methinks they both, as we recede from them,
Appear to join the innumerable stars
Which are around us; and, as we move on,
Increase their myriads.

Lucifer.

And if there should be

Worlds greater than thine own—inhabited By greater things—and they themselves far more In number than the dust of thy dull earth, Though multiplied to animated atoms.

i. Yon round blue circle swinging in far ether With an inferior circlet dimmer still.—[MS. M. erased.]

1. [Compare-

"And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent World, in higness as a star
Of smallest magnitude, close by the moon."

Paradise Lost, ii. 1051-1053.

Compare, too-

"The magic car inoved on.
Earth's distant orb appeared
The smallest light that twinkies in the heavens;
Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems rolled,
And countless spheres diffused
An ever-varying glory."
Shelley's Queen Mab, Poetical Works, 1829, p. 106.

All living—and all doomed to death—and wretched, What wouldst thou think? Cain. I should be proud of thought Which knew such things. Lucifer. But if that high thought were 50 Linked to a servile mass of matter—and. Knowing such things, aspiring to such things, And science still beyond them, were chained down To the most gross and petty paltry wants, All foul and fulsome—and the very best Of thine enjoyments a sweet degradation. A most enervating and filthy cheat To lure thee on to the renewal of Fresh souls and bodies, all foredoomed to be As frail, and few so happy— Cain. Spirit! I 60 Know nought of Death, save as a dreadful thing Of which I have heard my parents speak, as of A hideous heritage I owe to them No less than life—a heritage not happy, If I may judge, till now. But, Spirit! if It be as thou hast said (and I within Feel the prophetic torture of its truth), Here let me die: for to give birth to those Who can but suffer many years, and die-Methinks is merely propagating Death, 70 And multiplying murder. Lucifer. Thou canst not All die-there is what must survive. Cain. The Other Spake not of this unto my father, when He shut him forth from Paradise, with death Written upon his forehead. But at least Let what is mortal of me perish, that I may be in the rest as angels are. Lucifer. I am angelic: wouldst thou be as I am?

CAIN.

1. ["Several of the ancient Fathers, too much prejudiced in favour of virginity, have pretended that if Man had persevered in innocence he would not have entered into the carnal commerce of matrimony, and that the propagation of mankind would have been effected quite another way." (See St. Augustine, De Civitate Dei, xiv. cap. xxi.; Bayle's Dictionary, art. "Eve," 1735, ii. 853, note C.)]

SCENE I.

* Cain still
Wants to
Know
more

Cain. I know not what thou art: I see thy power, And see thou show'st me things beyond my power, Beyond all power of my born faculties, Although inferior still to my desires And my conceptions. Luciter. What are they which dwell So humbly in their pride, as to sojourn With worms in clay? Cain. And what art thou who dwellest So haughtily in spirit, and canst range Nature and immortality—and yet Seem'st sorrowful? Lucifer. I seem that which I am; And therefore do I ask of thee, if thou Wouldst be immortal? Cain. Thou hast said, I must be Immortal in despite of me. I knew not This until lately—but since it must be, Let me, or happy or unhappy, learn. To anticipate my immortality. Lucifer. Thou didst before I came upon thee. Cain. How? Lucifer. By suffering. Cain. And must torture be immortal? Lucifer. We and thy sons will try. But now, behold! Is it not glorious? Cain. Oh thou beautiful And unimaginable ether! and Ye multiplying masses of increased 100 And still-increasing lights! what are ye? what Is this blue wilderness of interminable Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden? Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye Sweep on in your unbounded revelry Through an aërial universe of endless Expansion—at which my soul aches to think— Intoxicated with eternity?

1. [Compare-

"Below lay stretched the universe! There, far as the remotest line Oh God! Oh Gods! or whatsoe'er ye are! HO How beautiful ye are! how beautiful Your works, or accidents, or whatsoe'er They may be! Let me die, as atoms die, (If that they die), or know ve in your might And knowledge! My thoughts are not in this hour Unworthy what I see, though my dust is; Spirit! let me expire, or see them nearer. Lucifer. Art thou not nearer? look back to thine earth! Cain. Where is it? I see nothing save a mass Of most innumerable lights. Look there! Lucifer. 120 Cain. I cannot see it. Lucifer. Yet it sparkles still. Cain. That !-- vonder! Lucifer. Yea. And wilt thou tell me so? Cain. Why, I have seen the fire-flies and fire-worms Sprinkle the dusky groves and the green banks In the dim twilight, brighter than yon world Which bears them. Lucifer. Thou hast seen both worms and worlds, Each bright and sparkling-what dost think of them? Cain. That they are beautiful in their own sphere, And that the night, which makes both beautiful, The little shining fire-fly in its flight, 130 And the immortal star in its great course, Must both be guided. Lucifer. But by whom or what? Cain. Show me. Lucifer. Dar'st thou behold? How know I what Cain. dare behold? As yet, thou hast shown nought dare not gaze on further. Lucifer. On, then, with me.

That bounds imagination's flight,
Countless and unending orbs
In many motions intermingled,
Yet still fulfilled immutably
Eternal Nature's laws."
Shelley's Queen Mab, ii. ibid., p. 107.]

CAIN.

SCENE I.]

Wouldst thou behold things mortal or immortal? Cain. Why, what are things? Lucifer. Both partly: but what doth Sit next thy heart? Cain. The things I see. Lucifer. But what Sate nearest it? Cain. The things I have not seen, Nor ever shall—the mysteries of Death. Lucifer. What, if I show to thee things which have died. As I have shown thee much which cannot die? Cain. Do so. Lucifer. Away, then! on our mighty wings! Cain. Oh! how we cleave the blue! The stars fade from us! The earth! where is my earth? Let me look on it, For I was made of it. 'Tis now beyond thee, Lucifer. Less, in the universe, than thou in it: Yet deem not that thou canst escape it; thou Shalt soon return to earth, and all its dust: 'Tis part of thy eternity, and mine. 150 Cain. Where dost thou lead me? Lucifer. To what was before thee! The phantasm of the world; of which thy world Is but the wreck. Cain. What! is it not then new? Lucifer. No more than life is; and that was ere thou Or I were, or the things which seem to us Greater than either: many things will have No end: and some, which would pretend to have Had no beginning, have had one as mean As thou; and mightier things have been extinct To make way for much meaner than we can 160 Surmise; for moments only and the space Have been and must be all unchangeable. But changes make not death, except to clay; But thou art clay-and canst but comprehend That which was clay, and such thou shalt behold. Cain. Clay-Spirit-what thou wilt-I can survey.

Lucifer. Away, then! Cain. But the lights fade from me fast, And some till now grew larger as we approached, And wore the look of worlds. Lucifer. And such they are. Cain. And Edens in them? Lucifer. It may be. Cain. And men? 170 Lucifer. Yea, or things higher. Aye! and serpents too? Lucifer. Wouldst thou have men without them? must no reptiles Breathe, save the erect ones? Cain. How the lights recede! Where fly we? Lucifer. To the world of phantoms, which Are beings past, and shadows still to come. Cain. But it grows dark, and dark—the stars are gone! Lucifer. And yet thou seest. Cain. 'Tis a fearful light! No sun-no moon-no lights innumerable-The very blue of the empurpled night Fades to a dreary twilight—yet I see 180 Huge dusky masses; but unlike the worlds We were approaching, which, begirt with light, Seemed full of life even when their atmosphere Of light gave way, and showed them taking shapes Unequal, of deep valleys and vast mountains; And some emitting sparks, and some displaying Enormous liquid plains, and some begirt With luminous belts, and floating moons, which took, Like them, the features of fair earth:—instead, All here seems dark and dreadful. Lucifer. But distinct. Thou seekest to behold Death, and dead things? Cain. I seek it not; but as I know there are Such, and that my sire's sin makes him and me, And all that we inherit, liable To such, I would behold, at once, what I Must one day see perforce. i. And with serpents too !- [MS. M.]

