

**L'ALLEGRO, IL
PENSEROSO, COMUS
AND LYCIDAS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649470860

L'allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus and Lycidas by J. Milton

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Jo: Milton

After an engraving by FAITHORNE.

MILTON'S
L'ALLEGRO, IL PENSEROSO, COMUS
AND LYCIDAS

EDITED
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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BOSTON, U.S.A. :
GINN & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS
The Athenæum Press
1902

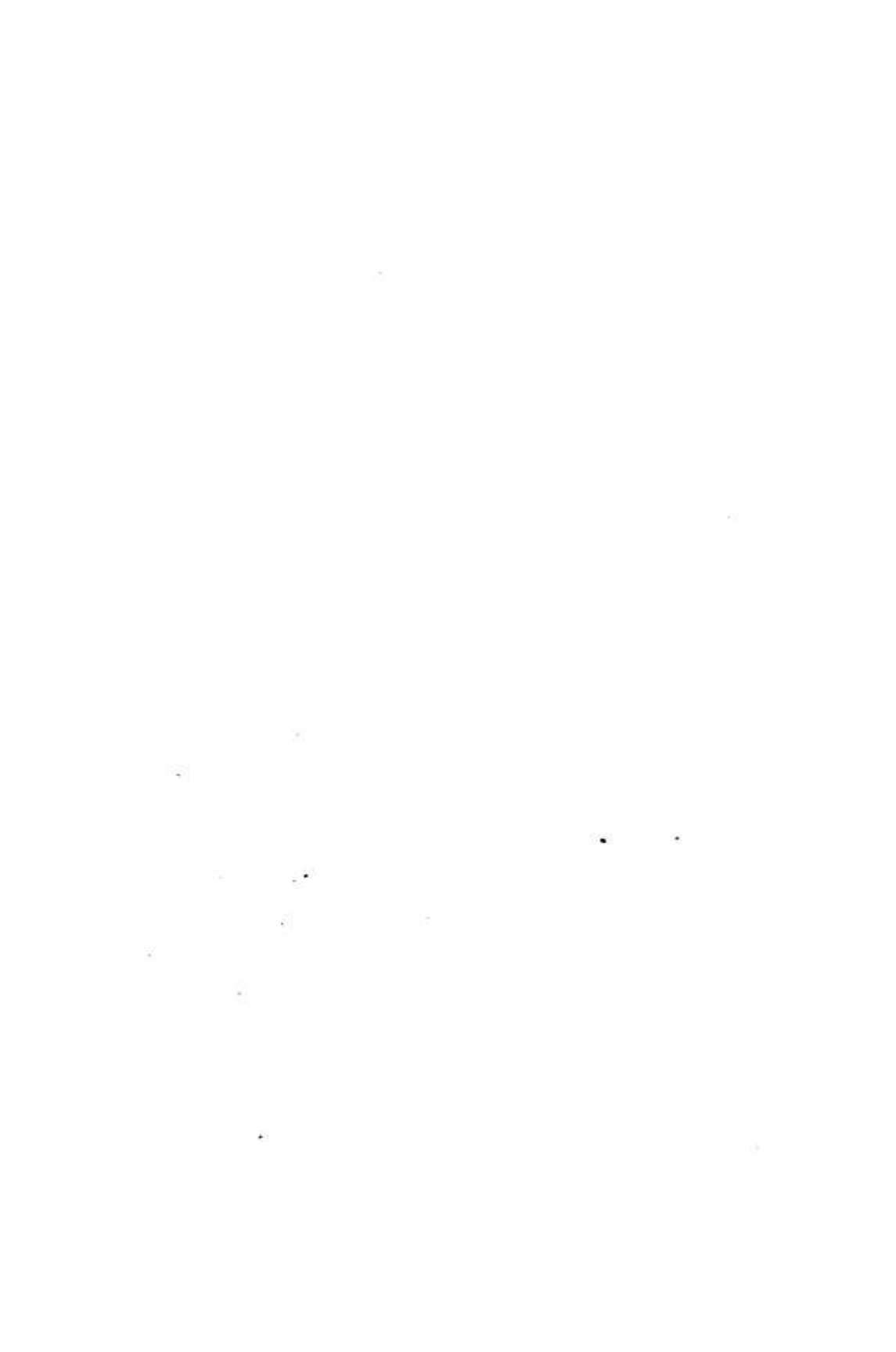
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To the Memory
of
My Mother



P R E F A C E.

IN Milton's *Tractate of Education* there is a passage which suggests in figure and with fine harmony the duty as well as the delight of every reader of Milton's poetry. "I shall . . . straight conduct you to a hill-side," writes Milton to Master Hartlib, "where I will point you out the right path of a virtuous and noble education, laborious indeed at the first ascent, but also so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect and melodious sounds, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming." With the reader of Milton, in like manner, the effort, laborious though it be, must ever precede the pleasure. Every line, every word of Milton's poetry has its meaning, and very often diligent search must be made for it; but it is nevertheless true that he who gives his days and nights to the search for this meaning, and finds it, wins for himself a culture scarcely less precious than Milton's own "virtuous and noble education."

Since so much has been written about Milton, and that, too, so ably, it seemed wiser to give in the Introduction to the present volume the best of what has been written by some of the more modern critics about the poems here edited rather than to attempt a criticism which could hardly hope to equal, much less to better, what has already been so admirably done. Furthermore, the divergence of views expressed by the critics here quoted will give the student abundant opportunity for discussion, and thereby lead to the formation of opinions more just than could possibly result from the perusal of any one man's single criticism.

The text of the poems is taken from Masson's library edition of Milton's poetical works. Here, as in the case of the selections printed in the Introduction, the reprint is as exact as it was possible to make it.

The Notes, as must be the case where serious study is to be made of poems whose lines have been so much fought over by scholars as these of Milton, are necessarily rather full. Several important interpretations are sometimes given to a single passage.

The necessity the student is thus put to in choosing the most reasonable of these — and it is the business of the teacher to see that he has good reasons for his preference — ought to lead to clear thinking. The study of parallel passages should be left ordinarily to the maturer work of the college, but in the case of Milton some work of this sort is absolutely essential to an appreciation of his genius. Some limit needs to be set, however, and hence all parallel passages in works later than Milton's time, with two or three exceptions, are rigidly excluded, while those in works before his time are given only where the resemblance is so close as to make it probable that they were actually suggestive to him. Passages in the Bible, in Shakspeare, and in Milton's other poems are merely cited, it being supposed that every student has at hand a Bible and the works of Milton and Shakspeare. These passages should in every case be looked up, both for the light they will throw upon the text and for the familiarity this sort of reference will breed with three of the world's great books. Questions and problems, such as the editor's experience in teaching High School students has shown him can be profitably set for independent study, are dispersed throughout the Notes.

The obligations of the editor are many. In the Notes use has been made of all the important editions of Milton's works, from Newton's to the present time, and with the exception of the matter taken from the editions of Warton and Keightley, to which the editor unfortunately did not have access, all quotations and citations are made at first hand. In the case of the exceptions, the editor has consulted such reliable sources, usually indicated in the Notes, that it is hoped no inaccuracy has resulted. Credit has everywhere been freely given for all matter which did not seem common property. To the Macmillan Company the editor is indebted for permission to use Masson's text and three of the selections in the Introduction. For other copyrighted material in the Introduction he is indebted to Harper & Brothers, to Longmans, Green & Co., to Walter Scott, to D. Appleton & Co., and to Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Prof. Albert E. Jack of Lake Forest University offered a number of suggestions, which have been made use of in the Notes.

T. F. H.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, CALIFORNIA,
October 16, 1899.