

where in Milton's poetry. For instance, his usual lack of humor does not strike us here: on the contrary, wrath and scorn have been so potent as to give a trace of the quality we miss in him elsewhere. There is a grain of humor in some of the scenes, similar to that in which Elijah taunts the prophets of Baal. It is a grim and terrible humor, the humor of the tiger playing with its victim.

But the interest of the poem lies chiefly in the fact that it is a self-revelation. The character and fate of Samson are well chosen, for they typified to the thought of the poet his own character and fate. Blind and in subjection, exposed to the mockery of lewd lords, surviving in loneliness the overthrow of the free commonwealth he had helped to build and had ably served, knowing what he regarded as the cause of the Lord to be at least for the time utterly lost, he felt to the bottom of his heart a deep sympathy with the ancient Hebrew hero who had been the scourge of the Philistines and was now their captive, blind and bemocked.

He longed to be like him, too, in giving a crushing blow to his enemies and the enemies of God in the hour of death. That blow he would deal, so far as song can give a downright blow, and so the strong statuesque play came into being.

There is a cry of agony, but of agony at the same time heroic and musical, ringing through the poem up to the final moment, when it swells steadily and grandly—not in the least hysterically, but with the perfect poise and ample volume of sound which the poet's own beloved organ would have sustained—into the shout and thunder of triumph

which is the climax of the play and of the blind bard's pent-up feeling.

Be sure, when that last act was written, there arose before the inner eye of him whom the babblers about a corrupt court called rebel and heresiarch, a grand vision of ultimate vindication—the vindication of the cause for which he had labored and sacrificed and suffered. The vindication came, and the principles for which he and his compeers contended have, in the main, triumphed in England and elsewhere, wherever indeed the highest forms of civilization and the purest forms of Christianity are to be found. The *Samson Agonistes* is, then, a prophesy as well as a play.

There is nothing like it in the whole range of English literature.

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#### A SYMPHONY IN SONGS.

After the Ball, the Two Little Girls in Blue, and Daisy Bell, accompanied by The Man who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo, went on a hay ride in Paddy Duffy's Cart.

The Man who Broke the Bank made love to Daisy as the Two Little Girls in Blue sang That is Love, followed by a chorus of We Won't Get Home till Morning.

An hour later, he said Farewell, My Own True Love, Kissed Her at the Gate, and Turned His Homeward Way. He went up stairs and Dreamed he Dwelt in Marble Halls, but soon awoke singing, Oh, What a Difference in the Morning! Three days later he was heard to say, He Never Cared to Wander from His Own Fireside.

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The base wretch who hoards up all he can  
Is praised and called a careful, thrifty  
man. —Dryden.