

in minds of a certain stamp—the more constructive and philosophic minds. We have always recognized a degree of coldness characterizing Milton's poetry—even the loves of Paradise; but we do not think this is owing to the classic spirit revived, the spirit of the Greek bards transfused into his own poetry. We have already noticed in those earlier poems, in which he partakes of the manner of Spenser, and may be said to belong to his school, there is a coldness compared with the elder bard. He has not the warmth or enthusiasm of Spenser or Shakspeare.* The classic allusion in Milton does diffuse a certain air of coldness over his poetry: it is not “the native woodnotes wild” which he himself speaks of in connection with Shakspeare; but is the ‘Paradise Lost’ and the ‘Paradise Regained,’ in their mould and structure and style, to be accounted for on any such theory as that of the renaissance of the classic ages, the revival of the spirit of the Greek poetry? With Seeley the fallen and unfallen angels are put in the same category as the mythology of the Greeks: it is a mythology it seems: were there no rebel angels?—was there no revolt in heaven?—and how could these angels be better named than after the false gods of the ancients—not the Greeks, however, but the Orientals? Are the yet unfallen spirits mythological beings? Seeley has no quarrel with the mediæval mythology—the saints and angels of the Church of Rome: there is a warmth breathed over the myths of that church. Milton's angels, it would seem, are cold impersonations. They have not the life, and warmth, and glow of heaven upon their wings, or atmosphere of awe around them, which Dante's or Spenser's have—the angel introduced, for example, at the beginning of the ‘Purgatorio,’ or the angel that meets Guion when he issues from the cave of Mammon! Then, Adam is on too familiar terms with the heavenly visitants: it is not said with God himself. He does not thrill or quiver at their approach. “Milton does not feel any awe of the spiritual world. Even in Homer when a deity has stood by a warrior, and exhorted him to be brave, the warrior is often described as receiving a kind of spiritual intoxication from the contact.” As in the case of the two Ajaxes, we suppose, after being addressed by Neptune. But what is the explanation of all this? The first part of the indictment has its explanation, we are persuaded, just in the difference of time which is embraced in Milton's and Dante's, or Spenser's, poems respectively. There is not the tenderness and pathos, of course, in the one case as necessarily there is in the other: it is the paradisaical state that is described, and Adam is yet unfallen, in the one case; there is the awe and trepidation and fear characteristic of man's sinful condition in the other. Man was once on more familiar terms with those celestial beings than now. In his state of innocence he was only “a little lower than the angels,” and he could have converse even with God without that intoxication to which Professor Seeley refers. The

*But is it not rather the greater majesty in the structure of Milton's mind that leaves this impression upon us than really any colder temperament or less enthusiastic disposition? Read the passage at the commencement of the 8th book of the ‘Paradise Lost,’ where Eve retires from the converse of Adam and the angel respecting the work of creation, that she may rather enjoy the narrative from Adam's own lips—and say if there was no warmth or tenderness in Milton's constitution?