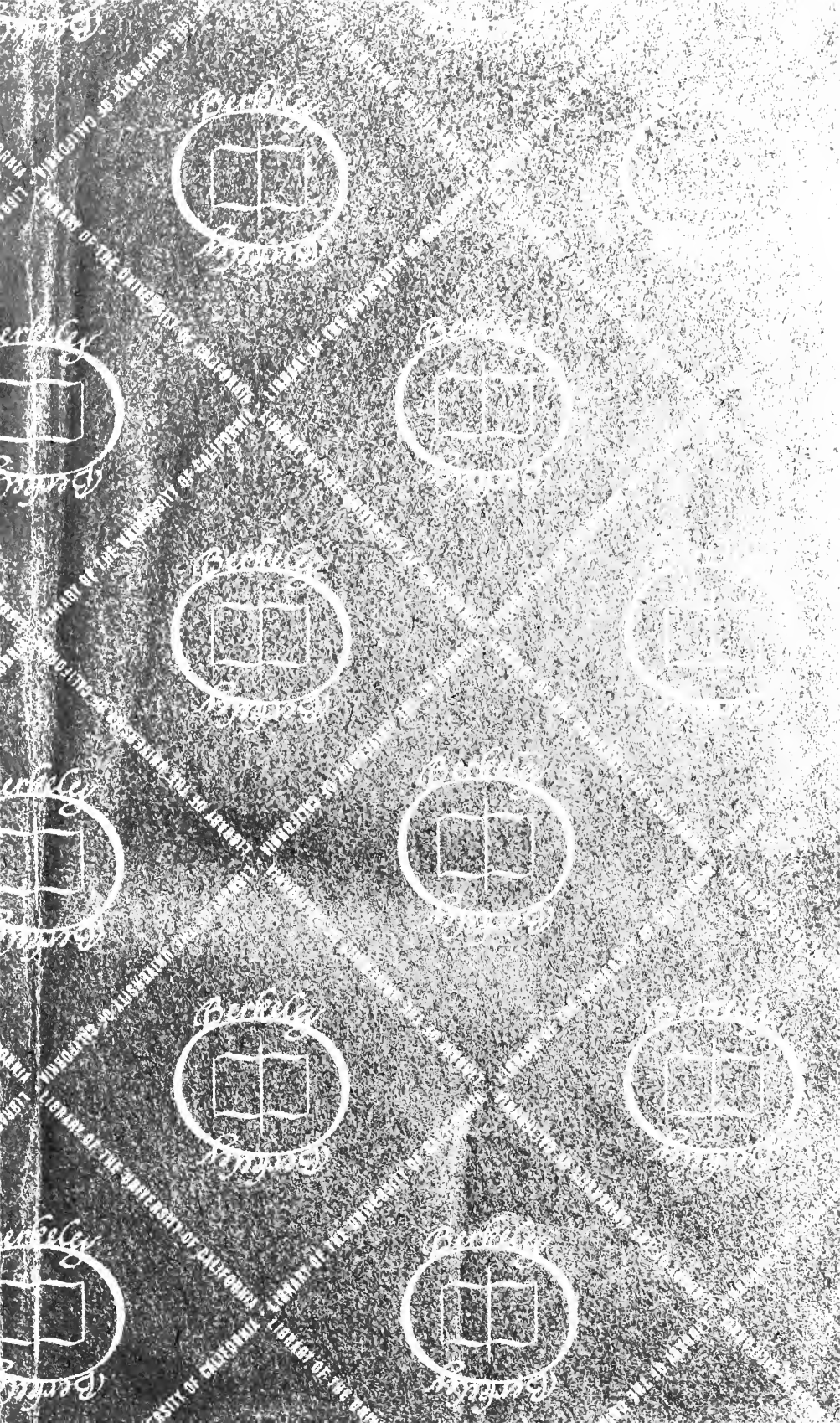


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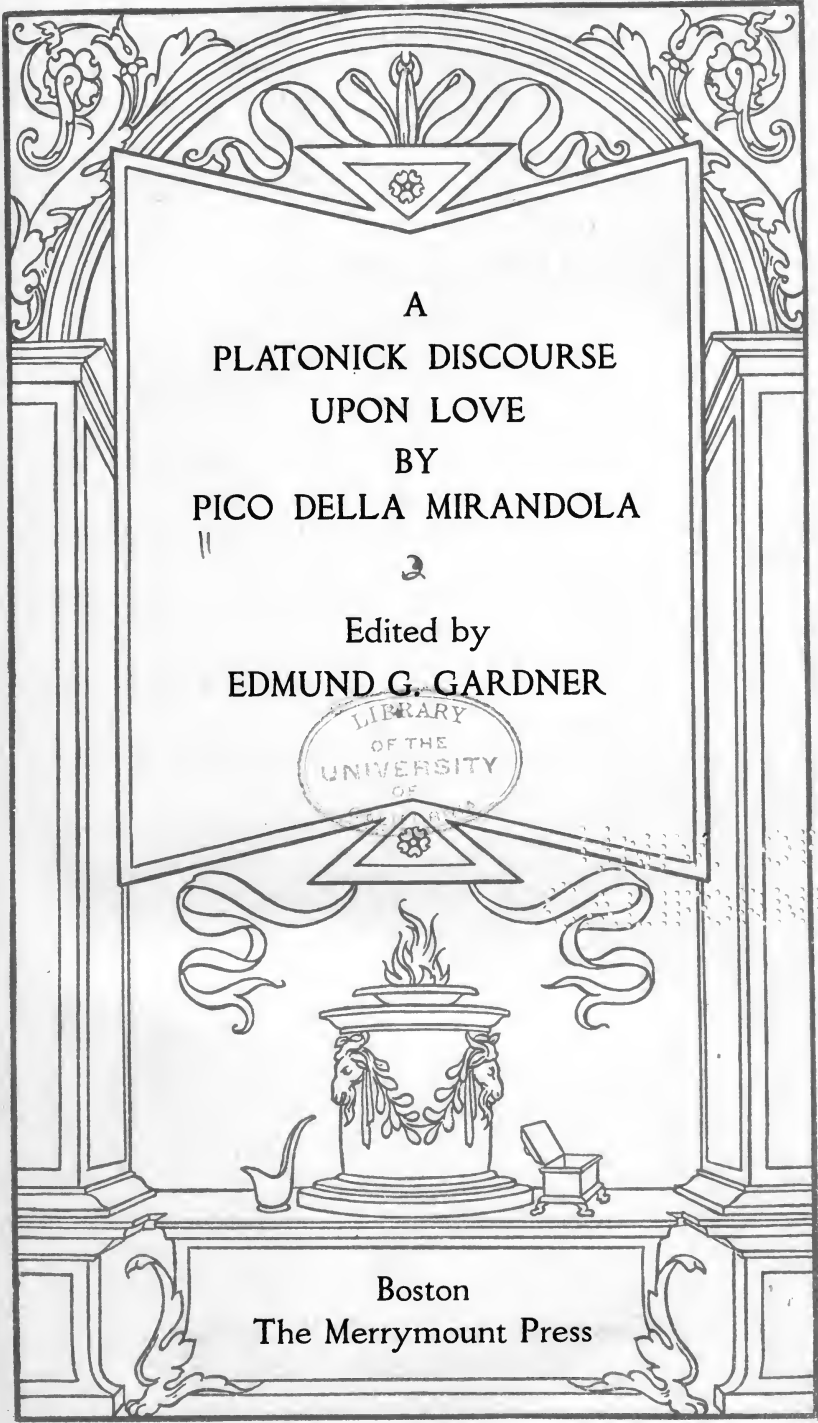
Edited by Lewis Einstein

VII

A PLATONICK DISCOURSE

UPON LOVE





A
PLATONICK DISCOURSE
UPON LOVE
BY
PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA

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Edited by
EDMUND G. GARDNER



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The Merrymount Press

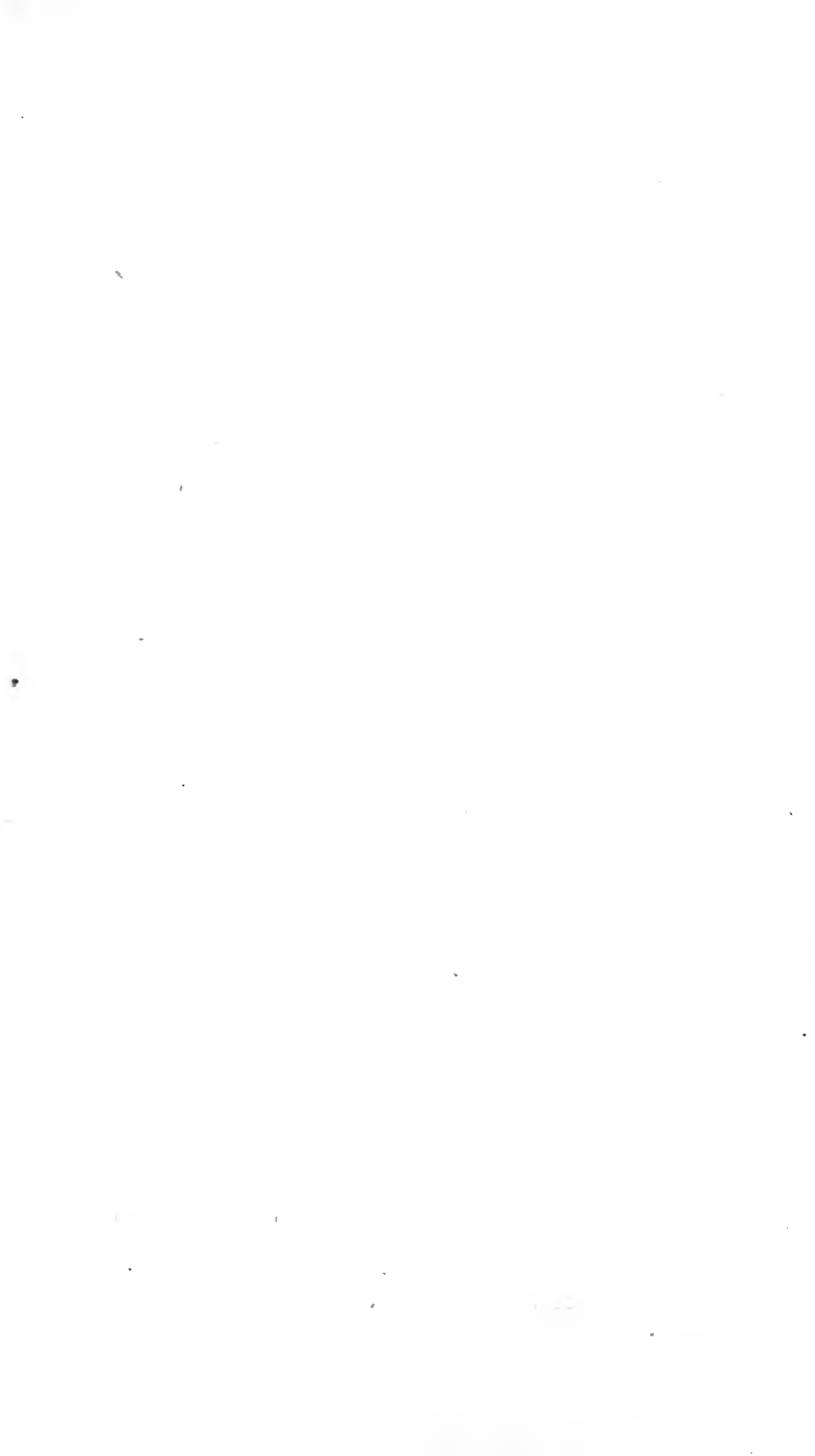
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LIBRARY OF

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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

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* *

“Being in a dark wood, and travelling along a hard and rough path, I rested from my labour, and slept. In my slumber I had this vision. Methought that I ascended a very high mountain, from which was seen almost all the world, and above this mountain there was another even higher, from which things yet more distant were beheld. On the first mountain stood a most beautiful Lady, and before her there was a fire so great that it gave warmth to all the world; on the other mountain, which was higher, stood two Ladies, and between them there was a most fair fountain, to which I was wont to go oftentimes to drink. Wherefore, wishing to go thither to drink, as was my usage, it behoved me to pass in front of the first Lady, and, as I passed, I saw a Squire kneeling before her, to whom the Lady was saying these words: ‘Thou knowest me by my face and by my bearing right well, that I am Love.’ And he answered her: ‘My Lady, it is very sooth.’ And the Lady said to him: ‘Now hearken to me, and listen well to what I would tell thee. I have sent to the world two messengers of mine, to wit, Solomon and Ovidius Naso; the one led me into the world with music and song, and the other

Intro- wrought the art wherewith I should be brought.
duction From then until now I have sent no messenger,
but those that have spoken of me have done so
either for their own desire of knowledge or be-
cause they were heated by this fire. I have chosen
thee for my third messenger, and this has been
done with reason; for as the first was divine in
his sweetness, and the second was a most perfect
poet, so art thou a philosopher full of wisdom;
and because thou art not a slave of Love, but
a friend, I command thee not, but I pray thee to
renew my memory in the world, and to tell of
my nature and secret conditions, upon which the
other speakers have not touched.' Having heard
this, that noble Squire answered the Lady, and
said: 'My Lady, what you pray of me shall be
done, but, because the world is full of divers fash-
ions, tell me the fashion that you would have me
adopt in my speech.' And the Lady made reply:
'I will tell thee one condition of mine, which is
that I can verily give the desire of speaking, but
cannot give the wisdom and the fashion; but hie
thee to those Ladies on the mountain, who are
the two Philosophies, Moral and Natural, and they
will teach thee the fashion of speaking.'"

