

FICTION

Giordano Bruno

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**The Heroic  
Enthusiasts Part  
the Second**



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FICTION

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THE  
**HEROIC ENTHUSIASTS**

(*GLI EROICI FURORI*)

*An Ethical Poem*

BY GIORDANO BRUNO

PART THE SECOND

TRANSLATED BY

L. WILLIAMS

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First Dialogue  
Second Dialogue  
Third Dialogue.  
Fourth Dialogue.  
Fifth Dialogue.

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**PREFACE.**

The second part of "The Heroic Enthusiasts" which I am now sending to the press is on the same subject as the first, namely the struggles of the soul in its upward progress towards purification and freedom, and the author makes use of lower things to picture and suggest the higher. The aim of the Heroic Enthusiast is to get at the Truth and to see the Light, and he considers that all the trials and sufferings of this life, are the cords which draw the soul upwards, and the spur which quickens the mind and purifies the will.

The blindness of the soul may signify the descent into the material body, and "visit the various kingdoms" may be an allusion to the soul passing through the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms before it arrives at man.

It is interesting to note that in the first part of "The Heroic Enthusiasts" (page 122), Bruno makes a distinct allusion to the power of steam, and in the second part, one might almost think, that in using the number nine in connexion with the blind men, he intended a reference to electricity, for we read in "The Secret Doctrine," by H.P. Blavatsky, "There exists an universal *agent unique* of all forms and of life, that is called Od, Ob, and Aour, active and passive, positive and negative, like day and night; it is the first light in creation; and the first light of the primordial Elo-him--the A-dam,--male and female, or, (scientifically) Electricity and Life. Its universal value is nine, for it is the ninth letter of the alphabet and the ninth door of the fifty portals or gateways, that lead to the concealed mysteries of being.... Od is the pure life-giving Light or magnetic fluid."

The notices of the press upon the first half of this work, were for the most part such, as to lead me to hope that the appearance of the second part will meet with a favourable reception.

When I first began this translation little was known about Giordano Bruno except through the valuable works of Sig. Berti and Sig. Levi, and since then Mrs. Firth has given us a life of the Nolan, written in English, and several able

articles in the magazines have been published, in one of which, by C.E. Plumptre (*Westminster Review*, August, 1889), an interesting parallel is drawn between Shelley and Bruno.

I will close this short notice with a sentence from an article in the *Nineteenth Century*, September, 1889, entitled "Criticism as a trade." "There is probably no author who does not feel how much he owes to the writers who have reviewed his books, whether he has occasion to acknowledge it or not. It is humiliating to find how many errors remain in writings that seemed comparatively free from them. Everyone who knows his subject, and has any modesty, is aware that there are defects in his work which his own eye has not seen; and he is more than grateful for the correction of every error that is pointed out to him by an honest censor." If this is the case with authors who produce original work, it may be still more aptly said of translators, especially of those who attempt to translate books so full of difficulties as those presented in the works of Giordano Bruno.

L. WILLIAMS.

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# SECOND PART OF THE HEROIC ENTHUSIASTS.

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## First Dialogue.

*Interlocutors:*

**CESARINO. MARICONDO.**

1.

CES. It is said that the best and most excellent things are in the world when the whole universe responds from every part, perfectly, to those things; and this it is said takes place as the planets arrive at Aries, being when that one of the eighth sphere again reaches the upper invisible firmament, where is also the other Zodiac;[A] and low and evil things prevail when the opposite disposition and order supervene, and thus through the power of change comes the continual mutation of like and unlike, from one opposite to another. The revolution then of the great year of the world is that space of time in which, through the most diverse customs and effects, and by the most opposite and contrary means, it returns to the same again. As we see in particular years such as that of the sun, where the beginning of an opposite tendency is the end of one year, and the end of this is the beginning of that. Therefore now that we have been in the dregs of the sciences, which have brought forth the dregs of opinions, which are the cause of the dregs of customs and of works, we may certainly expect to return to the better condition.

[A] Astronomers distinguish between a fixed and intellectual zodiac; and the movable and visible zodiac. According to the former, Aries still stands as the first of the signs; that is to say, the first thirty degrees of the zodiacal circle, reckoning from the equinoctial point in spring, are allotted to Aries in the intellectual zodiac.... Astronomers generally choose to reckon by the fixed and intellectual zodiac.--(Drummond's "Oedipus Judaicus.")

MARICONDO. Know, my brother, that this succession and order of things is most true and most certain; but as regards ourselves in all ordinary conditions whatever, the present afflicts more than the past, nor can these two together console, but only the future, which is always in hope and expectation as you may see designated in this figure which is taken from the ancient Egyptians, who made a certain statue which is a bust, upon which they placed three heads, one of a wolf which looks behind, one of a lion with the face turned half round, and the third of a dog who looks straight before him; to signify that things of the past afflict by means of thoughts, but not so much as things of the present which actually torment, while the future ever promises something better; therefore behold the wolf that howls, the lion that roars and the dog that barks (applause).

CES. What means that legend that is written above?

MAR. See, that above the wolf is Lam, above the lion Modo, above the dog Praeterea, which are words signifying the three parts of time.

CES. Now read the tablet.

MAR. I will do so.

41.

A wolf, a lion, and a dog appear  
At dawn, at midday, and dark night.  
That which I spent, retain and for myself procure,  
So much was given, is given, and may be given;  
For that which I did, I do, and have to do.  
In the past, in the present and in the future,  
I do repent, torment myself and re-assure,  
For the loss, in suffering and in expectation.  
With sour, with bitter and with sweet  
Experience, the fruits, and hope,

Threatens, afflict, and comforts me.  
The age I lived, do live and am to live,  
Affrights me, shakes me and upholds  
In absence, presence and in prospect.  
Much, too much and sufficient  
Of the past, of now, and of to come,  
Put me in fear, in anguish and in hope.

CES. This is precisely the humour of a furious lover, though the same may be said of nearly all mortals who are seriously affected in any way. We cannot say that this accords with all conditions in a general way, but only with those mortals who were, and who are, wretched. So that to him who sought a kingdom and obtained it, belongs the fear of losing the same; and to one who has laboured to secure the fruits of love, such as the special grace of the beloved, belongs the tooth of jealousy and suspicion. Thus, too, with the states of the world; when we find ourselves in darkness and in adversity we may surely prophecy light and prosperity, and when we are in a state of happiness and discipline, doubtless we have to expect the advent of ignorance and distress. As in the case of Hermes Trismegistus, who, seeing Egypt in all the splendour of the sciences and of occultism, so that he considered that men were consorting with gods and spirits and were in consequence most pious, he made that prophetic lament to Asclepius, saying that the darkness of new religions and cults must follow, and that of the then present things nothing would remain but idle tales and matter for condemnation. So the Hebrews, when they were slaves in Egypt, and banished to the deserts, were comforted by their prophets with the hope of liberty and the re-acquisition of their country; when they were in authority and tranquillity they were menaced with dispersion and captivity. And as in these days there is no evil nor injury to which we are not subject, so there is no good nor honour that we may not promise ourselves. Thus does it happen to all the other generations and states, the which, if they endure and be not destroyed entirely by the force of vicissitude, it is inevitable that from evil they come to good, from good to evil, from low estate to high, from high to low, out of obscurity into splendour, out of splendour into obscurity, for this is the natural order of things; outside of which order, if another should be found which destroys or corrects it, I should believe it and not dispute it, for I reason with none other than a natural spirit.[B]

[B] As in long-drawn systole and long-drawn diastole, must the period of Faith, alternate with the period of Denial; must the vernal growth, the summer luxuriance of all Opinions, Spiritual Representations and Creations, be followed by, and again follow the autumnal decay, the winter dissolution.--("Sartor Resartus.")

MAR. We know that you are not a theologian but a philosopher, and that you treat of philosophy and not of theology.

CES. It is so. But let us see what follows.

II.

CES. I see a smoking thurible, supported by an arm, and the legend which says: "Illius aram," and then the following:--

42.

Now who shall say the breath of my desire  
Of high and holy worship is demeaned  
If decked in divers forms ornate she come  
Through vows I offer to the shrine of Fame?  
And if another work should call, and lead me on,  
Who would aver that more it might beseem  
If that, of Heaven so loved and eulogized,  
Should hold me not in its captivity.  
Leave, oh leave me, every other wish,  
Cease, fretting thoughts, and give me peace;  
Why draw me forth from looking at the sun,  
From looking at the sun that I so love.  
You ask in pity, wherefore lookest thou  
On that, on which to look is thy undoing?  
Wherefore so captivated by that light?  
And I will say, because to me this pain  
Is dearer than all other pleasures are.

MAR. In reference to this I told you that although one should be attached to corporeal and external beauty yet he may honourably and worthily be so attached; provided that, through this material beauty, which is a glittering ray of

spiritual form and action, of which it is the trace and shadow, he comes to raise himself to the consideration and worship of divine beauty, light and majesty; so that, from these visible things his heart becomes exalted towards those things which are more excellent in themselves and grateful to the purified soul, in so far as they are removed from matter and sense. Ah me! he will say, if beauty so shadowy, so dim, so fugitive, painted on the surface of bodily matter pleases me so much, and moves my affections so much, and stamps upon my spirit I know not what of reverence for majesty, captivates me, softly binds me, and draws me, so that I find nothing that comes within the senses that satisfies me so much,—how will it be with the substantially, originally, primitively beautiful? How will it be with my soul, the divine intellect, and the law of nature? It is right, then, that the contemplation of this vestige of light lead me, through the purification of my soul, to the imitation, and to conformity and participation in that which is more worthy and higher, into which I am transformed and unto which I unite myself: for I am certain that nature, which has placed this beauty before my eyes and has gifted me with an interior sense, through which I am able to infer a deeper and incomparably greater beauty, wills that I be promoted to the altitude and eminence of more excellent kinds. Nor do I believe that my true divinity, as she shows herself to me in symbols and vestiges, will scorn me if in symbols and vestiges I honour her and sacrifice to her; as my heart and affections are always so ordered as to look higher. For who may he be, that can honour in essence and real substance, if in such manner he cannot understand it?

It is in and through Symbols that man, consciously or unconsciously, lives, works, and has his being. For is not a Symbol ever, to him who has eyes for it, some dimmer or clearer revelation, of the Godlike?—("Sartor Resartus.")

CES. Right well do you demonstrate how, to men of heroic spirit, all things turn to good and how they are able to turn captivity into greater liberty, and the being vanquished into an occasion for greater victory. Well dost thou know that the love of corporeal beauty to those who are well disposed, not only does not keep them back from higher enterprises, but rather does it lend wings to arrive at these, when the necessity for love is converted into a study of the virtuous, through which the lover is forced into those conditions in which he is worthy of the thing loved and perchance of even a still higher, better and more beautiful thing; so that he comes to be either contented to have gained that which he desires, or so satisfied with its own beauty, that he can despise that of others, which comes to be, by him, vanquished and overcome, so that he either remains tranquil, or else he aspires to things more excellent and grand. And so will the heroic spirit ever go on trying until it becomes raised to the desire of divine beauty itself, without similitude, figure, symbol, or kind, if it be possible, and what is more one knows that he will reach that height.

MAR. You see, Cesarino, how this enthusiast is justified in his anger against those who reproach him with being in captivity to a low beauty, to which he dedicates his vows, and attributes these forms, so that he is deaf to those voices which call him to nobler enterprises: for these low things are derived from those, and are dependent upon them, so that through these you may gain access to those, according to their own degrees. These, if they be not God, are things divine, are living images of Him, in the which, if He sees Himself adored, He is not offended. For we have a charge from the supernal spirit which says: Adorate scabellum pedum eius. And in another place a divine messenger says: Adorabimus ubi steterunt pedes eius.

CES. God, the divine beauty, and splendour shines and *is* in all things; and therefore it does not appear to me an error to admire Him in all things, according to the way in which we have communion with them. Error it would surely be if we should give to another the honour due to Him alone. But what means the enthusiast when he says, "Leave, leave me, every other wish"?

MAR. That he banishes every thought presented to him by different objects, which have not the power to move him and which would rob him of the sight of the sun which comes to him through that window more than through others.

CES. Why, importuned by thoughts, does he continually gaze at that splendour which destroys him, and yet does not satisfy him, as it torments him ever so fiercely?

MAR. Because all our consolations in this state of controversy are not without their discouragements, however vast those consolations may be. Just as the fear of a king for the loss of his kingdom, is greater than that of a mendicant who is in peril of losing ten farthings; and more important is the care of a prince over a republic, than that of a rustic over a herd of swine; as perchance the pleasures and delights of the one are greater than the pleasures and delights of the other. Therefore the loving and aspiring higher, brings with it greater glory and majesty, with more care, thought, and pain: I mean in this state, where the one opposite is always joined to the other, finding the greatest contrariety always in the same genus, and consequently about the same subject, although the opposites cannot be together. And thus proportionally in the love of the supernal Eros, as the Epicurean poet declares of vulgar and animal desire when he says:--

Fluctuat incertis erroribus ardor amantum,  
 Nec constat, quid primum oculis, manibusque fruuntur:  
 Quod petiere, premunt arte, faciuntque dolorem  
 Corporis, et dentes inlidunt saepe labellis,  
 Osculaque adfigunt, quia non est pura voluptas,  
 Et stimuli subsunt, qui instigant laedere id ipsum,  
 Quodcunque est, rabies, unde illa haec germina surgunt.  
 Sed leviter poenas frangit Venus inter amorem,  
 Blandaue refraenat morsus admixta voluptas;  
 Namque in eo spes est, unde est ardoris origo,  
 Restingui quoque posse ab eodem corpore flammam.

Behold, then, with what condiments the skill and art of nature works, so that one is wasted with the pleasure of that which destroys him, is happy in the midst of torment, and tormented in the midst of all the satisfactions. For nothing is produced absolutely from a homoeogeneous (pacifico) principle, but all from opposite principles, through the victory and dominion of one part of the opposites, and there is no pleasure of generation on one side without the pain of corruption on the other: and where these things which are generated and corrupted are joined together and as it were compose the same subject, the feeling of delight and of sadness are found together; so that it comes to be called more easily delight than sadness, if it happens that this predominates, and solicits the senses with greater force.

III.

CES. Now let us take into consideration the following image which is that of a phoenix, which burns in the sun, and the smoke from which almost obscures the brightness of that by which it is set on fire, and here is the motto which says: Neque simile, nec par mar.

43.

MAR.:

This phoenix set on fire by the bright sun,  
 Which slowly, slowly to extinction goes,  
 The while she, girt with splendour burning lies;  
 Yields to her star antagonistic fief  
 Through that which towards the sky to Heaven ascends.  
 Black smoke, and sombre fog of murky hue  
 Concealing thus his radiance from our eyes,  
 And veiling that which makes her burn and shine.  
 And so my soul, illumined and inflamed  
 By radiance divine, would fain display  
 The brightness of her own effulgent thought;  
 The lofty concept of her song sends forth.  
 In words which do but hide the glorious light,  
 [C]While I dissolve and melt and am destroyed.  
 Ah me! this lowering cloud, this smoky fire of words  
 Abases that which it would elevate.

[C] But not till the whole personality of the man is dissolved and melted—not until it is held by the divine fragment which has created it, as a mere subject for the grave experiment and experience—not until the whole nature has yielded and become subject unto its higher self, can the bloom open.—("Light on the Path.")

CES. This fellow then says that as this phoenix set on fire by the sun and accustomed to light and flame comes to send upwards that smoke which obscures him who has rendered her so luminous, so he, the inflamed and illumined enthusiast, through that which he does in praise of such an illustrious subject which has warmed his heart and which shines in his thought, comes rather to conceal it than to render it light for light, sending forth that smoke the effect of the flame, in which the substance of himself is resolved.

