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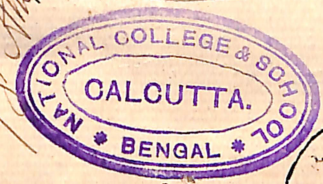
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MILTON

Handwritten notes:
Milton
L'Allegro

L'ALLEGRO



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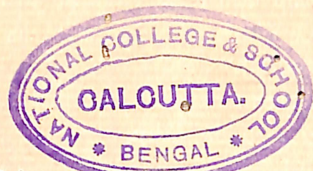
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THE present edition of 'L'Allegro' is taken from 'The English Poems of John Milton,' edited by R. C. Browne, M.A., for the Clarendon Press.

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L'ALLEGRO.

HENCE loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus, and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian¹ cave forlorn *from Styx, the river of Hell*
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy;
Find out some uncouth cell, *(rough, now)* ⁵ *unknown*
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There under ebon shades, and low-brow'd rocks,
As ragged² as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian³ desert ever dwell. 10
But come thou goddess fair and free,
In Heav'n yclep'd Euphrosyne, *Fertility (one of the three graces)*
And by men, heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus at a birth⁴
With two sister Graces more 15
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore;
Of whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying, 20

There on beds of violets blue,
 And fresh-blown roses washt in dew,⁵
 Fill'd her with thee a daughter fair,
 So buxom, blithe, and debonair.⁶ *elegant* 25
 Haste thee nymph, and bring with thee
 Jest and youthful Jollity,
 Quips and cranks,⁷ and wanton wiles, *cracked expressions*
 Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,
 Such as hang on Hebe's cheek, *the goddess of youth* 30
 And love to live in dimple sleek;
 Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
 And Laughter holding both his sides.
 Come, and trip it as ye go⁸
 On the light fantastic toe, 35
 And in thy right hand lead with thee
 The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;
 And if I give thee honour due,
 Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
 To live with her, and live with thee, 40
 In unreprieved pleasures free;
 To hear the lark begin his flight,
 And singing startle the dull night,¹⁰
 From his watch-tow'r in the skies,
 Till the dappled dawn doth rise;¹¹
 Then to come¹² in spite of sorrow, 45
 And at my window bid good morrow,
 Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,
 Or the twisted eglantine.¹³
 While the cock with lively din, *cheerful noise*
 Scatters the rear of darkness thin, *(proleptic)* 50

And to the stack, or the barn door,
 Stoutly struts his dames before:¹⁴
 Oft list'ning how the hounds and horn
 Cheerly rouse the slumbring Morn,
 From the side of some hoar hill, 55
 Through the high wood echoing shrill.
 Sometime walking not unseen¹⁵
 By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
 Right against the eastern gate,
 Where the great Sun begins his state, 60
 Rob'd in flames, and amber light,
 The clouds in thousand liveries¹⁶ dight.¹⁷
 While the ploughman near at hand,
 Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,
 And the milkmaid singeth blithe, 65
 And the mower whets his sithe,
 And every shepherd tells his tale¹⁸
 Under the hawthorn in the dale.
 Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures
 Whilst the landscape¹⁹ round it measures; 70
 Russet lawns,²⁰ and fallows gray, *wild common*
 Where the nibbling flocks do stray,
 Mountains on whose barren breast
 The labouring clouds do often rest;
 Meadows trim with daisies pie'd,²¹ *variegated* 75
 Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.
 Towers, and battlements it sees
 Bosom'd high in tufted trees,
 Where perhaps some beauty lies,²²
 The Cynosure²³ of neighbouring eyes. 80

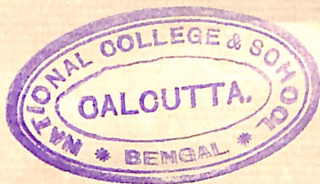
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes,
 From betwixt two aged oaks;
 Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,²⁴
 Are at their savoury dinner set
 Of herbs, and other country messes, 85
 Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
 And then in haste her bower she leaves,
 With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
 Or if the earlier season lead *the hay harvest in June*
 To the tann'd haycock in the mead. 90
 Sometimes with secure²⁵ delight
 The upland hamlets will invite;
 When the merry bells²⁶ ring round,
 And the jocund rebecks²⁷ sound *a fiddle of four*
 To many a youth, and many a maid, 95
 Dancing in the chequer'd shade;
 And young and old come forth to play
 On a sunshine holiday,²⁸
 Till the live-long day-light fail;
 Then to the spicy nut-brown ale, 100
 With stories told of many a feat,
 How faery Mab²⁹ the junkets³⁰ eat; *cream-chest*
 She was pincht and pull'd she sed;³¹
 And he by friars' lantern led,³²
 Tells how the drudging goblin³³ sweat *labourer* 105
 To earn his cream-bowl duly set;
 When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
 His shadowy flail hath thresh'd the corn
 That ten day-labourers could not end.
 Then lies him down the lubbar fiend, *chimney* 110

