

love that chooses and rescues from the burning. And this is essentially the character of the Satan of Job also. It may be, Herr Marti thinks, that in the Satan of Job there can be detected an inclination towards evil, or at least an undue suspicion of the good in men. But the most marked advance upon the Satan of Zechariah is that, while the latter appears in the heavenly court only in a particular occasion and for a particular purpose, the Satan of the Book of Job is a regular frequenter there, and has a standing office in the court of heaven.

One passage alone remains. It is 1 Chron. xxi. 1. It belongs, says Herr Marti, to a period about two centuries later than the Book of Job. Here Satan is represented as tempting David to number Israel, for the very purpose of bringing calamity on them. It is plainly a development in the direction of evil from the Satan of the Book of Job. But it is only when we go outside of the Old Testament canon to the so-called "Wisdom of Solomon" that we find him identified with the serpent that tempted Eve, and the occasion of Man's first disobedience and all our woe.

Studies in "Paradise Lost."

III.—MILTON'S ANGELS.

"Differing but in degree, of kind the same."

AN old tradition, condemned as heresy by the mediæval Church, represented men and women as disguised Angels. They had played a neutral part in the rebellion in Heaven, and had been punished by their cowardice by exile. Milton gives no credence to this tradition; nevertheless his men and Angels are curiously alike. His Angels are glorified men; or, to speak more accurately, his men are undeveloped Angels, differing in degree only, not in kind, from their happier fellow-creatures. The difference corresponds to the difference of dwelling-place. Earth consists, for the most part, of the lowest of the elements: Heaven is made of the fifth or highest element, the "ethereal quintessence." So man, though compounded of the four (grosser) elements, is mainly earth: Angels are "ethereal substance." Milton, it is true, distinguishes them as "spirits." But he means something quite different from what we mean, *e.g.* by the "spirit" of man, regarded as an entity distinct from the body. Milton does not believe in the existence of such an entity. He combats the popular distinction between soul (or spirit) and body. "Man," he says, "became a living soul"; whence it may be inferred that man is a living being, intrinsically and properly one and individual [inseparable], not compound or separable, not, according to the common opinion, made up and framed of two distinct and different natures, as of soul and body; but that the whole man is soul,

and the soul man—that is to say, a body or substance, individual, animated, sensitive, and rational.¹ Milton's Angels are "spirits," precisely as his men are "souls"; they, too, are substances, "individual, animated, sensitive, and rational." Like men, they are forms of that first matter which is common to all things, nay, inherent in GOD Himself.² The difference is that, being nearer to GOD, they are "more refined, more spiritous and pure."

"One first matter all,
Endued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;
But more refined, more spiritous and pure,
As nearer to Him placed, or nearer tending."³

The result of this greater perfection in the angelic substance is an extraordinary power and yet suppleness, which are evidently regarded as natural rather than miraculous. Milton's Angels have, on the one hand, gigantic size and strength; on the other hand, all the flexibility and airiness which we associate with the word "ethereal." "The least of them," we are told,

"Could wield
These elements, and arm him with the force
Of all their regions."⁴

¹ *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, chap. vii.

² *Ibid.* "Not even Divine virtue and efficiency could produce bodies out of nothing, unless there had been some bodily power in the substance of GOD. Nor did St. Paul hesitate to attribute to GOD something corporeal."

³ *P.L.* v. 472-476

⁴ *Ibid.* vi. 221-223.

In war, though Heaven had "limited their might," each "armèd band" appeared "a legion."¹ The combat between Satan and Michael is, "to set forth great things by small," the encounter of

"Two planets rushing from aspect malign
Of fiercest opposition;"²

and we all remember how at last the contending armies throw mountains at one another like stones—mountains, themselves on the scale of

"Regions to which
All thy dominion, Adam, is no more
Than what this garden is to all the earth
And all the sea."³

On the other hand, the extreme lightness and flexibility of the "ethereal substance" enable it to be expanded, or contracted, or changed, at will—

"Spirits . . . in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their airy purposes."⁴

And again—

"All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,
All intellect, all sense; and as they please
They limb themselves, and colour, shape, and size
Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare."⁵

Nay, they can

"Either sex assume or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure,
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Not founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh."⁶

Paradise Lost is full of examples of this extraordinary flexibility, this control of what we should call bodily conditions and functions by the will. We remember how Raphael takes the form of a phoenix, Michael of "a man clad to meet man," Satan, in turn, of Angel, beast, and bird—even of a black mist. We remember, too, how lightly he leaps the bounding wall of Paradise, and how Uriel defends himself to Gabriel—

"Hard thou knowst it to exclude
Spiritual substance with corporeal bar."⁷

Another result of this combined strength and lightness is "incredible swiftness." Raphael, we are told—