SCENE II.]

VOL. V.

Lucifer. Cain.

Behold!

'Tis darkness!

Lucifer. And so it shall be ever-but we will

Unfold its gates!

Cain, Enormous vapours roll

Apart-what's this?

Lucifer. Cain.

Enter!

Can I return?

Lucifer. Return! be sure: how else should Death be peopled?

Its present realm is thin to what it will be,

Through thee and thine.

Cain. The clouds still open wide

And wider, and make widening circles round us! Lucifer. Advance!

Cain.

And thou!

Lucifer. Couldst not have gone beyond thy world. On! on!

Fear not—without me thou

They disappear through the clouds.

Scene II .-- Hades.

Enter LUCIFER and CAIN.

Cain. How silent and how vast are these dim worlds! For they seem more than one, and yet more peopled Than the huge brilliant luminous orbs which swung So thickly in the upper air, that I Had deemed them rather the bright populace Of some all unimaginable Heaven, Than things to be inhabited themselves, But that on drawing near them I beheld Their swelling into palpable immensity Of matter, which seemed made for life to dwell on, 10 Rather than life itself. But here, all is So shadowy, and so full of twilight, that It speaks of a day past. It is the realm Lucifer.

i. Rather than things to be inhabited .- [MS. M.

Of Death.—Wouldst have it present? Till I know Cain. That which it really is, I cannot answer. But if it be as I have heard my father Deal out in his long homilies, 'tis a thing-Oh God! I dare not think on't! Cursed be He who invented Life that leads to Death! Or the dull mass of life, that, being life, Could not retain, but needs must forfeit it-Even for the innocent! Dost thou curse thy father? Lucifer. Cain. Cursed he not me in giving me my birth? Cursed be not me before my birth, in daring To pluck the fruit forbidden? Thou say'st well: Lucifer. The curse is mutual 'twixt thy sire and thee-But for thy sons and brother? Let them share it Cain. With me, their sire and brother! What else is Bequeathed to me? I leave them my inheritance! Oh, ve interminable gloomy realms Of swimming shadows and enormous shapes, Some fully shown, some indistinct, and all Mighty and melancholy—what are ve? Live ye, or have ye lived? Lucifer. Somewhat of both. Cain. Then what is Death? What? Hath not he who made ye Lucifer. Said 'tis another life? Till now he hath Cain. Said nothing, save that all shall die. He one day will unfold that further secret. Cain. Happy the day! Yes; happy! when unfolded, Lucifer. Through agonies unspeakable, and clogged With agonies eternal, to innumerable Yet unborn myriads of unconscious atoms, All to be animated for this only! Cain. What are these mighty phantoms which I see Floating around me?—They wear not the form

CAIN.

Of the Intelligences I have seen Round our regretted and unentered Eden; Nor wear the form of man as I have viewed it In Adam's and in Abel's, and in mine. Nor in my sister-bride's, nor in my children's: 50 And yet they have an aspect, which, though not Of men nor angels, looks like something, which, If not the last, rose higher than the first, Haughty, and high, and beautiful, and full Of seeming strength, but of inexplicable Shape; for I never saw such. They bear not The wing of Seraph, nor the face of man, Nor form of mightiest brute, nor aught that is Now breathing; mighty yet and beautiful As the most beautiful and mighty which 60 Live, and yet so unlike them, that I scarce Can call them living.1 Lucifer. Yet they lived. Cain. Where? Lucifer. Where Thou livest. Cain. When? Lucifer. On what thou callest earth They did inhabit. Cain. Adam is the first. Lucifer. Of thine, I grant thee-but too mean to be The last of these. Cain. And what are they? Lucifer. That which Thou shalt be. Cain. But what were they? Lucifer. Living, high, Intelligent, good, great, and glorious things, As much superior unto all thy sire Adam could e'er have been in Eden, as The sixty-thousandth generation shall be,

r. ["I have . . . supposed Cain to be shown in the rational pre-Adamites, beings endowed with a higher intelligence than man, but totally unlike him in form, and with much greater strength of mind and person. You may suppose the small talk which takes place between him and Lucifer upon these matters is not quite canonical."—Letter to Moore, September 19, 1821, Letters, 1901, v. 368.]

In its dull damp degeneracy, to Thee and thy son;—and how weak they are, judge By thy own flesh.

Cain. Ah me! and did they perish?

Lucifer. Yes, from their earth, as thou wilt fade from

CAIN.

Cain. But was mine theirs?

Lucifer.

It was.
But not as now.

It is too little and too lowly to Sustain such creatures.

Lucifer. True, it was more glorious.

Cain. And wherefore did it fall?

Lucifer. Ask him who fells.¹

Cain. But how?

Cain.

Lucifer. By a most crushing and inexorable Destruction and disorder of the elements, 81 Which struck a world to chaos, as a chaos Subsiding has struck out a world: such things, Though rare in time, are frequent in eternity.—Pass on, and gaze upon the past.

Cain. 'Tis awful!

Lucifer. And true. Behold these phantoms! they were once

Material as thou art.

Cain. And must I be

Like them?

Like them?

Lucifer. Let He ² who made thee answer that.

I show thee what thy predecessors are,

And what they were thou feelest, in degree

96

Inferior as thy petty feelings and

Thy pettier portion of the immortal part

Of high intelligence and earthly strength.

What ye in common have with what they had

Is Life, and what ye shall have—Death: the rest

Of your poor attributes is such as suits

1. [Compare the "jingle between king and kine," in Sardanapalus, act v. sc. 1, lines 483, 484. It is hard to say whether Byron inserted and then omitted to erase these blemishes from negligence and indifference, or whether he regarded them as permissible or even felicitous.] 2. ["Let He." There is no doubt that Byron wrote, or that he should have written, "Let Him."]

Reptiles engendered out of the subsiding Slime of a mighty universe, crushed into A scarcely-yet shaped planet, peopled with Things whose enjoyment was to be in blindness-100 A Paradise of Ignorance, from which Knowledge was barred as poison. But behold What these superior beings are or were; Or, if it irk thee, turn thee back and till The earth, thy task-I'll waft thee there in safety. Cain. No: I'll stay here, Lucifer. How long? Cain. For ever! Since I must one day return here from the earth, I rather would remain; I am sick of all That dust has shown me-let me dwell in shadows. Lucifer. It cannot be: thou now beholdest as 110 A vision that which is reality. To make thyself fit for this dwelling, thou Must pass through what the things thou seest have passed-The gates of Death. Cain. By what gate have we entered Even now? Lucifer. By mine! But, plighted to return, My spirit buoys thee up to breathe in regions Where all is breathless save thyself. Gaze on: But do not think to dwell here till thine hour Is come! Cain. And these, too-can they ne'er repass To earth again? Their earth is gone for ever-Lucifer. 120 So changed by its convulsion, they would not Be conscious to a single present spot Of its new scarcely hardened surface—'twas— Oh, what a beautiful world it was ! Cain. It is not with the earth, though I must till it, I feel at war—but that I may not profit By what it bears of beautiful, untoiling, Nor gratify my thousand swelling thoughts

With knowledge, nor allay my thousand fears

Of Death and Life. Lucifer. What thy world is, thou see'st, But canst not comprehend the shadow of That which it was. Cain. And those enormous creatures, Phantoms inferior in intelligence (At least so seeming) to the things we have passed, Resembling somewhat the wild habitants Of the deep woods of earth, the hugest which Roar nightly in the forest, but ten-fold In magnitude and terror; taller than The cherub-guarded walls of Eden-with Eyes flashing like the fiery swords which fence them— And tusks projecting like the trees stripped of Their bark and branches—what were they? That which The Mammoth is in thy world ;—but these lie By myriads underneath its surface. Cain. None on it? Lucifer. No: for thy frail race to war With them would render the curse on it useless-'Twould be destroyed so early. But why war? Cain. Lucifer. You have forgotten the denunciation Which drove your race from Eden-war with all things, And death to all things, and disease to most things, 150 And pangs, and bitterness; these were the fruits Of the forbidden tree. Cain. But animals-Did they, too, eat of it, that they must die? Lucifer. Your Maker told ye, they were made for you, As you for him.—You would not have their doom Superior to your own? Had Adam not Fallen, all had stood. Cain. Alas! the hopeless wretches! They too must share my sire's fate, like his sons; Like them, too, without having shared the apple; Like them, too, without the so dear-bought knowledge! It was a lying tree—for we know nothing.

