

And make me such a vessel of thy worth,
 As thy own laurel claims, of me beloved.
 Thus far¹ hath one of steep Parnassus' brows
 Sufficed me; henceforth, there is need of both
 For my remaining enterprise. Do thou²
 Enter into my bosom, and there breathe
 So, as when Marsyas³ by thy hand was dragg'd
 Forth from his limbs, unsheathed. O power divine!
 If thou to me of thine impart so much,
 That of that happy realm the shadow'd form
 Traced in my thoughts I may set forth to view;
 Thou shalt behold me of thy favour'd tree
 Come to the foot, and crown myself with leaves:
 For to that honour thou, and my high theme
 Will fit me. If but seldom, mighty Sire!
 To grace his triumph, gathers thence a wreath
 Cæsar, or bard⁴ (more shame for human wills
 Depraved), joy to the Delphic god must spring
 From the Peneian foliage, when one breast
 Is with such thirst inspired. From a small spark⁵
 Great flame hath risen: after me, perchance,
 Others, with better voice may pray, and gain,
 From the Cyrrhæan city, answer kind.

Through divers passages, the world's bright lamp

¹ *Thus far*.—He appears to mean nothing more than that this part of his poem will require a greater exertion of his powers than the former.

² *Do thou*.—Make me thine instrument; and through me, utter such sound as when thou didst contend with Marsyas.

³ *Marsyas*.—Ovid, "Metamorphoses," lib. vi., fab. 7. Compare Boccaccio, "Il Filocopo," lib. v., p. 25, v. ii., ediz. Firenze, 1723: "Egli nel mio petto entri," &c.—"May he enter my bosom, and let my voice sound like his own, when he made that daring mortal deserve to come forth unsheathed from his limbs."

⁴ *Cæsar, or bard*.—So Petrarch, "Son.," Par. Prima:

"Arbor vittoriosa trionfale;
 Onor d' imperadori e di poeti."

And Frezzi, "Il Quadriregio," lib. iii., cap. 14:

"Alloro,
 Che imperatori e poeti corona."

And Spenser, "Faery Queene," b. i., c. 1, st. 9:

"The laurel, meed of mighty conquerours,
 And poets sage."

⁵ *From a small spark*.—

Πολλὰν τ' ὄρει πῦρ ἐξ ἐνός
 Σπέρματος ἐνθρόν' αἰσώσεν ἕλαν.

"Upon the mountain from one spark hath leapt
 The fire, that hath a mighty forest burn'd."

Pindar, *Pyth.*, iii. 67.

Rises to mortals; but through that¹ which joins
 Four circles with the threefold cross, in best
 Course, and in happiest constellation² set
 He comes; and, to the worldly wax, best gives
 Its temper and impression. Morning there,³
 Here eve was well nigh by such passage made;
 And whiteness had o'erspread that hemisphere,
 Blackness the other part; when to the left⁴
 I saw Beatrice turn'd, and on the sun
 Gazing, as never eagle fix'd his ken.
 As from the first a second beam⁵ is wont
 To issue, and reflected upwards rise,
 Even as a pilgrim bent on his return;
 So of her act, that through the eyesight pass'd
 Into my fancy, mine was form'd: and straight,
 Beyond our mortal wont, I fix'd mine eyes
 Upon the sun. Much is allow'd us there,
 That here exceeds our power; thanks to the place
 Made⁶ for the dwelling of the human kind.

I suffer'd it not long; and yet so long,
 That I beheld it bickering sparks around,
 As iron that comes boiling from the fire.⁷
 And suddenly upon the day appear'd⁸

¹ *Through that*.—"Where the four circles, the horizon, the zodiac, the equator, and the equinoctial colure join; the last three intersecting each other so as to form three crosses, as may be seen in the armillary sphere."

² *In happiest constellation*.—Aries. Some understand the planet Venus by the "miglior stella."

³ *Morning there*.—It was morning where he then was, and about eventide on the earth.

⁴ *To the left*.—Being in the opposite hemisphere to ours, Beatrice, that she may behold the rising sun, turns herself to the left.