And stretcht out all the chimney's length,
 Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
 And crop-full out of doors he flings, *glutted*
 Ere the first cock his matin rings.
 Thus done the tales, to bed they creep, 115
 By whispering winds soon lull'd asleep.
 Towred cities please us then,
 And the busy hum of men,
 Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
 In weeds of peace high triumphs³⁴ hold, 120
 With store of³⁵ ladies, whose bright eyes
 Rain influence,³⁶ and judge the prize
 Of wit, or arms, while both contend
 To win her grace, whom all commend.
 There let Hymen oft appear, 125
 In saffron robe, with taper clear,³⁷
 And pomp,³⁸ and feast, and revelry,
 With mask, and antique pageantry;
 Such sights as youthful poets dream
 On summer eves by haunted stream. 130
 Then to the well-trod stage anon,
 If Jonson's learned sock be on, *comedy (from even the low wheel boot)*
 Or sweetest Shakespear, Fancy's³⁹ child,
 Warble his native wood-notes wild.⁴⁰
 And ever against eating cares,⁴¹ 135
 Lap me in soft Lydian⁴² airs,
 Married to immortal verse;⁴³
 Such as the meeting soul may pierce,⁴⁴
 In notes with many a winding bout⁴⁵
 Of linked sweetness long drawn out; 140

With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,⁴⁶
 The melting voice through mazes running;⁴⁷
 Untwisting all the chains that tie
 The hidden soul of harmony.
 That Orpheus' self may heave his head
 From golden⁴⁸ slumber on a bed
 Of heapt Elysian flow'rs; and hear
 Such strains as would have won the ear
 Of Pluto, to have quite set free
 His half-regain'd Eurydice.⁴⁹
 These delights, if thou canst give,⁵⁰
 Mirth with thee, I mean to live.

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NOTES.

Many touches in this poem occur in the lines prefixed to Burton's Anatomy, a dialogue between Pleasure and Pain.

¹ Styx, 'the hateful,' was one of the four infernal rivers. The adjective Stygian is used here as it is by Euripides, for 'detested.' Cp. Paradise Lost, i. 239,

'Both glorying to have scap't the Stygian flood';
 and ii. 577,

'Abhorred Styx the flood of deadly hate.'

² 'ragged, fatal rock' is the epithet given by Margaret to Richard, Duke of Gloucester (3 Henry VI, v. 4). Cp. Isa. ii. 21.

³ The Cimmerians (Odyssey, xi. 14) were a mythical people who lived in perpetual mist, and on whom the sun never shone. Cp. Ovid, Metamorphoses, xi. 592 et seqq.

⁴ This parentage of the Graces occurs in Servius on Aeneid i. 720. (Keightley.) Aglaia (the bright) and Thalia (the blooming) are the remaining sisters. Euphrosyne (the kindly) presides over festivities. Spenser (Faery Queene, vi. 10. 22) makes them the daughters of Jove and Eurynome (the daughter of Ocean)—

'The first of them hight mild Euphrosyne,
 Next faire Aglaia, last Thalia merry.'

⁵ Cp. 'Morning roses newly washed in dew.'

(Taming of the Shrew, ii. 1.)

⁶ Cp. 'So buxom, blithe, and full of face'

(Prologue to Pericles),

and 'That was so fine, so fair,
 So blithe, so debonaire'

(Burton, Anatomy of Melancholy).

Buxom is used by Spenser for 'yielding,' 'obedient' (Faery Queene, iii. 2. 23), but this true meaning had already passed away when Milton

used the word as equivalent to 'lively.' (Trench.) *Buxom* is usually spelt thus in Milton, but here *buckson*. It is the A.S. *bocsam*, 'obedient,' from *bugan*, 'to bow,' 'submit.' (Wedgwood.) The *son* is connected, not with *some*, but with *same*, and is the Germ. *sam*. (Earle.) *Debonair*, in the sense of 'courteous,' 'gentle,' is used by Chaucer, and it is an epithet applied to knights and ladies in the Faery Queene. (See Glossary to Book II. in this series.) The *air* in *debonair* probably signifies the atmosphere a person carries with him, and does not refer to the old medical theories about vapours and humours. 'The odour of sanctity' and 'to be in bad odour' is the same metaphor. (Wedgwood.)