At least it promised knowledge at the price

CAIN.

Of death—but knowledge still: but what knows man? Lucifer. It may be death leads to the highest knowledge; And being of all things the sole thing certain, i At least leads to the surest science: therefore The Tree was true, though deadly. Cain. These dim realms! I see them, but I know them not. Lucifer. Because Thy hour is yet afar, and matter cannot Comprehend spirit wholly-but 'tis something 170 To know there are such realms. Cain. We knew already That there was Death. Lucifer. But not what was beyond it. Cain. Nor know I now. Lucifer. Thou knowest that there is A state, and many states beyond thine own-And this thou knewest not this morn. Cain. But all Seems dim and shadowy. Lucifer. Be content; it will Seem clearer to thine immortality. Cain. And you immeasurable liquid space Of glorious azure which floats on beyond us, Which looks like water, and which I should deem ". 180 The river which flows out of Paradise Past my own dwelling, but that it is bankless And boundless, and of an ethereal hue-What is it? Lucifer. There is still some such on earth, Although inferior, and thy children shall Dwell near it—'tis the phantasm of an Ocean. Cain. 'Tis like another world; a liquid sun-And those inordinate creatures sporting o'er Its shining surface? Lucifer. Are its inhabitants, The past Leviathans. Cain. And you immense 100

i. And being of all things the sole thing sure, [MS. M.]
ii. Which seems like water and which I should deem. [MS. M.]

Serpent, which rears his dripping mane and vasty Head, ten times higher than the haughtiest cedar, Forth from the abyss, looking as he could coil Himself around the orbs we lately looked on—Is he not of the kind which basked beneath The Tree in Eden?

Lucifer. Eve, thy mother, best
Can tell what shape of scrpent tempted her.
Cain. This seems too terrible. No doubt the other
Had more of beauty.

CAIN.

Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er beheld him?

Cain. Many of the same kind (at least so called)

But never that precisely, which persuaded 201

The fatal fruit, nor even of the same aspect.

Lucifer. Your father saw him not?

Cain. No: 'twas my mother

Who tempted him—she tempted by the serpent.

Lucifer. Good man! whene'er thy wife, or thy sons'
wives.

Tempt thee or them to aught that's new or strange,

Be sure thou seest first who hath tempted them !

Cain. Thy precept comes too late; there is no more

For serpents to tempt woman to.

Lucifer.

Are some things still which woman may tempt man to, 210

And man tempt woman:—let thy sons look to it!

My counsel is a kind one; for 'tis even

Given chiefly at my own expense; 'tis true,

'Twill not be followed, so there's little lost.

Cain, I understand not this.

Lucifer. The happier thou!—
Thy world and thou are still too young! Thou thinkest
Thyself most wicked and unhappy—is it
Not so?

Cain. For crime, I know not; but for pain, I have felt much.

Lucifer. First-born of the first man!
Thy present state of sin—and thou art evil,
Of sorrow—and thou sufferest, are both Eden

1. [Lucifer's candour and disinterested advice are "after" and in the manner of Mephistopheles.]

And piteous bleating of its restless dam;

SCENE II.

In all its innocence compared to what Thou shortly may'st be; and that state again, In its redoubled wretchedness, a Paradise To what thy sons' sons, accumulating In generations like to dust (which they In fact but add to), shall endure and do.-Now let us back to earth! Cain. And wherefore didst thou Lead me here only to inform me this? Lucifer. Was not thy quest for knowledge? Cain. Yes-as being 230 The road to happiness ! Lucifer. If truth be so, Thou hast it. Cain. Then my father's God did well When he prohibited the fatal Tree. Lucifer. But had done better in not planting it. But ignorance of evil doth not save From evil; it must still roll on the same. A part of all things. Cain. Not of all things. No-I'll not believe it—for I thirst for good. Lucifer. And who and what doth not? Who covets For its own bitter sake?—None—nothing! 'tis The leaven of all life, and lifelessness. 240 Cain. Within those glorious orbs which we behold, Distant, and dazzling, and innumerable, Ere we came down into this phantom realm, Ill cannot come: they are too beautiful. Lucifer. Thou hast seen them from afar. Cain. And what of that? Distance can but diminish glory—they, When nearer, must be more ineffable. Lucifer. Approach the things of earth most beautiful, And judge their beauty near. Cain. I have done this __ 250 The loveliest thing I know is loveliest nearest. Lucifer. Then there must be delusion.—What is that Which being nearest to thine eyes is still More beautiful than beauteous things remote?

Cain. My sister Adah.—All the stars of heaven, The deep blue noon of night, lit by an orb Which looks a spirit, or a spirit's world— The hues of twilight—the Sun's gorgeous coming— His setting indescribable, which fills 260 My eyes with pleasant tears as I behold Him sink, and feel my heart float softly with him Along that western paradise of clouds— The forest shade, the green bough, the bird's voice— The vesper bird's, which seems to sing of love, And mingles with the song of Cherubim, As the day closes over Eden's walls ;-He is deeply in love with her All these are nothing, to my eyes and heart, Like Adah's face: I turn from earth and heaven To gaze on it. Lucifer. Tis fair as frail mortality. In the first dawn and bloom of young creation, And earliest embraces of earth's parents, Can make its offspring; still it is delusion. Cain. You think so, being not her brother. Mortal! Lucifer. My brotherhood's with those who have no children. Cain. Then thou canst have no fellowship with us. Lucifer. It may be that thine own shall be for me. But if thou dost possess a beautiful Being beyond all beauty in thine eyes, Why art thou wretched? Cain. Why do I exist? 280 Anti- Cod Why art thou wretched? why are all things so? Ev'n he who made us must be, as the maker Of things unhappy! To produce destruction Can surely never be the task of joy, And yet my sire says he 's omnipotent: Then why is Evil—he being Good? I asked This question of my father; and he said, Because this Evil only was the path To Good. Strange Good, that must arise from out Its deadly opposite. I lately saw A lamb stung by a reptile: the poor suckling Lay foaming on the earth, beneath the vain

My father plucked some herbs, and laid them to The wound; and by degrees the helpless wretch Resumed its careless life, and rose to drain The mother's milk, who o'er it tremulous Stood licking its reviving limbs with joy. Behold, my son! said Adam, how from Evil Springs Good!1 Lucifer. What didst thou answer? Cain. Nothing: for He is my father: but I thought, that 'twere 300 A better portion for the animal Never to have been stung at all, than to Purchase renewal of its little life With agonies unutterable, though Dispelled by antidotes. Lucifer. But as thou saidst Of all beloved things thou lovest her Who shared thy mother's milk, and giveth hers Unto thy children-Cain. Most assuredly: What should I be without her? What am I? Lucifer. Cain. Dost thou love nothing? What does thy God love? 310 Cain. All things, my father says; but I confess I see it not in their allotment here. Lucifer. And, therefore, thou canst not see if I love Or no—except some vast and general purpose, To which particular things must melt like snows. Cain. Snows! what are they? Be happier in not knowing Lucifer.