Thus, quaintly enough, opens the fourteenth
century commentary—erroneously and unac-
countably attributed to the great Augustinian
schoolman, Egidio Colonna¹—on the famous
canzone of Guido Cavalcanti, "Donna mi prega

perch' io voglio dire." A century and a half later, this poem seemed to the young Lorenzo de' Medici "a very wonderful canzone in which this gracious poet subtly described every quality, virtue, and accident of love;" but to us to-day it is a somewhat dreary composition, without a touch of the mystical enthusiasm which gives lyrical impetus to the "Al cor gentil ripara sempre amore" of Cavalcanti's lesser namesake and elder contemporary, Guido Guinizelli of Bologna. And the exposition itself but emphasises the dullness of the stanzas. Guido Cavalcanti opened the series of discussions on the philosophy of love, which were to exercise such a fascination over the minds of the men and women of the Renaissance; but the canzone and the commentary with which we have now to deal are on a higher plane. For between Cavalcanti and Girolamo Benivieni, between the pseudo-Egidio and Pico della Mirandola, had come the revival of Platonism and Neo-Platonism in Italy.

Neither Guido Cavalcanti nor his commentator makes any mention of Plato or his doctrines. Yet, not many years before the canzone was written, Albertus Magnus had declared that Plato and Aristotle alike were necessary to the perfect philosopher: "Non perficitur homo in philosophia nisi ex scientia duarum philosophiarum Aristotelis et Platonis."² Dante cites Plato somewhat frequently, but he knew nothing of him at first

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hand, save in the Latin translation of the "Timaeus" by Chalcidius. For the poet of the "Divina Commedia," Aristotle alone is still "il maestro di color che sanno;"³ but Petrarch already, in a remarkable anticipation of the following century, has deposed the Stagirite in favour of his master, and enthroned Plato in the place of philosophical supremacy.⁴

There came to the Council of Ferrara in 1438 a venerable Greek, named Georgius Gemistus, who seems to have been already more than eighty years old. He had held high office under the Emperors of the East, and had come to Italy ostensibly to work for the reunion of the Eastern and Western Churches; but in reality he cared for none of these things. While men like Bessarion looked to the salvation of Greece by means of reunion with the Church of Rome, Gemistus probably said in his heart: "A plague o' both your Churches." An ardent Neo-Platonist, a student of Zoroaster and other philosophers of old, he dreamed of the restoration of ancient Greece and her liberation from her Turkish assailants by a renovation of the antique virtues of the Greeks themselves; from the "Republic" of Plato and the old constitution of Lacedaemon, he had conceived the idea of a new State to be founded upon a new religion, which was to be a combination of Platonic philosophy with the classical mythology of Greece. When, in the following year, he ac-

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companied the council to Florence, he seemed to the Florentines a true reincarnation of the Greek spirit of the past. At the instigation of Cosimo de' Medici, he wrote a treatise contrasting the rival systems of Plato and Aristotle, naturally giving the preference to the former, but did not wait for the conclusion of the prolonged literary controversy which this aroused among the Greek scholars in Italy. He returned to Greece to share the lot of his countrymen, and at Mistra, the site of the ancient Sparta, he gathered a little band of followers round him, and established his religion, with ceremonial rites, prayers, and hymns. He did not live to see the final downfall of the Greek Empire, but died, in extreme old age, some time before Mohammed II stormed Constantinople. The story need not be retold here of how, in 1465, when Sigismondo Malatesta was commanding the Venetian forces in the Morea, he besieged and captured Mistra, and brought thence the ashes of Gemistus to Rimini, where they were placed in a tomb outside Leon Battista Alberti's newly built church of San Francesco: the shrine of a saint of Humanism.

In the meanwhile, the seeds that Gemistus had sown in Florence had borne fruit in the mind of Cosimo de' Medici. He had conceived the idea of making Florence the centre of Platonic philosophy, and of creating a Platonic Academy on the model of that which had existed in Athens. He

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duction found the instrument he needed in the person of Marsilio Ficino, the son of a physician of Figline in the Valdarno, whom he bade abandon his father's profession, and look to healing men's minds rather than their bodies. In 1463, he commissioned him to produce a complete Latin translation of Plato's dialogues, giving him a farm near the Medicean villa at Careggi and a house in Florence itself, that he might be enabled to work in ease and comfort. The translation took about fourteen years and was finished in 1477; but when Cosimo lay on his deathbed, in 1464, it was sufficiently advanced for Marsilio to comfort his last hours with the reading of his version of the "Philebus." "Even till the last day," wrote Marsilio to Lorenzo de' Medici, "when he departed from this world of shadows to go to light, he devoted himself to the acquisition of knowledge. For, when we had read together Plato's book on the origin of the Universe and the Supreme Good, he, as you who were present well know, soon after quitted this life, as though now in very deed to possess the fullness of that Good which he had tasted during our conversation."⁵

One of Marsilio's earlier works, perhaps the only one still read except by specialists, is his exposition of Plato's "Symposium," entitled "Sopra l'Amore." Written first in Latin, it was translated by the author himself into Italian. It purports to be an account of a banquet celebrated, apparently

about 1470, in the villa of Careggi, at the desire of Lorenzo de' Medici, to renew the custom of the Platonists of old, who thus commemorated the anniversary of the birth and death of Plato, which were supposed to fall on November 7. The guests are nine in number, because nine is the number of the Muses: Antonio degli Agli, Maestro Ficino (the author's father), Cristoforo Landini, Bernardo Nuti, Tommaso Benci, Giovanni Cavalcanti, Cristoforo and Carlo Marsuppini (the sons of the more famous Carlo Marsuppini, who had been secretary of the Republic in earlier days), and Marsilio Ficino himself. After the tables are cleared, the "Symposium" is read, and certain of the guests in turn take the parts of the speakers in the dialogue and interpret them. A religious note is struck at the outset. "The supreme Love of the Divine Providence," writes Marsilio, "to recall us to the right way [of love] which we had lost, inspired of old in Greece a most chaste woman named Diotima, a priestess; who, finding the philosopher Socrates especially consecrated to love, revealed to him what this ardent desire was, and how we can fall thereby into the greatest evil, and how we can ascend thereby to the Supreme Good. . . . May the Holy Spirit of Divine Love, who inspired Diotima, illumine our minds, and inflame our wills, in such fashion that we may love Him in all His beautiful works, and then love His works in Him, and so come to rejoice infinitely in

His infinite Beauty.”⁶ Marsilio reads into the discourses of the “Symposium” the mystical doctrine of beauty as a splendour reflected from the Divine Countenance and spiritual love as the turning of the creature to God.

The harmonising of Platonism and Christianity was the chief aim of Marsilio’s life. He had himself been troubled with doubts and difficulties, and had found in Platonic philosophy the solution of the problem. “There are some,” he writes to Giovanni Cavalcanti, “who wonder why we follow Plato with such observance, he who seems to have dealt only with paradoxes and wonders. But they should consider that it is only the divine incorruptible things that exist in reality; bodily things only seem to exist, they are subject to corruption and change, and are no more than images or shadows of the real. While the other philosophers, almost all, by devoting themselves to the study of material things, dreamed therein images of truth, our Plato, intent upon divine things, alone or chief of all, kept watch. I hold, then, that we should follow Plato as a theologian rather than the other philosophers, even as we should commit ourselves to vigilant pilots rather than to those that sleep.”⁷

But, from the standpoint of literature, the most interesting production of the school of Marsilio Ficino is the little book of Pico and Benivieni.

It was in 1479, when Marsilio had completed his

Plato and was about to apply himself to the interpretation of Plotinus, that Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, then seventeen years old, came to Florence. At a social gathering, held perhaps in the Medicean palace, he fell into discussion with a Florentine citizen, ten years older than himself, Girolamo di Paolo Benivieni, and formed with him one of the most famous friendships in the annals of literature.⁸

Born in 1463, Giovanni Pico was the youngest son of a powerful Lombard feudatory of the Empire, Gian Francesco Pico, Count of Mirandola and Concordia; his mother, Giulia Boiardo, was an aunt of the poet count of Scandiano, Matteo Maria Boiardo. His elder brother, Galeotto, who ruled the fiefs of the family, and who was married to a princess of the house of Este, was a fierce soldier, whom Savonarola in vain exhorted to repentance, and who excited the wonder of his contemporaries by defying a papal excommunication for sixteen years until his death. Giovanni Pico's extraordinary beauty and romantic character won him the hearts of Lorenzo de' Medici and the intellectual society of Florence; and his strange and varied learning aroused the greatest admiration among all. To Poliziano he was "omnium doctrinarum lux;" to Machiavelli, "uomo quasichè divino;" while Savonarola describes him as "inter perrara naturae miracula perspicacitate ingenii et doctrinae sublimitate

Introduction *olim connumerandus.*"⁹ Nevertheless, his erudition was little more than a medley of scholasticism, Neo-Platonic philosophy, and occult science, which he had failed to digest. A conviction abode with him that his life would be short. "It is a happy thing," he writes in a sonnet, "when Heaven is friendly to us, to die young; to complete one day then, is better than to wait until the evening." Loved by many women as well as by men, Pico wrote five books of erotic verse in Latin elegiacs, which he afterwards destroyed, and sonnets in the vernacular, a certain number of which have come down to us, and show him to have been but a mediocre poet. After his challenge to the world at Rome in 1486, to dispute his nine hundred conclusions, thirteen of which were declared heretical, or at least "male sonantes," he finally (after many adventures and a brief imprisonment) retired to the villa of Querceto, near Fiesole. There he composed his "Hep-
taplus," a wild and fantastic book on the seven-fold meaning of the six days of creation (dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici), and another, "De Ente et Uno," addressed to Poliziano, in which he attempted to reconcile Aristotle and Plato, and to harmonise the transcendence and the immanence of God, but only succeeded, it has been said, in reducing the Deity to a mere abstraction.¹⁰ His favourite maxim was: "There is no philosophy that leads us away from the truths of

mysteries;" and his dream was to form a synthesis of all knowledge, and reconcile it with Christianity. He planned a vast series of treatises, "Adversus hostes Ecclesiae," but only completed the twelve books of disputations "In Astrologiam," a work that roused the orthodox enthusiasm of Savonarola. Intro-
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The elder partner in this great friendship was a man of a spiritually less adventurous type. Girolamo Benivieni was born in 1453, the son of a notary of Florence. An elder brother, Antonio, gained renown as a physician; a younger, Domenico, devoted himself to the study of philosophy, held a chair in the university of Pisa at the age of nineteen, and became a canon of San Lorenzo. But Girolamo himself was prevented by perpetual ill-health from adopting any profession, and, rather than remain a burden upon his father, he seems to have sought the favour of princes as a court poet—of Giulio Cesare da Varano, the lord of Camerino, and of Lorenzo de' Medici—reluctantly, we may surmise, as he was afflicted with a melancholy humour and tempted to suicide, not one to be at home in the atmosphere of a Court. Celibate throughout a long life, Girolamo's inclinations all tended towards religion, and the blameless poems that he wrote seemed to him, later in life, pernicious and wanton. He had already published his "Buccolica," a series of eclogues in terza rima, depicting current events

Intro- under the pastoral disguise; he had composed
duction narrative poems in ottava rima, and love son-
nets and canzoni in imitation of the poets of the
“dolce stil nuovo,” of Dante, and of Petrarch—
which he was afterwards to rewrite and interpret
from the ascetic standpoint. But it is to his col-
laboration with Pico that he owes what has sur-
vived of his literary fame.

The “Canzone dello Amore secondo la mente
e opinione de’ Platonici” is described by Beni-
vieni himself as an attempt to sum up in a few
verses what Marsilio Ficino had described at
length in his commentary upon the “Symposi-
um” of Plato. It had been written some time
before it appeared, in 1487, accompanied by the
commentary which is Pico’s only important work
in the vernacular,—the result, doubtless, of the
discussions that the two had held together on a
topic so dear to both their hearts. Benivieni was
not a great poet, and the canzone (which, in the
Italian, is modelled upon the structure of Pe-
trarch’s “l’vopensando e nel penser m’assale”), in
spite of its noble and elevated diction, is scarcely
a masterpiece. But, rehandling the theme of
Guido Cavalcanti’s poem as to the nature, source,
and effects of love, in the language of the Neo-
Platonism of the writer’s own day, it is a most
characteristic literary fruit of the movement that,
in the field of painting, produced both the Venus
and the prophetic Madonna of Botticelli.

