

1321

THE DIVINE COMEDY: PARADISE

Alighieri Dante

translated by Henry F. Cary

Dante, Alighieri (1265-1321) - Italian poet. Dante was the first noteworthy poet to write in Italian and is considered one of the greatest poets in all literature. He is best known as the author of “The Divine Comedy,” a three- Cantica epic allegory of the human soul and a monument of the Middle Ages. Paradise (1321) - The last part of “The Divine Comedy” describes Dante’s voyage through the eight heavens with his guide, Beatrice, Dante’s real-life love and spiritual inspiration. See also “Inferno” and “Purgatory.”

Table Of Contents

CANTO I	10
CANTO II	17
CANTO III	25
CANTO IV	32
CANTO V	39
CANTO VI	46
CANTO VII	54
CANTO VIII	62

[illegible]

[illegible]

CANTO XXIX	. . . . .	214
CANTO XXX	. . . . .	222
CANTO XXXI	. . . . .	230
CANTO XXXII	. . . . .	237
CANTO XXXIII	. . . . .	244
NOTES - CANTO I.	. . . . .	251
NOTES - CANTO II.	. . . . .	253
NOTES - CANTO III.	. . . . .	255
NOTES - CANTO IV.	. . . . .	257
NOTES - CANTO V.	. . . . .	259

NOTES - CANTO VI.	261
NOTES - CANTO VII.	266
NOTES - CANTO VIII.	268
NOTES - CANTO IX.	271
NOTES - CANTO X.	276
NOTES - CANTO XI.	281
NOTES - CANTO XII.	285
NOTES - CANTO XIII.	292
NOTES - CANTO XIV.	296
NOTES - CANTO XV.	298

NOTES - CANTO XVI.	. . . . .	301
NOTES - CANTO XVII.	. . . . .	308
NOTES - CANTO XVIII.	. . . . .	311
NOTES - CANTO XIX.	. . . . .	314
NOTES - CANTO XX.	. . . . .	319
NOTES - CANTO XXI.	. . . . .	322
NOTES - CANTO XXII.	. . . . .	324
NOTES - CANTO XXIII.	. . . . .	327
NOTES - CANTO XXIV.	. . . . .	330
NOTES - CANTO XXV.	. . . . .	331

NOTES - CANTO XXVI. 334

NOTES - CANTO XXVII. 336

NOTES - CANTO XXVIII. 340

NOTES - CANTO XXIX. 343

NOTES - CANTO XXX. 346

NOTES - CANTO XXXI. 348

NOTES - CANTO XXXII. 350

NOTES - CANTO XXXIII. 352

CANTO I

The poet ascends with Beatrice towards the first heaven, and is resolved of certain doubts he entertains.

HIS glory, by whose might all things are moved,
Pierces the universe, and in one part
Sheds more resplendence, elsewhere less. In Heaven,
That largeliest of his light partakes, was I,
Witness of things, which, to relate again,
Surpasseth power of him who comes from thence;
For that, so near approaching its desire,
Our intellect is to such depth absorb'd,
That memory cannot follow. Nathless all,
That in my thoughts I of that sacred realm
Could store, shall now be matter of my song.
Benign Apollo! this last labor aid;
And make me such a vessel of thy worth,
As thy own laurel claims, of me beloved.
Thus far hath one of steep Parnassus' brows
Sufficed me; henceforth, there is need of both

For my remaining enterprise. Do thou
Enter into my bosom, and there breathe
So, as when Marsyas 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 favor'd tree,
Come to the foot, and crown myself with leaves:
For to that honor thou, and my high theme
Will fit me. If but seldom, mighty Sire!
To grace his triumph, gathers thence a wreath
Caesar, or bard (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 spark
Great flame hath risen: after me, perchance,
Others with better voice may pray, and gain,
From the Cyrrhaean city, answer kind.

Through divers passages, the world's bright lamp
Rises to mortals; but through that which joins

Four circles with the threefold cross, in best
Course, and in happiest constellation set,
He comes; and, to the worldly wax, best gives
Its temper and impression. Morning there,
Here eve was well-nigh by such passage made;
And whiteness had o'erspread that hemisphere,
Blackness the other part; when to the left
I saw Beatrice turn'd, and on the sun
Gazing, as never eagle fix'd his ken.
As from the first a second beam is wont
To issue, and reflected upward 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
Made 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.

And suddenly upon the day appear'd
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,
Beatrice stood unmoved; and I with ken
Fix'd upon her, from upward gaze removed,
At her aspect, such inwardly became
As Glaucus, when he tasted of the herb
That made him peer among the ocean gods:
Words may not tell of that trans-human change;
And therefore let the example serve, though weak,
For those whom grace hath better proof in store.

If 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,
Temper'd of thee and measured, charm'd mine ear
Then seem'd to me so much of heaven 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.

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 toward 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, 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. 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;
This the brute earth together knits, and binds.
Nor only creatures, void of intellect,
Are aim'd at by this vow; 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,
In which the substance, 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, oftentimes, but ill accords the form
To the design of art, through sluggishness
Or unreplying matter; so this course
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 vicious fondness. Thou no more admire
Thy soaring (if I rightly deem), than lapse
Of torrent downward from a mountain's height.
There would in thee for wonder be more cause,
If, free of hindrance, thou hadst stay'd below,
As living fire unmoved upon the earth."

So said, she turn'd toward the heaven her face.

CANTO II

Dante and his celestial guide enter the moon. The cause of the spots or shadows is explained to him.

ALL ye, who in small bark have following sail'd,
Eager to listen, on the adventurous track
Of my proud keel, that singing-cuts her way,
Backward return with speed, and your own shores
Revisit; nor put out to open sea,
Where losing me, perchance ye may remain
Bewilder'd in deep maze. The way I pass,
Ne'er yet was run: Minerva breathes the gale;
Apollo guides me; and another Nine,
To my rapt sight, the arctic beams reveal.
Ye other few who have outstretch'd the neck
Timely for food of angels, on which here
They live, yet never know satiety;
Through the deep brine ye fearless may put out
Your vessel; marking well the furrow broad
Before you in the wave, that on both sides

Equal returns. Those, glorious, who pass'd o'er
To Colchos, wonder'd not as ye will do,
When they saw Jason following the plough.

The increate perpetual thirst, that draws
Toward the realm of God's own form, bore us
Swift almost as the heaven ye behold.

Beatrice upward gazed, and I on her;
And in such space as on the notch a dart
Is placed, then loosen'd flies, I saw myself
Arrived, where wonderous thing engaged my sight.
Whence she, to whom no care of mine was hid,
Turning to me, with aspect glad as fair,
Bespake me: "Gratefully direct thy mind
To God, through whom to this first star we come."

Meseem'd as if a cloud had cover'd us,
Translucent, solid, firm, and polish'd bright,
Like adamant, which the sun's beam had smit.
Within itself the ever-during pearl
Received us; as the wave a ray of light

Receives, and rests unbroken. If I then
Was of corporeal frame, and it transcend
Our weaker thought, how one dimension thus
Another could endure, which needs must be
If body enter body; how much more
Must the desire inflame us to behold
That essence, which discovers by what means
God and our nature join'd! There will be seen
That, which we hold through faith; not shown by proof,
But in itself intelligibly plain,
E'en as the truth that man at first believes.

I answer'd: "Lady! I with thoughts devout,
Such as I best can frame, give thanks to him,
Who hath removed me from the mortal world.
But tell, I pray thee, whence the gloomy spots
Upon this body, which below on earth
Give rise to talk of Cain in fabling quaint?"

She somewhat smiled, then spake: "If mortals err
In their opinion, when the key of sense
Unlocks not, surely wonder's weapon keen

Ought not to pierce thee: since thou find'st, the wings
Of reason to pursue the senses' flight
Are short. But what thy own thought is, declare."

Then I: "What various here above appears,
Is caused, I deem, by bodies dense or rare."

She then resumed: "Thou certainly wilt see
In falsehood thy belief o'erwhelm'd, if well
Thou listen to the arguments which I
Shall bring to face it. The eighth sphere displays
Numberless lights, the which, in kind and size,
May be remark'd of different aspects:
If rare or dense of that were cause alone,
One single virtue then would be in all;
Alike distributed, or more, or less.
Different virtues needs must be the fruits
Of formal principles; and these, save one,
Will by thy reasoning be destroy'd. Beside,
If rarity were of that dusk the cause,
Which thou inquirest, either in some part
That planet must throughout be void, nor fed

With its own matter; or, as bodies share
Their fat and leanness, in like manner this
Must in its volume change the leaves. The first,
If it were true, had through the sun's eclipse
Been manifested, by transparency
Of light, as through aught rare beside effused.
But this is not. Therefore remains to see
The other cause: and, if the other fall,
Erroneous so must prove what seem'd to thee.
If not from side to side this rarity
Pass through, there needs must be a limit, whence
Its contrary no further lets it pass.
And hence the beam, that from without proceeds,
Must be pour'd back; as color comes, through glass
Reflected, which behind it lead conceals.
Now wilt thou say, that there of murkier hue,
Than, in the other part, the ray is shown,
By being thence refracted further back.
From this perplexity will free thee soon
Experience, if thereof thou trial make,
The fountain whence your arts derive their streams.
Three mirrors shalt thou take, and two remove

From thee alike; and more remote the third,
Betwixt the former pair, shall meet thine eyes:
Then turn'd toward them, cause behind thy back
A light to stand, that on the three shall shine,
And thus reflected come to thee from all.
Though that, beheld most distant, do not stretch
A space so ample, yet in brightness thou
Wilt own it equalling the rest. But now,
As under snow the ground, if the warm ray
Smites it, remains dismantled of the hue
And cold, that cover'd it before; so thee,
Dismantled in thy mind, I will inform
With light so lively, that the tremulous beam
Shall quiver where it falls. Within the heaven,
Where peace divine inhabits, circles round
A body, in whose virtue lies the being
Of all that it contains. The following heaven,
That hath so many lights, this being divides,
Through different essences, from it distinct,
And yet contain'd within it. The other orbs
Their separate distinctions variously
Dispose, for their own seed and produce apt.

Thus do these organs of the world proceed,
As thou beholdest now, from step to step;
Their influences from above deriving,
And thence transmitting downward. Mark me well;
How through this passage to the truth I ford,
The truth thou lovest; that thou henceforth, alone,
Mayst know to keep the shallows, safe, untold.

“The virtue and motion of the sacred orbs,
As mallet by the workman’s hand, must needs
By blessed movers be inspired. This heaven,
Made beauteous by so many luminaries,
From the deep spirit, that moves its circling sphere,
Its image takes and impress as a seal:
And as the soul, that dwells within your dust,
Through members different, yet together form’d,
In different powers resolves itself; e’en so
The intellectual efficacy unfolds
Its goodness multiplied throughout the stars;
On its own unity revolving still.
Different virtue compact different
Makes with the precious body it enlivens,

With which it knits, as life in you is knit.
From its original nature full of joy,
The virtue mingled through the body shines,
As joy through pupil of the living eye.
From hence proceeds that which from light to light
Seems different, and not from dense or rare.
This is the formal cause, that generates,
Proportion'd to its power, the dusk or clear."