1. ["If you say that God permitted sin to manifest His wisdom, which shines the more brightly by the disorders which the wickedness of men produces every day, than it would have done in a state of innocence, it may be answered that this is to compare the Deity to a father who should suffer his children to break their legs on purpose to show to all the city his great art in setting their broken bones; or to a king who should suffer seditions and factions to increase through all his kingdom, that he might purchase the glory of quelling them. . . . This is that doctrine of a Father of the Church who said, 'Felix culpa quae talem Redemptorem meruit!'"—Bayle's Dictionary, 1737, art. " l'aulicians," note B, 25, iv. 515.]

What thy remoter offspring must encounter;

SCENE II.

But bask beneath the clime which knows no winter. Cain. But dost thou not love something like thyself? Lucifer. And dost thou love thyself? Yes, but love more 320 What makes my feelings more endurable, And is more than myself, because I love it! Lucifer. Thou lovest it, because 'tis beautiful, As was the apple in thy mother's eye; And when it ceases to be so, thy love Will cease, like any other appetite.1 Cain. Cease to be beautiful! how can that be? Lucifer. With time. But time has passed, and hitherto Cain. Even Adam and my mother both are fair: Not fair like Adah and the Seraphim-330 But very fair. All that must pass away Lucifer. In them and her. I'm sorry for it; but Cain. Cannot conceive my love for her the less: And when her beauty disappears, methinks He who creates all beauty will lose more Than me in seeing perish such a work. Lucifer. I pity thee who lovest what must perish. Cain. And I thee who lov'st nothing. And thy brother-Lucifer. Sits he not near thy heart? Why should he not? Lucifer. Thy father loves him well-so does thy God. 340 Cain. Cain. And so do I. 'Tis well and meekly done. Lucifer. Cain. Meekly! He is the second born of flesh, Lucifer. And is his mother's favourite.

CAIN.

r. [Lucifer does not infect Cain with his cynical theories as to the origin and endurance of love. For the antidote, compare Wordsworth's sonnet "To a Painter" (No. 11), written in 1841—

"Morn into noon did pass, noon into eve, And the old day was welcome as the young, As welcome, and as beautiful-in sooth More beautiful, as being a thing more holy," etc. Works, 1889, p. 772.] To win it.

Her favour, since the Serpent was the first

Lucifer. And his father's?

Let him keep

He, too, looks smilingly on Abel. wrot Cain. Conu Lucifer. Ould His sacrifices are acceptable. Mecues Min Cain. NIM as agitated)-Spirit!

Cain. What is that To me? should I not love that which all love? Lucifer. And the Jehovah—the indulgent Lord, And bounteous planter of barred Paradise-Ne'er saw him, and I know not if he smiles. 350 Lucifer. But you have seen his angels. Rarely. But Sufficiently to see they love your brother: Cain. So be they! wherefore speak to me of this? Lucifer. Because thou hast thought of this ere now. And if I have thought, why recall a thought that—(he pauses Here we are in thy world; speak not of mine, Thou hast shown me wonders: thou hast shown me those Mighty Pre-Adamites who walked the earth Of which ours is the wreck: thou hast pointed out 360 Myriads of starry worlds, of which our own Is the dim and remote companion, in Infinity of life: thou hast shown me shadows Of that existence with the dreaded name Which my sire brought us—Death; thou hast shown me much But not all: show me where Jehovah dwells, In his especial Paradise-or thine: Where is it? Here, and o'er all space. Lucifer. Cain. Have some allotted dwelling—as all things; Clay has its earth, and other worlds their tenants; 370 All temporary breathing creatures their Peculiar element: and things which have i. Which my sire shrinks from-Death ---. - [MS. erased.]

Long ceased to breathe our breath, have theirs, thou And the Jehovah and thyself have thine-Ye do not dwell together? No, we reign Lucifer. Together; but our dwellings are asunder. Cain. Would there were only one of ye! perchance An unity of purpose might make union In elements which seem now jarred in storms. How came ye, being Spirits wise and infinite, 380 To separate? Are ye not as brethren in Your essence—and your nature, and your glory? Lucifer. Art not thou Abel's brother? We are brethren, Cain. And so we shall remain; but were it not so, Is spirit like to flesh? can it fall out-Infinity with Immortality? Tarring and turning space to misery-For what? Lucifer. To reign. Did ye not tell me that Cain. Ye are both eternal? Yea! Lucifer. And what I have seen-Cain. Yon blue immensity, is boundless? Ave. Cain. And cannot ye both reign, then?—is there not Lucifer. Enough?—why should ye differ? We both reign. Lucifer. Cain. But one of you makes evil. Which? Lucifer. Thou! for Cain. If thou canst do man good, why dost thou not? Lucifer. And why not he who made? I made ye Ye are his creatures, and not mine. Then leave us His creatures, as thou say'st we are, or show me Thy dwelling, or his dwelling. I could show thee Both; but the time will come thou shalt see one

CAIN.

SCENE II.

Of them for evermore.1

Cain. And why not now? 400

Lucifer. Thy human mind hath scarcely grasp to gather
The little I have shown thee into calm
And clear thought: and thou wouldst go on aspiring
To the great double Mysteries! the two Principles! And gaze upon them on their secret thrones!
Dust! limit thy ambition; for to see
Either of these would be for thee to perish!
Cain. And let me perish, so I see them!
Lucifer.

The son of her who snatched the apple spake!
But thou wouldst only perish, and not see them;
That sight is for the other state.

Cain. Of Death?

Lucifer. That is the prelude.

Now that I know it leads to something definite.

Lucifer. And now I will convey thee to thy world,
Where thou shalt multiply the race of Adam,
Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep, sleep—and die!

Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep, sleep—and die!

Cain. And to what end have I beheld these things

Which thou hast shown me?

Lucifer. Didst thou not require Knowledge? And have I not, in what I showed, Taught thee to know thyself?

Cain. Nothing.³

Alas! I seem

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1. [In Byron's Diary for January 28, 1821, we find the following entry—

"Thought for a speech of Lucifer, in the Tragedy of Cain.

"Were Death an evil, would I let thee live?
Fool! live as I live—as thy father lives,
And thy sons' sons shall live for evennore!"

Letters, 1901, v. 191.

2. [Matthew Arnold (Poetry of Byron, 1881, p. xxii.) quotes these lines as an instance of Byron's unknowingness and want of humour. It cannot be denied that he leaves imbedded in his fabric lumps of unshapen material, which mar the symmetry of his art. Lucifer's harangue involves a reference to "hard words ending in ism." The spirit of error, not the Manichaean heresy, should have proceeded out of his lips.]

3. ["Cain is a proud man: if Lucifer promised him kingdoms, etc..

Lucifer. And this should be the human sum Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's nothingness; Bequeath that science to thy children, and 'Twill spare them many tortures.

Cain. Haughty spirit! Thou speak'st it proudly; but thyself, though proud, Hast a superior.

Hast a superior. Lucifer. No! By heaven, which he Holds, and the abyss, and the immensity Of worlds and life, which I hold with him-No! I have a Victor—true; but no superior.1 Homage he has from all—but none from me: 430 I battle it against him, as I battled In highest Heaven—through all Eternity, And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades, And the interminable realms of space, And the infinity of endless ages. All, all, will I dispute! And world by world, And star by star, and universe by universe, Shall tremble in the balance, till the great Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease, Which it ne'er shall, till he or I be quenched! And what can quench our immortality, Or mutual and irrevocable hate? He as a conqueror will call the conquered

it would elate him: the object of the Demon is to depress him still further in his own estimation than he was before, by showing him infinite things and his own abasement, till he falls into the frame of mind that leads to the catastrophe, from mere internal irritation, not premeditation, or envy of Abel (which would have made him contemptible), but from the rage and fury against the inadequacy of his state to his conceptions, and which discharges itself rather against Life, and the author of Life, than the mere living."—Letter to Moore, November 3, 1821, Letters, 1901, 'v. 470. Here, no doubt, Byron is speaking in proprial persona. It was this sense of limitation, of human nothingness, which provoked an "internal irritation... a rage and fury against the inadequacy of his state to his conceptions." His "spirit beats its mortal bars," not, like Galahad, to be possessed by, but to possess the Heavenly Vision.]