⁵ *As from the first a second beam*.—"Like a reflected sunbeam," which he compares to a pilgrim hastening homewards.

"Ne simil tanto mai raggio secondo
 Dal primo uscì."

Filicaja, canz. xv., st. 4.

"Sicut vir in peregrinatione constitutus, omni stu-

dio, omnique conatu domum redire festinat, ac retrorsum non respicit sed ad domum, quam reliquerat, reverti desiderat."—*Alberici Visio*, § 25.

⁶ *Made*.—And therefore best adapted, says Venturi, to the good temperament and vigour of the human body and its faculties. The poet speaks of the terrestrial paradise where he then was.

⁷ *As iron that comes boiling from the fire*.—"Ardentem, et scintillas emittentem, ac si ferrum cum de fornace trahitur."—*Alberici Visio*, § 5. This simile is repeated, § 16. So Milton, "Paradise Lost," b. iii. 594:

"As glowing iron with fire."

⁸ *Upon the day appear'd*.—

"If the heaven had ywonne
 All new of God another sunne."

Chaucer, *First Booke of Fame*.

"E par ch' aggiunga un altro sole al cielo."
Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, c. x., st. 109.

A day new-risen; as he, who hath the power,
Had with another sun bedeck'd the sky.

Her eyes fast fix'd on the eternal wheels,¹
Beatrice stood unmoved; and I with ken
Fix'd upon her, from upward gaze removed,
At her aspect, such inwardly became
As Glaucus,² when he tasted of the herb
That made him peer among the ocean gods:
Words may not tell of that transhuman change;
And therefore let the example serve, though weak,
For those whom grace hath better proof in store.

If³ I were only what thou didst create,
Then newly, Love! by whom the heaven is ruled;
Thou know'st, who by thy light didst bear me up.
Whenas the wheel which thou dost ever guide,
Desired Spirit! with its harmony,⁴
Temper'd of thee and measured, charm'd mine ear
That seem'd to me so much of heaven⁵ to blaze
With the sun's flame, that rain or flood ne'er made
A lake so broad. The newness of the sound,
And that great light, inflamed me with desire,
Keener than e'er was felt, to know their cause.

"Ed ecco un lustrò lampeggiar d' intorno
Che sole a sole aggrunse e giorno a giorno."
Marino, Adone, c. xi., st. 27.

"Quando a paro col sol ma più lucente
L'angelo gli apparì sull' oriente."
Tasso, Gerusalemme Liberata, c. i.

"Seems another morn
Risen on mid-noon."
Milton, Paradise Lost, b. v. 311.

Compare Euripides, "Ion," 1550. *Ἀνθρήλιον πρό-
σωπον*.

¹ *Eternal wheels*.—The heavens, eternal, and al-
ways circling.

² *As Glaucus*.—Ovid, "Metamorphoses," lib. xiii.,
fab. 9. Plato, in the tenth book of the "Republic,"
makes a very noble comparison from Glaucus, but
applies it differently. Edit. Bipont., vol. vii., p.
317. Berkeley appears not to have been aware of
the passage, when he says that "Proclus compares
the soul, in her descent, invested with growing preju-

dices, to Glaucus diving to the bottom of the sea,
and there contracting divers coats of sea-weed, coral,
and shells, which stick close to him, and conceal his
true shape."—*Siris*, ed. 1744, p. 151.

³ *If*.—"Thou, O divine Spirit, knowest whether I
had not risen above my human nature, and were not
merely such as thou hadst then formed me."

⁴ *Harmony*.—The harmony of the spheres.

"And after that the melodie herd he
That cometh of thilke speris thryis three,
That welles of musike ben and melodie
In this world here, and cause of harmonie."
Chaucer, The Asseble of Foules.

"In their motion harmony divine
So smooths her charming tones, that God's own ear
Listens delighted."
Milton, Paradise Lost, b. v. 627.

⁵ *So much of heaven*.—The sphere of fire, as Lom-
bardi well explains it.

