

astronomy appear to have had some popular circulation. For instance, a French poem of the time of Edward the Second, called *Ymage du Monde*, contains a metrical account of the earth and heavens, according to the Ptolemaic views; and in a manuscript of this poem, preserved in the library of the University of Cambridge, there are representations, in accordance with the text, of a spherical earth, with men standing upright upon it on every side; and by way of illustrating the tendency of all things to the centre, perforations of the earth, entirely through its mass, are described and depicted; and figures are exhibited dropping balls down each of these holes, so as to meet in the interior. And, as bearing upon the perplexity which attends the motions of *up* and *down*, when applied to the globular earth, and the change of the direction of gravity which would occur in passing the centre, the readers of Dante will recollect the extraordinary manner in which the poet and his guide emerge from the bottom of the abyss; and the explanation which Virgil imparts to him of what he there sees. After they have crept through the aperture in which Lucifer is placed, the poet says,

“Io levai gli occhi e credetti vedere  
Lucifero com' io l' avea lasciato,  
E vidile le gambe in su tenere.”

. . . . . “Questi como è fitto  
Si sottasopra?” . . . . .

“Quando mi volsi, tu passast' il punto  
Al qual si traggon d' ogni parte i pesi.”

*Inferno*, xxxiv.

. . . . . “I raised mine eyes,  
Believing that I Lucifer should see  
Where he was lately left, but saw him now  
With legs held upward.” . . . . .

“How standeth he in posture thus reversed?”

. . . . .  
“Thou wast on the other side so long as I  
Descended; when I turned, thou didst o'erpass  
That point to which from every part is dragged  
All heavy substance.”

CARY.

This is more philosophical than Milton's representation, in a more scientific age, of Uriel sliding to the earth on a sunbeam, and sliding back again, when the sun had sunk below the horizon.

. . . . . “Uriel to his charge  
Returned on that bright beam whose point now raised,  
Bore him slope downward to the sun, now fallen  
Beneath the Azores.”

*Par. Lost*, B. iv.