1. [Compare—

"What though the field be lost,
All is not lost; th' unconquerable will
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield."

Paradise Lost, i. 105-108.]

heer sift

Evil: but what will be the Good he gives? Were I the victor, his works would be deemed The only evil ones. And you, ye new And scarce-born mortals, what have been his gifts To you already, in your little world? Cain. But few; and some of those but bitter. Lucifer. Back With me, then, to thine earth, and try the rest 450 Of his celestial boons to you and yours. Evil and Good are things in their own essence, And not made good or evil by the Giver; But if he gives you good—so call him; if Evil springs from him, do not name it mine, 460

Till ye know better its true fount; and judge Not by words, though of Spirits, but the fruits Of your existence, such as it must be... One good gift has the fatal apple given,— Your reason:—let it not be overswayed By tyrannous threats to force you into faith Gainst all external sense and inward feeling: Think and endure,—and form an inner world In your own bosom—where the outward fails; So shall you nearer be the spiritual Nature, and war triumphant with your own. They disappear.

ACT III.

Scene I .- The Earth, near Eden, as in Act I. Enter CAIN and ADAH.

Adah. Hush! tread softly, Cain! I will-but wherefore? Adah. Our little Enoch sleeps upon yon bed Of leaves, beneath the cypress. Cain. Cypress! 'tis A gloomy tree, which looks as if it mourned O'er what it shadows; wherefore didst thou choose it For our child's canopy?

SCENE I.]

Because its branches Adah. Shut out the sun like night, and therefore seemed Fitting to shadow slumber. Aye, the last-

CAIN.

· Cain. And longest; but no matter-lead me to him.

They go up to the child. How lovely he appears! his little cheeks,

In their pure incarnation,1 vying with The rose leaves strewn beneath them. And his lips, too, Adah.

How beautifully parted! No; you shall not Kiss him, at least not now: he will awake soon-His hour of mid-day rest is nearly over: But it were pity to disturb him till

'Tis closed.

You have said well; I will contain Cain. My heart till then. He smiles, and sleeps !-- sleep on, And smile, thou little, young inheritor Of a world scarce less young: sleep on, and smile! Thine are the hours and days when both are cheering And innocent! thou hast not plucked the fruit-Thou know'st not thou art naked! Must the time Come thou shalt be amerced for sins unknown, Which were not thine nor mine? But now sleep on! His cheeks are reddening into deeper smiles, And shining lids are trembling o'er his long Lashes,2 dark as the cypress which waves o'er them; Half open, from beneath them the clear blue Laughs out, although in slumber. He must dream- 30 Of what? Of Paradise !-- Aye! dream of it, My disinherited boy! 'Tis but a dream; For never more thyself, thy sons, nor fathers, Shall walk in that forbidden place of joy !

Adah. Dear Cain! Nay, do not whisper o'er our son Such melancholy yearnings o'er the past:

1. [An obsolete form of carnation, the colour of "flesh."]

2. Compare-"Her dewy eyes are closed,

And on their lids, whose texture fine Scarce hides the dark-blue orbs beneath, The baby Sleep is pillowed." Shelley's Queen Mab, i., ibid., p. 104.]

VOL, V.

Indoctranation of the young is part of youth Rebellion

Cain.

Adah.

Why wilt thou always mourn for Paradise? Can we not make another? Cain. Where? Adah. Here, or Where'er thou wilt: where'er thou art, I feel not The want of this so much regretted Eden, Have I not thee—our boy—our sire, and brother, And Zillah—our sweet sister, and our Eve, To whom we owe so much besides our birth? Cain. Yes—Death, too, is amongst the debts we owe her. Adah. Cain! that proud Spirit, who withdrew thee hence. Hath saddened thine still deeper. I had hoped The promised wonders which thou hast beheld, Visions, thou say'st, of past and present worlds, Would have composed thy mind into the calm Of a contented knowledge; but I see Thy guide hath done thee evil: still I thank him, And can forgive him all, that he so soon Hath given thee back to us. Cain. So soon? Adah. 'Tis scarcely Two hours since ye departed; two long hours To me, but only hours upon the sun. Cain. And yet I have approached that sun, and seen Worlds which he once shone on, and never more Shall light; and worlds he never lit; methought Years had rolled o'er my absence. Adah. Hardly hours. Cain. The mind then hath capacity of time. And measures it by that which it beholds, Pleasing or painful; 1 little or almighty.

r. ["Time is our consciousness of the succession of ideas in our mind. . . One man is stretched on the rack during twelve hours, another sleeps soundly in his bed. The difference of time perceived by these two persons is immense: one hardly will believe that half an hour has elapsed, the other could credit that centuries had flown during his agony."—Shelley's note to the lines—

". . . the thoughts that rise

In time-destroying infiniteness,"

Queen Mab, viii., ibid., p. 136.]

I had beheld the immemorial works Of endless beings; skirred extinguished worlds; And, gazing on eternity, methought I had borrowed more by a few drops of ages From its immensity: but now I feel My littleness again. Well said the Spirit, That I was nothing! Wherefore said he so? Adah. Jehovah said not that. No: he contents him 70 Cain. With making us the nothing which we are; And after flattering dust with glimpses of Eden and Immortality, resolves It back to dust again-for what? Thou know'st-Adah. Even for our parents' error. What is that Cain. To us? they sinned, then let them die! Adah. Thou hast not spoken well, nor is that thought Thy own, but of the Spirit who was with thee. Would I could die for them, so they might live! Cain. Why, so say I-provided that one victim Might satiate the Insatiable of life, And that our little rosy sleeper there Might never taste of death nor human sorrow, Nor hand it down to those who spring from him. Adah. How know we that some such atonement one day May not redeem our race? By sacrificing Cain. The harmless for the guilty? what atonement 1 Were there? why, we are innocent: what have we Done, that we must be victims for a deed Before our birth, or need have victims to Atone for this mysterious, nameless sin-If it be such a sin to seek for knowledge? Adah. Alas! thou sinnest now, my Cain: thy words Sound impious in mine ears.

Then leave me!

1. [Vide ante, p. 208.]

he knows that he's dangerous in this state.

Never.

Though thy God left thee. Say, what have we here? Cain. Adah. Two altars, which our brother Abel made During thine absence, whereupon to offer A sacrifice to God on thy return. Cain. And how knew he, that I would be so ready With the burnt offerings, which he daily brings With a meek brow, whose base humility Shows more of fear than worship—as a bribe To the Creator? Adah. Surely, 'tis well done. Cain. One altar may suffice: I have no offering. Adah. The fruits of the earth, the early, beautiful, Blossom and bud-and bloom of flowers and fruits-These are a goodly offering to the Lord, Given with a gentle and a contrite spirit. Cain. I have toiled, and tilled, and sweaten in the According to the curse: -must I do more? For what should I be gentle? for a war With all the elements ere they will yield The bread we eat? For what must I be grateful? For being dust, and grovelling in the dust, Till I return to dust? If I am nothing— For nothing shall I be an hypocrite, And seem well-pleased with pain? For what should I Be contrite? for my father's sin, already Expiate with what we all have undergone, And to be more than expiated by 120 The ages prophesied, upon our seed, Little deems our young blooming sleeper, there, The germs of an eternal misery To myriads is within him! better 'twere I snatched him in his sleep, and dashed him 'gainst The rocks, than let him live to-Adah. Oh, my God!