CANTO III

Dante meets Piccarda, the sister of Forese, who tells him the moon is allotted to those who had been compelled to break their vows of chastity and the religious life.

THAT sun, which erst with love my bosom warm'd,
Had of fair truth unveil'd the sweet aspect,
By proof of right, and of the false reproof;
And I, to own myself convinced and free
Of doubt, as much as needed, raised my head
Erect for speech. But soon a sight appear'd,
Which, so intent to mark it, held me fix'd,
That of confession I no longer thought.

As through translucent and smooth glass, or wave
Clear and unmoved, and flowing not so deep
As that its bed is dark, the shape returns
So faint of our impictured lineaments,
That, on white forehead set, a pearl as strong
Comes to the eye; such saw I many a face,

All stretch'd to speak; from whence I straight conceived,
Delusion opposite to that, which raised,
Between the man and fountain, amorous flame.

Sudden, as I perceived them, deeming these
Reflected semblances, to see of whom
They were, I turn'd mine eyes, and nothing saw;
Then turn'd them back, directed on the light
Of my sweet guide, who, smiling, shot forth beams
From her celestial eyes. "Wonder not thou,"
She cried, "at this my smiling, when I see
Thy childish judgement; since not yet on truth
It rests the foot, but, as it still is wont,
Makes thee fall back in unsound vacancy.
True substances are these, which thou behold'st,
Hither through failure of their vow exiled.
But speak thou with them; listen, and believe,
That the true light, which fills them with desire,
Permits not from its beams their feet to stray."

Straight to the shadow, which for converse seem'd
Most earnest, I address'd me: and began

As one by over-eagerness perplex'd:
"O spirit, born for joy! who in the rays
Of life eternal, of that sweetness know'st
The flavor, which, not tasted, passes far
All apprehension; me it well would please,
If thou wouldst tell me of thy name, and this
Your station here." Whence she with kindness prompt,
And eyes glistering with smiles: "Our charity,
To any wish by justice introduced,
Bars not the door; no more than she above,
Who would have all her court be like herself.
I was a virgin sister in the earth:
And if thy mind observe me well, this form,
With such addition graced of loveliness,
Will not conceal me long; but thou wilt know
Piccarda, in the tardiest sphere thus placed,
Here 'mid these other blessed also blest.
Our hearts, whose high affections burn alone
With pleasure from the Holy Spirit conceived,
Admitted to his order, dwell in joy.
And this condition, which appears so low,
Is for this cause assign'd us, that our vows

Were, in some part, neglected and made void."

Whence I to her replied: "Something divine
Beams in your countenances wonderous fair;
From former knowledge quite transmuting you.
Therefore to recollect was I so slow.
But what thou say'st hath to my memory
Given now such aid, that to retrace your forms
Is easier. Yet inform me, ye, who here
Are happy; long ye for a higher place,
More to behold, and more in love to dwell?"

She with those other spirits gently smiled;
Then answer'd with such gladness, that she seem'd
With love's first flame to glow: "Brother! our will
Is, in composure, settled by the power
Of charity, who makes us will alone
What we possess, and naught beyond desire:
If we should wish to be exalted more,
Then must our wishes jar with the high will
Of him who sets us here; which in these orbs
Thou wilt confess not possible, if here

To be in charity must needs befall,
And if her nature well thou contemplate.
Rather it is inherent in this state
Of blessedness, to keep ourselves within
The divine will, by which our wills with his
Are one. So that as we, from step to step,
Are placed throughout this kingdom, pleases all,
Even as our King, who in us plants his will;
And in his will is our tranquillity:
It is the mighty ocean, whither tends
Whate'er creates and Nature makes."

Then saw I clearly how each spot in heaven
Is Paradise, though with like gracious dew
The supreme virtue shower not over all.

But as it chances, if one sort of food
Hath satiated, and of another still
The appetite remains, that this is ask'd,
And thanks for that return'd; e'en so did I,
In word and motion, bent from her to learn
What web it was, through which she had not drawn

The shuttle to its point. She thus began:
“Exalted worth and perfectness of life
The Lady higher up in shrine in heaven,
By whose pure laws upon your nether earth
The robe and veil they wear; to that intent,
That e’en till death they may keep watch, or sleep,
With their great bridegroom, who accepts each vow,
Which to his gracious pleasure love conforms.
I from the world, to follow her, when young
Escaped; and, in her vesture mantling me,
Made promise of the way her sect enjoins.
Thereafter men, for ill than good more apt,
Forth snatch’d me from the pleasant cloister’s pale.
God knows how, after that, my life was framed.
This other splendid shape, which thou behold’st
At my right side, burning with all the light
Of this our orb, what of myself I tell
May to herself apply. From her, like me
A sister, with like violence were torn
The saintly folds, that shaded her fair brows.
E’en when she to the world again was brought
In spite of her own will and better wont,

Yet not for that the bosom's inward veil
Did she renounce. This is the luminary
Of mighty Constance, who from that loud blast,
Which blew the second over Suabia's realm,
That power produced, which was the third and last."

She ceased from further talk, and then began
"Ave Maria" singing; and with that song
Vanish'd, as heavy substance through deep wave.

Mine eye, that, far as it was capable,
Pursued her, when in dimness she was lost,
Turn'd to the mark where greater want impell'd,
And bent on Beatrice all its gaze.
But she, as lightning, beam'd upon my looks;
So that the sight sustain'd it not at first.
Whence I to question her became less prompt.

CANTO IV

Beatrice removes Dante's doubts about the place assigned to the blessed and the will absolute or conditional.

BETWEEN two kinds of food, both equally
Remote and tempting, first a man might die
Of hunger, ere he one could freely chuse.
E'en so would stand a lamb between the maw
Of two fierce wolves, in dread of both alike:
E'en so between two deer a dog would stand.
Wherefore, if I was silent, fault nor praise
I to myself impute; by equal doubts
Held in suspense; since of necessity
It happen'd. Silent was I, yet desire
Was painted in my looks; and thus I spake
My wish more earnestly than language could.

As Daniel, when the haughty king he freed
From ire, that spurr'd him on to deeds unjust
And violent; so did Beatrice then.

“Well I discern,” she thus her words address’d,
“How thou art drawn by each of these desires;
So that thy anxious thought is in itself
Bound up and stifled, nor breathes freely forth.
Thou arguest: if the good intent remain;
What reason that another’s violence
Should stint the measure of my fair desert?

“Cause too thou find’st for doubt, in that it seems,
That spirits to the stars, as Plato deem’d,
Return. These are the questions which thy will
Urge equally; and therefore I, the first,
Of that will treat which hath the more of gall
Of seraphim he who is most enskied,
Moses and Samuel, and either John,
Chuse which thou wilt, nor even Mary’s self,
Have not in any other heaven their seats,
Than have those spirits which so late thou saw’st;
Nor more or fewer years exist; but all
Make the first circle beauteous, diversly
Partaking of sweet life, as more or less

Afflation of eternal bliss pervades them.
Here were they shown thee, not that fate assigns
This for their sphere, but for a sign to thee
Of that celestial furthest from the height.
Thus needs, that ye may apprehend, we speak:
Since from things sensible alone ye learn
That, which, digested rightly, after turns
To intellectual. For no other cause
The Scripture, condescending graciously
To your perception, hands and feet to God
Attributes, nor so means: and holy church
Doth represent with human countenance,
Gabriel, and Michel, and him who made
Tobias whole. Unlike what here thou seest.
The judgment of Timaeus, who affirms
Each soul restored to its particular star;
Believing it to have been taken thence,
When nature gave it to inform her mould:
Yet to appearance his intention is
Not what his words declare: and so to shun
Derision, haply thus he hath disguised
His true opinion. If his meaning be,

That to the influencing of these orbs revert
The honor and the blame in human acts,
Perchance he doth not wholly miss the truth.
This principle, not understood aright,
Erewhile perverted well-nigh all the world;
So that it fell to fabled names of Jove,
And Mercury, and Mars. That other doubt,
Which moves thee, is less harmful; for it brings
No peril of removing thee from me.

“That, to the eye of man, our justice seems
Unjust, is argument for faith, and not
For heretic declension. But, to the end
This truth may stand more clearly in your view,
I will content thee even to thy wish.

“If violence be, when that which suffers, naught
Consents to that which forceth, not for this
These spirits stood exculpate. For the will,
That wills not, still survives unquench’d, and doth,
As nature doth in fire, though violence
Wrest it a thousand times; for, if it yield

Or more or less, so far it follows force.
And thus did these, when they had power to seek
The hallow'd place again. In them, had will
Been perfect, such as once upon the bars
Held Laurence firm, or wrought in Scaevola
To his own hand remorseless; to the path,
Whence they were drawn, their steps had hasten'd back,
When liberty return'd: but in too few,
Resolve, so steadfast, dwells. And by these words,
If duly weigh'd, that argument is void,
Which oft might have perplex'd thee still. But now
Another question thwarts thee, which, to solve,
Might try thy patience without better aid.
I have, no doubt, instill'd into thy mind,
That blessed spirit may not lie; since near
The source of primal truth it dwells for aye:
And thou mightst after of Piccarda learn
That Constance held affection to the veil;
So that she seems to contradict me here.
Not seldom, brother, it hath chanced for men
To do what they had gladly left undone;
Yet, to shun peril, they have done amiss:

E'en as Alcmaeon, at his father's suit
Slew his own mother; so made pitiless,
Not to lose pity. On this point bethink thee,
That force and will are blended in such wise
As not to make the offence excusable.
Absolute will agrees not to the wrong;
But inasmuch as there is fear of woe
From non-compliance, it agrees. Of will
Thus absolute, Piccarda spake, and I
Of the other; so that both have truly said."

Such was the flow of that pure rill, that well'd
From forth the fountain of all truth; and such
The rest, that to my wandering thoughts I found.

"O thou, of primal love the prime delight,
Goddess!" I straight replied, "whose lively words
Still shed new heat and vigor through my soul;
Affection fails me to requite thy grace
With equal sum of gratitude: be his
To recompense, who sees and can reward thee.
Well I discern, that by that truth alone

Enlighten'd, beyond which no truth may roam,
Our mind can satisfy her thirst to know:
Therein she resteth, e'en as in his lair
The wild beast, soon as she hath reach'd that bound.
And she hath power to reach it; else desire
Were given to no end. And thence doth doubt
Spring, like a shoot, around the stock of truth;
And it is nature which, from height to height,
On to the summit prompts us. This invites,
This doth assure me, Lady! reverently
To ask thee of another truth, that yet
Is dark to me. I fain would know, if man
By other works well done may so supply
The failure of his vows, that in your scale
They lack not weight." I spake; and on me straight
Beatrice look'd, with eyes that shot forth sparks
Of love celestial, in such copious stream,
That, virtue sinking in me overpower'd,
I turn'd; and downward bent, confused, my sight.