MAR. I, without weighing and comparing the studies of that fellow, repeat what I said to you the other day, that praise is one of the greatest oblations that human affection can offer to an object. And leaving on one side the proposition of the Divine, tell me, who would have known of Achilles, Ulysses, and all the other Greek and Trojan chiefs? Who would have heard of all those great soldiers, the wise and the heroes of the earth, if they had not been placed amongst the stars and deified by the oblation of praise which has lighted the fire on the altar of the heart of illustrious poets and

other singers, so that usually, the sacrificant, the victim and the sanctified deity, all mounted to the skies, through the hand and the vow of a worthy and lawful priest?

CES. Well sayest thou "of a worthy and lawful priest," for the world is at present full of apostate ones, the which, as they are for the most part unworthy themselves, sing the praises of other unworthy ones, so that, *asini asinos fricant*. But Providence wills that these, instead of rising to the sky, should go together to the shades of Orcus, so that naught is the glory of him who extols and of him who is extolled; for the one has woven a statue of straw, or carved the trunk of a tree, or cast a piece of chalk, and the other, the idol of shame and infamy, knows not that there is no need to wait for the keen tooth of the age and the scythe of Saturn in order to be put down, for through those self-same praises he gets buried alive then and there, while he is being praised, saluted, hailed, and presented. Just as it happened in a contrary way, so that much-praised Moecenatus, who, if he had had no other glory than a soul inclined to protect and favour the Muses, for this alone merited, that the genius of so many illustrious poets should do him homage, and place him in the number of the most famous heroes who have trod this earth. His own studies and his own brightness made him prominent and grand, and not the being born of a royal race, and not the being grand secretary and councillor of Augustus. That, I say, which made him illustrious was the having made himself worthy to fulfil the promise of that poet who says:--

Fortunati ambo, si quid mea carmina possunt,  
Nulla dies nunquam memori vos eximet aevo,  
Dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum  
Accolet, imperiumque pater romanus habebit.

MAR. I remember what Seneca says in certain letters where he refers to the words of Epicurus to a friend, which are these: "If the love of glory is dear to thy breast, these letters of mine will make thee more famous and known than all those other things which thou honourest, by which thou art honoured, and of which thou mayest boast." The same might Homer have said if Achilles or Ulysses had presented themselves before him, or Eneas and his offspring before Virgil; as that moral philosopher well said; Domeneia is more known through the letters of Epicurus, than all the magicians, satraps and royalties upon whom depended his title of Domeneia and the memory of whom was lost in the depths of oblivion. Atticus does not survive because he was the son-in-law of Agrippa and ancestor of Tiberius, but through the epistles of Tully; Drusus, the ancestor of Caesar, would not be found amongst the number of great names if Cicero had not inserted it. Many, many years may pass over our heads, and in all that time not many geniuses will keep their heads raised.

Now to return to the question of this enthusiast, who, seeing a phoenix set on fire by the sun, calls to mind his own cares, and laments that like the phoenix he sends, in exchange for the light and heat received, a sluggish smoke from the holocaust of his melted substance. Wherefore not only can we never discourse about things divine, but we cannot even think of them without detracting from, rather than adding to the glory of them; so that the best thing to be done with regard to them is, that man, in the presence of other men, should rather praise himself for his earnestness and courage, than give praise to anything, as complete and perfected action; seeing that no such thing can be expected where there is progress towards the infinite, where unity and infinity are the same thing and cannot be followed by the other number, because there is no unity from another unity, nor is there number from another number and unity, because they are not the same absolute and infinite. Therefore was it well said by a theologian that as the fountain of light far exceeds not only our intellects, but also the divine, it is decorous that one should not discourse with words, but that with silence alone it should be magnified.[D]

[D] Now, it may be asked, what is the state of a man who followeth the true Light to the utmost of his power? I answer truly, it will never be declared aright, for he who is not such a man, can neither understand nor know it, and he who is, knoweth it indeed; but he cannot utter it, for it is unspeakable.--("Theologia Germanica.")

CES. Not, verily, with such silence as that of the brutes who are in the likeness and image of men, but of those whose silence is more exalted than all the cries and noise and screams of those who may be heard.[E]

[E] "Speech is of time, silence is of eternity."--("Sartor Resartus.")

IV.

MAR. Let us go on and see what the rest means.

CES. Say, if you have seen and considered it, what is the meaning of this fire in the form of a heart with four wings, two of which have eyes and the whole is girt with luminous rays and has round about it this question: *Nititur incassum?*

MAR. I remember well, that it signifies the state of the mind, heart and spirit and eyes of the enthusiast, but read the sonnet!

[F]Splendour divine, to which this mind aspires,  
 The intellect alone cannot unveil.  
 The heart, which those high thoughts would animate,  
 Makes not itself their lord; nor spirit, which  
 Should cease from pleasure for a space,  
 Can ever from those heights withdraw.  
 The eyes which should be closed at night in sleep,  
 Awake remain, open, and full of tears.  
 Ah me, my lights! where are the zeal and art  
 With which to tranquillize the afflicted sense?  
 Tell me my soul; what time and in what place  
 Shall I thy deep transcendent woe assuage?  
 And thou my heart, what solace can I bring  
 As compensation to thy heavy pain?  
 When, oh unquiet and perturbed mind,  
 Wilt thou the soul for debt and dole receive  
 With heart, with spirit and the sorrowing eyes?

[F] Let no one suppose that we may attain to this true light and perfect knowledge by hearsay, or by reading and study, nor yet by high skill and great learning.--("Theologia Germanica.")

The mind which aspires to the divine splendour flees from the society of the crowd and retires from the multitude of subjects, as much as from the community of studies, opinions and sentences; seeing that the peril of contracting vices and illusions is greater, according to the number of persons with whom one is allied. In the public shows, said the moral philosopher, by means of pleasure, vices are more easily engendered. If one aspires to the supreme splendour, let him retire as much as he can, from union and support, into himself (*Di sorte che non sia simile a molti, per che son molti; e non sia nemico di molti per che son dissimili*), so that he be not like unto many, because they are many; and be not adverse to many, because they are dissimilar; if it be possible, let him retain the one and the other; otherwise he will incline to that which seems to him best. Let him associate either with those whom he can make better or with those through whom he may be made better, through brightness which he may impart to those or that he may receive from them. Let him be content with one ideal rather than with the inept multitude. Nor will he hold that he has gained little, when he has become such an one who is wise unto himself, remembering what Democritus says: *Unus mihi pro populo est, et populus pro uno*; and what Epicurus said to a companion of his studies, writing to him: "*Haec tibi, non multis! Satis enim magnum alter alteri theatrum sumus.*"

The mind, then, which aspires high, leaves, for the first thing, caring about the crowd, considering that that divine light despises striving and is only to be found where there is intelligence, and yet not every intelligence, but that which is amongst the few, the chief, the first among the first, the principal one.

CES. How do you mean that the mind aspires high? For example, by looking at the stars? At the empyreal heaven above the ether?

MAR. Certainly not! but by plunging into the depths of the mind, for which there is no great need to open the eyes to the sky, to raise the hands, to direct the steps to the temple, nor sing to the ears of statues in order to be the better heard, but to come into the inner self believing that, God is near, present and within, more fully than man himself,[G] being soul of souls, life of lives, essence of essences: for that which you see above or below, or round about, or however you please to say it, of the stars, are bodies, are created things, similar to this globe on which we are, and in which the divinity is present neither more nor less than he is in this globe of ours or in ourselves. This is how, then, one must begin to withdraw oneself from the multitude into oneself. One ought to arrive at such a point to despise and not to overestimate every labour, so that, the more the desires and the vices contend with each other inwardly and the vicious enemies dispute outwardly, so much the more should one breathe and rise, and with spirit, if possible, surmount this steep hill. Here there is no need for other arms and shield than the majesty of an unconquered soul and a tolerant spirit, which maintains the quality and meaning of that life which proceeds from science and is regulated by the art of considering attentively things low and high, divine and human, in the which consists that highest good, and in reference to this, a moral philosopher wrote to Lucillus that one must not linger between Scylla and Charybdis, penetrate the wilds of Candavia and the Apennines or lose oneself in the sandy plains, because the road is as sure and as blythe as Nature herself could make it. "It is not," says he, "gold and silver that makes one like God, because these are not treasure to Him; nor vestments, for God is naked; nor ostentation and fame, for He shows Himself to few, and perhaps not one knows Him, and certainly many, and more than many, have a bad opinion of Him. Not all the various

conditions of things which we usually admire, for not those things of which we desire to have copies, make one rich, but the contempt for those things."

[G] For, in this (degree), God cannot be tasted, felt, seen, because he is more ourselves than ourselves, is not distinct from us.--("Spiritual Torrents.")

CES. Well. But tell me in what manner will this fellow tranquillize the senses, assuage the woes of the spirit, compensate the heart and give its just debts to the mind, so that with this aspiration of his he come not to say: "Nitimur incassum"?

MAR. He will be present in the body in such wise that the best part of himself will be absent from it, and will join himself by an indissoluble sacrament to divine things, in such a way that he will not feel either love or hatred of things mortal. Considering himself as master, and that he ought not to be servant and slave to his body, which he would regard only as the prison which holds his liberty in confinement, the glue which smears his wings, chains which bind fast his hands, stocks which fix his feet, veil which hides his view. Let him not be servant, captive, ensnared, chained, idle, stolid and blind, for the body which he himself abandons cannot tyrannize over him, so that thus, the spirit in a certain degree comes before him as the corporeal world, and matter is subject to the divinity and to nature. Thus will he become strong against fortune, magnanimous towards injuries, intrepid towards poverty, disease and persecution.

CES. Well is the heroic enthusiast instructed!

V.

CES. Close by is to be seen that which follows. See the wheel of time, which moves round its own centre, and there is the legend: "Manens moveor." What do you mean by that?

MAR. This means that movement is circular where motion concurs with rest, seeing that in orbicular motion upon its own axis and about its own centre is understood rest and stability according to right movement, or, rest of the whole and movement of the parts; and from the parts which move in a circle is understood two different kinds of motion, inasmuch as some parts rise to the summit and others from the summit descend to the base successively; others reach the medium differences, and others the extremes of high and low. And all this seems to me suitably expressed in the following:

45.

That which keeps my heart both open and concealed,  
Beauty imprints and honesty dispels;  
Zeal holds me fast; all other care comes to me  
By that same path whence all care to the soul doth come:  
Seek I myself from pain to disengage,  
Hope sustains me then, whoso scourges, tires;--(altrui rigor mi lassa)  
Love doth exalt and reverence abase me  
What time I yearn towards the highest good.  
High thoughts, holy desires, and mind intent  
Upon the labours and the cunning of the heart  
Towards the immense divine immortal object,  
So do, that I be joined, united, fed,  
That I lament no more; that reason, sense, attend,  
Discourse and penetrate to other things.

So that the continual movement of one part supposes and carries with it the movement of the whole, in such a way that the attraction of the posterior parts is consequent upon the repulsion of the anterior parts; thus the movement of the superior parts results of necessity from that of the inferior, and from the raising of one opposite power, follows the depression of the other opposite. Therefore the heart, which signifies all the affections generally, comes to be concealed and open, held by zeal, raised by magnificent thoughts, sustained by hope, weakened by fear, and in this state and condition will it ever be seen and found.

VI.

CES. That is all well. Let us come to that which follows. I see a ship floating on the waves; its ropes are attached to the shore and there is the legend: *Fluctuat in portu*. Deliberate about the signification of this, and when you are decided about it, explain.

MAR. Both the legend and the figure have a certain connexion with the present legend and figure, as may be easily understood, if one considers it a little. But let us read the sonnet.

If I by gods, by heroes and by men  
 Be re-assured, so that I not despair,  
 Nor fear, pain, nor the impediments  
 Of death of body, joy and happiness,  
 Yet must I learn to suffer and to feel.  
 And that I may my pathways clearly see,  
 Let doubts arise, and dolour, and the woe  
 Of vanished hopes, of joy and all delight.  
 But if *he* should behold, should grant, and should attend  
 My thoughts, my wishes, and my reasoning,  
 Who makes them so uncertain, hot, and vague,  
 Such dear conceits, such acts and speech,  
 Will not be given nor done to him, who stays  
 From birth, through life, to death in sheltered home.

Non da, non fa, non ha qualunque stassi  
 De l'orto, vita e morte a le magioni.

From what we have considered and said in the preceding discourses one is able to understand these sentiments, especially where it is shown that the sense of low things is diminished and annulled whenever the superior powers are strongly intent upon a more elevated and heroic object. The power of contemplation is so great, as is noted by Jamblichus, that it happens sometimes, not only that the soul ceases from inferior acts, but that it leaves the body entirely. The which I will not understand otherwise than in such various ways as are explained in the book of thirty seals, wherein are produced so many methods of contraction, of which some infamously, others heroically operate, that one learns not to fear death, suffers not pain of body, feels not the hindrances of pleasures: wherefore the hope, the joy, and the delight of the superior spirit are of so intense a kind that they extinguish all those passions which may have their origin in doubt, in pain and all kinds of sadness.

CES. But what is that, of which he requests that it consider those thoughts which it has rendered so uncertain, fulfil those desires which it has made so ardent, and listen to those discourses which it has rendered so vague?

MAR. He means the Object, which he beholds when it makes itself present; for to see the Divine is to be seen by it, as to see the sun concurs with the being seen of the sun. Equally, to be heard by the Divine, is precisely to listen to it, and to be favoured by it, is the same as to offer to it; for from the one immoveable and the same, proceed thoughts uncertain and certain, desires ardent and appeased, and reasonings valid and vain, according as the man worthily or unworthily puts them before himself, with the intellect, the affections and actions. As that same pilot may be said to be the cause of the sinking or of the safety of the ship, according as he is present in it or absent from it; with this difference, that the pilot through his defectiveness or his efficiency ruins or saves the ship; but the Divine potency which is all in all does not proffer or withhold except through assimilation or rejection by oneself.[H]

[H] Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.--("St. Matthew.")

## VII.

MAR. It seems to me that the following figure is closely connected and linked with the above; there are two stars in the form of two radiant eyes, with the legend: Mors et vita.

CES. Read the sonnet!

MAR. I will do so:

Writ by the hand of Love may each behold  
 Upon my face the story of my woes.  
 But thou, so that thy pride no curb may know,  
 And I, unhappy one, eternally might rest,  
 Thou dost torment, by hiding from my view  
 Those lovely lights beneath the beauteous lids.  
 Therefore the troubled sky's no more serene,  
 Nor hostile baleful shadows fall away.

By thine own beauty, by this love of mine  
 (So great that e'en with this it may compare),  
 Render thyself, oh Goddess, unto pity!  
 Prolong no more this all-unmeasured woe,  
 Ill-timed reward for such a love as this.  
 Let not such rigour with such splendour mate  
 If it import thee that I live!  
 Open, oh lady, the portals of thine eyes,  
 And look on me if thou wouldst give me death!