SCENE I.]

CAIN.

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Touch not the child-my child! thy child! Oh, Cain! Cain. Fear not! for all the stars, and all the power Which sways them, I would not accost you infant 130 With ruder greeting than a father's kiss. Adah. Then, why so awful in thy speech? I said, Twere better that he ceased to live, than give Life to so much of sorrow as he must Endure, and, harder still, bequeath; but since That saying jars you, let us only say— "Twere better that he never had been born. Adah. Oh, do not say so! Where were then the The mother's joys of watching, nourishing, And loving him? Soft! he awakes. Sweet Enoch! She goes to the child. Oh, Cain! look on him; see how full of life, Of strength, of bloom, of beauty, and of joy-How like to me—how like to thee, when gentle beyond -a-doubt who this father was. For then we are all alike; is't not so, Cain? Mother, and sire, and son, our features are Reflected in each other; as they are In the clear waters, when they are gentle, and When thou art gentle. Love us, then, my Cain! And love thyself for our sakes, for we love thee. Look! how he laughs and stretches out his arms, And opens wide his blue eyes upon thine, 150 To hail his father; while his little form Flutters as winged with joy. Talk not of pain! The childless cherubs well might envy thee The pleasures of a parent! Bless him, Cain! As yet he hath no words to thank thee, but His heart will, and thine own too. Bless thee, boy! If that a mortal blessing may avail thee, To save thee from the Serpent's curse! It shall. Adah. Surely a father's blessing may avert A reptile's subtlety. Cain. Of that I doubt: 160 But bless him ne'er the less.

r. [It is Adah, Cain's wife, who suggests the disastrous compromise, not a "burnt-offering," but the "fruits of the earth," which would cost the giver little or nothing—an instance in point of Lucifer's cyuical reminder (vide ante, act ii. sc. 2, line 210, p. 247) "that there are some things still which woman may tempt man to."

Again, he

dangenis,

God, not

Abel

Knows

mad at

he is

Adah.
Cain. Thy brother Abel.

Enter ABEL.

Abel. Welcome, Cain! My brother, The peace of God be on thee! Cain. Abel, hail! Abel. Our sister tells me that thou hast been wandering, In high communion with a Spirit, far Beyond our wonted range. Was he of those We have seen and spoken with, like to our father? Cain. No. Abel. Why then commune with him? he may be A foe to the Most High. Cain. And friend to man. Has the Most High been so—if so you term him? 170 Abel. Term him! your words are strange to-day, my brother. My sister Adah, leave us for awhile-We mean to sacrifice.1 Adah. Farewell, my Cain: But first embrace thy son. May his soft spirit, And Abel's pious ministry, recall thee To peace and holiness! Exit ADAH, with her child. Abel. Where hast thou been? Cain. I know not. Abel. Nor what thou hast seen? Cain. The dead-The Immortal—the Unbounded—the Omnipotent— The overpowering mysteries of space-The innumerable worlds that were and are— 180 A whirlwind of such overwhelming things, Suns, moons, and earths, upon their loud-voiced spheres Singing in thunder round me, as have made me Unfit for mortal converse: leave me, Abel, Abel. Thine eyes are flashing with unnatural lightSCENE I.]

Thy cheek is flushed with an unnatural hue-Thy words are fraught with an unnatural sound-What may this mean? It means-I pray thee, leave me. Cain. Abel. Not till we have prayed and sacrificed together. Cain. Abel, I pray thee, sacrifice alone-Iehovah loves thee well. Both well, I hope. Abel. Cain. But thee the better: I care not for that; Thou art fitter for his worship than I am; Revere him, then-but let it be alone-At least, without me. Brother, I should ill Abel. Deserve the name of our great father's son, If, as my elder, I revered thee not, And in the worship of our God, called not On thee to join me, and precede me in Our priesthood-'tis thy place. But I have ne'er 200 Cain. Asserted it. The more my grief; I pray thee Abel. To do so now: thy soul seems labouring in Some strong delusion; it will calm thee. Cain. Nothing can calm me more. Calm / say I? Never Knew I what calm was in the soul, although I have seen the elements stilled. My Abel, leave me! Or let me leave thee to thy pious purpose. Abel. Neither; we must perform our task together. Spurn me not. If it must be so-well, then, Cain. What shall I do? Choose one of those two altars. 210 Abel. Cain. Choose for me: they to me are so much turf And stone. Abel. Choose thou ! I have chosen. Cain. 'Tis the highest, Abel. And suits thee, as the elder. Now prepare Thine offerings.

Where are thine?

Cain.

CAIN.

^{1. [&}quot;From the beginning" the woman is ineligible for the priesthood
—"He for God only, she for God in him" (Paradise Lost, iv. 299).
"Let the women keep silence in the churches" (Corinthians, i. xiv. 34).]

Abel

Abel. Behold them here—
The firstlings of the flock, and fat thereof—
A shepherd's humble offering.
Cain. I have no flocks;

am a tiller of the ground, and must

Yield what it yieldeth to my toil—its fruit:

Behold them in their various bloom and ripeness.

[They dress their altars, and kindle a flame upon them. Abel. My brother, as the elder, offer first 220
Thy prayer and thanksgiving with sacrifice.

Cain. No—I am new to this; lead thou the way,
And I will follow—as I may

And I will follow—as I may. Abel (kneeling). Oh. God I Who made us, and who breathed the breath of life Within our nostrils, who hath blessed us, And spared, despite our father's sin, to make His children all lost, as they might have been, Had not thy justice been so tempered with The mercy which is thy delight, as to Accord a pardon like a Paradise, Compared with our great crimes: -Sole Lord of light! Of good, and glory, and eternity! Without whom all were evil, and with whom Nothing can err, except to some good end Of thine omnipotent benevolence! Inscrutable, but still to be fulfilled! Accept from out thy humble first of shepherds' First of the first-born flocks—an offering, In itself nothing—as what offering can be Aught unto thee?—but yet accept it for 240

1. [Compare the following passage from La Rapresentatione di Abel et di Caino (in Firenze l'anno MDLIY.)—

"Abel parla a dio fatto il sacrifitio,
Rendendogli laude.
Signor per cui di tanti bene abondo
Liquali tu sommamente mi concedi
Tanto mi piace, et tanto me' giocondo
Quanto delle mie greggie che tu vedi
El piu grasso el migliore el piu mondo
Ti do con lieto core come tu vedi
Tu vedi la intentione con iequal vegno," etc.

The thanksgiving of him who spreads it in

The face of thy high heaven—bowing his own

Even to the dust, of which he is—in honour

Of thee, and of thy name, for evermore!

Cain (standing erect during this speech). Spirit whate'er

or whosoe'er thou art,

Omnipotent, it may be—and, if good,

Shown in the exemption of thy deeds from evil; Jehovah upon earth! and God in heaven! And it may be with other names, because Thine attributes seem many, as thy works:— 250 If thou must be propitiated with prayers, Take them! If thou must be induced with altars, And softened with a sacrifice, receive them; Two beings here erect them unto thee. If thou lov'st blood, the shepherd's shrine, which smokes On my right hand, hath shed it for thy service In the first of his flock, whose limbs now reek In sanguinary incense to thy skies; Or, if the sweet and blooming fruits of earth, And milder seasons, which the unstained turf 260 I spread them on now offers in the face Of the broad sun which ripened them, may seem Good to thee-inasmuch as they have not Suffered in limb or life—and rather form A sample of thy works, than supplication To look on ours! If a shrine without victim, And altar without gore, may win thy favour, Look on it! and for him who dresseth it, He is—such as thou mad'st him; and seeks nothing Which must be won by kneeling: if he 's evil, i. Strike him! thou art omnipotent, and may'st-For what can he oppose? If he be good, Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt! since all Rests upon thee; and Good and Evil seem To have no power themselves, save in thy will-And whether that be good or ill I know not, Not being omnipotent, nor fit to judge Omnipotence—but merely to endure Its mandate; which thus far I have endured.

i. Which must be won with prayers—if he be evil.—[MS, M.]