The actual commentary is the least part of Pico's discourse, and occupies only the third book. In the first book he gives his own general philosophical scheme of God and the world, a rather confused medley of Neo-Platonism and other theories. Beneath God, and created immediately by Him, between the intelligible and sensible worlds, is "a creature of incorporeal and intellectual nature, as perfect as it is possible for a created thing to be," which is the first created mind. "This first created mind is called by Plato, as also by the ancient philosophers, Mercurius Trismegistus and Zoroaster, now Son of God, now Mind, now Wisdom, now Divine Reason; which some again interpret, Word. But we must take diligent heed not to believe that this is He who by our theologians is called the Son of God; for, by the Son of God, we understand one same essence with the Father, equal to Him in all things, creator in fine and not creature; but what Platonists call the Son of God should rather be compared to the first and most noble Angel produced by God."¹¹ As Mr. Rigg points out, this is a confusion of the doctrine of Plotinus, concerning the first emanation from the Godhead, with various other mystical theories—but I hardly think we need suppose that Pico had abandoned the orthodox position.¹² The Neo-Platonists of the Renaissance seem to have been content to hold the Christian and the philosophical doctrine of the

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Intro- Word side by side. It may be noticed that there
duction is a somewhat analogous inconsistency in Dante's
"Convivio," whereby the lady of the poet's
worship seems at times a symbol of the second
Person of the Blessed Trinity (though under a
purely impersonal aspect), and at others a mere
abstraction of Wisdom in an idealized human
being. This confusion, such as it is, is avoided in
the mystical system of an earlier writer of the
Quattrocento, San Lorenzo Giustinian, by identi-
fying the Wisdom, of which philosophy is the
"amoroso uso," with the theological conception
of Christ as the Wisdom of the Father.¹³

In the second book we have the essence of the
whole discourse. It gives us the clearest and most
systematical exposition of that mystical creed of
love and beauty, already formulated by Marsilio
Ficino, which appealed so alluringly to many of
the finest minds of the Renaissance, and was, a
little later, to find more rapturous expression on
the lips of Bembo in the "Cortegiano" of Baldas-
sare Castiglione. "We should call beauty," wrote
Marsilio, "a certain lively and spiritual grace, the
which by the divine ray is first infused into
the Angels, then into the souls of men, and after
this, so far and in as much as it may be commu-
nicated, into corporeal figures and words, and
mundane material. And this grace, by means of
reason and sight and hearing, moveth and de-
lighteth our mind, and in the delight doth ravish,

and in ravishing doth kindle with ardent love.”¹⁴ Introduction
The more perfect human lovers, says Pico, “are those that, remembering a more perfect Beauty that their souls saw of old, before they were fettered to the body, are kindled with an incredible desire of rebeholding that Beauty; and to the end that they may obtain this purpose, they sever themselves as much as they can from the body, in such fashion that the soul returneth to her pristine dignity, becometh entirely mistress of the body, and is no longer subject to it in any wise. And then is the soul in that love which is the image of celestial love, and this alone is the human love that can be called perfect. When a man has reached this stage of love, he can go on increasing from perfection to perfection, until at last he cometh to such a grade of perfectedness that, uniting his soul entirely with the understanding, he is changed from man to Angel; and all inflamed with that angelical love, utterly purged from all the dross and stains of the earthly body, he is transformed into a spiritual flame by the power of love, and, flying up even to the intelligible heaven, he repositeth blissfully in the arms of the Primal Father.”¹⁵

It may, perhaps, be said that this is magnificent, but not practical religion. So Pico and Benivieni seem to have found, when they heard a simpler creed from the lips of Savonarola. Pico, who was one of those who stood by the deathbed

Introduction of Lorenzo de' Medici, confided to his nephew his intention of giving all his substance to the poor, and, arming himself with the crucifix, walking barefoot through the world, to speak of Christ in every town and village. This, however, was not to be. He had been told that he would die in the time that the lilies flowered, and he passed away, comforted in his last moments by a vision of the Blessed Virgin, in November, 1494, as the golden lilies on the royal standard of France were being borne in triumph through the Porta San Frediano. Benivieni cast his Plato aside, and became the poet of the Piagnoni. He revived Jacopone's doctrine that madness for Christ's sake is true wisdom, and wrote the laude that Savonarola's adherents sang in their processions through Florence. He came to regard his Platonic canzone as written "in another style than that of the book of life," and tried to counteract it by another, a "Canzone dello Amore celeste e divino secondo la verità cristiana e della fede cattolica," which soon fell into oblivion.¹⁶ In spite of his friendly relations with the younger branch of the Medici, he still kept the ideals of Savonarola, not only in his heart, but on his tongue—though they never carried him so far as even passive resistance to the government. The old poet's voice was heard for the last time in November, 1530, two months after the surrender of Florence to the imperial army and the final

downfall of the Republic, when he addressed a letter to Pope Clement, affirming his unshaken belief that Fra Girolamo was a true prophet. Twelve years later, in 1542, being nearly ninety years old, he died, and was buried with his beloved Pico in San Marco.

This theme of Platonic love inspired several writers in Italian in the early sixteenth century to tread in the footsteps of Ficino and Pico. Works like the "Libro di Natura d'Amore" of Ariosto's friend and correspondent, Mario Equicola, or the "Dialogo della infinità d'Amore" of the Spanish-Roman courtesan, Tullia d' Aragona, have little interest or spiritual significance; but a higher note is struck in the "Dialoghi di Amore" of Leone Abarbanel, known as Leone Ebreo, a Jewish physician of Portuguese descent whose family had settled in Naples. Recent research has shown that Leone died in 1542, the same year as Benivieni, but these "Dialoghi," discourses upon love between Philone and Sophia, appear to have been written in the first or second decade of the Cinquecento.¹⁷ The originality of the book lies in the author's standpoint. Whereas the other thinkers of this school are concerned in harmonising Plato with Christianity, Leone Abarbanel strives to show that Platonism is in accordance with Judaism, and thus to do for his co-religionists what Ficino and Pico had done for theirs.

But it is in the glorious prose poetry of the clos-

Intro- ing pages of the "Cortegiano" that this mystical
duction religion of Love and Beauty was to find its last
and most perfect utterance. Let us end, then, with
the prayer that Castiglione puts upon the lips of
Bembo:

"What mortal tongue then, O most holy Love, can worthily praise thee? . . . Vouchsafe, Lord, to hearken to our prayers. Infuse Thyself into our hearts, and, with the splendour of Thy most holy fire, illumine our darkness, and, like a trusted guide in this blind labyrinth, show us the true way. Do Thou correct the falseness of the senses, and, after long wandering in vanity, grant unto us the true and sound joy. Make us to smell those spiritual odours that vivify the virtues of the understanding, and to hear the heavenly harmony with such ineffable melody, that no discord of passion may any more have place within us. Do Thou inebriate us at that inexhaustible fountain of contentation that always doth delight and never doth satiate, and that giveth a taste of true beatitude to all that drink of its living and limpid waters. With the rays of Thy light, purge Thou our eyes from misty ignorance, that they may no more prize mere mortal beauty, and that they may know that the things that, at the first, they thought themselves to see, are not, and those that they saw not, are in very sooth. Accept, Lord, our souls that are offered unto Thee in sacrifice. Burn them in the living flame that consumeth all

gross filthiness, in order that, utterly separated from the body, they may be united by an everlasting and most sweet bond to the Divine Beauty. And may we, alienated from ourselves, be transformed like true lovers into the beloved; and, being uplifted from the earth, may we be admitted to the banquet of the Angels, where, fed with ambrosia and immortal nectar, we may at last die a most blissful and life-giving death—even as once did those Fathers of the olden time, whose souls, with most ardent virtue of contemplation, Thou didst ravish from the body, and didst join them with God.”

We can claim for Stanley's "Pico" a place, albeit a humble one, by the side of Hoby's version of the "Courtier," published a century earlier. Thomas Stanley is better known by his charming lyrics and his excellent translations from Anacreon. The "Platonick Discourse" was published in 1651, when he was twenty-seven years old, together with a reissue of his "Poems," his "Anacreon," and various other translations from his hand. It was reprinted in the second volume of his "History of Philosophy," published in 1656, and in subsequent editions of that rather ponderous work; but has not hitherto been reissued separately. His rendering of Benivieni's canzone (which he quaintly calls a "sonnet," and of which he reduces the metrical arrangement to rhyming couplets) has some poetical fire, and his translation of Pico's

Intro- commentary, which is considerably abridged,
duction has at least the merits of a noble English style and
greater clarity than the original. It is one of the
latest, but not the less delightful and typical, fruits
of the Italian Renaissance in English literature.

Edmund G. Gardner

December 8, 1913

A PLATONICK DISCOURSE
UPON LOVE

Written in Italian by
JOHN PICUS MIRANDULA
In Explication of a Sonnet by
Hieronimo Benivieni

2

[Printed in the Year 1651]

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AUGUST 1960



THE FIRST BOOK

I

IT is a Principle of the Platonists, That every created thing hath a threefold being: Causal, Formal, Participated. In the Sun there is no heat, that being but an elementary quality, not of Celestial nature: yet is the Sun the cause and Fountain of all heat. Fire is hot by nature, and its proper form: Wood is not hot of itself, yet is capable of receiving that quality by Fire. Thus hath heat its Causal being in the Sun, its Formal in the Fire, its Participated in the Fuel. The most noble and perfect of these is the Causal: and therefore Platonists assert, That all excellencies are in God after this manner of being: That in God is nothing, but from him all things; That Intellect is not in him, but that he is the original spring of every Intellect. Such is Plotinus's meaning, when he affirms, "God neither understands nor knows;" that is to say, after a formal way. As Dionysius Areopagita, "God is neither an Intellectual nor Intelligent nature, but unspeakably exalted above all Intellect and Knowledge."

Platonists distinguish Creatures into three degrees. The first comprehends the corporeal and visible, as Heaven, Elements, and all compounded of them: The last the invisible, incorporeal, absolutely free from bodies which properly are called Intellectual (by Divines, Angelical) Natures. Betwixt these is a middle nature, which though incorporeal, invisible, immortal, yet moveth bodies, as being obliged to that office; called, the rational soul; inferiour to Angels, superiour to Bodies; subject to those, regent of these: above which is God himself; author and principle of every Creature, in whom Divinity hath a causal being; from whom proceeding to Angels it hath a formal being, and thence is derived into the rational soul by participation of their lustre: below which no nature can assume the title of divine.

That the first of these three Natures cannot be multiplied, who is but one, the principle and cause of all other Divinity, is evidently proved by Platonists, Peripateticks, and our Divines. About the second, (viz.) the Angelick and Intellectual, Platonists disagree. Some (as Proclus, Hermias, Syrianus, and many others) betwixt God and the rational Soul place a great number of creatures; part of these they call *Νόετα, νόερα*, Intelligible; part Intellectual: which terms Plato sometimes confoundeth; as in his "Phaedo." Plotinus, Porphyrius, and generally, the most refined Platonists, betwixt God and the Soul of the World assigne onely one creature which they call the Son of God, because immediately produced by him. The first opinion complies most with Dionysius Areopagita, and Christian Divines, who assert the number of Angels to be in a manner infinite. The second is the more Philosophick, best suiting with Aristotle and Plato; whose sense we onely purpose to expresse; and therefore will decline the first path (though that only be the right) to pursue the latter.

We therefore according to the opinion of Plotinus confirmed not onely by the best Platonists, but even by Aristotle and all the Arabians, especially Avicenna, affirm, That God from eternity produced a creature of incorporeal and intellectual nature, as perfect as is possible for a created being, beyond which he produced nothing; for of the most perfect cause the effect must be most perfect: and the most perfect can be but one; for of two or more it is not possible but one should be more or lesse perfect than the rest, otherwise they would not be two, but the same. This reason for our opinion I rather choose than that which Avicen alledges, founded upon this principle, That from one cause, as one, can proceed but one effect. We conclude, therefore, that no creature but this first minde proceeds immediately from God: for of all other effects issuing from this minde, and all other second causes, God is onely the mediate efficient. This by Plato, Hermes, and Zoroaster is called the Daughter of God, the Minde, Wisdom, Divine Reason, by some interpreted the Word: not meaning (with our Divines) the Son of God, he not being a creature, but one essence coequal with the Creator.

All understanding agents have in themselves the form of that which they design to effect: as an Architect hath in his minde a figure of the building he undertakes, which as his pattern he exactly strives to imitate: This Platonists call the Idea or Exemplar, believing it more perfect, than that which is made after it: and this manner of Being, Ideal or Intelligible, the other Material and Sensible: So that when a Man builds a house, they affirm there are two, one intellectual in the Workman's minde; the other sensible, which he makes in Stone, Wood, or the like; expressing in that matter the form he hath conceiv'd: to this Dante alludes

“—None any work can frame
Unlesse himself become the same.”

Hereupon they say, though God produced onely one creature, yet he produced all, because in it he produced the Ideas and forms of all, and that in their most perfect being, that is the Ideal, for which reason they call this Minde, the Intelligible World.

✓ After the pattern of that Minde they affirm this sensible World was made, and the exemplar being the most perfect of all created things, it must follow that this image thereof be as perfect as its nature will bear. And since animate things are more perfect than the inanimate; and of those the rational than the irrational, we must grant, this World hath a soul perfect above all others. This is the first rational soul, which, though incorporeal and immaterial, is destin'd to the function of governing and moving corporeal Nature: not free from the body as that minde whence from Eternity it was deriv'd, as was the Minde from God. Hence Platonists argue the World is eternal; its soul being such, and not capable of being without a body, that also must be from Eternity; as likewise the motion of the Heavens, because the Soul cannot be without moving.

The ancient Ethnick Theologians, who cast Poetical vails over the face of their mysteries, express these three natures by other names. "Caelum" they call God himself; he produc'd the first Mind, "Saturn:" Saturn the Soul of the World, "Jupiter." "Caelum" implies priority and excellence, as in the Firmament, the first Heaven. Saturn signifies intellectual nature, wholly employ'd in contemplation; Jupiter active life, consisting in moving and governing all subordinate to it. The properties of the two latter agree with their Planets: Saturn makes Men Contemplative, Jupiter Imperious. The Speculative busied about things above them; the Practick beneath them.