Here, the face upon which the story of his woes appears is the soul; in so far as it is open to receive those superior gifts, for the which it has a potential aptitude, without the fulness of perfection and act which waits for the dew of heaven. Thus was it well said: *Anima mea sicut terra sine aqua tibi*; and again: *Os meum operui*; and again: *Spiritum, quia mandata tua desiderabam*. Then "pride which knows no curb" is said in metaphor and similitude, as God is sometimes said to be jealous, angry, or that He sleeps, and that signifies the difficulty with which He grants so much even as to show his shoulders, which is the making himself known by means of posterior things and effects. So the lights are covered with the eyelids, the troubled sky of the human mind does not clear itself by the removal of the metaphors and enigmas. Besides which, because he does not believe that all which is not, could not be, he prays the divine light, that by its beauty, which ought not to be entirely concealed, at least according to the capacity of whoever beholds it, and by his love, which, perchance, is equal to so much beauty (equal, he means, of the beauty, in so far as he can comprehend it) that it surrender itself to pity, that is, that it should do as those who are compassionate, and who from being capricious and gloomy become gracious and affable and that it prolong not the evil which results from that privation, and not allow that its splendour, for which it is so much desired, should appear greater than that love by means of which it communicates itself, seeing that in it all the perfections are not only equal but are also the same. In fine, he begs that it will no further sadden by privation, for it can kill with the glance of its eyes and can also with those same give him life.

CES. Does he mean that death of lovers, which comes from intense joy, called by the Kabalists, *mors oculi*, which same is eternal life, which a man may anticipate in this life and enjoy in eternity?

MAR. He does.

VIII.

MAR. It is time to proceed to the consideration of the following design, similar to those previously brought forward, and with which it has a certain affinity. There is an eagle, which with two wings cleaves the sky; but I do not know how much and in what manner it comes to be retarded by the weight of a stone which is tied to its leg. There is the legend: *Scinditur incertum*. It is certain that it signifies the multitude, number and character (*volgo*) of the powers of the soul, to exemplify which, that verse is taken: *Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus*. The whole of which character (*volgo*) in general is divided into two factions; although subordinate to these, others are not wanting, of which some appeal to the high intelligence and splendour of rectitude, while others incite and force in a certain manner to the low, to the uncleanness of voluptuousness and compliance with natural desires. Therefore says the sonnet:

48.

I would do well--to me 'tis not allowed.  
 With me my sun is not, although I be with him,  
 For being with him, I'm no more with myself:  
 The farther from myself--the nearer unto him;  
 The nearer unto him, the farther from myself.  
 Once to enjoy, doth cost me many tears,  
 And seeking happiness, I meet with woe.  
 For that I look aloft, so blind am I.  
 That I may gain my love, I lose myself.  
 Through bitter joy, and through sweet pain,  
 Weighted with lead, I rise towards the sky.  
 Necessity withholds, goodness conducts me on,  
 Fate sinks me down, and counsel raises me,  
 Desire spurs me, fear keeps me in check.  
 Care kindles and the peril backward draws.  
 Tell me, what power or what subterfuge

Can give me peace and bring me from this strife,  
If one repels, the other draws me on.

The ascension goes on in the soul through the power and appulsion in the wings, which are the intellect, or intellectual will upon which she naturally depends and through which she fixes her gaze toward God, as to the highest good, and primal truth, as to absolute goodness and beauty. Thus everything has an impetus towards its beginning retrogressively, and progressively towards its end and perfection, as Empedocles well said, and from which sentence I think may be inferred that which the Nolan said in this octave:

The sun must turn and reach his starting-point,  
Each wandering light must go towards its source,  
That which is earth to earth itself reverts,  
The rivers from the sea to sea return,  
And thither, whence desires have life and grow  
Must they aspire as to revered divinity,  
So every thought born of my lady fair  
Comes back perforce to her, my goddess dear.

The intellectual power is never at rest, it is never satisfied with any comprehended truth, but ever proceeds on and on towards that truth which is not comprehended. So also the will which follows the apprehension, we see that it is never satisfied with anything finite. In consequence of this, the essence of the soul is always referred to the source of its substance and entity. Then as to the natural powers, by means of which it is turned to the protection and government of matter, to which it allies itself, and by appulsion benefits and communicates of its perfection to inferior things, through the likeness which it has to the Divine, which in its benignity communicates itself or produces infinitely, *i.e.* imparts existence to the universal infinite and to the innumerable worlds in it, or, finitely, produces this universe alone, subject to our eyes and our common reason. Thus then in the one sole essence of the soul are found these two kinds of powers, and as they are used for one's own good and for the good of others, it follows that they are depicted with a pair of wings, by means of which it is potent towards the object of the primal and immaterial potencies, and with a heavy stone, through which it is active and efficacious towards the objects of the secondary and material potencies. Whence it follows that the entire affection of the enthusiast is bifold, divided, harassed, and placed in a position to incline itself more easily downwards than to force itself upwards: seeing that the soul finds itself in a low and hostile country, and reaches the far-off region of its more natural home where its powers are the weakest.

CES. Do you think that this difficulty can be overcome?

MAR. Perfectly well; but the beginning is most difficult, and according as we make more and more fruitful progress in contemplation we arrive at a greater and greater facility. As happens to whoever flies up high, the more he rises above the earth the more air he has beneath to uphold him, and consequently the less he is affected by gravitation; he may even rise so high that he cannot, without the labour of cleaving the air, return downwards, although one might imagine it were more easy to cleave the air downwards towards the earth than to rise on high towards the stars.

CES. So that with progress of this kind a greater and greater facility is acquired for mounting on high?

MAR. So it is; therefore well said Tansillo:--

"The more I feel the air beneath my feet  
So much the more towards the wind I bend  
My swiftest pinions  
And spurn the world and up towards Heaven I go."

As every part of bodies and of their elements, the nearer they come to their natural place, the greater the impetus and force with which they move, until at last, whether they will or not, they must prevail. That which we see then in the parts of bodies and in the bodies themselves we ought also to allow of intellectual things towards their proper objects, as their proper places, countries, and ends. Whence you may easily comprehend the entire significance of the figure, the legend, and the verses.

CES. So much so that whatsoever you might add thereto would appear to me superfluous.

IX.

CES. Let us see what is here represented by those two radiating arrows upon a target around which is written: *Vicit instans*.

MAR. The continual struggle in the soul of the enthusiast, the which, in consequence of the long familiarity which it had with matter was hard and incapable of being penetrated by the rays of the splendour of the Divine intelligence and the species of the Divine goodness; during which time, he says that the heart was enamelled with diamond, that is, the affection was hard and not capable of being heated and penetrated, and it rejected the blows of love which assailed it on innumerable sides. That is, it did not feel itself wounded by those wounds of eternal life of which the Psalmist speaks when he says: *Vulnerasti cor meum, o dilecta, vulnerasti cor meum*. The which wounds are not from iron or other material through the vigour and strength of nerves, but are darts of Diana, or of Phoebus, that is, either from the goddess of the deserts--of contemplation of truth, that is, from Diana, who is the order of the second intelligences, which transfer the splendour received from the first and communicate it to the others, who are deprived of a more open vision; or else from the principal god Apollo, who with his own, and not a borrowed splendour, sends his darts, that is, his rays, so many and from such innumerable points, which are all the species of things, which are indications of Divine goodness, intelligence, beauty, and wisdom, according to the various degrees, from the simple comprehension, to the becoming heroic enthusiasts; because the adamantine subject does not reflect from its surface the impression of the light, but, destroyed and overcome by the heat and light, it becomes in substance luminous--all light--so that it is penetrated within the affection and conception. This is not immediately, at the beginning of generation, when the soul comes forth fresh from the intoxication of Lethe, and drenched with the waves of forgetfulness and confusion, so that the spirit comes into captivity to the body, and is put into the condition of growth; but little by little, it goes on digesting, so as to become fitted for the action of the sensitive faculty, until, through the rational and discursive faculty, it comes to a purer intellectual one, so that it can present itself to the mind, without feeling itself befogged by the exhalations of that humour, which, through the exercise of contemplation, has been saved from putrefaction in the stomach and is duly digested. In this state, the present enthusiast shows himself to have remained thirty years, during which time he had not reached that purity of conception which would make him a suitable habitation for the wandering species, which offering themselves to all, equally, knock, ever at the door of the intelligence. At last, Love, who in various ways and at different times had assaulted him as it were in vain--as the light and heat of the sun are said to be useless to those who are in the opaque depths and bowels of the earth--having located itself in those sacred lights, that is having shown forth the Divine Beauty through two intelligible species the which bound his intellect through the reasoning of Truth and warmed his affections through the reasoning of Goodness; while the material and sensitive desires became superseded, which aforesaid used, as it were, to triumph, remaining intact, notwithstanding the excellence of the soul. Because those lights which made present the illuminating, acting intellect and sun of intelligence found easy ingress through his eyes; that of Truth (the intellect of Truth?) through the door of the intellectual faculty; that of Goodness (intellect of Goodness?) through the door of the appetitive faculty, to the heart, that is, the substance of the general affection. This was that double ray, which came as from the hand of an irate warrior, who showed himself, now, as ready and as bold, as aforesaid he had appeared weak and negligent.[1]

Then, when he first felt warmed and illuminated in his conception, was that victorious point and moment of which it is said: *Vicit instans*.

[1] He takes it by assault, without offering battle: the heart is unable to resist him.--("Spiritual Torrents.")

Thus you can understand the sense of the following figure, legend and sonnet, which says:--

49.

I fought with all my strength, 'gainst Love Divine  
 When he assailed with blows from every side  
 This cold, enamelled, adamantine heart,  
 Whence my desires defeated his intent.  
 At last, one day, 'twas as the heavens had willed.  
 Encamped I found him in those holy lights  
 Which, through mine own alone, of all the rest  
 An easy entrance to my heart could find.  
 'Twas then upon me fell that double bolt,  
 Flung as from hand of irate warrior  
 Who had for thirty years besieged in vain.  
 He marked that place and strongly there he held,  
 Planted the trophy there, and evermore  
 He holds my fleet wings in restraintment.  
 Meanwhile since then with more solemnity of preparation  
 The anger and the ire of my sweet enemy  
 Cease not to wound my heart.

Rare moment was that; the end of the beginning and perfection of victory; rare were those two species which amongst all others found easy entrance, seeing that they contain in themselves the efficacy and the virtue of all the others; for what higher and more excellent form can present itself than that of the beauty, goodness and truth, which are the source of every other truth, beauty, and goodness? "He marked that place"--that is, took possession of the affections, noted them, and impressed upon them his own character; "and strongly there he held;" he confirmed and established them and sanctified them so that he can never again lose them; for it is not possible that one should turn to love any other thing when once he has conceived in his mind the Divine Beauty, and it is as impossible that he can do other than love it, as it is impossible that his desires should fall otherwise than towards good, or species of good. Therefore his inclination is in the highest degree towards the primal good. So again, the wings, which used to be so fleet to go downwards with the weight of matter, are kept in restraint, and the sweet augers which are the efficacious assaults of the gracious enemy, who has been for so long time kept back, and excluded, a stranger and a pilgrim, never cease to wound, soliciting the affections and awakening thought. But now, the sole and entire possessor and disposer of the soul, for she neither wills nor wishes to will other, nor is she pleased, nor will she that any other please her, whence he often says:--

Dolci ire, guerra dolce, dolci dardi,  
Dolci mie piaghe, miei dolci dolori!

X.

CES. It would seem that we have nothing more to consider upon this proposition. Let us see now, how this quiver and bow of Eros display the sparks around, and the knot of the string, which hangs down with the legend, which is: Subito, clam.

MAR. Well do I remember having seen it expressed in the sonnet. But let us read it first.

50.

Eager to find the much desired food,  
The eagle towards the sky spreads out his wings  
And warns of his approach both bird and beast,  
The third flight bringing him upon the prey.  
And the fierce lion roaring from his lair  
Spreads horror all around and mortal fear;  
And all wild beasts, admonished and forewarned,  
Fly to the caves and cheat his cruel jaw.  
The whale, ere he the dumb Protean herd  
Hungry pursues, sends forth his nuncio,  
From caves of Thetys spouts his water forth.  
Lions and eagles of the earth and sky,  
And whales, lords of the seas, come not with treachery,  
But the assaults of Love come stealing secretly.

The animal kingdom is divided into three, and is composed of various elements: the earth, the water, the air, and there are three species--beasts, fishes, and birds. Into three kinds are the principles of nature settled and defined, in the air the eagle, on earth the lion, in the water the whale; of the which, each one, as it displays more strength and command over the others, makes a show of magnanimous action, or apparently magnanimous. Therefore it is observed, that the lion, before he starts on the hunt trumpets forth his roar, which resounds through the whole forest, like to the poetical description of the fury-hunter.

At saeva e speculis tempus dea nacta nocendi,  
Ardua tecta petit, stabuli et de culmine summo  
Pastorale canit signum, comuque recurvo  
Tartaream intendit vocem, qua protinus omne  
Contremuit nemus, et silvae intonuere profundae.

The eagle again, before he proceeds to his ventry, first rises straight from the nest in a perpendicular line upwards, and generally speaking at the third time he swoops from above with greater impetus and swiftness than if he were flying in a direct line, so that at the time when he is gaining the greatest velocity of flight, he is able also to speculate upon his success with the prey, and after three inspections he knows whether he will succeed or fail.

CES. Can one imagine why, if at the first his prey presents itself before his eyes, he does not instantly pounce upon it?

MAR. No; unless it be to see whether anything better, or more easily taken, comes to sight. At the same time I do not believe that this is always so, but most often it is. But to return. Of the whale it is manifest that, being such a huge animal, he cannot divide the waters without making his presence known through the repulsion of the waves, besides which there are several species of this fish, that when they move or breathe, spout forth a windy tempest of water. Thus from these three principal species of animals, the inferior kinds have warning to enable them to get away, so that they do not conduct themselves as deceivers and traitors. But Love, who is stronger and greater and who has supreme dominion in heaven, on earth, and in the seas, and who in comparison ought perhaps to show greater magnanimity, as he also has more power, does nothing of the kind, but assaults and wounds suddenly and swiftly.

Labitur totas furor in medullas,  
Igne furtivo populante venas,  
Nec habet latum data plaga frontem;  
Sed vorat tectas penitas medullas,  
Virginum ignoto ferit igne pectus.

As you perceive, the tragic poet calls him a furtive fire, an unknown flame. Solomon calls it furtive waters. Samuel named it the whisper of a gentle wind. The which three significations show with what sweetness, gentleness, and astuteness, in seas, on earth, in sky, does this fellow come and tyrannize over the whole universe.

CES. There is no vaster empire, no worse tyranny, no better dominion, no more necessary magistracy, nothing more sweet and dear, no food to be found more hard and bitter, no deity more violent, no god more pleasing, no agent more treacherous and false, no author more regal and faithful, and, in fine, it seems to me that Love is all and does all, of him all may be said, and all may refer itself to him.

MAR. You say well. Love then, as he who works chiefly through the sight, which is the most spiritual of all the senses, and which reaches swiftly the known ends of the earth, and without stretch of time takes in the whole horizon of the visible, comes to be quick, furtive, sudden and instantaneous. Besides which, we must remember what the ancients say, that Love precedes all the other gods, and therefore it is no use to imagine that Saturn shows him the way except by following him. Now must we find out, whether Love appears and makes himself known externally, whether his home is the soul itself, his bed the heart itself, and whether he consists of the same composition as our own substance, the same impulse as our own powers. Finally everything naturally desires the beautiful and the good, and therefore it is useless to argue and discuss, because the affection informs and confirms itself, and in one instant desire joins itself to the desirable, as the sight to the visible.

XI.

CES. Let us see here, what is the meaning of that burning arrow, around which is the legend: Cui nova plaga loco? Explain what part does this seek to wound?

MAR. Read the sonnet which says:--

51.