The fire upon the altar of ABEL kindles into a column of the brightest flame, and ascends to heaven: while a whirlwind throws down the altar of CAIN, and scatters the fruits abroad upon the

Abel (kneeling). Oh, brother, pray! Tehovah 's wroth with thee.

Cain. Why so?

Thy fruits are scattered on the earth. Abel. Cain. From earth they came, to earth let them return;

Their seed will bear fresh fruit there ere the summer: Thy burnt flesh-offering prospers better; see

How Heaven licks up the flames, when thick with blood! Abel. Think not upon my offering's acceptance,

But make another of thine own—before It is too late.

Cain. I will build no more altars,

Nor suffer any-

Abel (rising). Cain! what meanest thou? Cain. To cast down you vile flatterer of the clouds. The smoky harbinger of thy dull prayers-

Thine altar, with its blood of lambs and kids, Which fed on milk, to be destroyed in blood.

Abel (opposing him). Thou shalt not :- add not impious works to impious

Words! let that altar stand-'tis hallowed now By the immortal pleasure of Jehovah,

In his acceptance of the victims.

Cain.

His pleasure! what was his high pleasure in The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood,

To the pain of the bleating mothers, which

Still yearn for their dead offspring? or the pangs

Of the sad ignorant victims underneath

Thy pious knife? Give way! this bloody record Shall not stand in the sun, to shame creation!

Abel. Brother, give back I thou shalt not touch my altar

With violence: if that thou wilt adopt it, To try another sacrifice, 'tis thine.

I. [See Gessner's Death of Abel.]

SCENE I.

Abel.

CAIN.

Cain. Another sacrifice! Give way, or else

That sacrifice may be-

What mean'st thou?

Give-Cain. Give way !-- thy God loves blood !-- then look to it :--

Give way, ere he hath more!

In his great name, Abel.

I stand between thee and the shrine which hath

Had his acceptance.

If thou lov'st thyself, Cain.

Stand back till I have strewed this turf along

Its native soil :--else----Abel (opposing him).

I love God far more

Than life.

Cain (striking him with a brand, on the temples, which he snatches from the altar). Then take thy life unto thy God,

Since he loves lives.

What hast thou done-my brother? Abel (falls).

Cain. Brother!

Oh, God! receive thy servant! and Abel.

Forgive his slayer, for he knew not what

He did-Cain, give me-give me thy hand; and tell 320 Poor Zillah---

Cain (after a moment's stupefaction). My hand! 'tis all

red, and with-[A long pause.—Looking slowly round. What?

Where am 1? alone! Where 's Abel? where

Cain? Can it be that I am he? My brother,

Awake !-- why liest thou so long on the green earth? 'Tis not the hour of slumber :-- why so pale?

What hast thou !---thou wert full of life this morn!

Abel! I pray thee, mock me not! I smote

Too fiercely, but not fatally. Ah, why

Wouldst thou oppose me? This is mockery;

And only done to daunt me :--'twas a blow--

330 And but a blow. Stir-stir-nay, only stir!

Why, so—that 's well !—thou breathest! breathe upon me!

Oh God! Oh God!

Abel (very faintly). What's he who speaks of God? Cain. Thy murderer.

Abel. Then may God forgive him! Cain, Now.

Cain. And I none!—Who makes me brotherless? His eyes are open! then he is not dead! Death is like sleep; and sleep shuts down our lids. His lips, too, are apart; why then he breathes; And yet I feel it not.—His heart!—his heart!— 340 Let me see, doth it beat? methinks—No!—no! This is a vision, else I am become The native of another and worse world. The earth swims round me;—what is this?—'tis wet;

[Puts his hand to his brow, and then looks at it.
And yet there are no dews! 'Tis blood—my blood—
My brother's and my own! and shed by me!
Then what have I further to do with life,
Since I have taken life from my own flesh?
But he can not be dead!—Is silence death?
No; he will wake; then let me watch by him.
Life cannot be so slight, as to be quenched
Thus quickly!—he hath spoken to me since—
What shall I say to him?—My brother!—No:
He will not answer to that name; for brethren
Smite not each other. Yet—yet—speak to me.
Oh! for a word more of that gentle voice,
That I may bear to hear my own again!

Enter ZILLAH.

Zillah. I heard a heavy sound; what can it be?
'Tis Cain; and watching by my husband. What
Dost thou there, brother? Doth he sleep? Oh, Heaven!
What means this paleness, and yon stream?—No, no! 361
It is not blood; for who would shed his blood?
Abel! what's this?—who hath done this? He moves
not;
He breathes not: and his hands drop down from mine

I. [Compare-

"How wonderful is Death —
Death and his brother Sleep!"

Queen Mab, i. lines 1, 2.]

With stony lifelessness! Ah! cruel Cain!
Why camest thou not in time to save him from
This violence? Whatever hath assailed him,
Thou wert the stronger, and shouldst have stepped in
Between him and aggression! Father!—Eve!—
Adah!—come hither! Death is in the world!

[Exit ZILLAH, calling on her Parents, etc.

CAIN.

Cain (solus). And who hath brought him there?—I—who abhor

The name of Death so deeply, that the thought Empoisoned all my life, before I knew His aspect—I have led him here, and given My brother to his cold and still embrace, As if he would not have asserted his Inexorable claim without my aid.

1 am awake at last—a dreary dream Had maddened me;—but he shall ne'er awake!

Enter ADAM, EVE, ADAH, and ZILLAH.

Adam. A voice of woe from Zillah brings me here— 380 What do I see?—'Tis true!—My son!—my son! Woman, behold the Serpent's work, and thine! [To Eve. Eve. Oh! speak not of it now: the Serpent's fangs Are in my heart! My best beloved, Abel! Jehovah! this is punishment beyond A mother's sin, to take him from me! Adam. Or what hath done this deed?—speak, Cain, since thou Wert present; was it some more hostile angel, Who walks not with Jehovah? or some wild Brute of the forest? Eve.Ah! a livid light Breaks through, as from a thunder-cloud! you brand Massy and bloody! snatched from off the altar, And black with smoke, and red with-Adam. Speak, my son!

Speak, and assure us, wretched as we are, That we are not more miserable still.

Adah. Speak, Cain! and say it was not thou!

Eve.

It was!

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I see it now—he hangs his guilty head, And covers his ferocious eye with hands Incarnadine!

Adah. Mother, thou dost him wrong—
Cain! clear thee from this horrible accusal,
Which grief wrings from our parent.

Eve. Hear, Jehovah!

Hold!

ACT III.

Curse him not, mother, for he is thy son— Curse him not, mother, for he is my brother, And my betrothed.

Eve. He hath left thee no brother—Zillah no husband—me no son I for thus

I curse him from my sight for evermore!

All bonds I break between us, as he broke
That of his nature, in yon—Oh Death! Death!

Why didst thou not take me, who first incurred thee?

Why dost thou not so now?

Adam. Eve! let not this, Thy natural grief, lead to impiety! A heavy doom was long forespoken to us; And now that it begins, let it be borne In such sort as may show our God, that we Are faithful servants to his holy will.

Eve (pointing to Cain). His will! the will of you Incarnate Spirit

Of Death, whom I have brought upon the earth
To strew it with the dead. May all the curses
Of life be on him! and his agonies
Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us
From Eden, till his children do by him
As he did by his brother! May the swords
And wings of fiery Cherubim pursue him
By day and night—snakes spring up in his path—
Earth's fruits be ashes in his mouth—the leaves
On which he lays his head to sleep be strewed
With scorpions! May his dreams be of his victim! 430
His waking a continual dread of Death!