Which three names are promiscuously used upon these grounds: In God we understand first his Excellence, which, as Cause, he hath above all his effects; for this he is called "Coelus." Secondly the production of those effects, which denotes conversion towards inferiours; in this respect he is sometimes called "Jupiter," but with an addition, "Optimus," "Maximus." The first Angelick nature hath more names, as more diversity. Every creature consists of Power and Act: the first, Plato in "Philebus" calls Infinite: the second, Finite: all imperfections in the Minde are by reason of the first; all perfections, from the latter. Her operations are threefold. About Superiours, the contemplation of God; about the knowledge of her self; about Inferiours, the production and care of this sensible World: these three proceed from Act. By Power she descends to make inferiour things; but in either respect is firm within her self. In the two first, because contemplative, she is called "Saturn:" in the third "Jupiter," a name principally applied to her power, as that part from whence is derived the act of production of things. For the same reason is the Soul of the World, as she contemplates her self or superiours, termed "Saturn;" as she is employed in ordering worldly things, "Jupiter:" and since the government of the World belongs properly to her; the contemplation to the Minde;

therefore is the one absolutely called "Jupiter," The First
the other "Saturn." Book

✓ This World therefore (as all other creatures) consisteth of a Soul and Body: the Body is all that we behold, compounded of the four Elements. These have their causal being in the Heavens (which consist not of them, as sublunary things; for then it would follow that these inferior parts were made before the celestial, the Elements in themselves being simple, by con- course causing such things as are compounded of them): Their formal being from the Moon down to the Earth: Their participate and imperfect under the Earth, evident in the Fire, Air, and Water experience daily findes there; evinc'd by natural Philosophers: to which the ancient Theologians aenigmatically allude by their four infernal Rivers, Acheron, Cocytus, Styx, and Phlegeton.

✓ We may divide the body of the World into three parts: Celestial, Mundane, Infernal: The ground why the Poets feign the Kingdom of Saturn to be shar'd betwixt his three sons, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto: implying onely the three- fold variation of this corporeal World; which, as long as it remains under Saturn, that is, in its Ideal Intellectual being, is one and undivided; and so more firm and potent: but falling into the hands of his Sons, that is, chang'd to this material Being, and by them divided into three parts, according to the triple existence of bod-

ies, is more infirm and lesse potent, degenerat-
ing from a spiritual to a corporeal estate. The
first part, the heavenly, they attribute to Ju-
piter; the last and lowest to Pluto; the middle
to Neptune. And because in this principality is
all generation and corruption, the Theologians
express it by the Ocean, ebbing or flowing con-
tinually: by Neptune understanding the Power
or Deity that presides over Generation. Yet we
must not imagine these to be different souls, dis-
tinctly informing these three parts: the World
her self being one, can have but one Soul; which
as it animates the subterranean parts, is called
Pluto; the sublunary, Neptune; the celestial, Ju-
piter. Thus Plato in "Philebus" averres "by Jove
is understood a regal soul," meaning the princi-
pal part of the World which governs the other.
This opinion, though onely my own, I suppose is
more true than the expositions of the Grecians.

Next that of the World, Platonists assigne many other rational souls. The eight principal are those of the heavenly Spheres; which according to their opinion exceeded not that number; consisting of the seven Planets, and the starry Orb. These are the nine Muses of the Poets: Calliope (the universal soul of the World) is first: the other eight are distributed to their several Spheres.

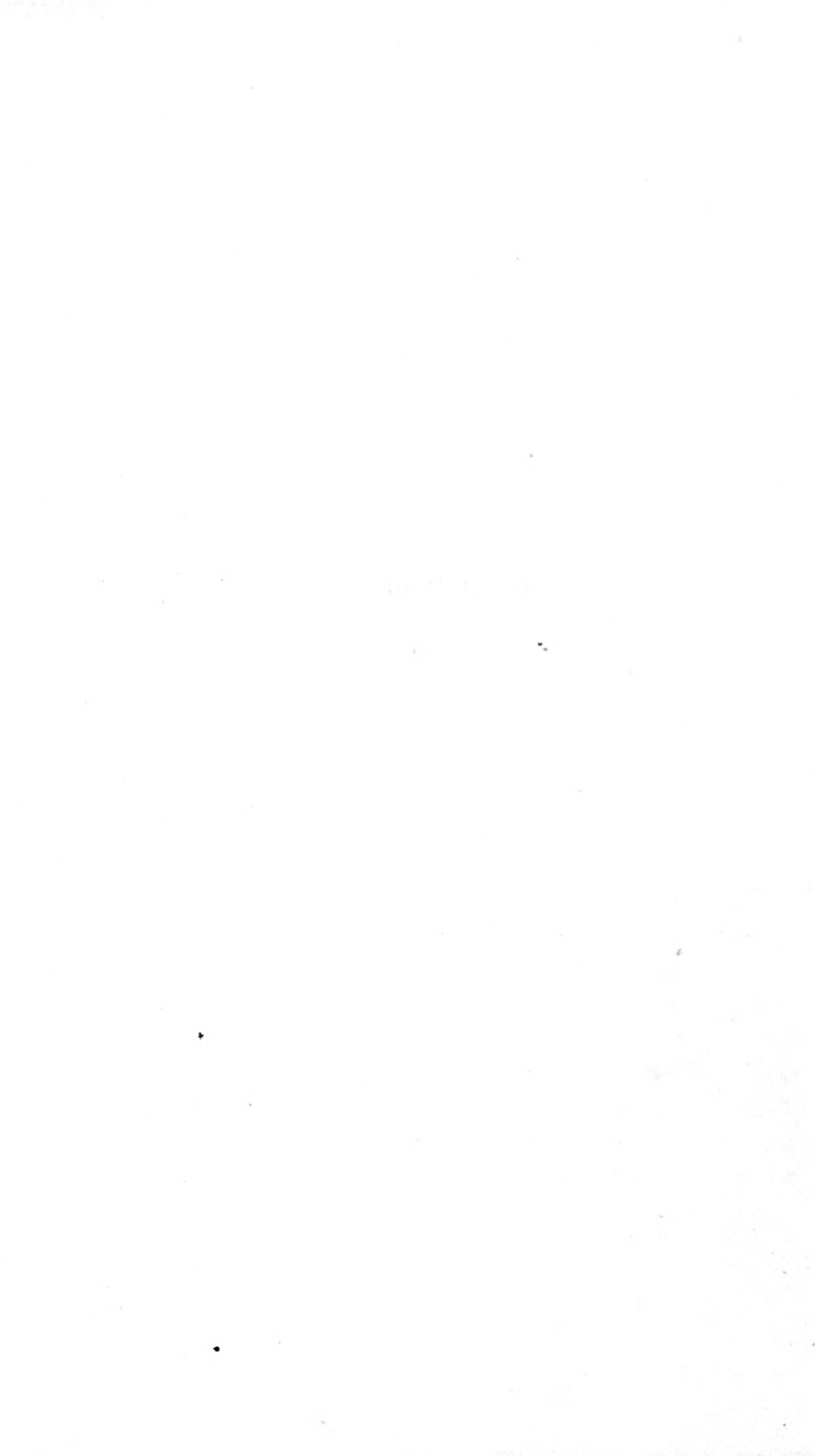
Plato asserts, that "the Author of the World made the mundane, and all other rational souls, in one Cup, and of the same Elements; the universall soul being most perfect, ours least:" whose parts we may observe by this division: Man, the chain that ties the World together, is placed in the midst: and as all mediums participate of their extreams, his parts correspond with the whole World; thence called "Microcosmus." In the World is first Corporeal Nature, eternal in the Heavens; corruptible in the Elements, and their compounds, as Stones, Mettals, &c. Then Plants. The third degree is of Beasts. The fourth Rational Souls. The fifth Angelical Mindes. Above these is God, their origine. In Man are likewise two bodies: one eternal, the Platonists' "Vehiculum caeleste," immediately inform'd by the rational soul: The other corruptible, subject to sight, consisting of the Elements: Then the vegetative faculty, by which generated and nourished. The third part is sensitive and motive. The fourth Rational; by the Latine Peripateticks believ'd the last and most noble part of the Soul: yet above that is the Intellectual and Angelick; the most excellent part whereof, we call the Soul's Union, immediately joyning it to God, in a manner resembling him; as in the other Angels, Beasts, and Plants. About these Platonists differ, Proclus and Porphyrius onely allow the rational

The First part to be Immortal; Zenocrates and Speusippus the sensitive also; Numenius and Plotinus the whole Soul.

Ideas have their causal being in God, their formal in the first Minde, their participated in the rational Soul. In God they are not, but produced by him in the Angelick nature, through this communicated to the Soul, by whom illuminated, when she reflects on her intellectual parts, she receives the true formes of things, Ideas. Thus differ the souls of Men from the celestial: these in their bodily functions recede not from the intellectual, at once contemplating and governing. Bodies ascend to them, they descend not. Those employ'd in corporeal office are depriv'd of contemplation, borrowing science from sense; to this wholly enclin'd; full of errorrs. Their onely means of release from this bondage is the amatory life; which by sensible beauties, exciting in the soul a remembrance of the intellectual, raiseth her from this terrene life to the eternal; by the flame of love refined into an Angel.



THE SECOND BOOK



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I

THE apprehensive faculties of the Soul are employ'd about truth, and falsehood; assenting to one, dissenting from the other. The first is affirmation; the second, negation. The desiderative converse in good and ill; inclining to this, declining that. The first is Love: the second Hate. Love is distinguish'd by its objects; if of riches, termed covetousness; of honour, ambition; of heavenly things, piety; of equals, friendship: these we exclude, and admit no other signification, but "the desire to possess what in it self, or at least in our esteem is fair:" of a different nature from the love of God to his Creatures, who comprehending all cannot desire or want the beauty and perfections of another: and from that of friends which must be reciprocal. We, therefore, with Plato define it, "The desire of Beauty." Desire is an inclination to real or apparent good. As there are divers kinds of good, so of desire. Love is a species of desire; Beauty of good. Desire is Natural or Knowing. All creatures have a particular perfection by participation of the divine goodness. This is their end, including that degree of felicity whereof they are capable; to which center they tend. This desire we call Natural; a great testimony of divine Provi-

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dence, by which they are unwittingly (as an arrow by the Archer) directed to their mark. With this all Creatures desire God, as being the original good imprinted and participated in every particular. This is in every Nature, as more or less capable, adressed to ends more or less noble; yet is the ultimate end of all the same, to enjoy God, as far as they may: thus as the Psalmist, "Every thing worships and praiseth God;" like suppliants "turning and offering themselves up to him," saith Theodore.

The other Species of Desire is employ'd onely about things known, given by Nature that to every apprehensive faculty there might be a desiderative; to embrace what it judgeth good, to refuse what it esteemeth evil; in its own nature enclin'd to good. None ever desir'd to be miserable; but the apprehensive Vertue many times mistaking Evil for Good, it oft falls out that the desiderative (in its self blinde) desires Evil. This in some sense may be said voluntary, for none can force it; in another sense, not voluntary, deceiv'd by the judgement of its Companion. This is Plato's meaning when he saith, "No man sins willingly."

It is the Property of every desiderative Vertue, that he who desires, possesseth in part the thing he desires; in part not: for if he were wholly deprived of its Possession, he would never desire it: this is verified two wayes. First, nothing is desired unless it be known; and to know a thing, is in some sort to possess it. So Aristotle; "The Soul is all, because it knows all." And in the Psalmist, God saith, "All things are mine, I know them." Secondly, there is alwayes some convenience and resemblance betwixt the desirer, and desired: Every thing delights, and preserves it self by that, which by natural affinity is most conformable to it; by its contrary is griev'd, and consum'd. Love is not betwixt things unlike; Repugnance of two opposite natures is natural hate. Hate is a repugnance with knowledge. Hence it followeth, that the nature of the desired, is in some manner in the desirer; otherwise, there would be no similitude betwixt them: yet imperfectly; else it were vain for it to seek what it entirely possesseth.

As desire generally follows knowledge, so several knowing are annexed to several desiring Powers. We distinguish the knowing into three degrees: Sense, Reason, Intellect; attended by three desiderative Vertues: Appetite, Election, Will. Appetite is in Brutes; Election in Men; Will in Angels. The Sense knows onely corporeal things, the Appetite onely desires such; the Angelick Intellect is wholly intent on Contemplation of spiritual Conceptions; not inclining to Material Things, but when divested of Matter, and spiritualiz'd, their Will is onely fed with intemporal spiritual Good. Rationall Nature is the mean betwixt these Extrems; sometimes descending to Sense, sometimes elevated to Intellect; by its own Election complying with the desires of which she pleaseth. Thus it appears that corporeal objects are desired, either by Sensual Appetite, or Election of Reason inclining to Sense: Incorporeal by Angelick Will, or the Election of Reason elevated to Intellectual Height.

Beauty in general is a "Harmony resulting from several things proportionably concurring to constitute a third;" In respect of which temperament and mixture of various Natures, agreeing in the composition of one, every creature is Fair; and in this sense no simple being is beautiful; not God himself; this Beauty begins after him; arising from contrariety, without which is no composition; it being the union of contraries, a friendly enmity, a disagreeing concord; whence Empedocles makes discord and concord the principles of all things; by the first, understanding the variety of the Natures compounding; by the second, their Union: adding, that in God onely there is no Discord, he not being the Union of several Natures, but a pure uncompounded Unity: In these compositions the Union necessarily predominates over the contrariety; otherwise the Fabrick would be dissolved. Thus in the Fictions of Poets, Venus loves Mars: this Beauty cannot subsist without contrariety; she curbs and moderates him; this temperament allays the strife betwixt these contraries. And in Astrology, Venus is plac'd next Mars, to check his destructive influence; as Jupiter next Saturn, to abate his malignancy. If Mars were alwayes subject to Venus (the contrariety of principles to their due temper), nothing would ever be dissolved.