That all the ears of corn that may be reaped  
In burning Apuleia, or sunbrowned Lybia,  
With all that they unto the winds entrust,  
Or that the rays from the great planet sent,  
Should number those sad pains of my glad soul,  
Which she from those two burning stars receives  
With mournful joy in sweetest agony,  
Forbid me Sense and Reason to believe.  
What would'st thou more, sweet foe?  
What wish is that which moves thee still to hurt,  
Since this my heart of but one wound is made?  
So that there lies no part that now may be  
By thee or others printed, stabbed, or pierced,  
Turn thee aside, turn otherwhere thy bow,  
For thou dost waste thy powers, oh beauteous god!  
In slaying him who lies already dead.

The meaning of all this is metaphorical, like the rest, and may be understood in the same sense as that. Here the number of darts which have wounded and do wound the heart, signify the innumerable individuals and species of things, in which shine the splendour of Divine Beauty, according to their degrees, and whence the affection for the good, well proposed and well apprehended warms us. The which through the causes of potentiality and actuality, of possibility and of effect, crucify and console, give the sense of sweetness and also make the bitter to be felt. But where the entire affection is all turned towards God, that is towards the Idea of Ideas, from the light of intelligible things, the mind becomes exalted to the super-essential unity, and, all love, all one, it feels itself no longer solicited by various objects, which distract it, but is one sole wound, in the which the whole affection concurs and which comes to be one and the same affection. Then there is no love or desire of any particular thing, that can urge, nor even present itself before the will; for there is nothing more straight than the straight, nothing more beautiful than beauty, nothing better than goodness, nothing can be found larger than size, nor anything lighter than that light which with its presence darkens and obliterates all lights.

CES. To the perfect, if it be perfect, there is nothing that can be added; therefore the will is not capable of any other desire, when that which is of the perfect is present with it, highest and best. Therefore I understand the conclusion where he says to Love, "Turn elsewhere thy bow," and wherefore should he try to kill him who is already dead, that is, he, who has no more life nor sense about other things, so that he cannot be stabbed or pierced or become exposed to other species. And this lament proceeds from him, who having tasted of the highest unity, desires to be in all things severed and withdrawn from the multitude.

MAR. You understand quite well.

XII.

CES. Now here is a boy in a boat, which little by little is being submerged in the tempestuous waves, and he, languid and tired, has abandoned the oars; around it the legend "Fronti nulla, fides." There is no doubt that this signifies that he was induced, by the serene aspect of the waters, to venture on the treacherous sea, which having suddenly become troubled, the boy, in mortal fear, and in his impotence to still the tempest, has lost his head, his hope, and the power of his arm. But let us see the rest:--

52.

Oh, gentle boy, that from the shore didst loose  
The baby bark, and to the slender oar  
Didst set thy unskilled hand; lured by the sea!  
Late hast thou seen the evil of thy plight.  
See there the traitor rolls his fatal waves,  
The prow of thy frail bark, now sinks, now mounts.  
The soul borne down with anxious cares  
Prevaileth not against the swollen floods.  
Thy oars thou yieldst to thy fierce enemy,  
Waiting for death with calm collected thought,  
With eyelids closed, lest thou shouldst see him come.  
If thee no friendly aid should quickly reach  
Thou surely must the full result soon feel,  
Of thy inquisitive temerity.  
My cruel fate is like unto thine own,  
For I too, lured, enticed by Love, must feel,  
The rigour keen of this most treacherous one.

In what manner and why Love is a traitor and deceiver we have just seen; but as I see the following without figure or legend, I believe that it must have connection with the above. Therefore let us go on and read it.

53.

Methought to leave the shelter of my port,  
And from maturer studies rest awhile:  
When, looking round me to enjoy my ease,  
Sudden I saw those unrelenting fates.  
These have inflamed me with so ardent fires.  
Vainly I strive some safer shores to reach,  
Vainly from pitying hands invoke some aid,

And swift deliverance from my enemies.  
Weary and hoarse I yield me, impotent,  
And seek no more to elude my destiny,  
Or make endeavour to escape my death:  
Let every other life to me be null,  
And let not the extremest torment fail,  
Which my hard fate for me prescribed.  
Type of my own deep ills,  
Is that which thou for pastime didst entrust  
To hostile breast. Oh, careless boy.

Here I would not pretend to understand or determine all that the enthusiast means. Yet there is well expressed the strange condition of a soul cast down by the knowledge of the difficulty of the operation, the amount of the labour, the vastness of the work on one side, and on the other the ignorance, want of knowledge of the way, weakness of nerves and peril of death. He has no knowledge suitable to the business, he does not know where and how to turn, no place of flight or refuge presents itself; and he sees that, from every side, the waves threaten, with frightful, fatal impetus. Ignoranti portum, nullus suus ventus est. Behold him, who has committed himself indeed to fortuitous things, and has brought upon himself trouble, prison, ruin, and drowning. See how fortune deludes us, and that which we put carefully into her hands, she either breaks or lets it fall from her hands, or causes it to be removed by the violence of another, or suffocates and poisons, or taints with suspicion, fear, and jealousy to the great hurt and ruin of the possessor. Fortuna au ulla putatis dona carcere dolis? For strength which cannot give proof of itself is dissipated; magnanimity, which cannot prevail, is naught, and vain is study without results; he sees the effects of the fear of evil, which is worse than evil itself. Peior est morte timor ipse mortis. He already suffers, through fear, that which he fears to suffer, terror in the limbs, imbecility in the nerves, tremors in the body, anxiety of the spirit, and that which has not yet appeared becomes present to him, and is certainly worse than whatsoever may happen. What can be more stupid than to be in pain about future things and absent ones which at present are not felt?

CES. These considerations are on the surface and belong to the external of the figure. But the proposition of the heroic enthusiast, I think, deals with the imbecility of human nature (ingegno) which, intent on the Divine undertaking, finds itself all at once engulfed in the abyss of incomprehensible excellence, and the sense and the imagination become confused and absorbed, and not knowing how to pass on, nor to go back, nor where to turn, vanishes and loses itself as a drop of water vanishes in the sea, or as a small spirit, becomes attenuated, losing its own substance in the space and immensity of the atmosphere.

MAR. Well. But let us go towards our chamber and talk as we go, for it is night.

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## Second Dialogue

MARICONDO. Here you see a flaming yoke enveloped in knots round which is written: *Levius aura*; which means that Divine love does not weigh down, nor carry his servant captive and enslaved to the lowest depths, but raises him, supports him and magnifies him above all liberty whatsoever.

CES. Prithce, let us read the sonnet, so that we may consider the sense of it in due order with propriety and brevity.

MAR. It says thus:--

54.

She who my mind to other love did move,  
To whom all others vile and vain appear,  
In whom alone is sovereign beauty seen,  
And excellence Divine is manifest.  
She from the forest coming, I beheld,  
Huntress of myself, beloved Artemis,  
'Midst beauteous nymphs, with air of nascent bells.  
Then said I unto Love: See, I am hers.  
And he to me: Oh, happy lover thou!  
Delectable companion of thy fate!  
That she alone of all the numberless,

That hold within their bosom life and death,  
Who most with virtues high the world adorns,  
Thou didst obtain, through will and destiny,  
Within the Court of Love.  
So happy thou in thy captivity  
Thou enviest not the liberty of man or God.

See how contented he is under that yoke, that marriage which has joined him to her whom he saw issuing from the forest, from the desert, from the woods, that is, from parts removed from the crowd, and from the conversation of the vulgar who have but small enlightenment. Diana, the splendour of the intelligible species, and huntress; because with her beauty and grace she first wounded him, and then bound him and holds him in her power, more contented than otherwise he could possibly have been. He speaks of her "amidst beauteous nymphs," that is, the multitude of other species, forms and ideas, and "air of bells," that is the genius and the spirit which displayed itself at Nola, which lies on the plain of the Campanian horizon.[J] He acknowledges her, and she, more than any other, is praised by Love, who considers him so fortunate, because amongst all those present or absent to mortal eyes, she does more highly adorn the world, and makes man glorious and beautiful. Hence he says that his mind is raised towards the highest love, and that it learns to consider "every other goddess," that is, the care or observation of every other kind, as vile and vain. [K] Now, in saying that she has roused his mind to high love, he takes occasion to magnify the heart through the thoughts, desires and works, as much as possible, and (to say) that we ought not to be entertained with low things which are beneath our faculties, as happens to those who, through avarice or through negligence, or indolence, become in this brief life attached to unworthy things.

[J] Does he allude to the fact that bells were first used in Christian Churches at Nola?—(Tr.)

[K] The delights which are perceived in things corporeal are vile; for every delight is such that it becomes viler the more it proceeds to external things, and happier, the more it proceeds to things internal.—("Spiritual Torrents.")

CES. There must be artisans, mechanics, agriculturists, servants, trotters, ignoble, low, poor, pedants and such like, for otherwise there could not be philosophers, meditators, cultivators of souls, masters, captains, nobles, illustrious ones, rich, wise, and the rest who may be heroes like to gods. Now why should we force ourselves to corrupt the state of nature which has separated the universe into things major and minor, superior and inferior, illustrious and obscure, worthy and unworthy, not only outside ourselves but also inside in the substance of us, even to that part of us which is said to be immaterial?

So of the intelligences: some are low, others are pre-eminent, some serve and some obey, some command and govern. I believe, however, that this ought not to be brought forward as an example, so that subjects wishing to be superiors, and the ignoble to equal the noble, the order of things would become perverted and confounded, so that a sort of neutrality would supervene, and a brutal equality, such as is found in certain deserts and uncultured republics. Do you not see what damage has been done to science through this: *i.e.* pedants wishing to be philosophers; to treat of natural things, and mix themselves with and decide about things Divine? Who does not see how much evil has happened, and does happen, through the mind having been moved through similar facts to exalted affections? Who is there, of good sense, who cannot see what a fine thing Aristotle made of it, when, being a master of belles lettres at Alexandria, he set himself to oppose and make war against the Pythagorean doctrine, and that of natural philosophy; seeking by means of his logical ratiocination to propose definitions and notions, certain fifth entities and other abortive portions of fantastical cogitations, as principles and substance of things, more anxious about the esteem of the vulgar stupid crowd, which is influenced and governed by sophisms and appearances which are found in the superficies of things rather than by the Truth, which is occult and hidden in the substance of them, and is the substance itself of them? He roused his mind, not to make himself a mediator, but judge and censor of things which he had never studied, nor well understood. Thus in our day, that little which Aristotle can bring, is peculiar for its inventive reasoning, its suggestiveness, its metaphysics, and is useful for other pedants, who work with the same "Sursum corda," who institute new dialectics and modes of forming the reason (judgment?) which are as much viler than those of Aristotle, as may be the philosophy of Aristotle is incomparably viler than that of the ancients. And it has been caused by this, that certain grammarians having grown old in the birching of children, and in anatomizing phrases and words, have sought to rouse the mind to the formation of new logic and metaphysics, judging and sentencing those which they had never studied nor understood: as also these by the approbation of the ignorant multitude, with whose mind they have most affinity, can easily demolish the humanities and ratiocination of Aristotle, as the latter was the executioner of the Divine philosophies of others. See, then, what it comes to, if all should aspire to the sacred splendour, and yet are occupied about things low and vain.

MAR.

Ride, si sapis, o puella, ride,

Pelignus, puto, dixerat poeta;  
Sed non dixerat omnibus puellis;  
Et si dixerat omnibus puellis,  
Non dixit tibi. Tu puella non es.

Thus the "Sursum corda" is not the measure for all; but for those that have wings. We see that pedantry has never been held in such esteem for the government of the world as in our times, and it offers as many paths of the true intelligible species and objects of infallible and sole truth as there are individual pedants. Therefore in this present time it is proper that noble spirits equipped with truth and enlightened with the Divine intelligence, should arm themselves against dense ignorance by climbing up to the high rock and tower of contemplation.[L]

[L]

If meditation be a nobler thing  
Than action, wherefore, then, great Kesava!  
Dost thou impel me to this dreadful fight?

--("Song Celestial.")

To them it is seemly that they hold every other object as vile and vain. Nor should these spend their time in light and vain things; for time flies with infinite velocity; the present rushes by with the same swiftness with which the future draws near. That which we have lived is nothing; that which we live is a point; that which we have to live is not yet a point, but may be a point which, together, shall be and shall have been. And with all this we crowd our memories with genealogies: this one is intent upon the deciphering of writings, that other is occupied in multiplying childish sophisms, and we shall see, for example, a volume full of: Cor est fons vitae. Nix est alba, ergo cornix est fons vitae alba, and one prattles about the noun; was it first, or the verb; the other, whether the sea was first or the springs; again, another tries to revive obsolete vocabularies which, because they were once used and approved by some old writer, must now be exalted to the stars. Yet another takes his stand upon the false or the true orthography, and so on, with various similar nonsense only worthy of contempt. They fast, they become thin and emaciated, they scourge the skin, and lengthen the beard, they rot, and in these things they place the anchor of their highest good. They despise fortune, and put up these as shield and refuge against the strokes of fate. With such-like most vile thoughts they think to mount to the stars, to be equal to gods, and to understand the good and the beautiful which philosophy promises.

CES. A grand thing, indeed, that time, which does not suffice for necessary things, however carefully we use it, should come to be chiefly consumed about superfluous things, and things vile and shameful.

Is it not rather a thing to laugh at than to praise in Archimedes, that at the time when the city was in confusion, everything in ruins, fire broken out in his room, enemies there at his back who had it in their power to make him lose his brain, his life, his art; that he, meanwhile, having abandoned all desire or intention of saving his life, lost it while he was inquiring, perhaps, into the proportion of the curve to the straight line, of the diameter to the circle, or other similar mathesis, as suitable for youth, as it were unsuitable for one who, being old, should be intent upon things more worthy of being put as the end of human desires?

MAR. In connection with this I like what you said just now, that there must be all sorts of persons in the world, and that the number of the imperfect, the ugly, the poor, the unworthy and the villanous, should be the greater, and, in short, it ought not to be otherwise than as it is. The long life of Archimedes, of Euclid, of Priscian, of Donato, and others, who were found up to their death occupied with numbers, lines, diction, concordances, writings, dialectics, syllogisms, forms, methods, systems of science, organs, and other preambles, is ordained for the service of youth, so that they may learn to receive the fruits of the mature age of those (sages) and be full of the same even in their green age, so that when they are older they may be fit and ready to arrive without hindrance to higher things.

CES. I am not wrong in the proposition I moved just now when I spoke of those who make it their study to appropriate to themselves the place and the fame of the ancients with new works which are neither better nor worse than those already existing, and spend their life in considering how to turn wheat into tares,[M] and find the work of their life in the elaboration of those studies which are suited for children and are generally profitable to no one, not even to themselves.

[M] E spendono la vita su le considerazioni da mettere avanti lana di capra, o l'ombra de l'asino.

MAR. But enough has been said about those who neither can nor dare to have their mind roused to highest love. Let us now come to the consideration of the voluntary captivity and of the pleasant yoke under the dominion of the said Diana; that yoke, I say, without which, the soul is impotent to rise to that height from which it fell, and which renders it light and agile, while the noose renders it more active and disengaged.

CES. Speak on then!

MAR. To begin, to continue, and to conclude in order; I consider that all which lives must feed itself and nourish itself in a manner suitable to the way in which it lives. Therefore, nothing squares with the intellectual nature but the intellectual, as with the body nothing but the corporeal; seeing that nourishment is taken for no other reason, but that it should go to the substance of him who is to be nourished. As then the body does not transmute into spirit, nor the spirit into body,--for every transmutation takes place, when matter, which was in one form, comes to be in another,[N]--so the spirit and the body are not the same matter; in that that, which was subject to one should come to be subject to the other.

[N] Carlyle says, "For matter, were it never so despicable, is spirit: were it never so honourable, can it be more?"--("Sartor Resartus.")