CANTO V

Dante ascends with Beatrice to Mercury, the second heaven,
where he meets a multitude of spirits.

IF beyond earthly wont, the flame of love
Illume me, so that I o'ercome thy power
Of vision, marvel not: but learn the cause
In that perfection of the sight, which, soon
As apprehending, hasteneth on to reach
The good it apprehends. I well discern,
How in thine intellect already shines
The light eternal, which to view alone
Ne'er fails to kindle love; and if aught else
Your love seduces, 'tis but that it shows
Some ill-mark'd vestige of that primal beam.

"This wouldst thou know: if failure of the vow
By other service may be so supplied,
As from self-question to assure the soul."

Thus she her words, not heedless of my wish,
Began; and thus, as one who breaks not off
Discourse, continued in her saintly strain.
“Supreme of gifts, which God, creating, gave
Of his free bounty, sign most evident
Of goodness, and in his account most prized
Was liberty of will; the boon, wherewith
All intellectual creatures, and them sole,
He hath endow’d. Hence now thou mayst infer
Of what high worth the vow, which so is framed
That when man offers, God well-pleased accepts:
For in the compact between God and him,
This treasure such as I describe it to thee,
He makes the victim; and of his own act.
What compensation therefore may he find?
If that, whereof thou hast oblation made,
By using well thou think’st to consecrate,
Thou wouldst of theft do charitable deed.
Thus I resolve thee of the greater point.

“But forasmuch as holy church, herein
Dispensing, seems to contradict the truth

I have discover'd to thee, yet behoves
Thou rest a little longer at the board,
Ere the crude aliment which thou hast ta'en,
Digested fitly, to nutrition turn.
Open thy mind to what I now unfold;
And give it inward keeping. Knowledge comes
Of learning well retain'd, unfruitful else.

“This sacrifice, in essence, of two things
Consisteth; one is that, whereof 'tis made;
The covenant, the other. For the last,
It ne'er is cancel'd, if not kept: and hence
I spake, erewhile, so strictly of its force.
For this it was enjoin'd the Israelites,
Though leave were given them, as thou know'st, to change
The offering, still to offer. The other part,
The matter and the substance of the vow,
May well be such, as that, without offence,
It may for other substance be exchanged.
But, at his own discretion, none may shift
The burden on his shoulders; unreleased
By either key, the yellow and the white.

Nor deem of any change, as less than vain,
If the last bond be not within the new
Included, as the quatre in the six.
No satisfaction therefore can be paid
For what so precious in the balance weighs,
That all in counterpoise must kick the beam.
Take then no vow at random: ta'en, with faith
Preserve it; yet not bent, as Jephthah once,
Blindly to execute a rash resolve,
Whom better it had suited to exclaim,
'I have done ill,' than to redeem his pledge
By doing worse: or, not unlike to him
In folly, that great leader of the Greeks;
Whence, on the altar, Iphigenia mourn'd
Her virgin beauty, and hath since made mourn
Both wise and simple, even all, who hear
Of so fell sacrifice. Be ye more staid,
O Christian! not, like feather, by each wind
Removable; nor think to cleanse yourselves
In every water. Either testament,
The old and new, is yours: and for your guide,
The shepherd of the church. Let this suffice

To save you. When by evil lust enticed,
Remember ye be men, not senseless beasts;
Nor let the Jew, who dwelleth in your streets,
Hold you in mockery. Be not, as the lamb,
That, fickle wanton, leaves its mother's milk,
To dally with itself in idle play."

Such were the words that Beatrice spake:
These ended, to that region, where the world
Is liveliest, full of fond desire she turn'd.

Though mainly prompt new question to propose,
Her silence and changed look did keep me dumb.
And as the arrow, ere the cord is still,
Leapeth unto its mark; so on we sped
Into the second realm. There I beheld
The dame, so joyous, enter, that the orb
Grew brighter at her smiles; and, if the star
Were moved to gladness, what then was my cheer,
Whom nature hath made apt for every change!

As in a quiet and clear lake the fish,

If aught approach them from without, do draw
Toward it, deeming it their food; so drew
Full more than thousand splendors toward us;
And in each one was heard: "Lo! one arrived
To multiply our loves!" and as each came,
The shadow, streaming forth effulgence new,
Witness'd augmented joy. Here, Reader! think,
If thou didst miss the sequel of my tale,
To know the rest how sorely thou wouldst crave;
And thou shalt see what vehement desire
Possess'd me, soon as these had met my view,
To know their state. "O born in happy hour!
Thou, to whom grace vouchsafes, or e'er thy close
Of fleshly warfare, to behold the thrones
Of that eternal triumph; know, to us
The light communicated, which through heaven
Expatiates without bound. Therefore, if aught
Thou of our beams wouldst borrow for thine aid,
Spare not; and, of our radiance, take thy fill."

Thus of those piteous spirits one bespake me;
And Beatrice next: "Say on; and trust

As unto gods." "How in the light supreme
Thou harbor'st, and from thence the virtue bring'st,
That, sparkling in thine eyes, denotes thy joy,
I mark; but, who thou art, am still to seek;
Or wherefore, worthy spirit! for thy lot
This sphere assign'd, that oft from mortal ken
Is veil'd by other's beams." I said; and turn'd
Toward the lustre, that with greeting kind
Erewhile had hail'd me. Forthwith, brighter far
Than erst, it wax'd: and, as himself the sun
Hides through excess of light, when his warm gaze
Hath on the mantle of thick vapors prey'd;
Within its proper ray the saintly shape
Was, through increase of gladness, thus conceal'd;
And, shrouded so in splendor, answer'd me,
E'en as the tenor of my song declares.

CANTO VI

The Emperor Justinian recounts the victories obtained before him under the Roman Eagle.

“AFTER that Constantine the eagle turn’d
Against the motions of the heaven, that roll’d
Consenting with its course, when he of yore,
Lavinia’s spouse, was leader of the flight;
A hundred years twice told and more, his seat
At Europe’s extreme point, the bird of Jove
Held, near the mountains, whence he issued first;
There under shadow of his sacred plumes
Swaying the world, till through successive hands
To mine he came devolved. Caesar I was;
And am Justinian; destined by the will
Of that prime love, whose influence I feel,
From vain excess to clear the incumber’d laws.
Or e’er that work engaged me, I did hold
In Christ one nature only; with such faith
Contented. But the blessed Agapete,

Who was chief shepherd, he with warning voice
To the true faith recall'd me. I believed
His words: and what he taught, now plainly see,
As thou in every contradiction seest
The true and false opposed. Soon as my feet
Were to the church reclaim'd, to my great task,
By inspiration of God's grace impell'd,
I gave me wholly; and consign'd mine arms
To Belisarius, with whom heaven's right hand
Was link'd in such conjointment, 'twas a sign
That I should rest. To thy first question thus
I shape mine answer, which were ended here,
But that its tendency doth prompt perforce
To some addition; that thou well mayst mark,
What reason on each side they had to plead,
By whom that holiest banner is withstood,
Both who pretend its power and who oppose.

“Beginning from that hour, when Pallas died
To give it rule, behold the valorous deeds
Have made it worthy reverence. Not unknown
To thee, how for three hundred years and more

It dwelt in Alba, up to those fell lists
Where, for its sake, were met the rival three;
Nor aught unknown to thee, which it achieved
Down from the Sabines' wrong to Lucrece's woe;
With its seven kings conquering the nations round;
Nor all it wrought, by Roman worthies borne
'Gainst Brennus and the Epirot prince, and hosts
Of single chiefs, or states in league combined
Of social warfare: hence, Torquatus stern,
And Quintius named of his neglected locks,
The Decii, and the Fabii hence acquired
Their fame, which I with duteous zeal embalm.
By it the pride of Arab hordes was quell'd,
When they, led on by Hannibal, o'erpass'd
The Alpine rocks, whence glide thy currents, Po!
Beneath its guidance, in their prime of days
Scipio and Pompey triumph'd; and that hill
Under whose summit thou didst see the light,
Rued its stern bearing. After, near the hour,
When Heaven was minded that o'er all the world
His own deep calm should brood, to Caesar's hand
Did Rome consign it; and what then it wrought

From Var unto the Rhine, saw Isere's flood,
Saw Loire and Seine, and every vale, that fills
The torrent Rhone. What after that it wrought,
When from Ravenna it came forth, and leap'd
The Rubicon, was of so bold a flight,
That tongue nor pen may follow it. Toward Spain
It wheel'd its bands, then toward Dyrrachium smote,
And on Pharsalia, with so fierce a plunge,
E'en the warm Nile was conscious to the pang;
Its native shores Antandros, and the streams
Of Simois revisited, and there
Where Hector lies; then ill for Ptolemy
His pennons shook again; lightning thence fell
On Juba, and the next, upon your west,
At sound of the Pompeian trump, return'd.

“What following, and in its next bearer's gripe,
It wrought, is now by Cassius and Brutus
Bark'd of in Hell; and by Perugia's sons,
And Modena's, was mourn'd. Hence weepeth still
Sad Cleopatra, who, pursued by it,
Took from the adder black and sudden death.

With him it ran e'en to the Red Sea coast;
With him composed the world to such a peace,
That of his temple Janus barr'd the door.

“But all the mighty standard yet had wrought
And was appointed to perform thereafter,
Throughout the mortal kingdom which it sway'd,
Falls in appearance dwindled and obscured,
If one with steady eye and perfect thought
On the third Caesar look; for to his hands,
The living Justice, in whose breath I move,
Committed glory, e'en into his hands,
To execute the vengeance of its wrath.

“Hear now, and wonder at, what next I tell.
After with Titus it was sent to wreak
Vengeance for vengeance of the ancient sin.
And, when the Lombard tooth, with fang impure,
Did gore the bosom of the holy church,
Under its wings, victorious Charlemain
Sped to her rescue. Judge then for thyself
Of those, whom I erewhile accused to thee,

What they are, and how grievous their offending,
Who are the cause of all your ills. The one
Against the universal ensign rears
The yellow lilies; and with partial aim,
That, to himself, the other arrogates:
So that 'tis hard to see who most offends.
Be yours, ye Ghibellines, to veil your hearts
Beneath another standard: ill is this
Follow'd of him, who severs it and justice:
And let not with his Guelfs the new-crown'd Charles
Assail it; but those talons hold in dread,
Which from a lion of more lofty port
Have rent the casing. Many a time ere now
The sons have for the sire's transgression wail'd:
Nor let him trust the fond belief, that heaven
Will truck its armor for his liliated shield.

“This little star is furnish'd with good spirits,
Whose mortal lives were busied to that end,
That honor and renown might wait on them:
And, when desires thus err in their intention,
True love must needs ascend with slacker beam.

But it is part of our delight, to measure
Our wages with the merit; and admire
The close proportion. Hence doth heavenly justice
Temper so evenly affection in us,
It ne'er can warp to any wrongfulness.
Of diverse voices is sweet music made:
So in our life the different degrees
Render sweet harmony among these wheels.