⁷ We have a practical illustration of *quip* in the Merry Wives of Windsor, i. 3. Crank implies the *turns* of wit. Hotspur, speaking of the winding Trent, exclaims

'See how this river comes me cranking in'
(1 Henry IV, iii. 1.)

Of the planets, Mutability (Faery Queene, vii. 7. 52) says—

'So many turning cranks these have, so many crookes.'

In Alexander and Campaspe, by Lyly, a *quip* is defined as 'a short saying of a sharp wit, with a bitter sense in a sweet word.' It is derived by Latham from *quid pro quo*, and Wedgwood says it is properly a cut or smart stroke. Welsh *chwip*, a quick turn or flirt.

'Each one tripping on his toe.'

(Ariel, of the Spirits, Tempest, iv. 2.)

Cp. Comus 144,

'In a light fantastic round.'

⁹ *unreproved*, that cannot be reprov'd. So Spenser has 'unreproved truth,' Faery Queene, ii. 7. 16, and a similar usage of 'unreproved,' 'Joying together in unblam'd delight' (vi. 2. 43). Cp. Paradise Lost, iii. 3, 'May I express thee unblam'd?' ix. 5, 'Venial discourse unblam'd'; xii. 22, 'Shall spend their days in joy unblam'd'; and Shakespear, Epitaph 11, 'unvalu'd.'

¹⁰ Cp. 'dull as night' (Merchant of Venice, v. 1), 'night's dull car' (Henry V, Chorus to Act iv.)

'The gentle day

Dapples the drowsy east with spots of gray.'

(Much Ado about Nothing, v. 3.)

¹² To come, following in sense after 'admit me,' like the previous 'to live,' 'to hear,' in the list of unreproved pleasures. Awakened by

the lark, the poet, after listening to that early song, arises to give a blithe good-morrow at his window. Other matin sounds are heard, and he goes forth to enjoy the cheerful music of the chase, or the sight of the rising sun. From line 69 the vision is mental rather than bodily. The plurals 'mountains,' 'meadows,' 'towers,' give a sense of generality that does not accord with the description of any actual scene: the delight given by the poem springs from touches of diverse yet harmonious associations.

¹³ Eglantine and sweet-briar being the same plant, it is conjectured that by twisted eglantine Milton means the honeysuckle.

¹⁴ Note the imitative rhythm of these lines descriptive of the cock.

¹⁵ Contrast with *Il Penseroso* 65,

'And missing thee I walk unseen.'

Some particulars of the following description of morning are taken from Browne's Britannia's Pastorals (Book IV, v. 75).

¹⁶ *liveries*; from Fr. *livrée* (*livrer*) something given out at stated times, as clothes and provisions to servants. (Wedgwood.) Cp.

'The shadowed livery of the burnish'd sun.'

(Merchant of Venice, ii. 1.)

¹⁷ *dight*, decked, arranged (from A.S. *dihstan*, parare). See Glossary to Faery Queene, Bk. I.

¹⁸ The tale here is not a tale of love, but the tale of sheep counted by the shepherd as he turns them forth to pasture. So the 'tale of the bricks' (Exod. v. 8).

¹⁹ *landscape*; spelt *lan'skip*, ed. 1645; 'a delineation of the land, from A.S. *sceapan*, to shape or form.' (Wedgwood.)

²⁰ *lawn*, open space between woods. So Scotch *loan*, *loaning*, an opening between fields left uncultivated for the sake of driving the cattle homewards. Welsh *llan*, a clear space. (Wedgwood.) *gray* = light-brown, as in Gray Friars. (Keightley.)

²¹ Warton says that *pie'd* was so hackneyed an epithet for flowers, that from it Shakespeare formed the substantive *pie'dness* (Winter's Tale, iv. 3). 'When daisies pie'd' begins the spring song at the end of Love's Labour's Lost.

²² *lies*, resides; e.g. 'When the court lay at Windsor' (Merry Wives of Windsor, ii. 2); 'When I lay at Clement's Inn' (2 Henry IV, iii. 2).

²³ *Cynosure* is the constellation of the Little Bear, by which the Phœnician mariners steered their course, as the Greeks did by the Great Bear. In Hacket's Life of Williams, the Countess of Buckingham is described as 'the Cynosura that all the Papists steered by.'