This is Beauty in the largest sense, the same with Harmony; whence God is said to have framed the World with musical harmonious temperament. But Harmony properly impliyes a melodious agreement of Voices; and Beauty in a restrictt acception relates to a proportionable concord in visible things, as Harmony in audible. The desire of this Beauty is Love; arising onely from one knowing faculty, the Sight: and that gave Plotinus (Ennead. 3, lib. 5, 3) occasion to derive *ἔρως*, Love, from *ὄρασις*, Sight. Here the Platonist may object; If Love be onely of visible things, how can it be applyed to Ideas, invisible natures? We answer, Sight is twofold, corporeal, and spiritual; the first is that of Sense, the other the Intellectual faculty, by which we agree with Angels; this Platonists call Sight, the corporeal being onely an image of this. So Aristotle, "Intellect is that to the Soul which sight is to the Body:" Hence is Minerva (Wisdom) by Homer call'd *γλαυκῶπις*, Bright-ey'd. With this sight Moses, S. Paul, and other Saints, beheld the face of God: this Divines call Intellectual, intuitive cognition; the Beatifical vision, the Reward of the Righteous.

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As Sight, so Beauty (its object) is twofold; (the two Venus's celebrated by Plato and our Poet): Sensible, called Vulgar Venus; Intellectual in Ideas (which are the object of the Intellect as colour of sight), nam'd Celestial Venus. Love also is twofold, Vulgar and Celestiall; for as Plato saith, "There must necessarily be as many Loves as Venus's."

Venus then is Beauty, whereof Love is generated: properly his Mother, because Beauty is the cause of Love, not as productive principle of this act, to Love, but as its object: the Soul being the efficient cause of it as of all his acts; Beauty the material: For in Philosophy the efficient is assimilated to the Father, the material to the Mother.

Celestial Love is an Intellectual desire of Ideal Beauty: Ideas (as we said before) are the Patterns of things in God, as in their Fountain; in the Angelick Minde, Essential; in the Soul by Participation, which with the Substance partakes of the Ideas and Beauty of the first Minde. Hence it follows, that Love of Celestial Beauty in the Soul, is not Celestial Love perfectly, but the nearest Image of it. Its truest being is with the desire of Ideal Beauty in the first Minde, which God immediately adorns with Ideas.

Love (saith Plato) was begot on Penia, by Porus (the son of Metis) in Jupiter's Orchard, being drunk with Nectar, when the Gods met to celebrate Venus' birth. Nature in it self inform, when it receives form from God is the Angelick Minde; this form is Ideas, the first Beauty; which in this descent from their divine Fountain, mixing with a different nature, become imperfect. The first Minde, by its opacousness eclipsing their lustre, desires that Beauty which they have lost; this desire is Love; begot when Porus, the affluence of Ideas, mixeth with Penia, the indigence of that inform nature we termed Jupiter, in whose Garden the Ideas are planted; with these the first Minde adorned, was by the Ancients named Paradise; to which contemplative life and eternal felicity Zoroaster inviting us saith, "Seek, seek Paradise:" Our Divines transfer it to the Coelum Empyraeum, the seat of the happy Souls, whose blessedness consists in contemplation and perfection of the Intellect, according to Plato. This Love "begot on Venus' birthday," that is, when the Ideal Beauty, though imperfectly, is infused into the Angelick Minde; Venus yet as a childe, not grown to perfection. All the Gods assembled at this Feast, that is their Ideas (as by Saturn we understand both the Planet and his Idea), an expression borrowed from Parmenides. These Gods, then, are those

The Ideas that precede Venus (she is the Beauty and Grace resulting from their variety): "Invited to a banquet of Nectar and Ambrosia;" those whom God feasts with Nectar and Ambrosia are eternal beings, the rest not. These Ideas of the Angelick Minde are the first eternal; Porus was drunk with Nectar, this Ideal affluence fill'd with Eternity; other Ideas were not admitted to the Feast, not indued with Immortality.

Orpheus upon the same grounds saith, "Love was born before all other Gods, in the bosome of Chaos:" Because Nature full of indistinct imperfect forms (the Minde replenished with confused Ideas) desires their perfection.

The Angelick Minde desires to make these Ideas perfect; which can onely be done by means opposite to the causes of their imperfection, these are Recession from their Principle and mixtion with contrary Nature: their remedy, separation from the unlike Nature, and return and conjunction (as far as possible) with God. Love, the desire of this Beauty, excites the Minde to conversion and re-union with him. Every thing is more perfect as nearer its Principle; This is the first Circle. The Angelick Minde, proceeding from the Union of God, by revolution of intrinsecal knowledge returneth to him. Which with the Ancients is Venus Adulta, grown to perfection. Every Nature that may have this conversion, is a Circle; such alone are the Intellectual and Rational, and therefore onely capable of felicity, the obtaining their first Principle, their ultimate end and highest good. This is peculiar to Immortal Substances, for the Material (as both Platonists and Peripateticks grant) have not this reflection upon themselves, or their Principle. These (the Angelick Minde and Rational Soul) are the two intelligible Circles; answerable to which in the corporeal World are two more: the tenth Heaven immoveable, image of the first Circle; the Celestial Bodies, that are moveable, image of the second. The first Plato mentions not, as wholly different and irrepresentable by corporeal Na-

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Some attribute the name of Circle to God; by the ancient Theologists called "Coelus;" being a Sphere which comprehends all, as the outmost Heaven includes the World.—

In one respect this agrees with God, in another not: the property of beginning from a point and returning to it, is repugnant to him; who hath no beginning, but is himself that indivisible point from which all Circles begin, and to which they return. And in this sense it is like wise inconsistent with material things; they have a beginning, but cannot return to it.

In many other properties it agrees with God; He is the most perfect of beings; this of figures: neither admit addition: the last Sphere is the place of all Bodies, God of all Spirits: the Soul (say Platonists) is not in the Body, but the Body is in the Soul, the Soul in the Minde, the Minde in God, the outmost Place; who is therefore named by the Cabalists מקום.

The three Graces are Handmaids to Venus: Thalia, Euphrosyne, Aglaia; Viridity, Gladnesse, Splendour; properties attending Ideal Beauty. Thalia is the permanence of every thing in its entire being; thus is Youth called green, Man being then in his perfect state; which decayes at his years' encrease, into his last dissolution. Venus is proportion, uniting all things; Viridity, the duration of it. In the Ideal World where is the first Venus, is also the first Viridity; for no Intelligible Nature recedes from its being by growing old. It communicates this property to sensible things as far as they are capable of this Venus, that is, as long as their due proportion continues. The two other properties of Ideal Beauty are Illustration of the Intellect, Aglaia; Repletion of the will with desire and joy, Euphrosyne.

Of the Graces one is painted looking toward us; the continuation of our being is no reflex act. The other two with their faces from us, seeming to return; the operations of the Intellect and Will are reflexive: "What comes from God to us, returns from us to God."

Venus is said to be born of the Sea; Matter the Inform Nature, whereof every Creature is compounded, is represented by Water, continually flowing, easily receptible of any form. This being first in the Angelick Minde, Angels are many times exprest by Water, as in the Psalms, "The Waters above the Heavens praise God continually;" so interpreted by Origen; and some Platonists expound the Ocean (stil'd by Homer Father of Gods and Men) this Angelick Minde, Principle and Fountain of all other Creatures; Gemistius, Neptune; as Commander of all Waters, of all Mindes Angelical and Humane. This is that living Fountain, whereof he that drinketh shall never thirst; These are the Waters whereon (David saith) God hath founded the World.

Porus (the Affluence of Ideas proceeding from God) is stiled by Plato the Son of Metis (Counsell), in Imitation of the Scripture: whence our Saviour by Dionysius Areopagita is termed the Angel of Counsel, that is, the Messenger of God the Father, so Avicen calls the first Cause conciliative, the Minde not having Ideas from it self but from God, by whose counsel she receiveth Knowledge and Art to frame this visible World.

Love according to Plato is "Youngest and Oldest of the Gods;" They as all other things, have a twofold Being, Ideal and Natural. The first God in his natural being was Love, who dispenc'd theirs to all the rest, the last in his Ideal. Love was born in the Descent of the Ideas into the Angelick Minde, which could not be perfect till they, its essence, were made so, by Love's conversion to God. The Angelick Minde owing its naturall being to Love, the other Gods, who succeed this Minde, necessarily are younger than he in their natural Being, though they precede him in their Ideal, as not born till these Ideas, though imperfectly, were joyn'd to the inform'd Nature.

“The Kingdom of Necessity is said to be before that of Love:” Every Creature consists of two Natures, Material, the imperfect (which we here understand by Necessity), and Formal, the occasion of perfection. That whereof it most partakes is said to be predominant, and the creature to be subject to it. Hence is Necessity (Matter) suppos’d to reign when the Ideas were imperfect, and all Imperfections to happen during that time; all perfections after Love began his reign; for when the Minde was by him converted to God, that which before was imperfect in her, was perfected.

Venus is said "to command Fate." The order and concatenation of causes and effects in this sensible World, called Fate, depends on the order of the Intelligible World, Providence. Hence Platonists place Providence (the ordering of Ideas) in the first Minde, depending upon God its ultimate end, to which it leads all other things. Thus Venus being the order of those Ideas whereon Fate, the World's order, depends, commands it.

Fate is divided into three parts, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos: That which is one in Providence, indivisible in Eternity, when it comes into Time and Fate is divisible, into Past, Present, and Future. Others apply Atropos to the fixed Sphere, Clotho to the seven Planets, Lachesis to sublunary things.

Temporal corporeal things onely are subjected to Fate; the Rational Soul being incorporeal predominates over it; but is subjected to Providence, to serve which is true Liberty. By whom the Will (obeying its Laws) is led to the Acquisition of her desired end. And as often as she endeavours to loose her self from this Servitude, of Free she becomes a Servant and Slave to Fate, of whom before she was the Mistress. To deviate from the Laws of Providence is to forsake Reason to follow Sense and Irrational Appetite, which being corporeal are under Fate; he that serves these is much more a servant than those he serves.

As from God Ideas descend into the Angelick Minde, by which the Love of Intellectual Beauty is begot in her, called "Divine Love;" so the same Ideas descend from the Angelick Minde into the rational Soul, so much the more imperfect in her, as she wants of Angelicall Perfection: From these springs Humane Love. Plato discourseth of the first, Plotinus of the latter: who by the same Argument whereby he proves Ideas not accidental but substantiall in the Angelick Minde, evinceth likewise the specifical Reasons, the Ideas in the Soul, to be substantial, terming the Soul "Venus," as having a specious splendid Love in respect of these specifical Reasons.

Vulgar Love is the Appetite of sensible Beauty, through corporeal sight. The cause of this Beauty is the visible Heaven by its moving Power. As our motive faculty consists in Muscles and Nerves (the Instruments of its Operation), so the motive faculty of Heaven is fitted with a Body proper for circular sempiternal motion; through which Body the Soul (as a Painter with his Pencil) changeth this inferiour matter into various forms. Thus vulgar Venus (the beauty of material forms) hath her causal being from the moving power of the Heavens, her formal from colour, enlightened by the visible Sun as Ideas by the invisible; her participate in the Figure and just order of parts communicated to sight by mediation of light and colour, by whose interest onely it procures love.

As when the Ideas descend into the Minde, there ariseth a desire of enjoying that from whence this Ideal Beauty comes; so when the species of sensible Beauty flow into the Eye, there springs a twofold Appetite of Union with that whence this Beauty is deriv'd, one sensuall, the other rational; the Principles of Bestial and Humane Love. If we follow Sense, we judge the Body, wherein we behold this Beauty, to be its Fountain; whence proceeds a desire of Coition, the most intimate union with it. This is the Love of irrational Creatures. But Reason knows that the Body is so far from being its Original, that it is destructive to it, and the more it is sever'd from the Body, the more it enjoys its own Nature and Dignity: we must not fix with the species of Sense, in the Body; but refine that species from all reliques of corporeal infection.

And because Man may be understood by the Rational Soul, either considered apart, or in its union to the Body; in the first sense, Humane Love is the Image of the Celestial; in the second, Desire of sensible Beauty; this being by the Soul abstracted from matter, and (as much as its nature will allow) made intellectual. The greater part of Men reach no higher than this; others more perfect, remembering that more perfect Beauty which the Soul (before immerst in the Body) beheld, are inflam'd with an incredible

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desire of reviewing it, in pursuit whereof they separate themselves as much as possible from the Body, of which the Soul (returning to its first Dignity) becomes absolute Mistress. This is the Image of Celestial Love, by which Man ariseth from one perfection to another, till his Soul (wholly united to the Intellect) is made an Angel. Purged from Material dross and transformed into spiritual flame by this Divine Power, he mounts up to the Intelligible Heaven, and happily rests in his Father's bosome.

Vulgar love is onely in Souls immerst in Matter, and overcome by it, or at least hindred by perturbations and passions. Angelick Love is in the Intellect, eternal as it. Yet but inferr'd, the greater part turning from the Intellect to sensible things, and corporeal cares. But so perfect are these celestial Souls, that they can discharge both Functions, rule the Body, yet not be taken off from Contemplation of Superiours: these the Poets signify by Janus with two faces; one looking forward upon Sensible things, the other on Intelligible: lesse perfect Souls have but one face, and, when they turn that to the Body, cannot see the Intellect, being depriv'd of Contemplation; when to the Intellect, cannot see the Body, neglecting the care thereof. Hence those souls that must forsake the Intellect to apply themselves to Corporeal Government, are by Divine Providence confin'd to caduque, corruptible Bodies, loosed from which, they may in a short time, if they fail not themselves, return to their Intellectual felicity. Other souls not hindred from Speculation are tyed to eternal incorruptible Bodies.

