

**MILTON AND VONDEL:  
A CURIOSITY OF  
LITERATURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649130382

Milton and Vondel: a curiosity of literature by George Edmundson

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**GEORGE EDMUNDSON**

**MILTON AND VONDEL:  
A CURIOSITY OF  
LITERATURE**



# MILTON AND VONDEL:

A Curiosity of Literature.

BY

GEORGE EDMUNDSON, M.A.

LATE FELLOW AND TUTOR OF BRASENOSE COLLEGE, OXFORD,  
VICAR OF NORTHOLT, MIDDLESEX.

*"Suum cuique honorem."*

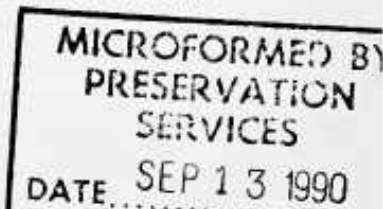


LONDON:

TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL.

1885.

[All rights reserved.]



Ballantyne Press  
BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

660629

31. 5. 57

PR  
3586  
E45  
1885

# CONTENTS.



|                                           | PAGES   |
|-------------------------------------------|---------|
| CHAPTER I.                                |         |
| INTRODUCTORY . . . . .                    | 1-12    |
| CHAPTER II.                               |         |
| MILTON AND VONDEL . . . . .               | 13-30   |
| CHAPTER III.                              |         |
| THE LUCIFER . . . . .                     | 31-87   |
| CHAPTER IV.                               |         |
| JOHN THE MESSENGER . . . . .              | 88-123  |
| CHAPTER V.                                |         |
| REFLECTIONS ON GOD AND RELIGION . . . . . | 124-135 |

*CONTENTS.*

## CHAPTER VI.

|                              | PAGE    |
|------------------------------|---------|
| ADAM IN BANISHMENT . . . . . | 136-157 |

## CHAPTER VII.

|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| SAMSON . . . . . | 158-192 |
|------------------|---------|

|                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| APPENDIX . . . . . | 193-223 |
|--------------------|---------|



# MILTON AND VONDEL.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### *INTRODUCTORY.*

THE "Paradise Lost" of Milton is now, by universal consent, numbered among those few productions of rare poetical genius whose supreme merit assures them an immortality of renown. Yet its record has not been one of unbroken triumph. The poem, when published, did not take public opinion by storm. Its popularity was at first of slow growth, and when at length it had won its way to that position of acknowledged pre-eminence, which it has since retained, its very originality and inspiration began to be vehemently questioned. In the eighteenth century a perfect storm of controversy arose as to the supposed sources from whence its author derived not merely the rudimentary ideas, but even the very details both in plot and imagery of that "adventurous song," which, in the poet's own words, was "to pursue things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme." Voltaire was the first who threw out the suggestion that the conceptions of Milton might not be entirely original. In an essay on Epic Poetry, written in English and published in the year 1727, he remarks

“that Milton during his year’s sojourn in Italy saw at Florence the performance of a Scriptural drama by an Italian writer named Andreini, entitled ‘Adamo,’ and dealing with the subject of the Fall of Man, and that he (Milton), piercing through the absurdity of the representation to the hidden majesty of the subject, took from that ridiculous trifle the first hint of the noblest work the human imagination has ever attempted.”

The careless suggestion did not fall to the ground; it was seized upon by critics and commentators with the avidity peculiar to their kind. The question, “Was Milton a plagiarist?” opened out a field for curious research too tempting to be neglected. Bookshelves and catalogues were ransacked, and the dust shaken from many a forgotten volume in the laborious search that was instituted in quest of the *prima stamina* of the Paradise Lost.

It is not necessary to enter into any detailed account of this curious episode of literary history; the more curious because its result, so far from detracting from Milton’s fame, has rather served to establish his reputation as being one of the most learned and well-read men of his time. It will be sufficient for our purpose to mention the malicious attempt made by William Lauder, who undertook to prove that Milton in writing his poem had made the freest use without acknowledgment of the works (principally in Latin) of a number of poets and poetasters, English, Scotch, Dutch, and German. Lauder published in 1750 a series of essays upon the subject in the pages of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, supporting his argument by copious quotations. These essays were afterwards collected in a volume under the title of “Milton’s Use and Imitation of the

Moderns in his *Paradise Lost*," and secured the imposing sanction of the then all-powerful literary dictator, Dr. Johnson, who contributed a short preface.

The effort of Lauder was to some extent successful, for he had undoubtedly discovered many similarities between passages of the *Paradise Lost* and others which he had brought forward; as, for instance, from Sylvester's *Du Bartas*,<sup>1</sup> and the "*Adamus Exul*" of Hugo Grotius. But he was not content with adducing such resemblances as really existed. He deliberately forged lines of his own and interpolated others, which were taken from a Latin translation of the *Paradise Lost* by a certain William Hogg, and assigned them to authors whom he professed to quote.

His triumph was, however, of short duration. The barefaced forgeries were ere long detected by the acuteness of Mr. Bowle, a tutor of Oriel College, Oxford; and a clergyman, Mr. (afterwards Bishop) Douglas, under the form of a letter addressed to the Earl of Bath, revealed to the public the gross imposition which had been practised upon them. Lauder's shameless attempt to cast a slur upon Milton's fame by false representation recoiled upon himself and ignominiously collapsed. His fabrications were exposed, himself discredited, and, as a natural result, a certain amount of obloquy and disparagement has since attached to that "*Inquiry into the Origin of Paradise Lost*" with which his too notorious name is associated.

But surely there are two points of view from which to regard this interesting chapter of literary criticism. A critical inquiry into the construction of his great

<sup>1</sup> See on Milton's debt to *Du Bartas*, Dunster's "*Considerations on Milton's Early Reading and the Prima Stamina of his 'Paradise Lost.'*"