

in the Restoration, he hailed with delight the opportunity to fulfil in peace his destiny, which is revealed in his prayer:

“ . . . What in me is dark  
Illumine, what is low raise and support;  
That to the height of this great argument  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men.”

He had revolved many subjects in his mind and spent much time in deliberation, until finally he conceived the theme of *Paradise Lost*. He had begun the poem in 1658. Now he was able to devote all his time to it, and it was finished in 1663. Then he spent some time in revising and perfecting it, publishing it in 1667.

In 1663 he contracted his third and happiest marriage, and his last wife outlived him by half a century.

In submitting some of the manuscript of *Paradise Lost* to a friend for criticism, he was reminded that the poem contained much of happiness lost, but nothing of happiness regained. After some deliberation he decided to write the great sequel. *Paradise Regained* was begun in 1665 and finished the following year. In 1667 *Samson Argonistes* was written, and the two last named works published in one volume in 1671. In 1673 he published a reprint of the volume of 1645, and the following year, on the 8th of November, the great poet died, being sixty-six years of age. He was buried in St. Giles Church, Cripplegate.

The literary work of Milton, briefly summed up, consists of twenty-three sonnets, ten of which were published in 1645, and nine more in his reprint of 1673, four being suppressed on account of political tone; the numerous prose pamphlets of his political career, of which *Areopagitica*, his speech before parliament for freedom of the press, is best known; a number of short poems and his Latin verse, which is unexcelled; and the masterpieces to which he owes his fame, namely, the five lyrics written at Horton, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Argonistes*. Thus we see that Milton wrote comparatively little; but the world is full of poetry, and is not one crowning poem of more value than an infinite number of lesser ones? Milton's pastoral, *Lycidas*, has no superior in literature; his epic, *Paradise Lost*, no equal.

In *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* Milton reveals his own nature, woven into Horton scenes. Later comes *Comus*, teaching the hal-