“Within the pearl, that now encloseth us,
Shines Romeo's light, whose goodly deed and fair
Met ill acceptance. But the Provencals,
That were his foes, have little cause for mirth.
Ill shapes that man his course, who makes his wrong
Of other's worth. Four daughters were there born
To Raymond Berenger; and every one
Became a queen: and this for him did Romeo,
Though of mean state and from a foreign land.
Yet envious tongues incited him to ask
A reckoning of that just one, who return'd
Twelve-fold to him for ten. Aged and poor
He parted thence: and if the world did know

The heart he had, begging his life by morsels,
‘Twould deem the praise it yields him, scanty dealt."

CANTO VII

Some doubts arise in the mind of the poet respecting human redemption which are explained by Beatrice.

“HOSANNA Sanctus Deus Sabaoth,
Superillustrans claritate tua
Felices ignes horum malahoth.”
Thus chanting saw I turn that substance bright,
With fourfold lustre to its orb again,
Revolving; and the rest, unto their dance,
With it, moved also; and, like swiftest sparks,
In sudden distance from my sight were veil’d.

Me doubt possess’d; and “Speak,” it whisper’d me,
“Speak, speak unto thy lady; that she quench
Thy thirst with drops of sweetness.” Yet blank awe,
Which lords it o’er me, even at the sound
Of Beatrice’s name, did bow me down
As one in slumber held. Not long that mood
Beatrice suffer’d: she, with such a smile,

As might have made one blest amid the flames,
Beaming upon me, thus her words began:
“Thou in thy thought art pondering (as I deem,
And what I deem is truth) how just revenge
Could be with justice punish’d: from which doubt
I soon will free thee; so thou mark my words;
For they of weighty matter shall possess thee.
Through suffering not a curb upon the power
That will’d in him, to his own profiting,
That man, who was unborn, condemn’d himself;
And, in himself, all, who since him have lived,
His offspring: whence, below, the human kind
Lay sick in grievous error many an age;
Until it pleased the Word of God to come
Amongst them down, to his own person joining
The nature from its Maker far estranged,
By the mere act of his eternal love.
Contemplate here the wonder I unfold.
The nature with its Maker thus conjoin’d,
Created first was blameless, pure and good;
But, through itself alone, was driven forth
From Paradise, because it had eschew’d

The way of truth and life, to evil turn'd.
Ne'er then was penalty so just as that
Inflicted by the cross, if thou regard
The nature in assumption doom'd; ne'er wrong
So great, in reference to him, who took
Such nature on him, and endured the doom.
So different effects flow'd from one act:
For by one death God and the Jews were pleased;
And heaven was open'd, though the earth did quake.
Count it not hard henceforth, when thou dost hear
That a just vengeance was, by righteous court,
Justly revenged. But yet I see thy mind,
By thought on thought arising, sore perplex'd;
And, with how vehement desire, it asks
Solution of the maze. What I have heard,
Is plain, thou say'st: but wherefore God this way
For our redemption chose, eludes my search.

“Brother! no eye of man not perfected,
Nor fully ripen'd in the flame of love,
May fathom this decree. It is a mark,
In sooth, much aim'd at, and but little kenn'd

And I will therefore show thee why such way
Was worthiest. The celestial love, that spurns
All envying in its bounty, in itself
With such effulgence blazeth, as sends forth
All beauteous things eternal. What distils
Immediate thence, no end of being knows;
Bearing its seal immutably imprest.
Whatever thence immediate falls, is free,
Free wholly, uncontrollable by power
Of each thing new: by such conformity
More grateful to its author, whose bright beams,
Though all partake their shining, yet in those
Are liveliest, which resemble him the most.
These tokens of pre-eminence on man
Largely bestow'd, if any of them fail,
He needs must forfeit his nobility,
No longer stainless. Sin alone is that,
Which doth disfranchise him, and make unlike
To the chief good; for that its light in him
Is darken'd. And to dignity thus lost
Is no return; unless, where guilt makes void,
He for ill-pleasure pay with equal pain.

Your nature, which entirely in its seed
Transgress'd, from these distinctions fell, no less
Than from its state in Paradise; nor means
Found of recovery (search all methods out
As strictly as thou may) save one of these,
The only fords were left through which to wade:
Either, that God had of his courtesy
Released him merely; or else, man himself
For his own folly by himself atoned.

“Fix now thine eye, intently as thou canst,
On the everlasting counsel; and explore,
Instructed by my words, the dread abyss.

“Man in himself had ever lack'd the means
Of satisfaction, for he could not stoop
Obeying, in humility so low,
As high, he, disobeying, thought to soar:
And, for this reason, he had vainly tried,
Out of his own sufficiency, to pay
The rigid satisfaction. Then behoved
That God should by his own ways lead him back

Unto the life, from whence he fell, restored:
By both his ways, I mean, or one alone.
But since the deed is ever prized the more,
The more the doer's good intent appears;
Goodness celestial, whose broad signature
Is on the universe, of all its ways
To raise ye up, was fain to leave out none.
Nor aught so vast or so magnificent,
Either for him who gave or who received,
Between the last night and the primal day,
Was or can be. For God more bounty show'd,
Giving himself to make man capable
Of his return to life, than had the terms
Been mere and unconditional release.
And for his justice, every method else
Were all too scant, had not the Son of God
Humbled himself to put on mortal flesh.

“Now, to content thee fully, I revert;
And further in some part unfold my speech,
That thou mayst see it clearly as myself.

“I see, thou sayst, the air, the fire I see,
The earth and water, and all things of them
Compounded, to corruption turn, and soon
Dissolve. Yet these were also things create
Because, if what were told me, had been true,
They from corruption had been therefore free.

“The angels, O my brother! and this clime
Wherein thou art, impassable and pure,
I call created, even as they are
In their whole being. But the elements,
Which thou hast named, and what of them is made,
Are by created virtue inform’d: create,
Their substance; and create, the informing virtue
In these bright stars, that round them circling move.
The soul of every brute and of each plant,
The ray and motion of the sacred lights,
Draw from complexion with meet power endued.
But this our life the eternal good inspires
Immediate, and enamors of itself;
So that our wishes rest forever here.

“And hence thou mayst by inference conclude
Our resurrection certain, if thy mind
Consider how the human flesh was framed,
When both our parents at the first were made.”

CANTO VIII

The poet ascends to Venus and meets Charles Martel,
King of Hungary, who tells him why children
differ in disposition from their parents.

THE world was, in its day of peril dark,
Wont to believe the dotage of fond love,
From the fair Cyprian deity, who rolls
In her third epicycle, shed on men
By stream of potent radiance: therefore they
Of elder time, in their old error blind,
Not her alone with sacrifice adored
And invocation, but like honors paid
To Cupid and Dione, deem'd of them
Her mother, and her son, him whom they feign'd
To sit in Dido's bosom: and from her,
Whom I have sung preluding, borrow'd they
The appellation of that star, which views
Now obvious, and now averse, the sun.

I was not ware that I was wafted up
Into its orb; but the new loveliness,
That graced my lady, gave me ample proof
That we had enter'd there. And as in flame
A sparkle is distinct, or voice in voice
Discern'd, when one its even tenor keeps,
The other comes and goes; so in that light
I other luminaries saw, that coursed
In circling motion, rapid more or less,
As their eternal vision each impels.

Never was blast. vapor charged with cold,
Whether invisible to eye or no,
Descended with such speed, it had not seem'd
To linger in dull tardiness, compared
To those celestial lights, that toward us came,
Leaving the circuit of their joyous ring,
Conducted by the lofty seraphim.
And after them, who in the van appear'd,
Such an Hosanna sounded as hath left
Desire, ne'er since extinct in me, to hear
Renew'd the strain. Then, parting from the rest,

One near us drew, and sole began: "We all
Are ready at thy pleasure, well disposed
To do thee gentle service. We are they
To whom thou in the world erewhile didst sing;
'O ye! whose intellectual ministry
Moves the third heaven': and in one orb we roll,
One motion, one impulse, with those who rule
Princedoms in heaven; yet are of love so full,
That to please thee 'twill be as sweet to rest."

After mine eyes had with meek reverence
Sought the celestial guide, and were by her
Assured, they turn'd again unto the light,
Who had so largely promised; and with voice
That bare the lively pressure of my zeal,
"Tell who ye are," I cried. Forthwith it grew
In size and splendor, through augmented joy;
And thus it answer'd: "A short date, below,
The world possess'd me. Had the time been more,
Much evil, that will come, had never chanced.
My gladness hides thee from me, which doth shine
Around, and shroud me, as an animal

In its own silk enswathed. Thou lovedst me well,
And hadst good cause; for had my sojourning
Been longer on the earth, the love I bare thee
Had put forth more than blossoms. The left bank,
That Rhone, when he hath mix'd with Sorga, laves,
In me its lord expected, and that horn
Of fair Ausonia, with its boroughs old,
Bari, and Croton, and Gaeta piled,
From where the Trento disembogues his waves,
With Verde mingled, to the salt-sea flood.
Already on my temples beam'd the crown,
Which gave me sovereignty over the land
By Danube wash'd, whenas he strays beyond
The limits of his German shores. The realm,
Where, on the gulf by stormy Eurus lash'd,
Betwixt Pelorus and Pachynian heights,
The beautiful Trinacria lies in gloom
(Not through Typhoeus, but the vapory cloud
Bituminous upsteam'd), that too did look
To have its sceptre wielded by a race
Of monarchs, sprung through me from Charles and Rodolph,
Had not ill-lording, which doth desperate make

The people ever, in Palermo raised
The shout of 'death,' re-echoed loud and long.
Had but my brother's foresight kenn'd as much,
He had been warier, that the greedy want
Of Catalonia might not work his bale.
And truly need there is that he forecast,
Or other for him, lest more freight be laid
On his already over-laden bark.
Nature in him, from bounty fallen to thrift,
Would ask the guard of braver arms, than such
As only care to have their coffers fill'd."

"My liege! it doth enhance the joy thy words
Infuse into me, mighty as it is,
To think my gladness manifest to thee,
As to myself, who own it, when thou look'st
Into the source and limit of all good,
There, where thou markest that which thou dost speak,
Thence prized of me the more. Glad thou hast made me:
Now make intelligent, clearing the doubt
Thy speech hath raised in me; for much I muse,
How bitter can spring up, when sweet is sown."

I thus inquiring; he forthwith replied:

“If I have power to show one truth, soon that
Shall face thee, which thy questioning declares
Behind thee now conceal’d. The Good, that guides
And blessed makes this realm which thou dost mount,
Ordains its providence to be the virtue
In these great bodies: nor the natures only
The all-perfect mind provides for, but with them
That which preserves them too; for naught, that lies
Within the range of that unerring bow,
But is as level with the destined aim,
As ever mark to arrow’s point opposed.
Were it not thus, these heavens, thou dost visit,
Would their effect so work, it would not be
Art, but destruction; and this may not chance,
If the intellectual powers, that move these stars,
Fail not, and who, first faulty made them, fail.
Wilt thou this truth more clearly evidenced?”