CES. Surely, if the soul should be nourished with body, it would carry itself better there, where the fecundity of the material is, (as Jamblichus argues); so that when a large fat body presents itself, we should imagine that it were the habitation of a strong soul, firm, ready and heroic, and we should say: Oh, fat soul, oh, fecund spirit, oh, fine nature, oh, divine intelligence, oh, clear mind, oh, blessed repast, fit to spread before lions, or verily for a banquet for dogs. On the other hand, an old man shrivelled, weak, of failing strength, would be held to be of little savour and of small account. But go on.

MAR. Now, it must be said that the outcome of the mind is that alone which is always by it desired, sought for, and embraced, and that which is more enjoyed than anything else, with which it is filled, comforted and becomes better,--that is Truth, towards which, in all times, in every state, and in whatsoever condition man finds himself, he always aspires, and for the which he despises every fatigue, attempts every study, makes no account of the body, and hates this life. Therefore Truth is an incorporeal thing; and neither physics, metaphysics, nor mathematics can be found in the body, because we see that the eternal human essence is not in individuals, who are born and die. It (Truth) is specific unity, said Plato, not the numerical multitude that holds the substance of things. Therefore he called Idea one and many, movable and immovable because as incorruptible species it is intelligible and one, and as it communicates itself to matter and is subject to movement and generation, it is sensible and many. In this second mode it has more of non-entity than of entity; seeing that it is one and another and is ever running but never diminishes.[O] In the first mode it is an entity, and true. See now, the mathematicians take it for granted, that the true figures are not to be found in natural bodies, nor can they be there through the power either of nature or of art. You know, besides, that the truth (reality) of supernatural substances is above matter. We must therefore conclude that he who seeks the truth must rise above the reason of corporeal things. Besides which it must be considered, that he who feeds has a certain natural memory of his food, especially when it is most required; it leaves in the mind the likeness and species of it, in an elevated manner, according to the elevation and glory of him who aims, and of that which is aimed at. Hence it is that everything has, innate, the intelligence of those things which belong to the conservation of the individual and species, and furthermore its final perfection depends upon efforts to seek its food through some kind of hunting or chase. Therefore it is necessary that the human soul should have the light, the genius, and the instruments suitable for its pursuit. And here contemplation comes to aid, and logic, the fittest mode for the pursuit of truth, to find it, to distinguish it, and to judge of it. So that one goes rambling amongst the wild woods of natural things, where there are many objects under shadow and mantle, for it is in a thick, dense, and deserted solitude that Truth most often has its secret cavernous retreat, all entwined with thorns and covered with bosky, rough and umbrageous plants; it is hidden, for the most part, for the most excellent and worthy reasons, buried and veiled with utmost diligence, just as we hide with the greatest care the greatest treasures, so that, sought by a great variety of hunters, of whom some are more able and expert, some less, it cannot be discovered without great labour.

Pythagoras went seeking for it with his imprints and vestiges impressed upon natural objects, which are numbers, the which display its progress, reasons, modes and operations in a certain manner, because in the number (of) multitude, the number (of) measures, and the number (of) moment or weight, the truth and Being are found in all things.[P]

[O] Atteso che sempre e altro ed altro, e corre etemo per la privazione.

[P] Number is, as the great writer (Balzac) thought, an Entity, and at the same time, a Breath emanating from what he called God, and what we call the ALL, the breath which alone could organize the physical Kosmos.--("The Secret Doctrine.")

Anaxagoras and Empedocles considered that the omnipotent and all-producing divinity fills all things, and with them nothing was so small that it did not contain within it the occult in every respect, although they were always progressing onwards to where it was predominant, and where it found a more magnificent and elevated expression.

The Chaldeans sought for Truth by means of subtraction, not knowing how to affirm anything about it; and proceeded without these dogs of demonstrations and syllogisms, but solely forcing themselves to penetrate by removing and digging and clearing away by means of negations of every kind and discourses both open and secret.

Plato went twisting and turning and tearing to pieces and placing embankments so that the volatile and fugacious species should be as it were caught in a net and held behind the hedges of definitions, and he considered that superior

things were, by participation, and according to similitude, reflected in those inferior, and these in those according to their greater dignity and excellence, and that the truth was in both the one and the other, according to a certain analogy, order and scale, in which the lowest of the superior order agrees with the highest of the inferior order. So that progress was from the lowest of nature to the highest, as from evil to good, from darkness to light, from the simple power to the simple action.

Aristotle boasts of being able to arrive at the desired booty by means of the imprints of tracks and vestiges, while he believes the effects will lead to the cause, although he, above all others who have occupied themselves with this sort of chase, has most deviated from the path, so as to be able hardly to distinguish the footsteps. Theologians there are, who, nourished in certain sects, seek the truth of nature in all her specific natural forms in which they see the eternal essence, the specific substantial perpetuator of the eternal generation and mutation of things, which are called after their founders and builders and above them all presides the form of forms, [Q] the fountain of light, very truth of very truth, God of gods, through whom all is full of divinity, truth, entity, goodness. This truth is sought as a thing inaccessible, as an object not to be objectized, incomprehensible. But yet, to no one does it seem possible to see the sun, the universal Apollo, the absolute light through supreme and most excellent species; but only its shadow, its Diana, the world, the universe, nature, which is in things, light which is in the opacity of matter, that is to say, so far as it shines in darkness.

[Q] A discerning of the Infinite in the Finite.--("Sartor Resartus.")

Many then wander amongst the aforesaid paths of this deserted wood, very few are those who find the fountain of Diana. Many are content to hunt for wild beasts and things less elevated, and the greater number do not understand why, having spread their nets to the wind, they find their hands full of flies. Rare, I say, are the Actaeons to whom fate has granted the power of contemplating the nude Diana and who, entranced with the beautiful disposition of the body of nature, and led by those two lights, the twin splendour of Divine goodness and beauty become transformed into stags; for they are no longer hunters, but that which is hunted. For the ultimate and final end of this sport, is to arrive at the acquisition of that fugitive and wild body, so that the thief becomes the thing stolen, the hunter becomes the thing hunted; in all other kinds of sport, for special things, the hunter possesses himself of those things, absorbing them with the mouth of his own intelligence; but in that Divine and universal one, he comes to understand to such an extent, that he becomes of necessity included, absorbed, united. Whence, from common, ordinary, civil, and popular, he becomes wild, like a stag, an inhabitant of the woods; he lives god-like under that grandeur of the forest; he lives in the simple chambers of the cavernous mountains, whence he beholds the great rivers; he vegetates intact and pure from ordinary greed, where the speech of the Divine converses more freely, to which so many men have aspired who longed to taste the Divine life while upon earth, and who with one voice have said: Ecce elongavi fugiens, et mansi in solitudine. Thus the dogs--thoughts of Divine things--devour Actaeon, making him dead to the vulgar and the crowd, loosened from the knots of perturbation of the senses, free from the fleshly prison of matter, whence they no longer see their Diana as through a hole or a window, but having thrown down the walls to the earth, the eye opens to the view of the whole horizon. [R] So that he sees all as one; he sees no more by distinctions and numbers, which, according to the different senses, as through various cracks, cause to be seen and understood in confusion.

[R] For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.--("St. Paul to the Corinthians.")

He sees Amphitrite, the source of all numbers, of all species, of all reasons, which is the monad, the real essence of the being of all, and if he does not see it in its essence, in absolute light, he sees it in its seed, which is like unto it, which is its image; for from the monad, which is the divinity, proceeds this monad which is nature, the universe, the world, where it is beheld and reflected, as the sun is in the moon by means of which it is illuminated; [S] he finding himself in the hemisphere of intellectual substances. This is that Diana, that one who is the same entity, that entity which is comprehensible nature, in which burns the sun and the splendour of the higher nature, according to which, unity is both the generated and the generating, the producer and produced. Thus you can of yourself determine the mode, the dignity, and the success, which are most worthy of the hunter and the hunted. Therefore the enthusiast boasts of being the prey of Diana, to whom he rendered himself, and of whom he considers himself the accepted consort, and happy as a captive and a subject. Why, he envies no man (for there is none that can have more) or any other god that can have that species which is impossible to be obtained by an inferior nature, and therefore is not worthy to be desired, nor can one hunger after it.

[S] There is no potentiality for creation, or self-consciousness, in a pure Spirit on this our plane, unless its too homogeneous, perfect, because Divine, nature is, so to say, mixed with, and strengthened by, an essence already differentiated. It is only the lower line of the Triangle--representing the first triad that emanates from the Universal Monad--that can furnish this needed consciousness on the plane of differentiated Nature.--("The Secret Doctrine.")

CES. I have well understood all that you have said, and you have more than satisfied me. Now it is time to return home.

MAR. Well.

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### Third Dialogue.

*Interlocutors:*

**LIBERIO. LAODONIO.**

LIB. Reclining in the shade of a cypress-tree, the enthusiast finding his mind free from other thoughts, it happened that the heart and the eyes spoke together as if they were animals and substances of different intellects and senses, and they made lament of that which was the beginning of his torment and which consumed his soul.

LAO. Repeat, if you can recollect, the reasons and the words.

LIB. The heart began the dialogue, which, making itself heard by the breast, broke into these words:

55.

*First proposition of the heart to the eyes.*

How, eyes of mine, can that so much torment,  
Which as an ardent fire from ye derives,  
And which this mortal subject so afflicts  
With unrelenting burning never spared?  
Can ocean floods suffice to mitigate  
The ardour of those flames? or slowest star  
Within the frozen circle of the north  
Offer umbrageous shade?  
Ye took me captive, and the self-same hand  
Doth hold me and reject me and through you  
I in the body am: out of it with the sun.  
I am the source of life, yet am I not alive.  
I know not what I am, for I belong  
Unto this soul; but this soul is not mine.

LAO. Truly the hearing, the seeing, the knowing, is that which kindles desire, and therefore it is through the operation of the eyes that the heart becomes inflamed: and the more worthy the object which is present with them the stronger is the fire, and the more active are the flames. What then, must that kind be, for which the heart burns in such a way that the coldest star in the Arctic circle cannot cool it, nor can the whole body of water of the ocean stop its burning! What must be the excellence of that object that has made him an enemy to himself, a rebel to his own soul and content with such hostility and rebellion, although he be captive to one who despises and will have none of him! But let me hear whether the eyes made a response, and what they said.

LIB. They, on the other hand, complained of the heart as being the origin and cause why they shed so many tears, and this was the sum of their proposition.

56.

*First proposition of the eyes to the heart.*

How, oh my heart, do waters gush from thee  
Like to the springs that bathe the Nereids' brows  
Which daily in the sun are born and die?  
Like to the double fountain of Amphitrite,  
Which pours so great a flood across the earth,  
That one might say, the sum of it exceeds  
That of the stream which Egypt inundates,  
Running its sevenfold course unto the sea.  
Nature hath given two lights  
To this small earth for governance;  
But thou, perverter of eternal law,  
Hast turned them into everlasting streams.  
But Heaven is not content to see her law

Decline before unbridled violence.

LAO. It is certain that the heart, grieved and stung, causes tears to spring to the eyes, and while these light the flames in this, that other dims those with moisture. But I am surprised at such exaggeration which says that the Nereids raising their wet faces to the eastern sun, is less than these waters (of the eyes). And more than that, they are equal to the ocean, not because they do pour, but because these two springing streams can pour such, and so much, that compared with them the Nile would appear a tiny stream divided into seven streamlets.[T]

[T] Is this an allusion to the seven activities or changes which water goes through to produce form; Water being the formative power which Fire, itself formless and the moving power, animates?--(Tr.)

LIB. Be not surprised at that exaggeration nor at that potency without action! For you will understand all, after having heard the conclusion of their argument. Now listen how the heart responds to the proposition of the eyes.

LAO. I pray you, let me hear.

LIB.

57.

*First response of the heart to the eyes.*

Eyes, if an immortal flame within me burn,  
And I no other am than burning fire;  
If to come near me is to feel the blaze,  
So that the heavens are fervid with my heat;  
Why does my blazing flame consume you not,  
But only contrary effects you feel?  
Why saturated and not roasted ye,  
If not of water but of fire I be?  
Believe ye, oh ye blind,  
That from such ardent burning is derived  
The double passage, and those living founts  
Have had their elements from Vulcan?  
As force sometimes acquires a power  
When by its contrary it is opposed.

You see that the heart could not persuade itself that from an opposite cause and beginning, could proceed a force of an opposite effect. So that it will not allow the possibility of it, except through antiperistasis, which means the strength which an opposite acquires from that which, flying from the other, comes to unite itself, incorporate itself, insphere itself, or concentrate itself towards the individual, through its own virtue, which, the farther it is removed from the dimensions (dimensioni) the more efficacious it becomes.

LAO. Tell me, how did the eyes respond to the heart?

58.

*First response of the eyes to the heart.*

Thy passion does confuse thee, on my heart,  
The path of truth thou hast entirely lost;  
That which in us is seen--that which is hid--  
Is seed of oceans. Neptune, if by fate  
His kingdom he should lose, would find it here entire.  
How does the burning flame from us derive  
Who of the sea the double parent are?  
So senseless thou'rt become!  
Dost thou believe the flame will pass  
And leave the doors all wet behind  
That thou may'st feel the ardour of the same?  
As splendour through a glass, dost thou  
Believe that it through us will penetrate?

Now I will not begin to philosophize about the identity of opposites which I have studied in the book De Principio ed

uno, and I will suppose that which is usually received, that the opposites in the same genus are quite separate (distantissimi), so that the meaning of this response is more easily learned where the eyes call themselves the seed or founts in the virtual potentiality of which is the sea; so that if Neptune should lose all the waters, he could recall them into action by their own potentiality, where they are as in the beginning, medium and material. But it is not urged as a necessity, when they say it cannot be, that the flame passes over to the heart through their room (stanza e cortile) and courtyard leaving so many waters behind, for two reasons. First, because such an impediment cannot exist in action, if (equally?) violent opposition is not put into action;[U] second, because in so far as the waters are actually in the eyes, they can give passage to the heat as to the light; for, experience proves that the luminous ray kindles, by means of reflection, any material that becomes opposed to it, without heating the glass; and the ray passes through a glass, crystal or other vase, full of water, and heats an object placed under it, without heating the thick intervening body. As it is also true that it causes dry and dusty impressions in the caves of the deep sea. Therefore by analogy, if not by the same sort of reasons, we may see how it is possible that, through the lubricant and dark passage of the eyes, the affection may be kindled and inflamed by that light, the which for the same reason cannot be in the middle.[V] As the light of the sun, according to other reasoning, is in the middle air, or again in the nearer sense, and again in the common sense, or again in the intellect, notwithstanding that from one mode proceeds the other mode of being.

[U] Prima, per che tal impedimento in atto non puo essere se non posti in atto tali oltraggiosi ripari. Does this mean that the opposites which are called into action must be equal in power?--(Translator)

If, when fire is ascending again to its proper sphere, it should meet with obstacles, such as a bit of wood or of straw, it would resume its former activity, and consume this obstacle or hindrance; and the greater the resistance, the more its activity would be increased.... You will observe that the obstacle which the fire meets with would serve only to increase its velocity, by giving it a new ardour to overcome all obstacles in joining itself to its centre.--("Spiritual Torrents," Lady Guion.)

[V] Nel mezzo.

LAO. Are there any more discourses?

LIB. Yes; because both the one and the other are trying to find out in what way it is that it (the heart) contains so many flames and those (the eyes) so many waters. The heart then makes the next proposition.

59.