May the clear rivers turn to blood as he 1
Stoops down to stain them with his raging lip!
May every element shun or change to him!
May he live in the pangs which others die with!
And Death itself wax something worse than Death
To him who first acquainted him with man!
Hence, fratricide! henceforth that word is Cain,
Through all the coming myriads of mankind,
Who shall abhor thee, though thou wert their sire!
May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods
Deny thee shelter! earth a home! the dust
A grave! the sun his light! and heaven her God!²
[Exit Eve.

Adam. Cain! get thee forth: we dwell no more together.

Depart! and leave the dead to me—I am Henceforth alone—we never must meet more.

Adah. Oh, part not with him thus, my father: do not Add thy deep curse to Eve's upon his head!

Adam. I curse him not: his spirit be his curse.

Come, Zillah!

Zillah. I must watch my husband's corse.3

Adam. We will return again, when he is gone

Who hath provided for us this dread office.

Come, Zillah!

Zillah. Yet one kiss on yon pale clay,

1. [Compare-

"And Water shall hear me,
And know thee and fly thee;
And the Winds shall not touch thee
When they pass by thee. . . .
And thou shalt seek Death
To release thee in vain."
The Curse of Kehama, by R. Southey, Canto II.]

2. [The last three lines of this terrible denunciation were not in the original MS. In forwarding them to Murray (September 12, 1821, Letters, 1901, v. 361), to be added to Eve's speech, Byron says, "There's as pretty a piece of Imprecation for you, when joined to the lines already sent, as you may wish to meet with in the course of your business. But don't forget the addition of these three lines, which are clinchers to Eve's speech."

3. [If Byron had read his plays aloud, or been at pains to revise the proofs, he would hardly have allowed "corse" to remain in such close

proximity to "curse."

And those lips once so warm—my heart! my heart! Exeunt ADAM and ZILLAH weeping.

Adah. Cain! thou hast heard, we must go forth. I am ready.

So shall our children be. I will bear Enoch. And you his sister. Ere the sun declines Let us depart, nor walk the wilderness Under the cloud of night.—Nay, speak to me. To me-thine own.

Cain.

272

Leave me!

Adah. Why, all have left thee, 460 Cain. And wherefore lingerest thou? Dost thou not

To dwell with one who hath done this? Adah.

Nothing except to leave thee, much as I Shrink from the deed which leaves thee brotherless.

I must not speak of this—it is between thee

And the great God.

A Voice from within exclaims, Cain! Cain! Hear'st thou that voice? The Voice within, Cain! Cain!

It soundeth like an angel's tone. Adah.

Enter the ANGEL of the Lord.1

Angel. Where is thy brother Abel? Cain.

Am I then

fact III.

My brother's keeper?

Cain! what hast thou done? The voice of thy slain brother's blood cries out, Even from the ground, unto the Lord !-Now art thou Cursed from the earth, which opened late her mouth

1. ["I have avoided introducing the Deity, as in Scripture (though Milton does, and not very wisely either); but have adopted his angel as sent to Cain instead, on purpose to avoid shocking any feelings on the subject, by falling short of what all uninspired men must fall short in, viz. giving an adequate notion of the effect of the presence of Jehovah. The Old Mysteries introduced him liberally enough, and this is avoided in the New."—Letter to Murray, February 8, 1822, Letters, 1901, vi. 13. Byron does not seem to have known that in the older portions of the Bible "Angel of the Lord" is only a name for the Second Person of the Trinity.]

To drink thy brother's blood from thy rash hand. Henceforth, when thou shalt till the ground, it shall not Vield thee her strength; a fugitive shalt thou Be from this day, and vagabond on earth!

CAIN.

Adah. This punishment is more than he can bear. Behold thou drivest him from the face of earth, And from the face of God shall he be hid. A fugitive and vagabond on earth, 480

Twill come to pass, that whose findeth him

Shall slay him.

Would they could! but who are they Cain. Shall slay me? Where are these on the lone earth As vet unpeopled?

Thou hast slain thy brother, Angel. And who shall warrant thee against thy son?

Adah. Angel of Light! be merciful, nor say. That this poor aching breast now nourishes A murderer in my boy, and of his father.

Angel. Then he would but be what his father is. Did not the milk of Eve give nutriment To him thou now seest so besmeared with blood? The fratricide might well engender parricides.-But it shall not be so-the Lord thy God And mine commandeth me to set his seal On Cain, so that he may go forth in safety.

Who slayeth Cain, a sevenfold vengeance shall Be taken on his head. Come hither! What Cain.

Wouldst thou with me?

To mark upon thy brow i. Angel. Exemption from such deeds as thou hast done.

Cain. No, let me die! Angel.

It must not be.

The Angel sets the mark on Cain's brow. It burns 500

Cain. My brow, but nought to that which is within it! Is there more? let me meet it as I may.

Angel. Stern hast thou been and stubborn from the womb.

As the ground thou must henceforth till; but he

i. On thy brow .- [MS.]

SCENE I.

Thou slew'st was gentle as the flocks he tended. Cain. After the fall too soon was I begotten: Ere yet my mother's mind subsided from The Serpent, and my sire still mourned for Eden. That which I am, I am; I did not seek For life, nor did I make myself: but could I 510 With my own death redeem him from the dust-And why not so? let him return to day. And I lie ghastly! so shall be restored By God the life to him he loved; and taken From me a being I ne'er loved to bear. Angel. Who shall heal murder? what is done, is done; Go forth! fulfil thy days! and be thy deeds Unlike the last! The ANGEL disappears. Adah. He's gone, let us go forth; I hear our little Enoch cry within Our bower. Cain. Ah! little knows he what he weeps for! 520 And I who have shed blood cannot shed tears! But the four rivers 1 would not cleanse my soul. Think'st thou my boy will bear to look on me? Adah. If I thought that he would not, I would-Cain (interrupting her). No more of threats: we have had too many of them: Go to our children—I will follow thee. Adah. I will not leave thee lonely with the dead— Let us depart together. Cain. Oh! thou dead And everlasting witness I whose unsinking Blood darkens earth and heaven! what thou now art 530 I know not! but if thou seest what I am, I think thou wilt forgive him, whom his God Can ne'er forgive, nor his own soul.—Farewell! I must not, dare not touch what I have made thee. I, who sprung from the same womb with thee, drained The same breast, clasped thee often to my own, In fondness brotherly and boyish, I Can never meet thee more, nor even dare To do that for thee, which thou shouldst have done

1. [The "four rivers" which flowed round Eden, and consequently the only waters with which Cain was acquainted upon earth.]

For me—compose thy limbs into their grave— 540
The first grave yet dug for mortality.
But who hath dug that grave? Oh, earth! Oh, earth!
For all the fruits thou hast rendered to me, I
Give thee back this.—Now for the wilderness!

[ADAH stoops down and kisses the body of ABEL.

Adah. A dreary, and an early doom, my brother,
Has been thy lot! Of all who mourn for thee,
I alone must not weep. My office is
Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed them;
But yet of all who mourn, none mourn like me,
Not only for thyself, but him who slew thee.

550
Now, Cain! I will divide thy burden with thee.

Cain. Eastward from Eden will we take our way; C.f. Book?
Tis the most desolate, and suits my steps.

Adah. Lead! thou shalt be my guide, and may our name.

God

Be thine! Now let us carry forth our children.

Cain. And he who lieth there was childless! I

Have dried the fountain of a gentle race,
Which might have graced his recent marriage couch,
And might have tempered this stern blood of mine,
Uniting with our children Abel's offspring!

O Abel!

Adah. Peace be with him!

Cain.

But with me!

[Exeunt.