1. The sonnet is divided into two parts :– the octave and the sestet. The first eight lines in every sonnet compose what we call the octave and consist of two quatrains. According to the ~~rhyme~~ rhyming rules of the sonnet of Petrarchan structure, the rhyme arrangement in the octave is invariable i.e they must be in the following order :–

1st Quatrain (A, B, B, A)
2nd " " (A' B, B, A)

Tennyson has in one of his sonnets 'Buonaparte' ~~A~~ his second quatrain rhyming (B, A, A, B,) instead of A, B, B, A. The peculiarity about the octave is that it should not contain more than two rhymes. While the octave forms the opening of the sonnet, the sestet brings up the rear, so to speak, of the sonnet. This consists of two tercets and ~~more than three~~ rhymes ~~are~~ must be not more less than three in the sestet, but as to their arrangements, the modern sonneteer is bound to no strict rule. There ~~It~~ must be a pause in sense between the octave and sestet, so they must clearly be separated from one another even in form. But in what we call the sonnet of Miltonic structure, no such division is observed and it is a

Milton's

noticeable fact, finest sonnets generally neglect this rule. (f.i. "On his Blindness" "To the Lord General Cromwell" "To his deceased Wife" "On the Massacre of Piedmont")

2. Sometimes (especially in Italy), the sonnet is the means of expressing disgust and displeasure. Such sonnets written for the purpose of burlesque are distinguished from others by their peculiar construction — having colla coda attached to them. The tail or coda consists of one or more tercets. The first line in each coda must be shorter than others in the body of the sonnet, the first line in each coda must bear definite proportion to the body of the sonnet. The first line also must rhyme with the 14th line of the sonnet. A new rhyme must be introduced to the second & third lines in the coda. We have a fine example of the sonnet of this kind in Milton's 'On the New Forcers of Conscience'.

3. Leigh Hunt tells us Surrey's imprisonment and his consequent death is caused by his ~~writing~~ having written a sonnet, stanza of which I cannot just call to mind, and which incurred the King's displeasure.

"Darda caduta "The Assyrian King..."

4. Milton, as has often been remarked, was a man of principle, according to which he meant to live 'as ever in the Task-master's eye'. And he can by no means be said a warm-hearted, indulgent person, having neither the capacity of forgiving others nor the weakness of attaching himself blindly to others. If he praised other, it was not because he loved them personally, but because their deeds were done in accordance with his own principle which he considered right and just. And we cannot fail to notice this true purport of his eulogies if we but read attentively his sonnets which he ~~gave~~ addressed to Fairfax and Cromwell. In both cases, the personal elements are very feeble and his eulogy is nothing but what he might addressed to the abstract 'Liberty' + 'Freedom of Conscience'

5. These lines come from Milton's sonnet addressed to 'the Lord General Cromwell' Warwen is the name of a river, near which the parliamentary forces had an engagement with the King's, assisted by the Scots. The King's army was defeated. Dunbar and Worcester are ~~both~~ the names of places where Cromwell gained a great victory over the King. In a word,

in Lancashire near Preston

(a) Scots (b) Charles II.

the lines signify:– 'Thou hast won more battle much to your glory and fame!

6. The duke of Savoy ordered his protestant subjects in Piedmont either to take Mass or to quit this abode within twenty days. He sent troops to execute his command immediately. Atrocities and enormities were committed on that occasion by those who were sent. Milton, indignant with the rest of England, gave vent to his feeling by writtening a finest sonnet. 'triple tyrant' is a coronet worn by the pope, it represents heaven, earth, hell, ~~therefore~~ whence the name triple. tyrant is here used for the pope. 'Babylonian woe' is the woe denounced against Babylonia(?) Rome.

7. We have two sonnets of Milton in which he refers to his blindness. One 'on his Blindness' was written in 1652. In which he laments the loss of sight because he could not perform 'day labour' light denied'. But he cheers himself at the idea that he is a child of God as well as others, if he patiently waits and bears the mild yoke of heaven. In another sonnet to Cyriak Skinner, he again alludes to his blindness, saying that though his eyes are apparently without any 'spot or blemish'

written three years after

are bereft of light. But the consciousness that
he had lost his sight becaus of over plying,
to fulfil his appointed Task by heaven,
made him content with his present lot, thinking
contemplating
that it was nothing less than Heaven's Will

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