Whence she, who saw me, clearly as myself,
To calm my troubled mind, before I ask'd,
Open'd her lips, and gracious thus began:
"With false imagination thou thyself
Makest dull; so that thou seest not the thing,
Which thou hadst seen, had that been shaken off.
Thou art not on the earth as thou believest;
For lightning, scaped from its own proper place,
Ne'er ran, as thou hast hither now return'd."

Although divested of my first-raised doubt
By those brief words accompanied with smiles,
Yet in new doubt was I entangled more,
And said: "Already satisfied, I rest
From admiration deep; but now admire
How I above those lighter bodies rise."

Whence, after utterance of a piteous sigh,
She towards me bent her eyes, with such a look,
As on her frenzied child a mother casts;
Then thus began: "Among themselves all things
Have order; and from hence the form,¹ which makes
The universe resemble God. In this
The higher creatures see the printed steps
Of that eternal worth, which is the end
Whither the line is drawn.² All natures lean,
In this their order, diversly; some more,
Some less approaching to their primal source.
Thus they to different havens are moved on
Through the vast sea of being, and each one
With instinct given, that bears it in its course:
This to the lunar sphere directs the fire;
This moves the hearts of mortal animals;

¹ *From hence the form*.—This order it is that gives
to the universe the form of unity, and therefore of
resemblance to God.

² *Of that eternal worth, which is the end whither*

the line is drawn.—All things, as they have their
beginning from the Supreme Being, so are they re-
ferred to Him again.

This the brute earth together knits, and binds.
 Nor only creatures, void of intellect,
 Are aim'd at by this bow; but even those,
 That have intelligence and love, are pierced.
 That Providence, who so well orders all,
 With her own light makes ever calm the heaven,¹
 In which the substance,² that hath greatest speed,
 Is turn'd: and thither now, as to our seat
 Predestined, we are carried by the force
 Of that strong cord, that never looses dart
 But at fair aim and glad. Yet it is true,
 That as, oft-times, but ill accords the form
 To the design of art, through sluggishness³
 Or unreplying matter; so this course⁴
 Is sometimes quitted by the creature, who
 Hath power, directed thus, to bend elsewhere;
 As from a cloud the fire is seen to fall,
 From its original impulse warp'd to earth,
 By vitious fondness. Thou no more admire
 Thy soaring (if I rightly deem), than lapse
 Of torrent downwards from a mountain's height.

¹ *Heaven*.—The empyrean, which is always motionless.

² *The substance*.—The primum mobile.

³ *Through sluggishness*.—

"Perch' a risponder la materia è sorda."

So Filicaja, canz. vi., st. 9:

"Perche a risponder la discordia è sorda."

"The workman hath in his heart a purpose, he carrieth in mind the whole form which his work should have; there wanteth not in him skill and desire to bring his labour to the best effect; only the matter, which he hath to work on, is unframable."—*Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, b. v., § 9. Our poet, in his "De Monarchiâ," has expressed the same thought more fully: "Sciendum," &c., lib. ii., p. 115. "We must know, that as art is found in a triple degree,

in the mind that is of the artist, in the instrument, and in the matter formed by art, so we may contemplate nature also in a triple degree. For nature is in the mind of the first mover, who is God; then in heaven, as in an instrument, by means of which the similitude of the eternal goodness is unfolded in variable matter; and, as the artist being perfect, and the instrument in the best order, if there is any fault in the form of art, it is to be imputed only to the matter; so, since God reaches to the end of perfection, and his instrument, which is heaven, is not in any wise deficient of due perfection (as appears from what we know by philosophy concerning heaven), it remaineth that whatever fault is in inferior things, is a fault of the matter worked on, and clean beside the intention of God and of heaven."

⁴ *Course*.—Some beings, abusing the liberty given them by God, are repugnant to the order established by Him.

There would¹ in thee for wonder be more cause,
 If, free of hinderance, thou hadst stay'd below,
 As living fire unmoved upon the earth."
 So said, she turn'd toward the heaven her face.

¹ *There would*.—Hence, perhaps, Milton:

"In our proper motion we ascend
 Up to our native seat: descent and fall
 To us were adverse."

Paradise Lost, b. ii., v. 77.