*Second proposition of the heart to the eyes.*

If to the foaming sea the rivers run,  
 And pour their streams into the sea's dark gulf,  
 How does the kingdom of the water-gods,  
 Fed by the double torrent of these eyes,  
 Increase not; since the earth  
 Must lose the glorious overflow?  
 How is it that we do not see the day,  
 When from the mount Deukalion returns?  
 Where are the lengthening shores,  
 Where is the torrent to put out my flame,  
 Or, failing this, to give it greater power?  
 Does drop of water ever fall to earth  
 In such a way as leads me to suppose  
 It is not as the senses show it?

It asks, what power is this, which is not put into action? If the waters are so many, why does Neptune not come to tyrannize over the kingdoms of the other elements? Where are the inundated banks? Where is he who will give coolness to the ardent fire? Where is the drop of water by which I may affirm through the eyes that which the senses deny? But the eyes in the same way ask another question.

60.

*Second proposition of the eyes to the heart.*

If matter changed and turned to fire acquires  
 The movement of a lighter element,  
 Rising aloft unto the highest heaven;  
 Wherefore, ignited by the fire of love,  
 Swifter than wind, dost thou not rise and flash.  
 Into the sun and be incorporate there?

Why rather stay a pilgrim here below  
Than open through the air and us a way?  
No spark of fire from that heart  
Goes out through the wide atmosphere.  
Body of dust and ashes is not seen,  
Nor water-laden smoke ascends on high.  
All is contained entire within itself,  
And not of flame, is reason, sense, or thought.

L<sub>AO</sub>. This proposition is neither more nor less conclusive than the other. But let us come at once to the answers if there be any.

L<sub>IC</sub>. There are some certainly and full of sap. Listen.

61.

*Second response of the heart to the eyes.*

He is a fool, who that alone believes,  
Which to the sense appears, who reason scorns.  
My flame could never wing its way above.  
The conflagration infinite remains unseen.  
Between the eyes their waters are contained,  
One infinite encroaches not upon another.  
Nature wills not that all should perish.  
If so much fire's enough for so much sphere,  
Say, say, oh eyes,  
What shall we do? how act  
In order to make known, or I, or you,  
For its deliverance, the sad plight of the soul?  
If one and other of us both be hid,  
How can we move the beautiful god to pity?

L<sub>AS</sub>. If it is not true it is very well imagined: if it is not so, it is yet a very good excuse the one for the other; because where there are two forces, of the which one is not greater than the other, the operation of both must cease, for one resists as much as the other insists, and one assails while the other defends. If therefore the sea is infinite and the force of tears in the eyes is immense, it never can be made apparent by speech, nor the impetus of the fire concealed in the heart break forth, nor can they (the eyes) send forth the twin torrent to the sea if the heart shelters them with equal tenacity. Therefore the beautiful deity cannot be expected to be pitiful towards the afflicted soul because of the exhibition of tears which distil from the eyes, or speech which breaks forth from the breast.

L<sub>IB</sub>. Now note the answer of the eyes to this proposition:--

62.

*Second response of the eyes to the heart.*

Alas! we poured into the wavy sea,  
The strength of our two fountains in vain,  
For two opposing powers hold it concealed,  
Lest it go rolling aimlessly adown.  
The strength unmeasured of the burning heart,  
Withholds a passage to the lofty streams;  
Barring their twofold course unto the sea,  
Nature abhors the covered ground.[W]  
Now say, afflicted heart, what canst thou bring  
To oppose against us with an equal force?  
Oh, where is he, will boast himself to be  
Exalted by this most unhappy love,  
If of thy pain and mine it can be said,  
The greater they, the less it may be seen.

[W] Ch'il coperto terren natura aborre.

Both these evils being infinite, like two equally vigorous opposites they curb and suppress each other: it could not be so if they were both finite, seeing that a precise equality does not belong to natural things, nor would it be so if the one were finite, the other infinite; for of a certainty the one would absorb the other, and they would both be seen, or, at least one, through the other. Beneath these sentences, there lies hidden, ethical and natural philosophy, and I leave it to be searched for, meditated upon and understood, by whosoever will and can. This alone I will not leave (unsaid) that it is not without reason that the affection of the heart is said to be the infinite sea by the apprehension of the eyes.[X] For the object of the mind being infinite, and no definite object being proposed to the intellect, the will cannot be satisfied by a finite good, but if besides that, something else is found, it is desired and sought for; for, as is commonly said, the apex of the inferior species is the beginning of the superior species, whether the degrees are taken according to the forms, the which we cannot consider as being infinite, or according to the modes and reasons of those, in which way, the highest good being infinite, it would be supposed to be infinitely communicated, according to the condition of the things, over which it is diffused. However, there is no definite species of the universe. I speak according to the figure and mass; there is no definite species of the intellect; the affections are not a definite species.

[X] Fire, Flame, Day, Smoke, Night, and so on ... These are all names of various deities which preside over the Cosmo-psyche Powers.--("The Secret Doctrine.")

LAO. These two powers of the soul, then, never are nor can be perfect for the object, if they refer to it infinitely?

LIB. So it would be if this infinite were by negative privation or privative negation of the end, as it is for a more positive affirmation of the end, infinite and endless.[Y]

[Y] "The deity is one, because it is infinite. It is triple, because it is ever manifesting." This manifestation is triple in its aspects, for it requires, as Aristotle has it, three principles for every natural body to become objective: privation, form and matter. Privation meant in the mind of the great philosopher ... the lowest plane and world of the Anima Mundi.--("The Secret Doctrine.")

LAO. You mean, then, two kinds of affinity; the one privative, the which may be towards something which is power, as, infinite is darkness, the end of which is the position of light; the other perfecting, which tends to the act and perfection, as infinite is the light, the end of which would be privation and darkness.[Z] In this, then, the intellect conceives the light, the good, the beautiful, in so far as the horizon of its capacity extends, and the soul, which drinks of Divine nectar and the fountain of eternal life in so far as its own vessel allows, and one sees that the light is beyond the circumference of his horizon, where it can go and penetrate more and more, and the nectar and fount of living water is infinitely fruitful, so that it can become ever more and more intoxicated.

[Z] "Darkness adopted illumination in order to make itself visible." Darkness in its radical, metaphysical basis, is subjective and absolute light; while the latter, in all its seeming effulgence and glory, is merely a mass of shadows, as it can never be eternal, and is simply an illusion, or Maya.--("The Secret Doctrine.")

LIB. From this it does not follow that there is imperfection in the object, nor that there is little satisfaction in the potency, but that the power is included in the object and beatifically absorbed by it. Here the eyes imprint upon the heart, that is upon the intelligence, and rouse in the will an infinite torment of love, where there is no pain because nothing is sought which is not obtained; but it is happiness, because that which is there sought is always found, and there is no satiety, inasmuch as there is always appetite, and therefore enjoyment; in this it is not like the food of the body, the which with satiety loses enjoyment, has no pleasure before the enjoyment, nor after enjoyment, but only in the enjoyment itself, and where it passes certain limits it comes to feel annoyance and disgust. Behold, then, in a certain analogy, how the highest good ought to be also infinite, in order that it should not some time turn to evil; as food, which is good for the body, if it is not limited, may come to be poison. Thus it is that the water of the ocean does not extinguish that flame, and the rigour of the Arctic circle does not mitigate that ardour. Therefore it is bad through (the) one hand, which holds him and rejects him; it holds him, because it has him for its own; it rejects him because, flying from him, the higher it makes itself the more he ascends upwards to it; the more he follows it, the further off it appears, by reason of its high excellence, according as it is said: *Accedit homo ad cor altum, et exaltabitur Deus*. Such blessedness of affection begins in this life, and in this state it has its mode of being. Hence the heart can say that it is within with the body, and without with the sun, in so far as the soul with its twin faculty, puts into operation two functions: the one to vivify and realize the animal body, the other to contemplate superior things; so that it is in receptive potentiality from above, as it is in re-active potentiality below, towards the body. The body is, as it were, dead, and as it were apart from the soul, the which is its life and its perfection; and the soul is as it were dead, and a thing apart from the superior illuminating intelligence, from which the intellect is derived as to its nature and acts. Therefore, the heart is said to be the beginning of life, and not to be alive, it is said to belong to the animating soul, and that this does not belong to it; because it is inflamed by Divine love, and finally converted into fire, which can set on fire that which comes near it, seeing that it has contracted into itself the divinity; it is made god, and consequently in its kind it can inspire others with love; as the splendour of the sun may be seen and admired in the moon. And as for that which belongs to the consideration of the eyes, know, that in the present discourse they have two functions; one

to impress the heart, the other to receive the impression of the heart; as this also has two functions, one to receive the impressions from the eyes, the other to impress them. The eyes study the species and propose them to the heart; the heart desires them, and presents his desire to the eyes; these conceive the light, diffuse it, and kindle the fire in the heart, which heated and kindled, sends its waters (umore) to them, so that they may dispose of them[AA] (digeriscano). Thus, firstly, cognition moves the affection, and soon the affection moves the cognition. The eyes, when they move (the heart), are dry, because they perform the office of a looking-glass, and of a representer; when they are moved, however, they become troubled and perturbed, because they perform the office of a diligent executer, seeing that with the speculating intellect, the beautiful and the good is first seen, then the will desires it; and later the industrious intellect procures it, follows it, and seeks it. Tearful eyes signify the difficulty of separating the thing wished for from, the wisher, the which in order that it should not pall, nor disgust, presents itself as an infinite longing (studio) which ever has, and ever seeks; seeing that the delight of the gods is ascribed to drinking, not to having tasted ambrosia, and to the continual enjoyment of food and drink, and not in being satiated and without desire for them. Hence they have satiety as it were in movement and apprehension, not in quiet and comprehension; they are not satiated without appetite, nor are they in a state of desire, without being in a certain way satiated.

[AA] "Deity is an arcane, living (or moving) FIRE, and the eternal witnesses to this unseen Presence are Light, Heat, Moisture," this trinity including, and being the cause of every phenomenon in Nature.--("The Secret Doctrine.")

LAO. Esuries satiata, satietas esuriens.

LIB. Precisely so.

LAO: From this I can comprehend how, without blame, but with great truth and understanding, it has been said that Divine love weeps with indescribable groans, because having all it loves all, and loving all has all.

LIB. But many comments would be necessary if we would understand that Divine love which is deity itself; and one easily understands Divine love, so far as it is to be found in its effects and in the inferior nature. I do not say that which from the divinity is diffused into things, but that of things which aspires to the divinity.

LAO. Now of this and of other matters we will discourse more at our ease presently. Let us go.

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#### Fourth Dialogue.

*Interlocutors:*

**SEVERING. MINUTOLO.**

SEV. You will see the origin of the nine blind men, who state nine reasons and special causes of their blindness, and yet they all agree in one general reason and one common enthusiasm.[AB]

[AB] May one suggest an analogy between the nine months of gestation, during which time the foetus goes through various stages and conditions to complete the "individual cycle of evolution," and the nine blind men who, at the end of their probation, are brought to see the light--to be born--illuminated?--("Translator.")

MIN. Begin with the first!

SEV. The first of these, notwithstanding that he is blind by nature, yet he laments, saying to the others that he cannot persuade himself that nature has been less courteous to them than to him; seeing that although they do not (now) see, yet they have enjoyed sight, and have had experience of that sense, and of the value of that faculty, of which they have been deprived, while he came into the world as a mole, to be seen and not to see, to long for the sight of that which he never had seen.

MIN. Many have fallen in love through report alone.

SEV. They have, says he, the happiness of retaining that Divine image present in the mind, so that, although blind, they have in imagination that which he cannot have. Then in the sistine he turns to his guide and begs him to lead him to some precipice, so that he may no longer endure this contempt and persecution of nature. He says then:

63.

*The first blind man.*

Ye now afflicted are, who erst were glad,  
For ye have lost the light that once was yours,

Yet happy, for ye have the twin lights known.  
These eyes ne'er lighted were, and ne'er were quenched;  
But a more grievous destiny is mine  
Which calls for heavier lamentation.  
Who will deny that nature upon me  
Has frowned more harshly than on you?  
Conduct me to the precipice, my guide,  
And give me peace, for there will I a cure  
For this my dolour and affliction find;  
For to be seen, yet not to see the light,  
Like an incapable and sightless mole,  
Is to be useless and a burden on the earth.

Now follows the other, who, bitten by the serpent of jealousy, became affected in the organ of sight. He wanders without any guide, unless he has jealousy for his escort. He begs some of the bystanders, that seeing there is no remedy for his misfortune, they should have pity upon him, so that he should no longer feel it; that he might become as unmanifest to himself as he is to the light, and that they bury him together with his own misfortune. He says then:

64.

*The second blind man.*

Alecta has torn from out her dreadful hair,  
The infernal worm that with a cruel bite,  
Has fiercely fastened on my soul,  
And of my senses, torn the chief away,  
Leaving the intellect without its guide.  
In vain the soul some consolation seeks.  
That spiteful, rabid, rancorous jealousy  
Makes me go stumbling along the way.  
If neither magic spell nor sacred plant,  
Nor virtue hid in the enchanter's stone,  
Will yield me the deliverance that I ask:  
Let one of you, my friends, be pitiful,  
And put me out, as are put out my eyes,  
That they and I together be entombed.

The other follows, who says that he became blind through having been suddenly brought out of the darkness into a great light: accustomed to behold ordinary beauties, a celestial beauty was suddenly presented before his eyes--a sun-god--in this manner his sight became dull and the twin lights which shine at the prow of the soul were put out: for the eyes are like two beacons, which guide the ship, and this would happen to one brought up in Cimmerian obscurity if he fixed his eyes suddenly upon the sun. In the sistine he begs for free passage to Hades, because darkness alone is suitable to a dark condition. He says:

65.

*The third blind man.*

If sudden on the sight, the star of day  
Should shed his beams on one in darkness reared,  
Nurtured beneath the black Cimmerian sky,  
Far from the radiance of the glorious sun,  
The double light, the beacon of the soul  
He quenches: then as a foe he hides.  
Thus were my eyes made dull, inept,  
Used only, wonted beauties to behold.  
Conduct me to the land where darkness reigns!  
Wherefore being dead, speak I amidst the folk?  
A chip of Hell, why do I mix and move  
Amongst the living, wherefore do I drink  
The hated air, since all my pain

Is due to having seen the highest good?

The fourth blind man comes forward, not blind for the same reason as the former one. For as that one was blinded through the sudden aspect of the light, this one is so, from having too frequently beheld it, or through having fixed his eyes too much upon it, so that he has lost the sense of all other light, but he does not consider himself to be blind through looking at that one which has blinded him: and the same may be said of the sense of sight as of the sense of hearing, that those whose ears are accustomed to great noises, do not hear the lesser, as is well known of those who live near the cataracts of the great river Nile which fall precipitously down to the plain.

MIN. Thus, all those who have accustomed the body and the soul to things more difficult and great, are not apt to feel annoyed by smaller difficulties. So that fellow ought not to be discontented about his blindness.

SEV. Certainly not. But one says, voluntarily blind, of one who desires that every other thing be hidden because it annoys him to be diverted from looking at that which alone he wishes to behold. Meanwhile he prays the passers-by to prevent his coming to mischief in any encounter, while he goes so absorbed and captivated by one principal object.

MIN. Repeat his words!

SEV. He says:

66

*The fourth blind man.*

Headlong from on high, to the abyss,  
The cataract of the Nile falls down and dulls the senses  
Of the joyless folk to every other sound,  
So stood I too, with spirit all intent  
Upon the living light, that lights the world;  
Dead henceforth to all the lesser splendours,  
While that light shines, let every other thing  
Be to the voluntary blind concealed.  
I pray you save me stumbling 'mongst the stones,  
Make me aware of the wild beast,  
Show me whether up or down I go;  
So that the miserable bones fall not,  
Into a low and cavernous place,  
While I, without a guide, am stepping on.