²⁴ Milton's classic fancy plays round the sights and sounds of English rural life and gives to Berkshire peasants the names of Virgilian swains and shepherdeses. He saw nature 'through the spectacles of books,' as Dryden says.

²⁵ *secure* here means, not 'safe,' but 'void of care' (Lat. *sine curâ*). Quarles, in his *Enchiridion*, observes, 'The way to be safe is not to be secure.' Hamlet's father was murdered in his 'secure hour.' (Hamlet, i. 5.)

'Security

Is mortal's chiefest enemy.' (Macbeth, iii. 5.)

So Ben Jonson, in his Epode:

'Men may securely sin, but safely never.'

²⁶ Bells were abominations to the Puritans. In Ben Jonson's *Alchemist* (iii. 2), Ananias says, 'Bells are profane; a tune may be religious.'

²⁷ The rebeck was a fiddle of four strings. The fiddler in *Romeo and Juliet*, iv. 5, is named Hugh Rebeck.

²⁸ Cp. *Comus* 959,

'Till next sunshine holiday.'

The deposed Richard II (iv. 1) wishes Bolingbroke 'many years of sunshine days.'

²⁹ For Queen Mab see the well-known passage in *Romeo and Juliet*, i. 4.

³⁰ *junkets*, from Ital. *giuncata*, covered with, or placed on, rushes, as cream cheese is; and so used for other rural delicacies, and 'junketing' for feasting, merrymaking generally.

³¹ The punishment inflicted by fairies on tell-tales.

'It was a just and Christian deed,
To pinch such black and blue.'

(Corbet's Farewell to the Fairies.)

Cp. Shakespeare's fairies in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Merry Wives of Windsor* (v. 5), and Dromio's speech in *Comedy of Errors* (ii. 2),

'They'll suck our breath, and pinch us black and blue.'

³² 'The friar is the celebrated Friar Rush, who haunted houses, not fields, and was never the same with Jack-o'-the-Lantern,' (Keightley.)

³³ *goblin* is the Germ. *kobold*, the German domestic sprite. See Glossary to *Faery Queene*, Bk. II. Milton gives a more elevated meaning to the word in *Paradise Lost* (ii. 688). The construction is rather difficult. I would suggest a colon at *led* and would read *Tales for Tells* in line 105, thus carrying on the sense from *stories* (line 101) to *tales* (line 105).

²⁴ *Triumph*, here = show, spectacle. One of Bacon's Essays is on *Masques and Triumphs*, the latter title being applied to 'justs, tourneys, and barriers.' 'Justs and triumphs' are named together in York's speech (*Richard II*, v. 2), and Aumerle was expected at their celebration 'in gay apparel.' Achilles desires to see great Hector in his 'weeds of peace,' *Troilus and Cressida*, iii. 3. Cp. *Samson Agonistes* 1312,

'With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games';

and Shakespeare, *Pericles*, ii. 1.

²⁵ *store of* was a familiar expression for 'plenty of,' 'many.' Spenser has it, *Faery Queene*, v. 3. 2,

'Of lords and ladies infinite great store.'

Cp. *Paradise Lost*, ix. 1078, 'Foul concupiscence; whence evil store.'

²⁶ *influence*; one of the words ('disastrous,' 'ill-starred,' 'ascendancy') which still testify to the once prevalent belief in astrology. Whenever this word occurs in our poetry, down to comparatively a modern day, it refers to invisible illapses of power, skyeey planetary effects, supposed to be exercised by the heavenly luminaries upon the lives of men. (Trench.) Hakewill affirms that the influence of the stars produces the metals and minerals in the bowels of the earth. 'As heat pierces where light cannot, so the influence pierces where heat cannot.' Marvell (in his *First Anniversary*) says of Cromwell that

'By his beams observant princes steer,

And wisely court the influence they fear.'

Randolph's Epilogue to his *Jealous Lovers* attributes 'influence' in this sense to his audience:

'You are the stars we gaze at; we shall find

Our labours blest, if your aspects be kind.'

Cp. Edmund's speech in *King Lear* (i. 2), and Horatio's words before the second entrance of the Ghost (*Hamlet*, i. 1). Ben Jonson, in his *Elegy* on Shakespeare, exclaims,

'Shine forth thou star of poets, and with rage

Or influence, chide or cheer the drooping stage.'