. . . "Since the morning hour set out from Heaven
Where GOD resides, and ere mid-day arrived
In Eden: distances inexpressible
By numbers that have name."⁸

In his *Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, Milton refers to the strength and swiftness of the Angels, and to their "ethereal nature";⁹ and also represents them as appearing in other shapes than their own. We may, therefore, assume that he describes them in his poem as he supposes them to have really been. In one respect only does he appear to have drawn on his imagination. He endows them with wings, which, with an unusual freedom of interpretation, he regards as assigned to them in Scripture in a metaphorical sense only.¹⁰ But Milton is never so happy as when he feels himself at liberty to invent. His Angels stand out from the canvas, like none of his other creations, glowing and gorgeous in the brilliant clothing of his fancy. The lowest of the Cherubs wears wings "of many a coloured plume sprinkled with gold," while a coronet adorns his "flowing hair."¹¹ In the case of Uriel the coronet has become a crown—

"Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar
Circled his head, nor less his locks behind
Illustrious on his shoulders fledge with wings
Lay waving round."¹²

Read also the description of Raphael as he approaches his human friend—

"Six wings he wore, to shade
His lineaments divine: the pair that clad
Each shoulder broad came mantling o'er his breast
With regal ornament; the middle pair
Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
And colours dipt in Heaven; the third his feet
Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,
Sky-tinctured grain."¹³

We have in such descriptions a delightful hint of Milton's native love of colour and splendour, a love intensified rather than dulled by his blindness. His Angels are not the ghost-like, white-winged beings of later religious fancy. They are retainers of the King of kings, and are "liveried"¹⁴ accordingly. Even when they veil their glory in human shape, the disguise is glorious. See the description of Michael, sent from Heaven to execute God's sentence on man. How does he disguise himself to the eyes that may no longer look upon his celestial brightness? Not, as we might expect, in black, the emblem of mourning and sin. No—

"Over his lucid arms
A military vest of purple flowed

¹ *P.L.* vi. 231.

² *Ibid.* v. 750-753.

³ *Ibid.* vi. 350-354.

⁴ *Ibid.* iv. 584, 585.

⁵ *Ibid.* vi. 313, 314.

⁶ *Ibid.* i. 428-430.

⁷ *Ibid.* i. 424-428.

⁸ *Ibid.* viii. 111-114.

⁹ *T.C.D.* chap. vii.

¹⁰ *P.L.* iii. 640-642.

¹¹ *Ibid.* v. 277-285.

¹² *Ibid.* chap. vii.

¹³ *Ibid.* iii. 625-628.

¹⁴ *Comus*, 455.

Livelier than Melibæan, or the grain
Of Sarra, worn by kings and heroes old
In time of truce: Iris had dipt the woof."¹

Such are the radiant beings whom Milton represents as peopling in their millions the empyreal Heaven. They had been created, he tells us (in opposition to the teaching of the Schoolmen²), at an epoch long antecedent to the creation of man.³ How had they been occupied? We are all familiar with the picture, in Milton's famous sonnet,⁴ of the active and contemplative sides of the angelic life. But what shape did action assume in those far-back days when there were no men to minister to, no ill spirits to contend against, no planets to sentinel? What were the activities that belonged to the heavenly world? Were there occupations and industries analogous to those of earth—agriculture, education, the cares of government? Government there clearly was, for we are told of

"Many a towered structure high,
Where sceptred Angels held their residence,
And sat as princes, whom the Supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the orders bright."⁵

In fact, the "offices and degrees"⁶ of the Angels are a point on which Milton strongly insists. In a fine passage in his *Reason of Church Government*, he says: "The Angels themselves, in whom no disorder is feared, as the apostle that saw them in his rapture describes, are distinguished and quaternioned into their celestial principedoms and satrapies, according as GOD Himself has writ His imperial decrees through the provinces of Heaven."⁷ In *Paradise Lost* he frequently alludes to the nine Orders of Patristic Angelology⁸—

. . . "Seraphim, and Potentates, and Thrones,
In their triple degrees,"⁹

and recognises

"Thrones, Dominations, Principedoms, Virtues, Powers."¹⁰

It is true that, with poetical licence, he frequently uses one name for another. Thus Satan and his peers, when assembled in conclave, are success-

ively designated "Seraphic Lords and Cherubim," "Powers and Dominions," "Celestial Virtues," "Temporal Thrones"; and Raphael is, in turn, a Seraph, Virtue, Power, Archangel. But the names symbolise real distinctions, and Milton always insists on the respect due from the number of a lower Order to one of a higher. Thus, when Raphael comes down to visit Adam—

. . . "Straight knew him all the bands
Of Angels under watch, and to his state
And to his message high in honour rise;"¹¹

and Satan, in his character of a "stripling Cherub," bows low to the Archangel Uriel—

"As to superior Spirits is wont in Heaven,
Where honour due and reverence none neglects."¹²

For Milton, if a Republican, is no Democrat.