To whom I thus: “It is enough: no fear
I see, lest nature in her part should tire.”

He straight rejoin'd: "Say, were it worse for man,
If he lived not in fellowship on earth?"

"Yea," answer'd I; "nor here a reason needs."

"And may that be, if different estates
Grow not of different duties in your life?
Consult your teacher, and he tells you 'no.'"

Thus did he come, deducing to this point,
And then concluded: "For this cause behoves,
The roots, from whence your operations come,
Must differ. Therefore one is Solon born;
Another, Xerxes; and Melchisedec
A third; and he a fourth, whose airy voyage
Cost him his son. In her circuitous course,
Nature, that is the seal to mortal wax,
Doth well her art, but no distinction owns
'Twixt one or other household. Hence befalls
That Esau is so wide of Jacob: hence
Quirinus of so base a father springs,
He dates from Mars his lineage. Were it not

That Providence celestial overruled,
Nature, in generation, must the path
Traced by the generator still pursue
Unswervingly. Thus place I in thy sight
That, which was late behind thee. But, in sign
Of more affection for thee, 'tis my will
Thou wear this corollary. Nature ever,
Finding discordant fortune, like all seed
Out of its proper climate, thrives but ill.
And were the world below content to mark
And work on the foundation nature lays,
I would not lack supply of excellence.
But ye perversely to religion strain
Him, who was born to gird on him the sword,
And of the fluent phraseman make your king:
Therefore your steps have wander'd from the path."

CANTO IX

The conversation of the amorous Cunizza is followed
by a meeting with Folco of Folques who blames
the Pope for neglecting the holy land.

AFTER solution of my doubt, thy Charles,
O fair Clemenza, of the treachery spake,
That must befall his seed; but, “Tell it not,”
Said he, “and let the destined years come round.”
Nor may I tell thee more, save that the meed
Of sorrow well-deserved shall quit your wrongs.

And now the visage of that saintly light
Was to the sun, that fills it, turn’d again,
As to the good, whose plenitude of bliss
Sufficeth all. O ye misguided souls!
Infatuate, who from such a good estrange
Your hearts, and bend your gaze on vanity,
Alas for you!- And lo! toward me, next,
Another of those splendid forms approach’d

That, by its outward brightening, testified
The will it had to pleasure me. The eyes
Of Beatrice, resting, as before,
Firmly upon me, manifested forth
Approval of my wish. "And O," I cried,
"Blest spirit! quickly be my will perform'd;
And prove thou to me, that my inmost thoughts
I can reflect on thee." Thereat the light,
That yet was new to me, from the recess,
Where it before was singing, thus began,
As one who joys in kindness: "In that part
Of the depraved Italian land, which lies
Between Rialto and the fountain-springs
Of Brenta and of Piava, there doth rise,
But to no lofty eminence, a hill,
From whence erewhile a firebrand did descend,
That sorely shent the region. From one root
I and it sprung; my name on earth Cunizza:
And here I glitter, for that by its light
This star o'ercame me. Yet I naught repine,
Nor grudge myself the cause of this my lot:
Which haply vulgar hearts can scarce conceive.

“This jewel, that is next me in our Heaven,
Lustrous and costly, great renown hath left,
And not to perish, ere these hundred years
Five times absolve their round. Consider thou,
If to excel be worthy man’s endeavor,
When such life may attend the first. Yet they
Care not for this, the crowd that now are girt
By Adice and Tagliamento, still
Impenitent, though scourged. The hour is near
When for their stubbornness, at Padua’s marsh
The water shall be changed, that laves Vicenza.
And where Cagnano meets with Sile, one
Lords it, and bears his head aloft, for whom
The web is now a-warping. Feltro too
Shall sorrow for its godless shepherd’s fault,
Of so deep stain, that never, for the like,
Was Malta’s bar unclosed. Too large should be
The skillet that would hold Ferrara’s blood,
And wearied he, who ounce by ounce would weigh it,
The which this priest, in show of party-zeal,
Courteous will give; nor will the gift ill suit

The country's custom. We descry above
Mirrors, ye call them thrones, from which to us
Reflected shine the judgments of our God:
Whence these our sayings we avouch for good."

She ended; and appear'd on other thoughts
Intent, re-entering on the wheel she late
Had left. That other joyance meanwhile wax'd
A thing to marvel at, in splendor glowing,
Like choicest ruby stricken by the sun.
For, in that upper clime, effulgence comes
Of gladness, as here laughter: and below,
As the mind saddens, murkier grows the shade.

"God seeth all: and in him is thy sight,"
Said I, "blest spirit! Therefore will of his
Cannot to thee be dark. Why then delays
Thy voice to satisfy my wish untold;
That voice, which joins the inexpressive song,
Pastime of Heaven, the which those ardors sing,
That cowl them with six shadowing wings outspread?
I would not wait thy asking, wert thou known

To me, as thoroughly I to thee am known."

He, forthwith answering, thus his words began:

"The valley of waters, widest next to that
Which doth the earth engarland, shapes its course,
Between discordant shores, against the sun
Inward so far, it makes meridian there,
Where was before the horizon. Of that vale
Dwelt I upon the shore, 'twixt Ebro's stream
And Macra's, that divides with passage brief
Genoan bounds from Tuscan. East and west
Are nearly one to Begga and my land
Whose haven erst was with its own blood warm.
Who knew my name, were wont to call me Folco;
And I did bear impression of this heaven,
That now bears mine: for not with fiercer flame
Glow'd Belus' daughter, injuring alike
Sichaeus and Creusa, than did I,
Long as it suited the unripen'd down
That fledged my cheek; nor she of Rhodope,
That was beguiled of Demophoon;
Nor Jove's son, when the charms of Iole

Were shrined within his heart. And yet there bides
No sorrowful repentance here, but mirth,
Not for the fault (that doth not come to mind)
But for the virtue, whose o'erruling sway
And providence have wrought thus quaintly. Here
The skill is look'd into, that fashioneth
With such effectual working, and the good
Discern'd accruing to the lower world
From this above. But fully to content
Thy wishes all that in this sphere have birth,
Demands my further parle. Inquire thou wouldst,
Who of this light is denizen, that here
Beside me sparkles, as the sun-beam doth
On the clear wave. Know then, the soul of Rahab
Is in that gladsome harbor; to our tribe
United, and the foremost rank assign'd.
She to this heaven, at which the shadow ends
Of your sublunar world, was taken up,
First, in Christ's triumph, of all souls redeem'd.
For well behaved, that, in some part of heaven,
She should remain a trophy, to declare
The mighty conquest won with either palm;

For that she favor'd first the high exploit
Of Joshua on the Holy Land, whereof
The Pope recks little now. Thy city, plant
Of him, that on his Maker turn'd the back,
And of whose envying so much woe hath sprung,
Engenders and expands the cursed flower,
That hath made wander both the sheep and lambs,
Turning the shepherd to a wolf. For this,
The gospel and great teachers laid aside,
The decretals, as their stuft margins show,
Are the sole study. Pope and Cardinals,
Intent on these, ne'er journey but in thought
To Nazareth, where Gabriel oped his wings.
Yet it may chance, ere long, the Vatican,
And other most selected parts of Rome,
That were the grave of Peter's soldiery,
Shall be deliver'd from the adulterous bond."

CANTO X

They next ascent to the sun where they are encompassed
by twelve blessed spirits including Thomas Aquinas.

LOOKING into his first-born with the love,
Which breathes from both eternal, the first Might
Ineffable, wherever eye or mind
Can roam, hath in such order all disposed,
As none may see and fail to enjoy. Raise, then,
O reader! to the lofty wheels, with me,
Thy ken directed to the point, whereat
One motion strikes on the other. There begin
Thy wonder of the mighty Architect,
Who loves his work so inwardly, his eye
Doth ever watch it. See, how thence oblique
Brancheth the circle, where the planets roll
To pour their wished influence on the world;
Whose path not bending thus, in heaven above
Much virtue would be lost, and here on earth
All power well-nigh extinct: or, from direct

Were its departure distant more or less,
I' the universal order, great defect
Must, both in Heaven and here beneath, ensue.

Now rest thee, reader! on thy bench, and muse
Anticipative of the feast to come;
So shall delight make thee not feel thy toil.
Lo! I have set before thee; for thyself
Feed now: the matter I indite, henceforth
Demands entire my thought. Join'd with the part,
Which late we told of, the great minister
Of nature, that upon the world imprints
The virtue of the heaven, and doles out
Time for us with his beam, went circling on
Along the spires, where each hour sooner comes;
And I was with him, weetless of ascent,
But as a man, that weets him come, ere thinking.

For Beatrice, she who passeth on
So suddenly from good to better, time
Counts not the act, oh then how great must needs
Have been her brightness! What there was i' th' sun,

(Where I had enter'd) not through change of hue,
But light transparent- did I summon up
Genius, art, practice- I might not so speak,
It should be e'er imagined: yet believed
It may be, and the sight be justly craved.
And if our fantasy fail of such height,
What marvel, since no eye above the sun
Hath ever travel'd? Such are they dwell here,
Fourth family of the Omnipotent Sire,
Who of his spirit and of his offspring shows;
And holds them still enraptured with the view.
And thus to me Beatrice: "Thank, oh thank
The Sun of angels, him, who by his grace
To this perceptible hath lifted thee."

Never was heart in such devotion bound,
And with complacency so absolute
Disposed to render up itself to God,
As mine was at those words: and so entire
The love for Him, that held me, it eclipsed
Beatrice in oblivion. Naught displeased
Was she, but smiled thereat so joyously,

That of her laughing eyes the radiance brake
And scatter'd my collected mind abroad.