To the blind man that follows, it happens that having wept so much, his eyes are become dim, so that he is not able to extend the visual ray, so as to distinguish visible objects, nor can he see the light, which in spite of himself, through so many sorrows, he at one time was able to see. Besides which he considers that his blindness is not from constitution, but from habit, and is peculiar to himself, because the luminous fire which kindles the soul in the pupil, was for too long a time and with too much force, repressed and restrained by a contrary humour, so that although he might cease from weeping, he cannot be persuaded that this would result in the longed-for vision. You will hear what he says to the throng in order that they should enable him to proceed on his way:

67.

*The fifth blind man.*

Eyes of mine, with waters ever full,  
When will the bright spark of the visual ray,  
Darting, spring through each veiling obstacle,  
That I may see again those holy lights  
That were the alpha of my darling pain?  
Ah, woe! I fear me it is quite extinct,  
So long oppressed and conquered by its opposite.  
Let the blind man pass on!  
And turn your eyes upon these founts  
Which overcome the others one and all.  
Should any dare dispute it with me,  
There's one would surely answer him again;

That in one eye of mine an ocean is contained.

The sixth blind man is sightless because, through so much weeping, there remains no more moisture, not even the crystalline and moisture through which, as a diaphanous medium, the visual ray was transmitted, and the external light and visible species were introduced, so that the heart became compressed because all the moist substance, whose office it is to keep united the various parts and opposites, was absorbed, and the amorous affection remains without the effect of tears. Therefore the organ is destroyed through the victory of the other elements, and it is consequently left without sight and without consistency of the parts of the body altogether.[AC] He then proposes to the bystanders that which you shall hear:

68.

*The sixth blind man.*

Eyes, no longer eyes, fountains no longer founts,  
Ye have wept out the waters that did keep  
The body, soul, and spirit joined in one,  
And thou, reflecting crystal, which from without  
So much unto the soul made manifest,  
Thou art consumed by the wounded heart.  
So towards the dark and cavernous abyss,  
I, a blind arid man, direct my steps.  
Ah, pity me, and do not hesitate  
To help my speedy going. I who  
So many rivers in the dark days spread out,  
Finding my only comfort in my tears,  
Now that my streams and fountains all are dry,  
Towards profound oblivion lead the way.

[AC] Water is the first principle of all things; this was the central doctrine of his system (Thales). Now, if we may believe Aristotle, this thought was suggested to him not so much by contemplating the illimitable ocean, out of which, as old cosmogonists taught, all things had at first proceeded, as by noticing the obvious fact, that moisture is found in all living things, and that if it were absent they would cease to be. Thales, no doubt, believed this humour or moisture to be, as he said, the essence and principle of all things.--("Encyclopaedia Metropolitana.")

The next one avers that he has lost his sight through the intensity of the flame, which, proceeding from the heart, first destroyed the eyes, and then dried up all the remaining moisture of the substance of the lover, so that being all melted and turned to flame, he is no longer himself, because the fire whose property it is to resolve all bodies into their atoms, has converted him into impalpable dust, whereas by virtue of water alone, the atoms of other bodies thicken, and are welded together to make a substantial composition. Yet he is not deprived of the sense of the most intense flame. Therefore, in the sistine he would have space made for him to pass; for if anybody should be touched by his fires he would become such that he would have no more feeling of the flames of hell, for their heat would be to him as cold snow.

69.

*The seventh blind man.*

Beauty, which through the eyes rushed to the heart,  
And formed the mighty furnace in my breast,  
Absorbing first the visual moisture; then,  
Spouting aloft its grasping flashing flame,  
Devouring every other fluid,  
To set the dryer element at rest,  
Has thus reduced me to a boneless dust,  
Which now to its own atoms is resolved,  
If anguish infinite your fears should rouse  
Make space, give way, oh peoples!  
Beware of my fierce penetrating fire,  
For if it should invade and touch you, ye  
Would feel and know the fires of hell  
To be like winter's cold.

The eighth follows, whose blindness is caused by the dart which love has caused to penetrate from the eyes to the

heart. Hence, he laments not only as being blind, but furthermore because he is wounded and burnt so fiercely, that he believes no other can be equally so. The sense of it is easily expressed in this sonnet:--

70.

*The eighth blind man.*

Vile onslaught, evil struggle, unrighteous palm,  
Fine point, devouring fire, strong nerve,  
Sharp wound, impious ardour, cruel body,  
Dart, fire and tangle of that wayward god  
Who pierced the eyes, inflamed the heart, bound the soul,  
Made me at once sightless, a lover, and a slave,  
So that, blind I have at all times, in all ways and places,  
The feeling of my wound, my fire, my noose.  
Men, heroes, and gods!  
Who be on earth, or near to Ditis or to Jove,  
I pray ye say, when, how, and where did ye  
Feel ever, hear, or see in any place  
Woes like to these, amongst the oppressed  
Amongst the damned, 'mongst lovers?

Finally comes the last one, who is also mute through not having been able, or having dared, to say that which he most desired to say, for fear of offending or exciting contempt, and he is deprived of speaking of every other thing: therefore, it is not he who speaks, but his guide who relates the affair, about which I do not speak, but only bring you the sense thereof:

71.

*The guide of the ninth blind man.*

Happy are ye, oh all ye sightless lovers,  
That ye the reason of your pains can tell,  
By virtue of your tears you can be sure  
Of pure and favourable receptions.  
Amongst you all, the latent fire of him  
Whose guide I am, rages most fiercely,  
Though he is mute for want of boldness  
To make known his sorrows to his deity.  
Make way! open ye wide the way,  
Be ye benign unto this vacant face,  
Oh people full of grievous hindrances,  
The while this harassed weary trunk  
Goes knocking at the doors  
To meet a death less painful, more profound.

Here are mentioned nine reasons, which are the cause that the human mind is blind as regards the Divine object and cannot fix its eyes upon it. And of these, the first, allegorized through the first blind man, is the quality of its own species, which in so far as the degree in which he finds himself admits, he aspires certainly higher, than he is able to comprehend.

MIN. Because no natural desire is vain, we are able to assure ourselves of a more excellent state which is suitable to the soul outside of this body, in the which it may be possible to unite itself, or to approach more nearly, to its object.

SEV. Thou sayest well that no natural impulse or power is without strong reason; it is in fact the same rule of nature which orders things. So far, it is a thing most true and most certain to well-disposed intellects, that the human soul, whatever it may show itself while it is in the body, that same, which it makes manifest in this state, is the expression of its pilgrim existence in this region; because it aspires to the truth and to universal good, and is not satisfied with that which comes on account of and to the profit of its species.

The second, represented by the second blind man, proceeds from some troubled affection, as in the question of Love and Jealousy, the which is like a moth, which has the same subject, enemy and father, that is, it consumes the cloth or

wood from which, it is generated.

MIN. This does not seem to me to take place with heroic love.

SEV. True, according to the same reason which is seen in the lower kind of love; but I mean according to another reason similar to that which happens to those who love truth and goodness, which shows itself when they are angry against those who adulterate it, spoil it, or corrupt it, or who in other ways would treat it with indignity, as has been the case with those who have brought themselves to suffer death and pains, and to being ignominiously treated by ignorant peoples and vulgar sects.

MIN. Certainly no one truly loves the truth and the good who is not angry against the multitude; as no one loves in the ordinary way who is not jealous and fearful about the thing loved.

SEV. And so he comes to be really blind in many things, and according to the common opinion he is quite infatuated and mad.

MIN. I have noted a place which says that all those are infatuated and mad, who have sense beyond and outside of the general sense of other men. But such extravagance is of two kinds, according as one goes beyond and ascends up higher than the greater number rise or can rise, and these are they who are inspired with Divine enthusiasm; or by going down lower where those are found who have greater defect of sense and of reason than the many, and the ordinary; but in that kind of madness, insensibility and blindness, will not be found the jealous hero.

SEV. Although he is told that much learning makes him mad, yet no one can really abuse him. The third, represented by the third blind man, proceeds from this: that Divine Truth according to supernatural reasoning, called metaphysics, manifests itself to those few to whom it shows itself, and does not proceed with measure of movement and time as occurs in the physical sciences, that is, those which are acquired by natural light, the which, in discoursing of a thing known to reason by means of the senses, proceed to the knowledge of another thing, unknown, the which discourse is called argument; but immediately and suddenly, according to the method which belongs to such efficiency.[AD] Whence a divine has said: "Attenuati sunt oculi mei suspicientes in excelsum." So that it does not require a useless lapse of time, fatigue, and study, and inquisitorial act to have it, but it is taken in quickly, as the solar light, without hesitation, and makes itself present to whoever turns himself to it and opens himself to it.

[AD] When somewhat of this Perfect Good is discovered and revealed within the soul of man, as it were in a glance or flash, the soul conceiveth a longing to approach unto the Perfect Goodness.--("Theologia Germanica.")

MIN. Do you mean then, that the student and the philosopher are not more apt to receive this light than the ignorant?

SEV. In a certain way no, and in a certain way yes. There is no difference, when the Divine mind through its providence comes to communicate itself without disposition of the subject; I mean to say when it communicates itself because it seeks and elects its subject; but there is a great difference, when it waits and would be sought, and then according to its own good will and pleasure it makes itself to be found. In this way it does not appear to all, nor can it appear to others, than to those who seek it. Hence it is said, "Qui quaerunt me, invenient me;" and again: "Qui sitit, veniat et bibat!"

MIN. It is not to be denied, that the apprehension of the second manner is made in Time. (Comes with time?)

SEV. You do not distinguish between the disposition towards the Divine light and the apprehension of the same. Certainly I do not deny that it requires time to dispose oneself, discourse, study and fatigue; but as we say that change takes place in time, and generation in an instant, and as we see that with time, the windows are opened, but the sun enters in a moment, so does it happen similarly in this case.

The fourth, represented in the following, is not really unworthy, like that which results from the habit of believing in the false opinions of the vulgar, which are very far removed from the opinions of philosophers, and are derived from the study of vulgar philosophies, which are by the multitude considered the more true, the more they appeal to common sense. And this habit is one of the greatest and strongest disadvantages, because as Alcazele and Averroes showed, it is like that which happens to those persons who from childhood and youth are in the habit of eating poison, and have become such, that it is converted into sweet and proper nutriment, and on the other hand, they abominate those things which are really good and sweet according to common nature; but it is most worthy, because it is founded upon the habit of looking at the true light; the which habit cannot come into use for the multitude, as we have said. This blindness is heroic, and is of such a kind that it can worthily satisfy the present heroic blind man, who is so far from troubling himself about it that he is able to explain every other sight, and he would crave nothing else from the community save a free passage and progress in contemplation, for he finds himself usually hampered and blocked by obstacles and opposition.

The fifth results from the disproportion of the means of our cognition to the knowable; seeing that in order to contemplate Divine things, the eyes must be opened by means of images, analogies and other reasonings which by the Peripatetics are comprehended under the name of fancies (fantasmi); or, by means of Being, to proceed to speculate about Essence, by means of its effects and the knowledge of the cause; the which means, are so far from ensuring the attainment of such an end, that it is easier to believe that the highest and most profound cognition of Divine things, is through negation and not through affirmation, knowing that the Divine beauty and goodness is not that which can or does fall within our conception, but that which is above and beyond, incomprehensible; chiefly in that condition called by the philosopher speculation of phantoms, and by the theologian, vision through analogies, reflections and enigmas, because we see, not the true effects and the true species of things, or the substance of ideas, but the shadows, vestiges and simulacra of them, like those who are inside the cave and have from their birth their shoulders turned away from the entrance of the light, and their faces towards the end, where they do not see that which is in reality, but the shadows of that which is found substantially outside the cave. Therefore by the open vision which it has lost, and knows it has lost, a spirit similar to or better than that of Plato weeps, desiring exit from the cave, whence, not through reflexion, but through immediate conversion he may see the light again.

MIN. It appears to me that this blind man does not refer to the difficulty which proceeds from reflective vision, but to that which is caused through the medium between the visual power and the object.

SEV. These two modes, although they are distinct in the sensitive cognition, or ocular vision, at the same time are united together in the rational or intellectual cognition.

MIN. It seems to me that I have heard and read that in every vision, the means, or the intermediary is required between the power and the object. Because as by means of the light diffused in the air and the figure of the thing, which in a certain way proceeds from that which is seen, to that which sees, the act of seeing is put into effect, so in the intellectual region, where shines the sun of the intellect, acting between the intelligible species formed as proceeding from the object, our intellect comes to comprehend something of the divinity, or something inferior to it. Because, as our eye, when we see, does not receive the light of the fire and of gold, in substance, but in similitude; so the intellect, in whatever state it is found, does not receive the divinity substantially, so that there should be substantially as many gods as there are intelligences, but in similitude; therefore they are not formally gods, but denominatively divine, the divinity and Divine beauty being one, exalted above all things.

SEV. You say well; but for all your well saying, there is no need for me to retract, because I have never said the contrary. But I must declare and explain. Therefore, first I maintain that the immediate vision, so called and understood by us, does not do away with that sort of medium which is the intelligible species, nor that which is the light; but that which is equal to the thickness and density of the crystalline or opaque intermediate body; as happens to him who sees by means of the waters more or less turbid, or air foggy and cloudy, who would believe he was looking as without a medium when it was conceded to him to look through the pure air, light and clear. All which you have explained where it says:

"When will the bright spark of the visual ray  
Darting, spring through each veiling obstacle."

But let us return. The sixth, represented in the following, is caused only by the imbecility and unreality of the body, which is in continual motion, mutation, and change, the operations of which must follow the condition of its faculty, the which is a result of the condition of its nature and being. How can immobility, reality, entity, truth be contained in that which is ever different, and always makes and is made, other and otherwise? What truth, what picture can be painted and impressed, where the pupils of the eyes are dispersed in water, the water into steam, the steam into flame, the flame into air, and this in other and other without end: the subject of sense and cognition turns for ever upon the wheel of mutation?

MIN. Movement is change, and that which is changeable works and operates ever differently, because the conception and affection follow the reason and condition of the subject; and he who sees other and other different and differently must necessarily be blind as regards that beauty which is one and alone and is the same unity and entity.

SEV. So it is. The seventh, contained allegorically in the sentiment of the seventh blind man, is the result of the fire of the affections, whence some become impotent and incapable of comprehending the truth, by making the affection precede the intellect. There are those who love before they understand: whence it happens that all things appear to them according to the colour of their affections, whereas he who would understand the truth by means of contemplation, ought to be perfectly pure in thought.

MIN. In truth, one sees how much diversity there is in meditators and inquirers, because some, according to their habits and early fundamental discipline, proceed by means of numbers,[AE] others by means of images, others by means of

order and disorder, others through composition and division, others by separation and congregation, others by inquiry and doubt, others by discussions and definitions, others by interpretations and decyphering of voices, words, and dialects, so that some are mathematical philosophers, some metaphysicians, others logicians, others grammarians; so there are divers contemplators, who with different affections set themselves to study and apply the meaning of written sentences; whence we find that the same light of truth, expressed in the selfsame book, serves with the same words the proposition of so numerous, diverse, and contrary sects.[AF]

[AE] Number is, as the great writer (Balzac) thought, an Entity, and, at the same time, a Breath emanating from what he termed God, and what we call the ALL; the breath which alone could organize the physical kosmos.--("The Secret Doctrine.")

[AF] As the Bible serves as the basis for all the different Protestant sects.