But the point to be specially noticed is that the Orders are military. Before rebellion breaks out, we hear of the "legions"¹³ of Satan. His standard, as we learn in Book I. (537, 538),

"Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind
With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed."

Gabriel, reproaching him with his disloyalty, asks—

"Was this your discipline and faith engaged,
Your military obedience?"¹⁴

Gabriel himself and his superior Michael are both "warrior Angels"¹⁵—

"Go Michael, of celestial armies Prince,
And thou, in military prowess next,
Gabriel."¹⁶

The "Empyrean Host" summoned to hear GOD's new decree

"Appear
Under their hierarchs in orders bright."

And we read how

"Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,
Standards and gonfalons, 'twixt van and rear
Stream in the air, and for distinction serve
Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees;
Or in their glittering tissues bear emblazed
Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love,
Recorded eminent."¹⁷

What were these "memorials," these "acts of zeal and love," these "trophies" of Satan? The rebel Angels were, we are told, till the hour of their defeat—

"Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain."¹⁸

¹ *P.L.* xi. 240-244.

² See also Dante's *Paradiso*, xxix. 37-45.

³ *T.C.D.* chap. vii.; *P.L.* v. 859-863.

⁴ Sonnet xix., "On his Blindness." ⁵ *P.L.* i. 733-737.

⁶ *T.C.D.* chap. vii. ⁷ *R.C.G.* chap. i.

⁸ These, it will be remembered, were—(a) Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones. (b) Dominations (Dominions), Virtues, Powers (Potentates). (c) Principalities (Principedoms), Archangels, Angels. ⁹ *P.L.* v. 749, 750.

¹⁰ This line occurs no less than three times; *P.L.* v. 601, 772, 840.

¹¹ *P.L.* v. 287-289.

¹² *Ibid.* v. 669.

¹³ *Ibid.* iv. 946.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* v. 583-594.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* iii. 737, 738.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* iv. 954, 955.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* vi. 44-46.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* vi. 397.

They can hardly have proved this immunity, except in battle. Raphael, it is true, tells us—

“Strange to us it seemed
That Angel should with Angel war;”¹

but his words do not preclude, they rather suggest, some earlier contest against a common foe. What was this contest? The towers of Heaven

“Are filled
With armed watch, that render all access
Impregnable: oft on the bordering deep
Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,
Scorning surprise.”²

Why all this, unless from experience of danger? Had Heaven, like Hell, been annexed from the dominions of Chaos? Had the gloomy “ancestors of Nature,”³ who had submitted perforce to the loss of “heaven and earth,” resisted those earlier encroachments, and lost heart by defeat?

Milton can hardly have refrained from asking these questions, but he does not answer them. He contents himself with marshalling his hosts, both good and evil, in battle array, showing us how they march, how they stand at halt, how they fight, are conquered or conquer, in a series of military pictures that are among the finest in the poem. The most striking of these is perhaps the description of the defeated host in Book I., which, familiar though it is, I cannot forbear quoting—

“All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
With orient colours waving; with them rise
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders: such as raised
To highth of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle, and instead of rage
Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
With solemn touches troubled thought, and chase
Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force with fixed thought,
Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed
Their painful steps o’er the burnt soil.”⁴

We have next the mock fight on the plains of Hell, with its famous simile—

“Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigades form;

As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
To battle in the clouds: before each van
Prick forth the airy knights, and couch their spears,
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
From either end of Heaven the welkin burns.”⁵

Gabriel’s guardianship of Eden gives scope for several picturesque military touches—

- (a) . . . “As flame they part
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.”⁶
(b) . . . “On he led his radiant files,
Dazzling the moon.”⁷
(c) The angelic squadrons bright
Turned fiery red, sharpening in moonèd horns
Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
With ported spears, as thick as when a field
Of Ceres ripe for harvest waving bends
Her bearded grove of ears, which way the wind
Sways them.”⁸

But pictures of this kind are naturally most numerous in the story of the War in Heaven. Look at the preparations for battle on either side: on the one side—

. . . “All the plain
Covered with thick embattled squadrons, bright
Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,
Reflecting blaze on blaze.”⁹

On the other side—

. . . “A fiery region, stretched.
In bataillous aspect,”

which, on nearer view,

“Bristled with upright beams innumerable
Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields
Various.”¹⁰

Or take the march of Michael’s host to battle, echoing, as it does (though chronologically it precedes it), that forlorn march over the plains of Hell—

. . . “The Powers militant
That stood for Heaven, in mighty quadrate joined
Of union irresistible, moved on
In silence their bright legions to the sound
Of instrumental harmony, that breathed
Heroic ardour to adventurous deeds
Under their God-like leaders.”¹¹

Or look at the picture of the first day’s defeat—

“Deformed Rout
Entered, and foul Disorder; all the ground
With shivered armour strown; and on a heap
Chariot and charioteer lay overturned,
And fiery foaming steeds.”¹²

¹ *P.L.* vi. 91, 92.