Then saw I a bright band, in liveliness
Surpassing, who themselves did make the crown,
And us their centre: yet more sweet in voice,
Than, in their visage, beaming. Cinctured thus,
Sometime Latona's daughter we behold,
When the impregnate air retains the thread
That weaves her zone. In the celestial court,
Whence I return, are many jewels found,
So dear and beautiful, they cannot brook
Transporting from that realm: and of these lights
Such was the song. Who doth not prune his wing
To soar up thither, let him look from thence
For tidings from the dumb. When, singing thus,
Those burning suns had circled round us thrice,
As nearest stars around the fixed pole;
Then seem'd they like to ladies, from the dance
Not ceasing, but suspense, in silent pause,
Listening, till they have caught the strain anew:
Suspended so they stood: and, from within,

Thus heard I one, who spake: "Since with its beam
The grace, whence true love lighteth first his flame,
That after doth increase by loving, shines
So multiplied in thee, it leads thee up
Along this ladder, down whose hallow'd steps
None e'er descend, and mount them not again;
Who from his phial should refuse thee wine
To slake thy thirst, no less constrained were,
Than water flowing not unto the sea.
Thou fain wouldst hear, what plants are these, that bloom
In the bright garland, which, admiring, girds
This fair dame round, who strengthens thee for heaven.
I, then, was of the lambs, that Dominic
Leads, for his saintly flock, along the way
Where well they thrive, not swol'n with vanity.
He, nearest on my right hand, brother was,
And master to me: Albert of Cologne
Is this; and, of Aquinum, Thomas I.
If thou of all the rest wouldst be assured,
Let thine eye, waiting on the words I speak,
In circuit journey round the blessed wreath.
That next resplendence issues from the smile

Of Gratian, who to either forum lent
Such help, as favor wins in Paradise.
The other, nearest, who adorns our quire,
Was Peter, he that with the widow gave
To holy Church his treasure. The fifth light,
Goodliest of all, is by such love inspired,
That all your world craves tidings of his doom:
Within, there is the lofty light, endow'd
With sapience so profound, if truth be truth,
That with a ken of such wide amplitude
No second hath arisen. Next behold
That taper's radiance, to whose view was shown,
Clearliest, the nature and the ministry
Angelical, while yet in flesh it dwelt.
In the other little light serenely smiles
That pleader for the Christian temples, he,
Who did provide Augustin of his lore.
Now, if thy mind's eye pass from light to light,
Upon my praises following, of the eighth
Thy thirst is next. The saintly soul, that shows
The world's deceitfulness, to all who hear him,
Is, with the sight of all the good that is,

Blest there. The limbs, whence it was driven, lie
Down in Cieldauro; and from martyrdom
And exile came it here. Lo! further on,
Where flames the arduous spirit of Isidore;
Of Bede; and Richard, more than man, erewhile,
In deep discernment. Lastly this, from whom
Thy look on me reverteth, was the beam
Of one, whose spirit, on high musings bent,
Rebuked the lingering tardiness of death.
It is the eternal light of Sigebert
Who escaped not envy, when of truth he argued,
Reading in the straw-litter'd street." Forthwith,
As clock, that caneth up the spouse of God
To win her bridegroom's love at matin's hour,
Each part of other fitly drawn and urged,
Sends out a tinkling sound, of note so sweet,
Affection springs in well-disposed breast;
Thus saw I move the glorious wheel; thus heard
Voice answering voice, so musical and soft,
It can be known but where day endless shines.

CANTO XI

Thomas Aquinas describes life and character of St. Francis,
and a difficulty that has arisen in Dante's mind.

O FOND anxiety of mortal men!
How vain and inconclusive arguments
Are those, which make thee beat thy wings below.
For statutes one, and one for aphorisms
Was hunting; this the priesthood follow'd; that,
By force or sophistry, aspired to rule;
To rob, another; and another sought,
By civil business, wealth; one, moiling, lay
Tangled in net of sensual delight;
And one to wistless indolence resign'd;
What time from all these empty things escaped,
With Beatrice, I thus gloriously
Was raised aloft, and made the guest of heaven.

They of the circle to that point, each one,
Where erst it was, had turn'd; and steady glow'd,

As candle in his socket. Then within
The lustre, that erewhile bespake me, smiling
With merer gladness, heard I thus begin:

“E’en as his beam illumines me, so I look
Into the eternal light, and clearly mark
Thy thoughts, from whence they rise. Thou art in doubt,
And wouldst that I should bolt my words afresh
In such plain open phrase, as may be smooth
To thy perception, where I told thee late
That ‘well they thrive’; and that ‘no second such
Hath risen,’ which no small distinction needs.

“The Providence, that governeth the world,
In depth of counsel by created ken
Unfathomable, to the end that she,
Who with loud cries was ‘spoused in precious blood,
Might keep her footing toward her well-beloved,
Safe in herself and constant unto him,
Hath two ordain’d, who should on either hand
In chief escort her: one, seraphic all
In fervency; for wisdom upon earth,

The other, splendor of cherubic light.
I but of one will tell: he tells of both,
Who one commendeth, which of them soe'er
Be taken: for their deeds were to one end.

“Between Tupino, and the wave that falls
From blest Ubaldo's chosen hill, there hangs
Rich slope of mountain high, whence heat and cold
Are wafted through Perugia's eastern gate:
And Nocera with Gualdo, in its rear,
Mourn for their heavy yoke. Upon that side,
Where it doth break its steepness most, arose
A sun upon the world, as duly this
From Ganges doth: therefore let none, who speak
Of that place, say Ascesi; for its name
Were lamely so deliver'd; but the East,
To call things rightly, be it henceforth styled.
He was not yet much distant from his rising,
When his good influence 'gan to bless the earth.
A dame, to whom none openeth pleasure's gate
More than to death, was, 'gainst his father's will,
His stripling choice: and he did make her his,

Before the spiritual court, by nuptial bonds,
And in his father's sight: from day to day,
Then loved her more devoutly. She, bereaved
Of her first husband, slighted and obscure,
Thousand and hundred years and more, remain'd
Without a single suitor, till he came.
Nor aught avail'd, that, with Amyclas, she
Was found unmoved at rumor of his voice,
Who shook the world: nor aught her constant boldness
Whereby with Christ she mounted on the cross,
When Mary stay'd beneath. But not to deal
Thus closely with thee longer, take at large
The lovers' titles- Poverty and Francis.
Their concord and glad looks, wonder and love,
And sweet regard gave birth to holy thoughts,
So much, that venerable Bernard first
Did bare his feet, and, in pursuit of peace
So heavenly, ran, yet deem'd his footing slow.
O hidden riches! O prolific good!
Egidius bares him next, and next Sylvester,
And follow, both, the bridegroom: so the bride
Can please them. Thenceforth goes he on his way

The father and the master, with his spouse,
And with that family, whom now the cord
Girt humbly: nor did abjectness of heart
Weigh down his eyelids, for that he was son
Of Pietro Bernardone, and by men
In wonderous sort despised. But royally
His hard intention he to Innocent
Set forth; and, from him, first received the seal
On his religion. Then, when numerous flock'd
The tribe of lowly ones, that traced his steps,
Whose marvellous life deservedly were sung
In heights empyreal; through Honorius' hand
A second crown, to deck their Guardian's virtues,
Was by the eternal Spirit inwreathed: and when
He had, through thirst of martyrdom, stood up
In the proud Soldan's presence, and there preach'd
Christ and his followers, but found the race
Unripen'd for conversion; back once more
He hasted (not to intermit his toil),
And reap'd Ausonian lands. On the hard rock,
'Twixt Arno and the Tiber, he from Christ
Took the last signet, which his limbs two years

Did carry. Then, the season come that he,
Who to such good had destined him, was pleased
To advance him to the meed, which he had earn'd
By his self-humbling; to his brotherhood,
As their just heritage, he gave in charge
His dearest lady: and enjoin'd their love
And faith to her; and, from her bosom, will'd
His goodly spirit should move forth, returning
To its appointed kingdom; nor would have
His body laid upon another bier.

“Think now of one, who were a fit colleague
To keep the bark of Peter, in deep sea,
Helm'd to right point; and such our Patriarch was.
Therefore who follow him as he enjoins,
Thou mayst be certain, take good lading in.
But hunger of new viands tempts his flock;
So that they needs into strange pastures wide
Must spread them: and the more remote from him
The stragglers wander, so much more they come
Home, to the sheep-fold, destitute of milk,
There are of them, in truth, who fear their harm,

And to the shepherd cleave; but these so few,
A little stuff may furnish out their cloaks.

“Now, if my words be clear; if thou have ta’en
Good heed; if that, which I have told, recall
To mind; thy wish may be in part fulfill’d:
For thou wilt see the plant from whence they split;
And he shall see, who girds him, what that means,
‘That well they thrive, not swol’n with vanity.’”

CANTO XII

Bonaventura praises St. Dominic and informs the poet
about the glorified souls in this second garland.

SOON as its final word the blessed flame
Had raised for utterance, straight the holy mill
Began to wheel; nor yet had once revolved,
Or e'er another, circling, compass'd it,
Motion to motion, song to song, conjoining;
Song, that as much our muses doth excel,
Our Syrens with their tuneful pipes, as ray
Of primal splendor doth its faint reflex.

As when, if Juno bid her handmaid forth,
Two arches parallel, and trick'd alike,
Span the thin cloud, the outer taking birth
From that within (in manner of that voice
Whom love did melt away, as sun the mist)
And they who gaze, presageful call to mind
The compact, made with Noah, of the world

No more to be o'erflow'd; about us thus,
Of sempiternal roses, bending, wreathed
Those garlands twain; and to the innermost
E'en thus the external answer'd. When the footing,
And other great festivity, of song,
And radiance, light with light accordant, each
Jocund and blythe, had at their pleasure still'd,
(E'en as the eyes, by quick volition moved,
Are shut and raised together), from the heart
Of one amongst the new lights moved a voice,
That made me seem like needle to the star,
In turning to its whereabouts; and thus
Began: "The love, that makes me beautiful,
Prompts me to tell of the other guide, for whom
Such good of mine is spoken. Where one is,
The other worthily should also be;
That as their warfare was alike, alike
Should be their glory. Slow, and full of doubt,
And with thin ranks, after its banner moved
The army of Christ (which it so dearly cost
To reappoint), when its imperial Head,
Who reigneth ever, for the drooping host

Did make provision, through grace alone,
And not through its deserving. As thou heard'st,
Two champions to the succor of his spouse
He sent, who by their deeds and words might join
Again his scatter'd people. In that clime
Where springs the pleasant west-wind to unfold
The fresh leaves, with which Europe sees herself
New-garmented; nor from those billows far,
Beyond whose chiding, after weary course,
The sun doth sometimes hide him; safe abides
The happy Callaroga, under guard
Of the great shield, wherein the lion lies
Subjected and supreme. And there was born
The loving minion of the Christian faith,
The hallow'd wrestler, gentle to his own,
And to his enemies terrible. So replete
His soul with lively virtue, that when first
Created, even in the mother's womb,
It prophesied. When, at the sacred font,
The spousals were complete 'twixt faith and him,
Where pledge of mutual safety was exchanged,
The dame, who was his surety, in her sleep

Beheld the wondrous fruit, that was from him
And from his heirs to issue. And that such
He might be construed, as indeed he was,
She was inspired to name him of his owner,
Whose he was wholly; and so call'd him Dominic.
And I speak of him, as the laborer,
Whom Christ in his own garden chose to be
His help-mate. Messenger he seem'd, and friend
Fast-knit to Christ; and the first love he show'd,
Was after the first counsel that Christ gave.
Many a time his nurse, at entering, found
That he had risen in silence, and was prostrate,
As who should say, 'My errand was for this.'
O happy father! Felix rightly named.
O favor'd mother! rightly named Joanna;
If that do mean, as men interpret it.
Not for the world's sake, for which now they toil
Upon Ostiense and Taddeo's lore,
But for the real manna, soon he grew
Mighty in learning; and did set himself
To go about the vineyard, that soon turns
To wan and wither'd, if not tended well:

And from the see (whose bounty to the just
And needy is gone by, not through its fault,
But his who fills it basely) he besought,
No dispensation for commuted wrong,
Nor the first vacant fortune, nor the tenths
That to God's paupers rightly appertain,
But, 'gainst an erring and degenerate world,
License to fight, in favor of that seed
From which the twice twelve cions gird thee round.
Then, with sage doctrine and good-will to help,
Forth on his great apostleship he fared,
Like torrent bursting from a lofty vein;
And, dashing 'gainst the stocks of heresy,
Smote fiercest, where resistance was most stout.
Thence many rivulets have since been turn'd,
Over the garden catholic to lead
Their living waters, and have fed its plants.

