

good deal of episodical ornament." (Referring to his frequent allusions to Fable and Mythology): "These give much relief to the severity of the poem, and few readers would dispense with them. Less excuse can be made for some affectation of science, which has produced hard and unpleasant lines; but he had been born in an age when more credit was gained by reading much than by writing well."—HALLAM's *Lit. of Europe*.

In one of his Essays on Milton, DE QUINCEY combats this objection, and asserts that "in doing as he did, this mighty poet was governed by no carelessness or oversight, far less by affectation or ostentation, but by a most refined theory of poetic effects;" that "the quantity of learning for which any poem can find an opening cannot be great;" and that "in any poem burning with concentrated fire, like the Miltonic, the passion becomes a law to itself, and will not receive into connection with itself any parts so deficient in harmony, as a cold ostentation of learned illustrations must always have been found." He further states that when Milton uses such words as *frieze*, *architrave*, *cornice*, &c., he does so under such circumstances that each image (the circumstances and the technical terms), "from reciprocal contradiction, heightens and revivifies the other. The two images act and react by strong repulsion and antagonism."

IV.—"We often hear of the magical influence of poetry. The expression in general means nothing; but, applied to the writings of Milton, it is most appropriate. His poetry acts like an incantation. Its merits lies less in its obvious meaning than in its occult power. There would seem, at first sight, to be no more in his words than in other words. But they are words of enchantment. No sooner are they pronounced than the past is present and the distant near. New forms of beauty start at once into existence, and all the burial grounds of the memory give up their dead. Change the structure of the sentence; substitute one synonym for another, and the whole effect is destroyed."—MACAULAY.

[See also B. I., l. 202, and HAZLITT's criticism, B. I., l. 467].

"Milton's blank verse, both for its rich and varied music and its exquisite adaptation, would in itself almost deserve to be styled poetry, without the words; alone of all our poets, before or since, he has brought out the full capabilities of the language in that form of composition. Indeed, out of the drama, he is still our only great blank verse writer. . . . What other has the true organ tone which makes the music of this form of verse—either the grandeur or the sweetness?"—CRAIK.

[The student will find in the *Spectator*, the *Rambler*, DE QUINCEY's *Essays*, JOHNSON's *Life of Milton*, and LANDOR's *Imaginary Conversations*, a full discussion of the peculiarities and alleged defects of Milton's versification, &c., &c.]

V.—"Another inconvenience of Milton's design is, that it requires the description of what cannot be described, the agency of spirits. He saw that immateriality supplied no images, and that he could not shew angels acting, but by instruments of action; he therefore invested them with form and matter. This being necessary was, therefore, defensible; and he should have secured the consistency of his system by keeping immateriality out of sight, and enticing his reader to drop it from his thoughts. But he has unhappily perplexed his poetry with his philosophy. His infernal and celestial powers are sometimes pure spirit and sometimes animated body."—JOHNSON's *Life of Milton*.

"Of all the poets who have introduced into their work the agency of supernatural beings, Milton has succeeded best. . . . He has been often censured for ascribing to spirits many functions of which they must