Celestial Souls then (design'd by Janus, as the Principles of Time, motion intervening) behold the Ideal Beauty in the Intellect to love it perpetually; and inferiour sensible things, not to desire their Beauty, but to communicate this other to them. Our Souls before united to the Body are

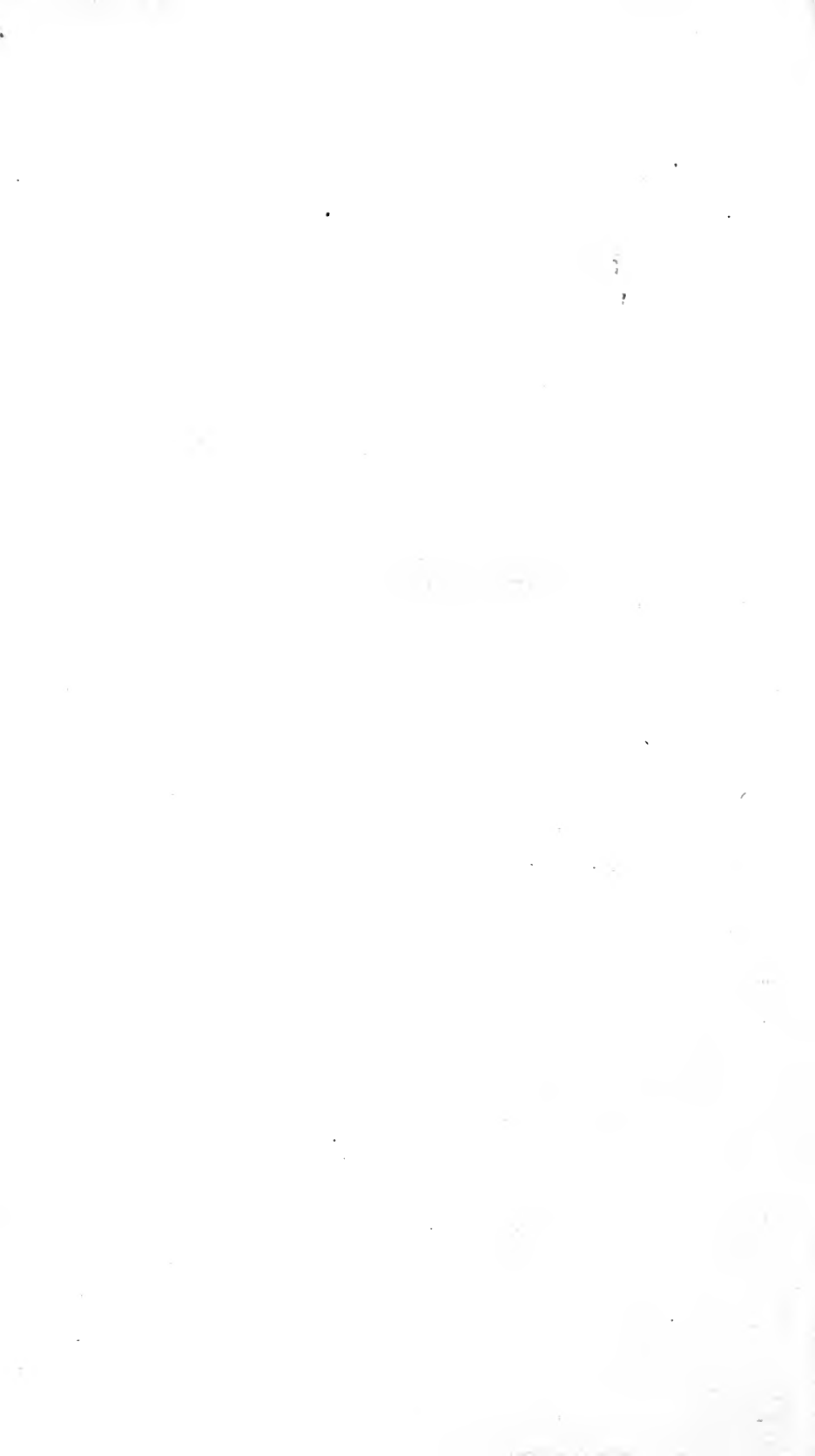
The ✓ in like manner double fac'd, but are then as it
Second were cleft asunder, retaining but one; which as
Book they turn to either object, Sensual or Intellectual, is deprived of the other.

Thus is vulgar Love inconsistent with the Celestial; and many ravish'd at the sight of Intellectual Beauty, become blinde to sensible; imply'd by Callimachus, Hymn 5 in the Fable of Tyresias, who viewing Pallas naked, lost his sight, yet by her was made a Prophet; closing the eyes of his Body, she open'd those of his Minde, by which he beheld both the Present and Future. The Ghost of Achilles, which inspired Homer with all Intellectual Contemplations in Poetry, deprived him of corporeal sight.

Though Celestial Love liveth eternally in the Intellect of every Soul, yet onely those few make use of it, who declining the care of the Body, can with S. Paul say, "Whether in the Body or out of the Body they know not." To which state a man sometimes arrives; but continues there but a while, as we see in Extasies.

Thus in our Soul (naturally indifferent to sensible or intelligible Beauty) there may be three Loves; one in the Intellect, Angelical; the second Humane; the third Sensual. The two latter are conversant about the same object, Corporeal Beauty; the sensual fixeth its Intention wholly in it; the humane separates it from Matter. The greater part of Mankind go no further than these two; but they whose understandings are purified by Philosophy, knowing sensible Beauty to be but the Image of another more perfect, leave it, and desire to see the Celestial, of which they have already a Taste in their Remembrance; if they persevere in this Mental Elevation, they finally obtain it; and recover that, which though in them from the beginning, yet they were not sensible of, being diverted by other objects.

THE SONNET



THE SONNET

I

Love (whose hand guides my Heart's
strict Reins,
Nor, though he govern it, disdains
To feed the Fire with pious care
Which first himself enkindled there)
Commands my backward Soul to tell
What Flames within her Bosome dwell;
Fear would perswade her to decline
The charge of such a high design;
But all her weak reluctance fails,
'Gainst greater Force no Force avails.
Love to advance her flight, will lend
Those wings by which he did descend
Into my Heart, where he to rest
For ever, long since built his Nest:
I what from thence he dictates write,
And draw him thus by his own Light.

The
Sonnet

Love, flowing from the sacred Spring
Of uncreated Good, I sing:
When born; how Heaven he moves; the Soul
Informs; and doth the World controwl;
How closely lurking in the heart,
With his sharp weapon's subtle art
From heavy earth he Man unties,
Enforcing him to reach the skies.
How kindled, how he flames, how burns;
By what laws guided now he turns
To Heaven, now to the Earth descends,
Now rests 'twixt both, to neither bends.
Apollo, Thee I invoke,
Bowing beneath so great a weight.
Love, guide me through this dark design,
And imp my shorter wings with thine.

III

The
Sonnet

When from true Heav'n the sacred Sun
Into th' Angelick Minde did run,
And with enliv'ned Leaves adorn,
Bestowing form on his first-born;
Enflamed by innate Desires,
She to her chiefest good aspires;
By which reversion her rich Breast
With various Figures is imprest;
And by this love exalted, turns
Into the Sun for whom she burns.
This flame, rais'd by the Light that shin'd
From Heav'n into th' Angelick Minde,
Is eldest Love's religious Ray,
By Wealth and Want begot that Day,
When Heav'n brought forth the Queen,
whose Hand
The Cyprian Scepter doth Command.

The
Sonnet

IV

This born in amorous Cypris' armes,
The Sun of her bright Beauty warmes.
From this our first desire accrues,
Which, in new fetters caught, pursues
The honourable path that guides
Where our eternal good resides.
By this the fire, through whose fair beams
Life from above to Mankinde streams,
Is kindled in our hearts, which glow
Dying, yet glowing greater grow;
By this th' immortal Fountain flows,
Which all Heaven forms below, bestowes;
By this descends that shower of light
Which upwards doth our minds invite;
By this th' Eternal Sun inspires
And Souls with sacred lustre fires.

As God doth to the Minde dispencc
Its Being, Life, Intelligence,
So doth the Minde the Soul acquaint
How t' understand, to move, to paint;
She thus prepar'd, the Sun that shines
In the Eternal Breast designs,
And here what she includes diffuses,
Exciting every thing that uses
Motion and sense (beneath her state)
To live, to know, to operate.
Inferiour Venus hence took Birth;
Who shines in Heav'n, but lives on Earth,
And o'er the World her shadow spreads:
The elder in the Sun's Glasse reads
Her Face, through the confused skreen
Of a dark Shade obscurely seen;
She Lustre from the Sun receives,
And to the other Lustre gives;
Celestial Love on this depends,
The younger, vulgar Love attends.

The
Sonnet

VI

Form'd by th' eternal Look of God,
From the Sun's most sublime abode,
The Soul descends into Man's Heart,
Imprinting there with wondrous Art
What Worth she borrowed of Her Starre,
And brought in her Celestial Carre;
As well as humane Matter yields,
She thus her curious Mansion builds;
Yet all those frames from the divine
Impression differently decline:
The Sun, who's figur'd here, his Beams
Into another's Bosome streams;
In whose agreeing Soul he stayes,
And guilds it with his virtuous Rayes:
The Heart in which Affection's bred,
Is thus by pleasing Errour fed.

VII

The
Sonnet

The Heart where pleasing Errour reigns,
 This object as her Childe maintains,
 By the fair Light that in her shines
 (A rare Celestial Gift) refines;
 And by degrees at last doth bring
 To her first splendours sacred Spring:
 From this divine Look, one Sun passes
 Through three refulgent Burning-glasses, ✓
 Kindling all Beauty, which the Spirit,
 The Body, and the Minde inherit.
 These rich spoyles, by th' eye first caught,
 Are to the Soul's next Handmaid brought,
 Who there resides: She to the Breast
 Sends them; reform'd, but not exprest:
 The Heart, from Matter Beauty takes,
 Of many one Conception makes;
 And what were meant by Nature's Laws,
 Distinct, She in one Picture draws. ✓

united
 in men

The
Sonnet

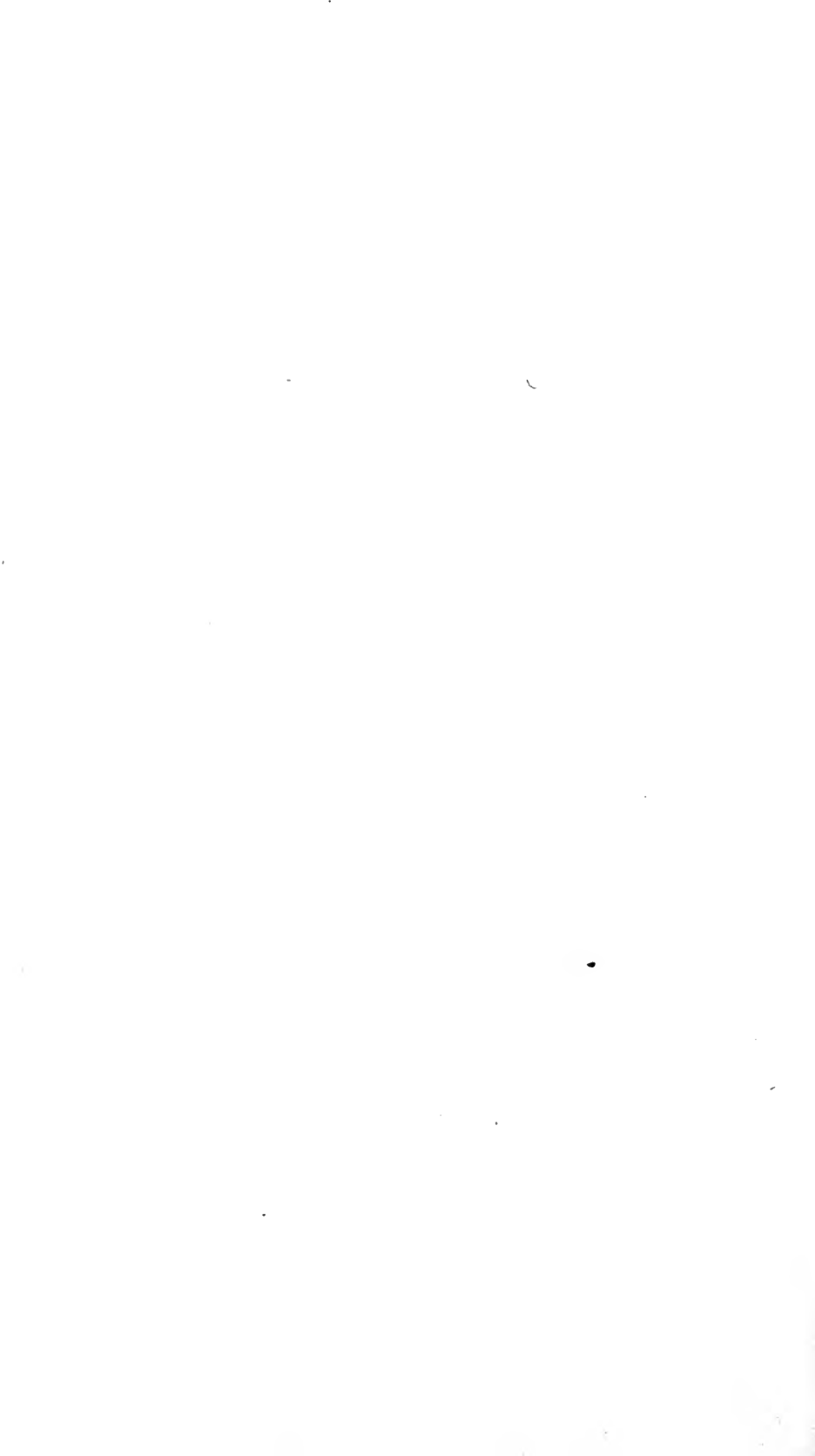
VIII

The Heart by Love allur'd to see
Within her self her Progenie;
This, like the Sun's reflected Rayes
Upon the Water's face, survayes;
Yet some divine, though clouded Light
Seems here to twinkle, and invite
The pious Soul, a Beauty more
Sublime and Perfect to adore;
Who sees no longer his dim shade
Upon the Earth's vast Globe display'd,
But certain Lustre, of the True
Sun's truest Image, now in view.
The Soul thus entring in the Minde,
There such uncertainty doth finde,
That she to clearer Light applies
Her Armes, and near the first Sun flies:
She by his splendour beautious grows,
By loving whom all Beauty flows
Upon the Minde, Soul, World, and All
Included in this spacious Ball.