“If such, one wheel of that two-yoked car,
Wherein the holy Church defended her,
And rode triumphant through the civil broil;
Thou canst not doubt its fellow's excellence,

Which Thomas, ere my coming, hath declared
So courteously unto thee. But the track,
Which its smooth fellies made, is now deserted:
That, mouldy mother is, where late were lees.
His family, that wont to trace his path,
Turn backward, and invert their steps; erelong
To rue the gathering in of their ill crop,
When the rejected tares in vain shall ask
Admittance to the barn. I question not
But he, who search'd our volume, leaf by leaf,
Might still find page with this inscription on't,
'I am as I was wont.' Yet such were not
From Acquasparta nor Casale, whence,
Of those who come to meddle with the text,
One stretches and another cramps its rule.
Buonaventura's life in me behold,
From Bagnoregio; one, who, in discharge
Of my great offices, still laid aside
All sinister aim. Illuminato here,
And Agostino join me: two they were,
Among the first of those barefooted meek ones,
Who sought God's friendship in the cord: with them

Hugues of Saint Victor; Pietro Mangiadore;
And he of Spain in his twelve volumes shining;
Nathan the prophet; Metropolitan
Chrysostom; and Anselmo; and, who deign'd
To put his hand to the first art, Donatus.
Raban is here; and at my side there shines
Calabria's abbot, Joachim, endow'd
With soul prophetic. The bright courtesy
Of friar Thomas and his goodly lore,
Have moved me to the blazon of a peer
So worthy; and with me have moved this throng."

CANTO XIII

Thomas Aquinas solves another of Dante's doubts
and warns him against assenting to any proposition
without having duly examined it.

LET him, who would conceive what now I saw,
Imagine (and retain the image firm
As mountain rock, the whilst he hears me speak),
Of stars, fifteen, from midst the ethereal host
Selected, that, with lively ray serene,
O'ercome the massiest air: thereto imagine
The wain, that, in the bosom of our sky,
Spins ever on its axle night and day,
With the bright summit of that horn, which swells
Due from the pole, round which the first wheel rolls,
To have ranged themselves in fashion of two signs
In heaven, such as Ariadne made,
When death's chill seized her; and that one of them
Did compass in the other's beam; and both
In such sort whirl around, that each should tend

With opposite motion: and, conceiving thus,
Of that true constellation, and the dance
Twofold, that circled me, he shall attain
As 'twere the shadow; for things there as much
Surpass our usage, as the swiftest heaven
Is swifter than the Chiana. There was sung
No Bacchus, and no Io Paeon, but
Three Persons in the Godhead, and in one
Person that nature and the human join'd.

The song and round were measured: and to us
Those saintly lights attended, happier made
At each new ministering. Then silence brake
Amid the accordant sons of Deity,
That luminary, in which the wondrous life
Of the meek man of God was told to me;
And thus it spake: "One ear o' the harvest thresh'd,
And its grain safely stored, sweet charity
Invites me with the other to like toil.

"Thou know'st, that in the bosom, whence the rib
Was ta'en to fashion that fair cheek, whose taste

All the world pays for; and in that, which pierced
By the keen lance, both after and before
Such satisfaction offer'd as outweighs
Each evil in the scale; whate'er of light
To human nature is allow'd, must all
Have by his virtue been infused, who form'd
Both one and other: and thou thence admirest
In that I told thee, of beatitudes,
A second there is none to him enclosed
In the fifth radiance. Open now thine eyes
To what I answer thee; and thou shalt see
Thy deeming and my saying meet in truth,
As centre in the round. That which dies not,
And that which can die, are but each the beam
Of that idea, which our Sovereign Sire
Engendereth loving; for that lively light,
Which passeth from his splendor, not disjoin'd
From him, nor from his love triune with them,
Doth, through his bounty, congregate itself,
Mirror'd, as 'twere, in new existences;
Itself unalterable, and ever one.

“Descending hence unto the lowest powers,
Its energy so sinks, at last it makes
But brief contingencies; for so I name
Things generated, which the heavenly orbs
Moving, with seed or without seed, produce.
Their wax, and that which moulds it, differ much:
And thence with lustre, more or less, it shows
The ideal stamp imprest: so that one tree,
According to his kind, hath better fruit,
And worse: and, at your birth, ye, mortal men,
Are in your talents various. Were the wax
Moulded with nice exactness, and the heaven
In its disposing influence supreme,
The brightness of the seal should be complete.
But nature renders it imperfect ever;
Resembling thus the artist, in his work,
Whose faltering hand is faithless to his skill.
Therefore, if fervent love dispose, and mark
The lustrous image of the primal virtue,
There all perfection is vouchsafed; and such
The clay was made, accomplish’d with each gift,
That life can teem with; such the burden fill’d

The virgin's bosom: so that I commend
Thy judgment, that the human nature ne'er
Was, or can be, such as in them it was.

“Did I advance no further than this point;
‘How then had he no peer?’ thou might'st reply.
But, that what now appears not, may appear
Right plainly, ponder, who he was, and what
(When he was bidden ‘Ask’) the motive, sway'd,
To his requesting. I have spoken thus,
That thou mayst see, he was a king, who ask'd
For wisdom, to the end he might be king
Sufficient: not, the number to search out
Of the celestial movers; or to know,
If necessary with contingent e'er
Have made necessity; or whether that
Be granted, that first motion is; or if,
Of the mid-circle, can by art be made
Triangle, with its corner blunt or sharp.

“Whence, noting that, which I have said, and this,
Thou kingly prudence and that ken mayst learn,

At which the dart of my intention aims.
And, marking clearly, that I told thee, 'Risen,'
Thou shalt discern it only hath respect
To kings, of whom are many, and the good
Are rare. With this distinction take my words;
And they may well consist with that which thou
Of the first human father dost believe,
And of our well-beloved. And let this
Henceforth be lead unto thy feet, to make
Thee slow in motion, as a weary man,
Both to the 'yea' and to the 'nay' thou seest not.
For he among the fools is down full low,
Whose affirmation, or denial, is
Without distinction, in each case alike.
Since it befalls, that in most instances
Current opinion leans to false: and then
Affection bends the judgment to her ply.

"Much more than vainly doth he lose from shore,
Since he returns not such as he set forth,
Who fishes for the truth and wanteth skill.
And open proofs of this unto the world

Have been afforded in Parmenides,
Melissus, Bryso, and the crowd beside,
Who journey'd on, and knew not whither: so did
Sabellius, Arius, and the other fools,
Who, like to scimitars, reflected back
The scripture-image by distortion marr'd.

“Let not the people be too swift to judge;
As one who reckons on the blades in field,
Or e'er the crop be ripe. For I have seen
The thorn frown rudely all the winter long,
And after bear the rose upon its top;
And bark, that all her way across the sea
Ran straight and speedy, perish at the last
E'en in the haven's mouth. Seeing one steal,
Another bring his offering to the priest,
Let not Dame Birtha and Sir Martin thence
Into heaven's counsels deem that they can pry:
For one of these may rise, the other fall.”

CANTO XIV

After listening to Solomon, Dante and Beatrice proceed
to Mars and behold the spirits of those who died
fighting for the true faith.

FROM centre to the circle, and so back
From circle to the centre, water moves
In the round chalice, even as the blow
Impels it, inwardly, or from without.
Such was the image glanced into my mind,
As the great spirit of Aquinum ceased;
And Beatrice, after him, her words
Resumed alternate: "Need there is (though yet
He tells it to you not in words, nor e'en
In thought) that he should fathom to its depth
Another mystery. Tell him, if the light,
Wherewith your semblance blooms, shall stay with you
Eternally, as now; and, if it doth,
How, when ye shall regain your visible forms,
The sight may without harm endure the change,

That also tell." As those, who in a ring
Tread the light measure, in their fitful mirth
Raise loud the voice, and spring with gladder bound;
Thus, at the hearing of that pious suit,
The saintly circles, in their tourneying
And wondrous note, attested new delight.

Whoso laments, that we must doff this garb
Of frail mortality, thenceforth to live
Immortally above; he hath not seen
The sweet refreshing of that heavenly shower.

Him, who lives Ever, and forever reigns
In mystic union of the Three in One,
Unbounded, bounding all, each spirit thrice
Sang, with such melody, as, but to hear,
For highest merit were an ample meed.
And from the lesser orb the goodliest light,
With gentle voice and mild, such as perhaps
The angel's once to Mary, thus replied:
"Long as the joy of Paradise shall last,
Our love shall shine around that raiment, bright

As fervent; fervent as, in vision, blest;
And that as far, in blessedness, exceeding,
As it hath grace, beyond its virtue, great.
Our shape, regarmented glorious weeds
Of saintly flesh, must, being thus entire,
Show yet more gracious. Therefore shall increase
Whate'er, of light, gratuitous imparts
The Supreme Good; light, ministering aid,
The better to disclose his glory: whence,
The vision needs increasing, must increase
The fervor, which it kindles; and that too
The ray, that comes from it. But as the gleed
Which gives out flame, yet in its whiteness shines
More livelily than that, and so preserves
Its proper semblance; thus this circling sphere
Of splendor shall to view less radiant seem,
Than shall our fleshly robe, which yonder earth
Now covers. Nor will such excess of light
O'erpower us, in corporeal organs made
Firm, and susceptible of all delight."

So ready and so cordial an "Amen"

Follow'd from either choir, as plainly spoke
Desire of their dead bodies; yet perchance
Not for themselves, but for their kindred dear,
Mothers and sires, and those whom best they loved,
Ere they were made imperishable flame.

And lo! forthwith there rose up round about
A lustre, over that already there;
Of equal clearness, like the brightening up
Of the horizon. As at evening hour
Of twilight, new appearances through heaven
Peer with faint glimmer, doubtfully descried;
So, there, new substances, methought, began
To rise in view beyond the other twain,
And wheeling, sweep their ampler circuit wide.

O genuine glitter of eternal Beam!
With what a sudden whiteness did it flow,
O'erpowering vision in me. But so fair,
So passing lovely, Beatrice show'd,
Mind cannot follow it, nor words express
Her infinite sweetness. Thence mine eyes regain'd

Power to look up; and I beheld myself,
Sole with my lady, to more lofty bliss
Translated: for the star, with warmer smile
Impurpled, well denoted our ascent.

With all the heart, and with that tongue which speaks
The same in all, a holocaust I made
To God befitting the new grace vouchsafed.
And from my bosom had not yet upsteam'd
The fuming of that incense, when I knew
The rite accepted. With such mighty sheen
And mantling crimson, in two listed rays
The splendors shot before me, that I cried,
“God of Sabaoth! that dost prank them thus!”