SEV. That is to say, that the affections are very powerful in hindering the comprehension of the Truth, notwithstanding that the person may not himself perceive it; just as it happens to a stupid invalid who does not say that his mouth is bitter but that the food is bitter. Now that kind of blindness is expressed by him whose eyes are changed and deprived of their natural powers, by that which the heart has given and imprinted upon it, powerful not only to change the sense, but besides that, all the faculties of the soul as the present image shows. According to the meaning of the eighth, the high intelligible object has blinded the intellect, as the high superposed sensible has corrupted the senses. Thus it would happen to him who should see Jove in his majesty, he would lose his life and in consequence his senses. As he who looks aloft sometimes is overcome by the majesty.[AG] Besides, when he comes to penetrate the Divine species, he passes it like a ray. Whence say the theologians that the Divine word is more penetrating than sharp point of sword or knife. Hence is derived the form and impression of His own footstep, upon which nothing else can be imprinted and sealed. Therefore, that form being there confirmed and the new strange one not being able to take its place unless the other yields, consequently he can say, that he has no power of taking any other, if there is one who replaces it or scatters it through the necessary want of proportion. The ninth reason is exemplified, by the ninth who is blind through want of confidence, through dejection of spirit, the which is caused and brought about also by a great love which He fears to offend by His temerity. Whence says the Psalm: "Averte oculos tuos a me, quia ipsi me avolare fecere." And so he suppresses his eyes so as not to see that which most of all he desires, as he keeps his tongue from talking with whom he most wishes to speak, from fear that a defective look or word should humiliate him or bring him in some way into misfortune. And this generally proceeds from the apprehension of the excellence of the object above its potential faculty: whence the most profound and divine theologians say, that God is more honoured and loved by silence than by words; as one sees more by shutting the eyes to the species represented, than by opening them, therefore the negative theology of Pythagoras and Dionysius is more celebrated than the demonstrative theology of Aristotle and the scholastic doctors.

[AG]

... Gaze, as thy lips have said,  
On God Eternal, Very God! See me, see what thou prayest!

---

O Eyes of God! O Head!  
My strength of soul is fled.  
Gone is heart's force, rebuked is mind's desire!  
When I behold Thee so,  
With awful brows a-glow,  
With burning glance, and lips lighted by fire,  
Fierce as those flames which shall  
Consume, at close of all,  
Earth, Heaven!

---

God is it I did see,  
This unknown marvel of Thy Form! but fear  
Mingles with joy! Retake,  
Dear Lord! for pity's sake,  
Thine earthly shape, which earthly eyes may bear!  
--("The Song Celestial.")  
(Sir Edwin Arnold's translation.)

MIN. Let us go; and we will reason by the way.

SEV. As you please.

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## **Fifth Dialogue.**

*Interlocutors:*

**LAODOMIA. GIULIA.**

LAO. Some other time, oh my sister, thou wilt hear what happened to those nine blind men, who were at first nine most beautiful and amorous youths, who being so inspired by the loveliness of your face, and having no hope of receiving the reward of their love, and fearing that such despair would reduce them to final ruin, went away from the happy Campanian country, and of one accord, those who at first were rivals for your beauty, swore not to separate until they had tried in all possible ways to find something more beautiful than you or at least equal to you; besides which, that they might discover that mercy and pity which they could not find in your breast armed with pride; for they believed this was the only remedy which could bring them out of that cruel captivity. The third day after their solemn departure, as they were passing by the Circean mount, it pleased them to go and see those antiquities, the cave and fane of that goddess. When they were come there, the majesty of the solitary place, the high, storm-beaten rocks, the murmur of the sea waves which break amongst those caves, and many other circumstances of the locality and the season combined, made them feel inspired; and one of them I will tell thee, more bold than the others, spoke these words: "Oh might it please heaven that in these days, as in the past more happy ages, some wise Circe might make herself present who, with plants and minerals working her incantations, would be able to curb nature. I should believe that she, however proud, would surely be pitiful unto our woes. She, solicited by our supplications and laments, would condescend either to give a remedy or to concede a grateful vengeance for the cruelty of our enemy."

Hardly had he finished uttering these words than there became visible to them a palace, which, whoever had knowledge of human things, could easily comprehend that it was not the work of man, nor of nature; the form and manner of it I will explain to thee another time. Whence, filled with great wonder and touched by hope that some propitious deity, who must have placed this before them, would explain their condition and fortunes, they said with one accord they could meet with nothing worse than death, which they considered a less evil than to live in so much anguish. Therefore they entered, not finding any door that was shut against them nor janitor who questioned them. They found themselves in a very richly ornamented room, where with royal majesty, (as one may say, Apollo was found again by Phaeton;) appears she, who is called his daughter, and at whose appearance they saw vanish all the figures of many other deities who ministered unto her. Then, received and comforted by this gracious face, they advanced, and overcome by the splendour of that majesty, they bent their knee to the earth, and altogether, with the diversity of tones which their various genius suggested, they laid open their vows to the goddess. By her finally, they were treated in such a manner that, blind and homeless, with great labour having ploughed the seas, passed over rivers, overcome mountains, traversed plains for the space of ten years, and at the end of which time having arrived under that temperate sky of the British Isles, and come into the presence of the lovely, graceful nymphs of Father Thames, they (the nine), having made humble obeisance, and the nymphs having received them with acts of purest courtesy, one, the principal amongst them, who later on will be named, with tragic and lamenting accents laid bare the common cause in this manner:

Of those, oh gentle Dames, who with closed urn,  
Present themselves, whose hearts are pierced  
Not for a fault by nature caused,  
But through a cruel fate,  
That in a living death,  
Does hold them fast, we each and all are blind.

Nine spirits are we, wandering many years,  
Longing to know; and many lands  
O'ertravelled, one day were surprised  
By a sore accident,  
To which if you attend,  
You'll say, oh worthy, oh unhappy lovers!

An impious Circe, who presumes to boast  
Of having for her sire this glorious sun,  
Welcomed us after many wanderings:  
Opened a certain urn,  
With water sprinkled us,  
And to the sprinkling added an enchantment.

Waiting the finish of this work of hers  
We all were quiet, mute, attent,  
Until she said, "Oh ye unhappy ones,  
Blind be ye all,  
Gather that fruit  
Those get who fix their thoughts on things above."

Daughter and Mother of horror and darkness and woe  
They cried, who sudden were struck blind,  
It pleased you then, so proud and harsh,  
To treat these wretched lovers,  
Who put themselves before you,  
Ready to consecrate to you their hearts.

But when the sudden fury somewhat stayed,  
Which this new case had brought on them,  
Each one within himself withdrew,  
While rage to grief gave place;  
To her they turned for pity,  
With chosen words companioning their tears.

Now if it please thee, gracious sorceress,  
If zeal for glory chance to move thy heart,  
Or milk of kindness soften it,  
Be merciful to us,  
And with thy magic herbs,  
Heal up the wound imprinted on our hearts.

If wish to succour rules thy beauteous hand,  
Make no delay, lest some of us  
Unhappy ones reach death, ere we  
Praising thy act  
Can each one say,  
So much did she torment, yet more did heal.

Then she replied: Oh curious prying minds,  
Take this my other fatal urn,  
Which my own hand may not uncloset;  
Over the wide expanse of earth,  
Wander ye still,  
Search for and visit all the various kingdoms.

Fate hath decreed, it ne'er shall be unclosed  
Till lofty wisdom, noble chastity  
And loveliness with these combined,  
Shall set their hands to it;  
All other efforts vain,  
To make this fluid open to the sky.

Then should it chance to sprinkle beauteous hands,  
Of those who come a-near for remedy,  
Its god-like virtues you may prove,  
And turning cruel pain  
Into a sweet content,  
Two lovely stars upon the earth you'll see.

Meanwhile be none of you cast down or sad,  
Although long while in deep obscurity  
All that the heavens contain remain concealed,  
For good so great as this,

No pain, however sharp,  
Can be accounted worthy of the cost.

That Good to which through blindness you are led,  
Should make appear all other-having, vile,  
And every torment be as pleasure held,  
Who, hoping to behold  
Graces unique and rare,  
May hold in high disdain all other lights.

Ah, weary ones! Too long, too long our limbs  
Have wandered o'er the terrene globe,  
So that to us it seems  
As if the shrewd wild beast,  
With false and flattering hopes,  
Our bosoms has encumbered with her wiles.

Wretched henceforth, we see, though late, the witch  
Concerned to keep us all with promises

(And for our greater hurt), at bay;  
For surely she believes  
No woman can be found  
Beneath the roof of heaven so dowered as she.

Now that we know that every hope is vain,  
We yield to destiny and are content,  
Nor will withdraw from all our strivings sore;  
And staying not our steps,  
Though trembling, tired and vexed,  
We languish through the days that yet are ours.

Oh graceful nymphs, that on the grassy banks  
Of gentle Thames do make your home,  
Do not disdain, ye beauteous ones,  
To try, although in vain,  
With those white hands of yours  
To uncover that which in our urn is hid.

Who knows? perchance it may be on these shores,  
Where, with the Nereids, may be seen  
The rapid torrent from below ascend  
And wind again  
Back to its source,  
That heaven has destined there she shall be found.

One of the nymphs took the urn in her hand, and without trying to do more offered it to one at a time, but not one was found who dared to be the first to try (to open it), but all by common consent, after simply looking at it, referred and proposed it with respect and reverence to one alone; who, finally, not so much to exhibit her own glory as to succour those unhappy ones, and while in a sort of doubt, the urn opened as it were spontaneously of itself. But what shall I say to you of the applause of the nymphs? How can you imagine that I can express the extreme joy of the nine blind men, when, hearing that the urn was open, they felt themselves sprinkled with the desired waters, they opened their eyes and saw the two suns, and felt they had gained a double happiness; one, the having recovered the light they had lost, the other that of the newly discovered light which alone could show them the image of the highest good upon earth. How, I say, can you expect me to describe the joy and exulting merriment of voices of spirit and of body which they themselves all together could not express? For a time it was like seeing so many furious bacchanals, inebriated with that which they saw so plainly, until at last, the impetus of their fury being somewhat calmed, they put themselves in a row.

*The first played the guitar and sang the following:*

Oh cliffs, oh deeps, oh thorns, oh snags, oh stones,  
Oh mounts, oh plains, oh valleys, rivers, seas,  
How dear and sweet you show yourselves,  
For by your aid and favour,  
To us the sky's unveiled.  
Oh fortunate and well-directed steps,

*The second with the mandoline played and sang:*

Oh fortunate and well-directed steps,  
Oh goddess Circe, oh transcendent woes,  
With which ye did afflict us months and years;  
They were the grace of heaven,  
For such an end as this,  
After such weariness and such distress.[AH]

[AH] For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.--("St. Paul to the Corinthians.")

*The third with the lyre played and sang:*

After such weariness and such distress;  
If such a port the tempests have prescribed,  
Then is there nothing more that we can do,  
But render thanks to heaven,  
Who closely veiled our eyes,  
And pierced anon with such a light as this.

*The fourth with the viola sang:*

And pierced anon with such a light as this;  
Blindness worth more than every other sight,  
Pains sweeter far than other pleasures are,  
For to the fairest light  
Thou art thyself a guide,  
Show to the soul all lower things are null.

*The fifth with the Spanish drum sang:*

Showing the soul all lower things are null,  
Seasoning with hope the high thought of the mind,  
Was one who pushed us to the only path,  
And so did show us plain,  
The fairest work of God,  
Thus does a fate benign present itself.[AI]

[AI] The lonely sore-footed pilgrims on their way back to their home are never sure to the last moment of not losing their way in this limitless desert of illusion and matter called Earth-life.--("The Secret Doctrine.")

*The sixth with a lute sang:*

Thus does a fate benign present itself,  
Who wills not that to good, good should succeed,  
Or pain forerunner be of pain,  
But turning round, the wheel,  
Now rising, now depressed,  
As day and night succeed alternately.

*The seventh with the Irish harp:*

As day and night succeed alternately;  
While the great mantle of the lights of night,  
Blanches the chariot of diurnal flames,  
As He who governs all,  
With everlasting laws,  
Puts down the high and raises up the low.

*The eighth with the violin:*

Puts down the high and raises up the low,  
He who the infinite machine sustains,  
With swiftness, with the medium or with slow,  
Apportioning the turning  
Of this gigantic mass,  
The hidden is unveiled and open stands.

*The ninth with the rebeck:*

The hidden is unveiled and open stands,  
Therefore deny not, but admit the triumph,  
Incomparable end of all the pains  
Of field and mount,  
Of pools and streams and seas,  
Of cliffs and deeps, of thorns and snags and stones.

After each one in this way, singly, playing his instrument, had sung his sistine, they danced altogether in a circle and sang together in praise of the one Nymph with the softest accents a song which I am not sure whether I can call to memory.

GIU. I pray you, my sister, do not fail to let me hear so much of it as you can remember!

LAO.

74.

*Song of the Illuminati:*

"I envy not, oh Jove, the firmament,"  
Said Father Ocean, with the haughty brow:  
"For that I am content  
With that which my own empire gives to me."

Then answered Jove, "What arrogance is thine.  
What to thy riches have been added now,  
Oh god of the mad waves,  
To make thy foolish boasting rise so high?"

"Thou hast," said the sea-god, "in thy command,  
The flaming sky, where is the burning zone,  
In which the heavenly host  
Of stars and planets stand within thy sight.[AJ]

"Of these, the world looks most upon the sun,  
Which, let me tell you, shineth not so bright,  
As she who makes of me,  
The god most glorious of the mighty whole.

"And I contain within my bosom vast,  
With other lands, that, where the happy Thames  
Goes gliding gaily on,  
Which has of graceful nymphs a lovely throng.

"There will be found 'mongst those where all are fair,  
Will make thee lover more of sea than sky,  
Oh Jove, High Thunderer!  
Whose sun shines pale beside the starry night."

Then answered Jove, "God of the billowy sea!  
That one should ere be found more blest than I  
Fate nevermore permits,  
My treasures with thine own run parallel.

"The sun is equal to thy chiefest nymph,  
By virtue of the everlasting laws,  
And pauses alternating,  
Amongst my stars she's equal to the sun."

[AJ] Plato says that [Greek: Theos] is derived from the verb [Greek: Theein], to move, to run, as the first astronomers who observed the motions of the heavenly bodies called the planets [Greek: Theoi], the gods.--("The Secret Doctrine," foot note, p. 2, vol. 1.)

I believe that I have recalled it entirely.

GU. You can see that no sentence is wanting to the perfecting of the proposition, nor rhyme to the completion of the stanzas. Now if I by the grace of heaven have received beauty, a greater favour I consider is mine, in that whatever beauty I may have had it has been in a certain way instrumental in causing that Divine and only one to be found. I thank the gods, because in that time, when I was so tender (verde), that the amorous flames could not be lighted in my breast, by reason of my intractability, such simple and innocent cruelty was used in order to yield more graces to my lovers than otherwise it would have been possible for them to obtain, through any kindness of mine however great.

LAO. As to the souls of those lovers, I assure you that as they are not ungrateful to the sorceress Circe for their blindness, grievous thoughts, and bitter trials, by means of which they have reached so great a good, so they can be no less grateful to thee.[AK]

GU. So I desire and hope.

[AK] For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.--(St. Paul to the Romans.)

### **Transcriber's Notes:**

Page 15: The last paragraph had only one double quote. I added the closing quote, but am not certain about it. The line begins: ["If the love of glory is dear to thy breast,]. Unchanged.

Page 78: LIC is suspected of being a typo for LIB. No other occurrences. Unchanged.

Page 79: LAS is suspected to be a typo for LAO, as this name occurs only once. Unchanged.

Page 109: The term selfsame occurs only once without a hyphen. Unchanged.