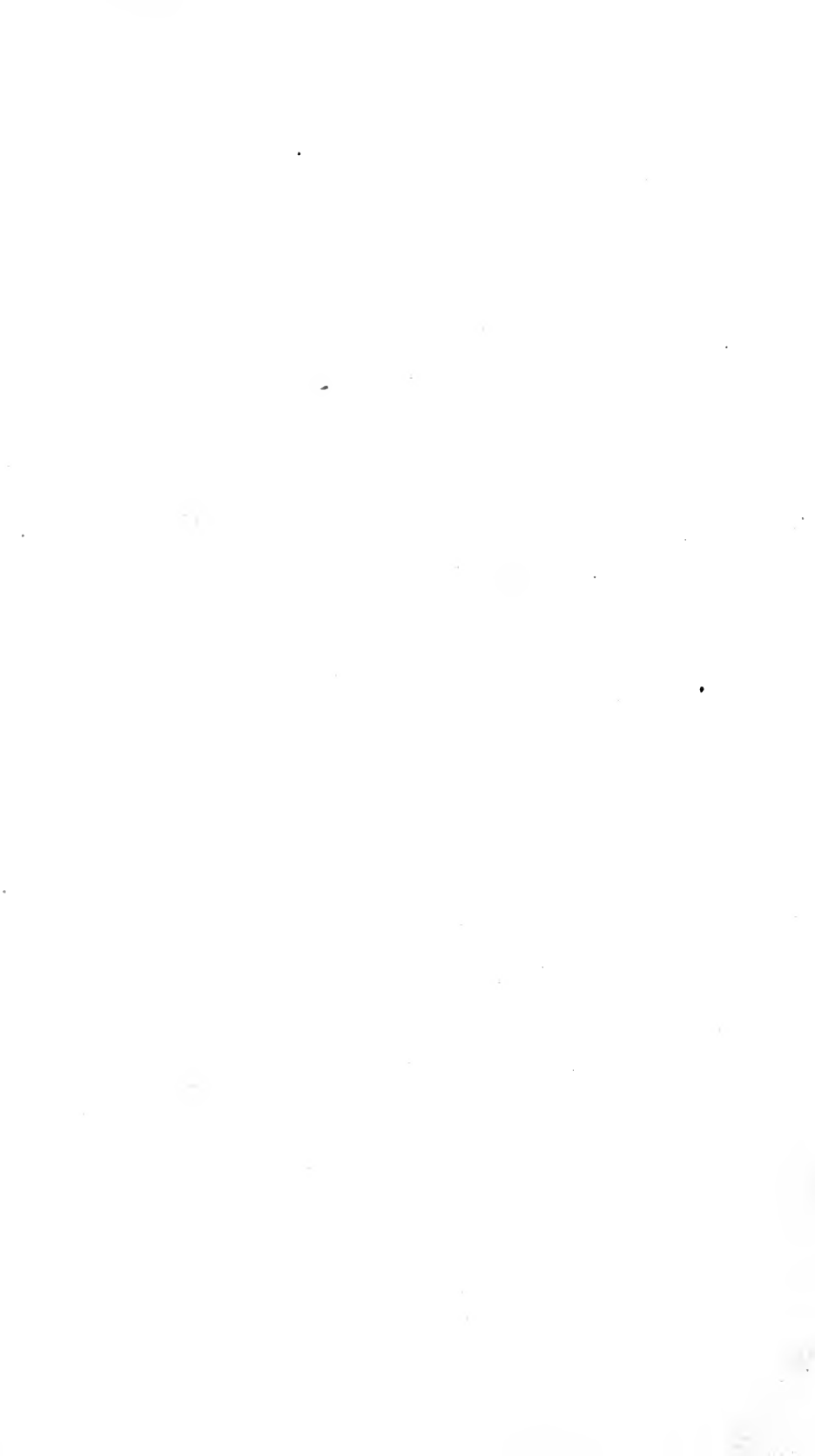
IX

The
Sonnet

But hold! Love stops the forward Course
That me beyond my scope would force.
Great Power! if any Soul appears
Who not alone the blossomes wears,
But of the rich Fruit is possest,
Lend him thy Light, deny the rest.



THE THIRD BOOK



THE THIRD BOOK

TO treat of both Loves belongs to different sciences; Vulgar Love to Natural or Moral Philosophy; Divine, to Theology or Metaphysics. Solomon discourseth excellently of the first in "Ecclesiastes," as a Natural Philosopher, in his "Proverbs," as a Moral: of the Second in his "Canticles," esteemed the most divine of all the Songs in Scripture.

The chief order established by divine Wisdom in created things is, that every inferiour Nature be immediately governed by the superiour; whom whilst it obeys, it is guarded from all ill, and led without any obstruction to its determinate felicity; but if through too much affection to its own liberty, and desire to prefer the licentious life before the profitable, it rebel from the superiour nature, it falls into a double inconvenience. First, like a ship given over by the Pilot, it lights sometimes on one Rock, sometimes on another, without hope of reaching the Port. Secondly, it loseth the command it had over the Natures subjected to it, as it hath deprived its superiour of his. Irrational Nature is ruled by another, unfit for its Imperfection to rule any. God by his ineffable Excellence provides for every thing, himself needs not the providence of any other: betwixt the two extremes, God and Brutes, are Angels and Rational Souls, governing others, and govern'd by others. The first Hierarchy of Angels, immediately illuminated by God, enlighten the next under them; the last (by Platonists termed Daemons, by the Hebrews דַּשְׂרִים as Guardians of Men) are set over us as we over Irrationals. So Psalm 8. Whilst the Angels continued subject to the Divine Power, they retained their Authority over other Creatures; but when Lucifer and his Companions, through inordinate love of their own Excellence,

aspir'd to be equal with God, and to be con- The
served, as he, by their own strength, they fell Third
from Glory to extream Misery; and when they Book
lost the Priviledge they had over others, seeing us
freed from their Empire, enviously every hour in-
sidiatè our good. The same order is in the lesser
World, our Soul: the inferiour faculties are di-
rected by the superiour, whom following they
erre not. The imaginative corrects the mistakes of
outward sense: Reason is illuminated by the In-
tellect, nor do we at any time miscarry, but when
the Imaginative will not give credit to Reason,
or Reason confident of it self, resists the Intellect.
In the desiderative the Appetite is govern'd by the
Rational, the Rational by the Intellectual, which
our Poet implies, saying,

“Love whose hand guides my heart's strict reins.”

The cognoscitive powers are seated in the Head,
the desiderative in the Heart. In every well or-
der'd Soul the Appetite is govern'd by Intellec-
tual Love; implied by the Metaphore of Reines
borrowed from Plato in his “Phaedrus.”

“Love to advance my flight, will lend
The wings by which he did descend
Into my heart—”

When any superiour vertue is said to descend,
we imply not that it leaves its own height to
come down to us, but draws us up to it self: its

The descending to us, is our ascending to it: otherwise such conjunction would be the imperfection of the vertue, not the perfection of him who receives it.

STANZA II

The
Third
Book

“Love, flowing from the sacred Spring
Of uncreated Good—”

From the Fountain of divine goodness into our
souls in which that influx is terminated.

“When born,—”

The order, participation, conversion of Ideas; see
lib. 2, sect. 18.

“—how Heaven he moves; the Soul
Informs; and doth the World controwl.”

Of these three properties Love is not the effi-
cient: God produceth the Ideas in the Angelick
Minde; the Minde illustrates the Soul with Ideal
Beauty; Heaven is moved by its proper Soul:
But without Love these principles do not oper-
ate: He is cause of the Minde's conversion to God,
and of the Soul's to the Minde; without which the
Ideas would not descend into the one, nor the spe-
cifick reasons into the other: the Soul not illumi-
nated by these, could not elicit this sensible form
out of matter by the motion of Heaven.

STANZA III

When the first emanation from God (the plenty of Ideas) descended into the Angelick Minde, she, desiring their perfection, reverts to God, obtaining of him what she covets; which the more fully she possesseth, the more fervently she loves. This desire (Celestial Love), born of the obscure Minde and Ideas, is explain'd in this stanza.

“-true Heaven-”

God, who includes all created beings, as Heaven all sensible (lib. 2, sect. 11). Onely Spiritual things according to Platonists are true and real, the rest but shadows and images of these.

“-the sacred Sun-”

The light of Ideas streaming from God.

“-enliven'd Leaves-”

The Metaphore of Leaves relates to the Orchard of Jupiter, where these Ideas were planted (lib. 2, sect. 10): “Enliven'd” as having in themselves the principle of their operation, Intellection, the noblest life, as the Psalmist, “Give me understanding and I shall live.” So the Cabalists to the second Sephirah, which is Wisdom, attribute the name of Life.

“-adorn, bestowing form-”

To adorn denotes no more than accidentall perfection, but Ideas are the Substance of the Minde,

and therefore he adds "bestowing form;" which though they come to her from without, she receives not as accidents, but as her first intrinsic act: which our Author implies, terming her desires innate. The
Third
Book

"And by this Love exalted, turns
Into the Sun for whom she burns."

Love transforms the lover into the thing loved. ✓

"—Wealth and Want—"

Porus and Penia (lib. 2, sect. 10).

The
Third
Book

STANZA IV

The properties of Celestial Love are in this stanza discovered.

“—in new fetters caught—”

The Soul being opprest by the Body, her desire of Intellectual Beauty sleeps; but, awakened by Love, is by the sensible Beauty of the Body led at last to their Fountain, God.

“—which glow

Dying, yet glowing greater grow.”

Motion and Operation are the signes of life, their privation of death; in him who applies himself to the intellectual part, the rational and the sensitive fail; by the Rational he is Man; by the Intellectual communicates with Angels: As Man he dyes, reviv'd an Angel. Thus the Heart dyes in the flames of Intellectual Love, yet consumes not, but by this death “grows greater,” receives a new and more sublime life. See in Plato the Fables of Alcestes and Orpheus.

1. 10. 15. 27

Essentially
Christian

STANZA V

The
Third
Book

This stanza is a description of sensible Beauty.

“The elder in the Sun’s glasse reads
Her face, through the confused skreen
Of a dark shade obscurely seen.”

Sensible light is the act and efficacy of corporeal, spiritual light of Intelligible Beauty. Ideas in their descent into the inform Angelick Minde, were as colours and figures in the Night. As he who by Moonlight seeth some fair object, desires to view and enjoy it more fully in the day; so the Minde, weakly beholding in her self the Ideal Beauty dim, and opacous (which our Author calls “the skreen of a dark shade”) by reason of the Night of her imperfection, turns (like the Moon) to the eternal Sun, to perfect her Beauty by him; to whom addressing her self, she becomes Intelligible light; clearing the beauty of Celestial Venus, and rendring it visible to the eye of the first Minde.

In sensible Beauty we consider first the object in it self; the same at Midnight as at Noon: secondly the light, in a manner the Soul thereof: the Author supposeth, that as the first part of sensible Beauty (corporeal forms) proceeds from the first part of Intellectual Beauty (Ideal forms), so sensible light flows from the intelligible descending upon Ideas.

Corporeal Beauty implies, first the material disposition of the Body, consisting of quantity in the proportion and distance of parts, of quality in figure and colour: secondly, a certain quality which cannot be express by any term better than Gracefulness, shining in all that is fair. This is properly Venus, Beauty, which kindles the fire of Love in Mankind: they who affirm it results from the disposition of the Body, the sight, figure, and colour of features, are easily confuted by experience. We see many persons exact, and unaccusable in every part, destitute of this grace, and comeliness; others lesse perfect in those particular conditions, excellently graceful and comely; Thus Catullus,

“Many think Quintia beautiful; fair and tall,
And strait she is, a part I grant her all,
But altogether beautiful I deny;
For not one grace doth that large shape supply.”

He grants her Perfection of Quality, Figure, and Quantity, yet not allows her handsome, as wanting this Grace. This then must by consequence be ascribed to the Soul; which when perfect and lucid, transfuseth even into the Body some Beams of its Splendour. When Moses came from the divine Vision in the Mount, his face did shine so exceedingly, that the People could not behold it, unlesse veil'd. Porphyrius relates, that when Plo-

tinus his Soul was elevated by divine Contem-
plation, an extraordinary brightness appear'd in
his looks; Plotinus himself averres, that there was
never any beautiful Person wicked, that this
Gracefulnesse in the Body is a certain signe of
Perfection in the Soul. Proverbs xvii. 24. "Wis-
dom shineth in the countenance of the Wise."