²⁷ Not (as in the Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester 20) with a 'scarce-well-lighted flame.' Hymen's dress in the masques was saffron-coloured. His mask and teade (i.e. torch) are named in Spenser's *Epithalamion*.

²⁸ *pomp*, solemn procession, as in its classical meaning. Cp. *Samson Agonistes* 1312 (quoted in note 34). 'Feasts, pomps, and vain glories' are inveighed against by Apemantus (*Timon of Athens*, i. 2), and Theseus uses 'pomp' in a kindred sense (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, i. 1).

³⁹ Fancy had a wider range of meaning in Milton's time than now. Shakespeare often uses it as a synonym for 'love,' and Spenser makes the leader of the Maske of Cupid, Faery Queene, iii. 12. 7.

⁴⁰ Archbishop Trench demurs to this line. "Fancy's child" may pass, for fancy and imagination were not effectually desynonymized when Milton wrote; nay, "fancy" was for him the greater name (Paradise Lost, v. 103, 110). "Sweetest" Shakespeare undoubtedly was, but then the sweetness is so drawn up into the power that this is about the last epithet one would be disposed to use about him. And then what could Milton possibly have intended by "his native wood-notes wild"? the sort of praise which might be bestowed, though with no eminent fulness, upon Clare or a poet of his rank.' Tennyson, in The Palace of Art, has applied what seem at first glance equally inadequate epithets to Shakespeare—'bland and mild.' But it should be remembered that it is just that feature of Shakespeare's poetic genius, the stillness of his power, which is most in harmony with the mood of intellectual luxury depicted in that poem. So here, the tragedies being relegated to Il Penseroso, the comedies would to Milton's mind present an artless beauty and irregular grace, sharply contrasting with the more severe formal and conscious displays of 'Jonson's learned sock.' Milton did not trace the operation of the 'wanton heed and giddy cunning' of art in literature as in music.

⁴¹ Eating cares is translated from Horace (Odes, i. 18. 4).

⁴² The three (supposed) original ancient modes were the Dorian, the Phrygian, and the Lydian. The principal note of the last is F, its scale being the scale of F with B natural substituted for B flat. The tender character ascribed by the ancients to this mode results from the ascent by a semitone to the key-note, the form of cadence most conclusive and agreeable to us moderns. Therein the Lydian measure differed from the Dorian, which was the key of D with F and C natural instead of sharp. Dryden assigns to the Lydian measure the tender strains that lull the passions of his hero. 'In Beethoven's Quartet in A, there is a movement defined as a song of gratitude in the Lydian mode, offered to the Divinity by a convalescent.' (Macfarren's Lectures on Harmony, pp. 13, 14.)

⁴³ Cp. Solemn Music 2, 3,

'Voice and Verse

Wed your divine sounds,

Ben Jonson, in his lines to Filmer, says

'French air and English verse here wedded lie';

and Du Bartas,

'Marrying their sweet tunes to the angels' lays.'

⁴⁴ Perhaps *perce* was once pronounced *perse*, retaining its French form *percer*; for Chaucer has *persaunt*, and Spenser *persant* and *perceable*. But Milton's rhymes are often irregular. Cp. Solemn Music 3, 4, for the same rhyme; and Scott, Marmion (Introd.),

'Not even your Britain's groans can pierce

The leaden silence of your hearse.'

⁴⁵ *bout*, fold or twist; a word used by Spenser (Faery Queene, i. 1. 15, and i. 11. 11). It comes from *bow*, not from French *bout*. 'The boughs of a rope are the separate folds when coiled in a circle (A. S. *bugan*, to bind), and as the coils come round and round in similar circles, a *bout*, with a slight difference in spelling, is applied to the turns of things which succeed one another at certain intervals, as a bout of fair or foul weather. So Ital. *volta*, a turn, or time, or occasion, from *volgere*, to turn.' (Wedgwood.) Cp. Shakespeare (Coriolanus, iv. 4),

'O world! thy slippery turns!'

⁴⁶ The adjectives describe the appearance, the nouns the reality.

⁴⁷ The accompanied voice is meant, otherwise there would be melody, but not harmony.

⁴⁸ *golden*, in sense of 'excellent,' as used by Plato and Horace, and in the phrase 'the golden age.' Shakespeare has 'golden sleep' twice (1 Henry IV, 3; Romeo and Juliet, ii. 3).

⁴⁹ In this passage Milton's opinion of the superiority of the modern over the ancient classical music is strongly asserted.

⁵⁰ No such doubt finds a place in the parallel passage of Il Penseroso.

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