³ *Ibid.* ii. 895.

² *Ibid.* ii. 129-134.

⁴ *Ibid.* i. 544-562.

⁵ *P.L.* ii. 531-538.

⁷ *Ibid.* iv. 797, 798.

⁹ *Ibid.* vi. 15-18.

¹¹ *Ibid.* vi. 61-67.

⁶ *Ibid.* iv. 784, 785.

⁸ *Ibid.* iv. 977-983.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* vi. 80-85.

¹² *Ibid.* vi. 387-391.

The magnificent description of the Son's riding out to war on the third day—

" Attended with ten thousand thousand saints . . .
And twenty thousand (I their number heard)
Chariots of God,"¹

has already been quoted; but two last pictures—those of Michael's cohort—may be given from Books XI. and XII.—

(a) . . . "The heavenly band
Down from a sky of jasper lighted now
In Paradise, and on a hill made halt:
A glorious apparition. . . .
Not that more glorious, when the Angels met
Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw
The field pavilioned with his guardians bright;
Nor that which on the flaming mount appeared
In Dothan, covered with a camp of fire,
Against the Syrian king."²

(b) . . . "From the other hill
To their fixed station, and in bright array,
The Cherubim descended, on the ground
Gliding meteorous, as evening mist
Risen from a river o'er the marsh glides."³

But Milton's Angels are not militant only. He has much to tell us of the service of song; and his descriptions of "the minstrelsy of Heaven"⁴ are, if possible, even more beautiful than those of his "wingèd warriors." Of this kind are the passages that tell us how, through the twilight that makes the night of Heaven, singers in their course

"Melodious hymns about the Sovran Throne
Alternate all night long."⁵

How, in Eden,

"Celestial voices to the midnight air
Sole, or responsive each to other's note,"

are heard

"Singing their great Creator."⁶

How, during the Creation week, each day

"Nor passed uncelebrated nor unsung
By the celestial choir,"⁷

who hail the completion of the work with

"The sound
Symphonious of ten thousand harps that tuned
Angelic harmonies. The earth, the air
Resounded . . .
The Heavens and all the constellations rung;
The planets in their stations listening stood."⁸

¹ *P. L.* vi. 767-770.

² *Ibid.* xii. 626-630.

³ *Ibid.* v. 655, 656.

⁷ *Ibid.* vii. 253, 254.

³ *Ibid.* xi. 208-218.

⁴ *Ibid.* vi. 168.

⁶ *Ibid.* iv. 682-684.

⁸ *Ibid.* vii. 558-563.

How, finally, the first Sabbath was kept in Heaven—

"But not in silence holy kept: the harp
Had work, and rested not; the solemn pipe
And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,
All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,
Tempered soft tunings, intermixed with voice
Choral or unison."⁹

We may conclude with a passage that divides the palm for popularity with that already quoted from the First Book, and whose soft brightness contrasts finely with the sombre beauty of the other. It describes the joy of the Angels on hearing that "man shall find grace"—

"No sooner had the Almighty ceased, but all
The multitude of Angels, with a shout
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heaven rung
With Jubilee, and loud Hosannas filled
The Eternal regions: lowly reverent
Towards either Throne they bow, and to the ground
With solemn adoration down they cast
Their crowns, inwove with amaranth and gold . . .
(With these, that never fade, the Spirits elect
Bind their resplendent locks inwreathed with beams):
Now, in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
Pavement that like a sea of jasper shone
Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.
Then, crowned again, their golden harps they took,
Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side
Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony they introduce
Their sacred song, and waken raptures high:
No voice exempt, no voice but well could join
Melodious part: such concord is in Heaven."¹⁰

Milton describes Adam as formed "for contemplation and valour." Among the Angels, the prototypes of men, these gifts find strenuous exercise: valour, as we have seen, is warfare, and contemplation song. But they have gentler ministrations entrusted to them than those of war. They bear GOD's messages to man,¹¹ or control the courses of the planets.¹² So, too, their song is sometimes silence: and they are content to listen and to gaze.

"About Him all the sanctities of Heaven
Stood thick as stars, and from His sight received
Beatitude past utterance."¹³

And we remember how

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

MARY A. WOODS.

⁹ *P. L.* vii. 594-599.

¹¹ *Ibid.* iii. 532-534.

¹³ *Ibid.* iii. 60-62.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* iii. 344-371.

¹² *Ibid.* x. 649-651.