From Material Beauty we ascend to the first
Fountain by six Degrees: the Soul through the
sight represents to her self the Beauty of some
particular Person, inclines to it, is pleased with it,
and while she rests here, is in the first, the most
imperfect material degree. 2. She reforms by her
imagination the Image she hath received, making
it more perfect as more spiritual; and separating
it from Matter, brings it a little nearer Ideal Beauty.
3. By the light of the agent Intellect abstracting
this Form from all singularity, she considers the
universal Nature of Corporeal Beauty by it self:
this is the highest degree the Soul can reach
whilst she goes no further than Sense. 4. Reflect-
ing upon her own Operation, the knowledge
of universal Beauty, and considering that every
thing founded in Matter is particular, she con-
cludes this universality proceeds not from the
outward Object, but her Intrinsic Power: and
reasons thus: If in the dimme Glasse of Mate-
rial Phantasmes this Beauty is represented by
vertue of my Light, it follows that, beholding it
in the clear Mirrour of my substance devested

The Third Book of those Clouds, it will appear more perspicuous: thus turning into her self, she findes the Image of Ideal Beauty communicated to her by the Intellect, the Object of Celestiall Love. 5. She ascends from this Idea in her self, to the place where Celestial Venus is, in her proper form: Who in fullness of her Beauty not being comprehensible, by any particular Intellect, she, as much as in her lies, endeavours to be united to the first Minde, the chiefest of Creatures, and general Habitation of Ideal Beauty. Obtaining this, she terminates, and fixeth her journey; this is the sixth and last degree. They are all imply'd in the 6th, 7th, and 8th Stanzas

“Form'd by th' eternal Look, &c.”

Platonists affirm some Souls are of the nature of Saturn, others of Jupiter or some other Planet; meaning, one Soul hath more conformity in its Nature with the Soul of the Heaven of Saturn, than with that of Jupiter, and so on the contrary; of which there can be no internal Cause, assigned; the external is God, who (as Plato in his “Timaeus”) “Soweth and scattereth Souls, some in the Moon, others in other Planets and Stars, the Instruments of Time.”

Many imagine the Rational Soul descending from her Star, in her “Vehiculum Coeleste,” of her self forms the Body, to which by that Medium she is united. Our Author upon these

grounds supposeth, that into the "Vehiculum" of the Soul, by her endued with Power to form the Body, is infused from her Star a particular formative vertue, distinct according to that Star; thus the aspect of one is Saturnine, of another Jovial, &c. In their looks we reade the nature of their Souls.

But because inferiour Matter is not ever obedient to the Stamp, the vertue of the Soul is not alwayes equally exprest in the visible Effigies; hence it happens that two of the same Nature are unlike; the Matter whereof the one consists, being lesse disposed to receive that Figure than the other; what in that is compleat is in this imperfect; our Author infers, that the figures of two Bodies being formed by vertue of the same Star, this Conformity begets Love.

"From the Sun's most sublime abode."

The Tropick of Cancer: by which Souls according to Platonists descend, ascending by Capricorn. Cancer is the House of the Moon, who predominates over the vital Parts, Capricorn of Saturn presiding over Contemplation.

"The Heart in which Affection's bred
Is thus by pleasing Errour fed."

Frequently, if not alwayes, the Lover believes that which he loves more beautious than it is; he beholds it in the Image his Soul hath formed

The Third Book of it, so much fairer as more separate from Matter, the Principle of Deformity; besides, the Soul is more indulgent in her Affection to this Species, considering it is her own Childe produc'd in her Imagination.

“—one Sun passes
Through three refulgent Burning-glasses.”
One Light flowing from God, beautifies the Angelick, the Rational Nature, and the Sensible World.

“—the Soul's next Handmaid—”
The Imaginative.

“—to the Breast.”
The Breast and Heart here taken for the Soul because her nearest Lodging; the Fountain of Life and Heat.

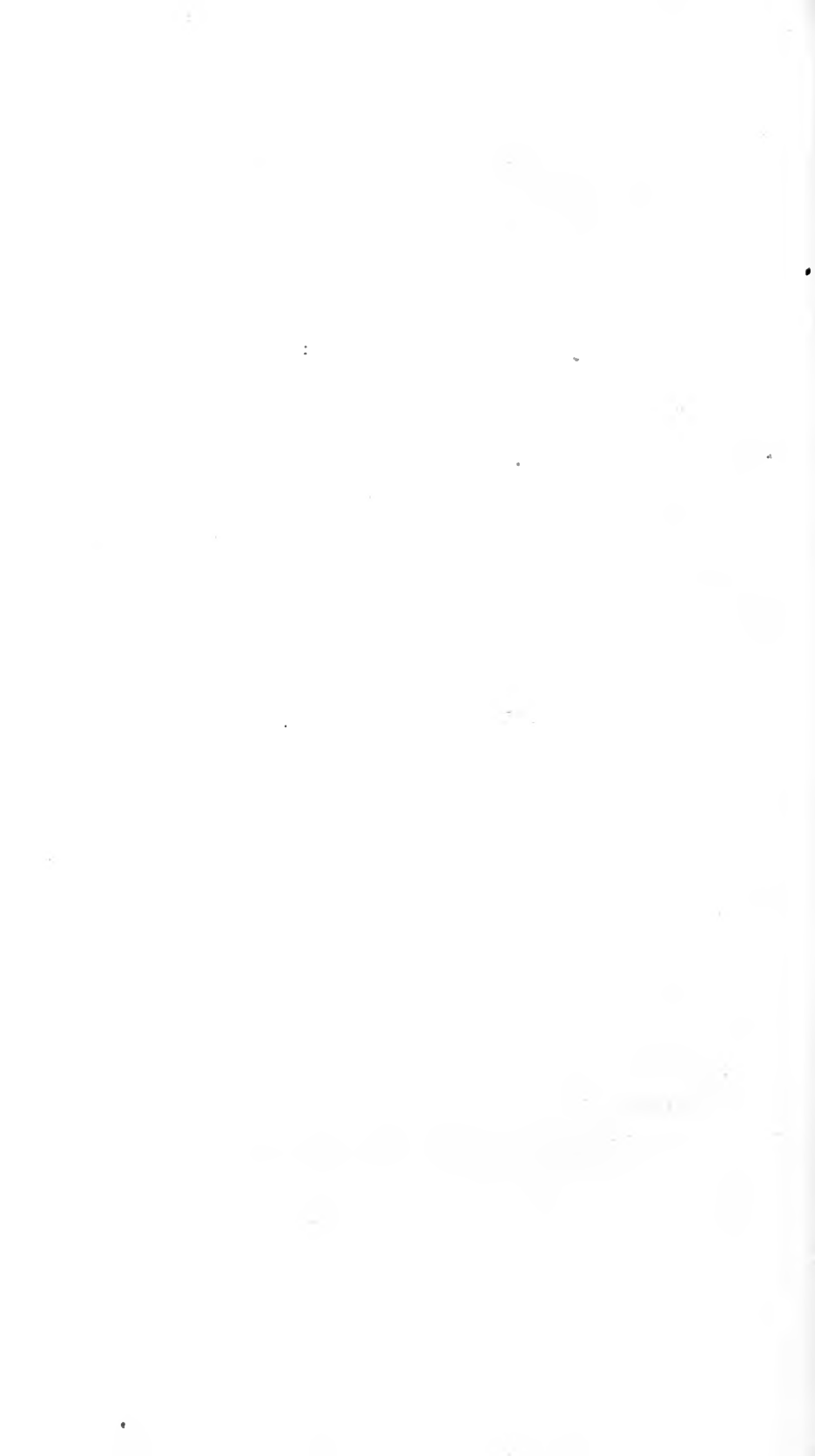
“—reform'd, but not exprest.”
“Reform'd” by the Imagination from the deformity of Matter; yet not reduc'd to perfect immateriality, without which true Beauty is not “Exprest.”

Finis

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION



- ¹ Cf. N. Mattioli, *Studio critico sopra Egidio Romano Colonna* (Rome, 1896), pp. 195 et seq.; and, in support of the traditional attribution to Egidio, G. Boffito, *Saggio di Bibliografia Egidianiana* (Florence, 1911), pp. 57, 58.
- ² *Liber I Metaphysicorum*, V, xv.
- ³ *Inf.* iv, 131.
- ⁴ *Triumphus Famae*, iii, 4-7.
- ⁵ *Marsilii Ficini Opera* (Basle, 1576), I, p. 649.
- ⁶ Prefatory letters to Bernardo del Nero & Antonio Manetti: Marsilio Ficino sopra l'Amore overo Convito di Platone.
- ⁷ *Opera*, ed. cit., I, p. 628.
- ⁸ Cf. Caterina Re, *Girolamo Benivieni Fiorentino*, pp. 75-80.
- ⁹ *De veritate Fidei in Dominicae Crucis triumphum*, IV, iii.
- ¹⁰ Cf. J. M. Rigg, *Pico della Mirandola*, pp. xxiii, xxiv.
- ¹¹ *Commento*, i, sect. 4.
- ¹² But cf. Mr. Rigg's interpretation of this passage, *op. cit.*, pp. xxv, xxvi.
- ¹³ Cf. especially his *Fasciculus Amoris*.
- ¹⁴ *Sopra l'Amore*, p. 108.
- ¹⁵ *Commento*, ii, sect. 20.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Caterina Re, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-211.
- ¹⁷ Cf. E. Solmi, *Benedetto Spinoza e Leone Ebreo. Studio su una fonte italiana dimenticata dello Spinozismo*. Modena, 1903.



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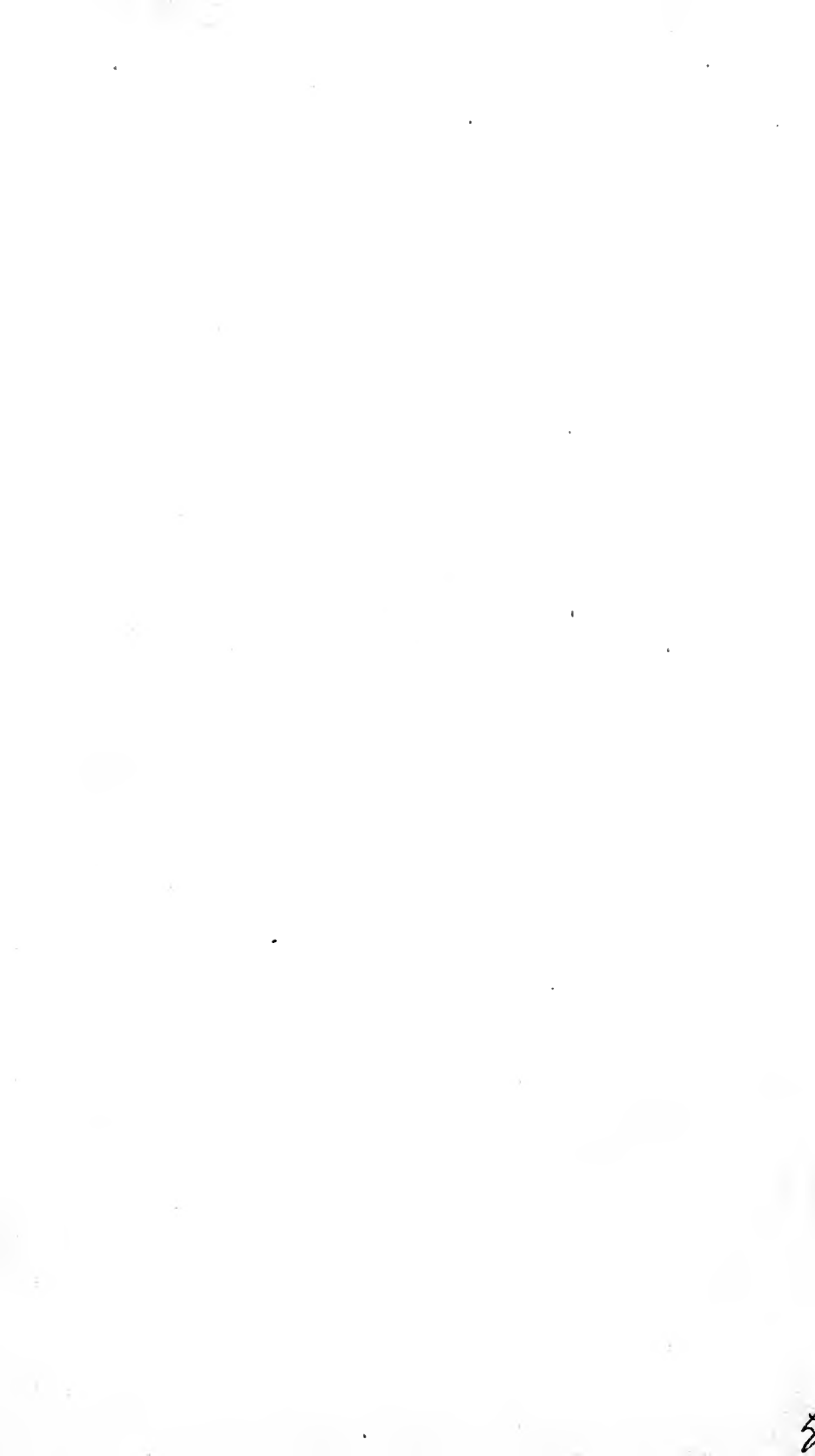
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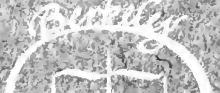
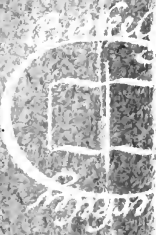
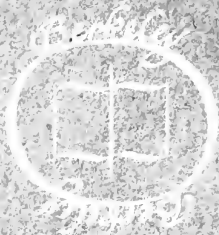
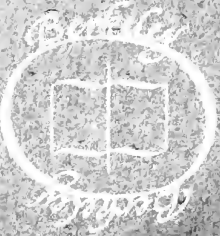
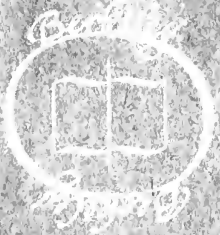
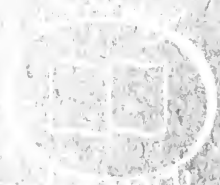
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