As leads the galaxy from pole to pole,
Distinguish'd into greater lights and less,
Its pathway, which the wisest fail to spell;
So thickly studded, in the depth of Mars,
Those rays described the venerable sign,
That quadrants in the round conjoining frame.

Here memory mocks the toil of genius. Christ
Beam'd on that cross; and pattern fails me now.
But whoso takes his cross, and follows Christ,
Will pardon me for that I leave untold,
When in the flecker'd dawning he shall spy
The glitterance of Christ. From horn to horn,
And 'tween the summit and the base, did move
Lights, scintillating, as they met and pass'd.
Thus oft are seen with ever-changeful glance,
Straight or athwart, now rapid and now slow,
The atomies of bodies, long or short,
To move along the sunbeam, whose slant line
Checkers the shadow interposed by art
Against the noontide heat. And as the chime
Of minstrel music, dulcimer, and harp
With many strings, a pleasant dinning makes
To him, who heareth not distinct the note;
So from the lights, which there appear'd to me,
Gather'd along the cross a melody,
That, indistinctly heard, with ravishment
Possess'd me. Yet I mark'd it was a hymn
Of lofty praises; for there came to me

“Arise,” and “Conquer,” as to one who hears
And comprehends not. Me such ecstasy
O’ercame, that never, till that hour, was thing
That held me in so sweet imprisonment.

Perhaps my saying overbold appears,
Accounting less the pleasure of those eyes,
Whereon to look fulfilleth all desire.
But he, who is aware those living seals
Of every beauty work with quicker force,
The higher they are risen; and that there
I had not turn’d me to them; he may well
Excuse me that, whereof in my excuse
I do accuse me, and may own my truth;
That holy pleasure here not yet reveal’d,
Which grows in transport as we mount aloft.

CANTO XV

The spirit of Cacciaguida speaks of the simplicity
of the Florentines in his days.

TRUE love, that ever shows itself as clear
In kindness, as loose appetite in wrong,
Silenced that lyre harmonious, and still'd
The sacred chords, that are by Heaven's right hand
Unwound and tighten'd. How to righteous prayers
Should they not hearken, who, to give me will
For praying, in accordance thus were mute?
He hath in sooth good cause for endless grief,
Who, for the love of thing that lasteth not,
Despoils himself forever of that love.

As oft along the still and pure serene,
At nightfall, glides a sudden trail of fire,
Attracting with involuntary heed
The eye to follow it, erewhile at rest;
And seems some star that shifted place in heaven,

Only that, whence it kindles, none is lost,
And it is soon extinct: thus from the horn,
That on the dexter of the cross extends,
Down to its foot, one luminary ran
From mid the cluster shone there; yet no gem
Dropp'd from its foil: and through the beamy list,
Like flame in alabaster, glow'd its course.
So forward stretch'd him (if of credence aught
Our greater muse may claim) the pious ghost
Of old Anchises, in the Elysian bower,
When he perceived his son. "O thou, my blood!
O most exceeding grace divine! to whom,
As now to thee, hath twice the heavenly gate
Been e'er unclosed?" So spake the light: whence I
Turn'd me toward him; then unto my dame
My sight directed: and on either side
Amazement waited me; for in her eyes
Was lighted such a smile, I thought that mine
Had dived unto the bottom of my grace
And of my bliss in Paradise. Forthwith,
To hearing and to sight grateful alike,
The spirit to his proem added things

I understood not, so profound he spake:
Yet not of choice, but through necessity,
Mysterious; for his high conception soar'd
Beyond the mark of mortals. When the flight
Of holy transport had so spent its rage,
That nearer to the level of our thought
The speech descended; the first sounds I heard
Were, "Blest be thou, Triunal Deity!
That hast such favor in my seed vouchsafed."
Then follow'd: "No unpleasant thirst, though long,
Which took me reading in the sacred book,
Whose leaves or white or dusky never change,
Thou hast allay'd, my son! within this light,
From whence my voice thou hear'st: more thanks to her
Who, for such lofty mounting, has with plumes
Begirt thee. Thou dost deem thy thoughts to me
From Him transmitted, who is first of all,
E'en as all numbers ray from unity;
And therefore dost not ask me who I am,
Or why to thee more joyous I appear,
Than any other in this gladsome throng.
The truth is as thou deem'st; for in this life

Both less and greater in that mirror look,
In which thy thoughts, or e'er thou think'st, are shown.
But, that the love, which keeps me wakeful ever,
Urging with sacred thirst of sweet desire,
May be contented fully; let thy voice,
Fearless, and frank, and jocund, utter forth
Thy will distinctly, utter forth the wish,
Whereto my ready answer stands decreed."

I turn'd me to Beatrice; and she heard
Ere I had spoken, smiling an assent,
That to my will gave wings; and I began:
"To each among your tribe, what time ye kenn'd
The nature, in whom naught unequal dwells,
Wisdom and love were in one measure dealt;
For that they are so equal in the sun,
From whence ye drew your radiance and your heat,
As makes all likeness scant. But will and means,
In mortals, for the cause ye well discern,
With unlike wings are fledge. A mortal, I
Experience inequality like this;
And therefore give no thanks, but in the heart,

For thy paternal greeting. This howe'er
I pray thee, living topaz! that ingemm'st
This precious jewel; let me hear thy name."

"I am thy root, O leaf! whom to expect
Even, hath pleased me." Thus the prompt reply
Prefacing, next it added: "He, of whom
Thy kindred appellation comes, and who,
These hundred years and more, on its first ledge
Hath circuited the mountain, was my son,
And thy great-grandsire. Well befits, his long
Endurance should be shorten'd by thy deeds.

"Florence, within her ancient limit-mark,
Which calls her still to matin prayers and noon,
Was chaste and sober, and abode in peace.
She had no armlets and no head-tires then;
No purpled dames; no zone, that caught the eye
More than the person did. Time was not yet,
When at his daughter's birth the sire grew pale,
For fear the age and dowry should exceed,
On each side, just proportion. House was none

Void of its family: nor yet had come
Sardanapalus, to exhibit feats
Of chamber prowess. Montemalo yet
O'er our suburban turret rose; as much
To be surpassed in fall, as in its rising.
I saw Bellincion Berti walk abroad
In leathern girdle, and a clasp of bone;
And, with no artful coloring on her cheeks,
His lady leave the glass. The sons I saw
Of Nerli, and of Vecchio, well content
With unrobed jerkin; and their good dames handling
The spindle and the flax: O happy they!
Each sure of burial in her native land,
And none left desolate a-bed for France.
One waked to tend the cradle, hushing it
With sounds that lull'd the parent's infancy;
Another, with her maidens, drawing off
The tresses from the distaff, lectured them
Old tales of Troy, and Fesole, and Rome.
A Salterello and Cianghella we
Had held as strange a marvel, as ye would
A Cincinnatus or Cornelia now.

“In such composed and seemly fellowship,
Such faithful and such fair equality,
In so sweet household, Mary at my birth
Bestow’d me, call’d on with loud cries; and there,
In your old baptistery, I was made
Christian at once and Cacciaguida; as were
My brethren Eliseo and Moronto.

“From Val dipado came to me my spouse;
And hence thy surname grew. I follow’d then
The Emperor Conrad: and his knighthood he
Did gird on me; in such good part he took
My valiant service. After him I went
To testify against that evil law,
Whose people, by the shepherd’s fault, possess
Your right usurp’d. There I by that foul crew
Was disentangled from the treacherous world
Whose base affection many a spirit soils;
And from the martyrdom came to this peace.”

CANTO XVI

Cacciaguida recounts the names of the chief Florentine families of his time and accounts for the subsequent degeneration of the city.

O SLIGHT respect of man's nobility!
I never shall account it marvellous,
That our infirm affection here below
Thou movest to boasting; when I could not chuse,
E'en in that region of unwarp'd desire,
In heaven itself, but make my vaunt in thee.
Yet cloak thou art soon shorten'd; for that Time,
Unless thou be eked out from day to day,
Goes round thee with his shears. Resuming then,
With greeting such as Rome was first to bear,
But since hath disaccustom'd, I began:
And Beatrice, that a little space
Was sevr'd, smiled; reminding me of her,
Whose cough embolden'd (as the story holds)
To first offence the doubting Guenever.

“You are my sire,” said I: “you give me heart
Freely to speak my thought: above myself
You raise me. Through so many streams with joy
My soul is fill’d, that gladness wells from it;
So that it bears the mighty tide, and bursts not.
Say then, my honor’d stem! what ancestors
Were those who sprang from, and what years were mark’d
In your first childhood? Tell me of the fold,
That hath Saint John for guardian, what was then
Its state, and who in it were highest seated!”

As embers, at the breathing of the wind,
Their flame enliven; so that light I saw
Shine at my blandishments; and, as it grew
More fair to look on, so with voice more sweet,
Yet not in this our modern phrase, forthwith
It answer’d: “From the day, when it was said
‘Hail Virgin!’ to the throes by which my mother,
Who now is sainted, lighten’d her of me
Whom she was heavy with, this fire had come
Five hundred times and fourscore, to relume

Its radiance underneath the burning foot
Of its own lion. They, of whom I sprang,
And I, had there our birth-place, where the last
Partition of our city first is reach'd
By him that runs her annual game. Thus much
Suffice of my forefathers: who they were,
And whence they hither came, more honorable
It is to pass in silence than to tell.
All those who at that time were there, betwixt
Mars and the Baptist, fit to carry arms,
Were but the fifth, of them this day alive.
But then the citizen's blood, that now is mix'd
From Campi and Certaldo and Fighine,
Ran purely through the last mechanic's veins.
O how much better were it, that these people
Were neighbors to you; and that at Galluzzo
And at Trespiano ye should have your boundary;
Than to have them within, and bear the stench
Of Aguglione's hind, and Signa's, him,
That hath his eye already keen for bartering.
Had not the people, which of all the world
Degenerates most, been stepdame unto Caesar,

But, as a mother to her son been kind,
Such one, as hath become a Florentine,
And trades and traffics, had been turn'd adrift
To Simifonte, where his grandsire plied
The beggar's craft: the Conti were possessed
Of Montemurlo still: the Cerchi still
Were in Acone's parish: nor had haply
From Valdigreve passed the Buondelmonti.
The city's malady hath ever source
In the confusion of its persons, as
The body's, in variety of food:
And the blind bull falls with a steeper plunge,
Than the blind lamb: and oftentimes one sword
Doth more and better execution,
Than five. Mark Luni; Urbisaglia mark;
How they are gone; and after them how go
Chiusi and Sinigaglia: and 'twill seem
No longer new, or strange to thee, to hear
That families fail, when cities have their end.
All things that appertain to ye, like yourselves,
Are mortal: but mortality in some
Ye mark not; they endure so long, and you

Pass by so suddenly. And as the moon
Doth, by the rolling of her heavenly sphere,
Hide and reveal the strand unceasingly;
So fortune deals with Florence. Hence admire not
At what of them I tell thee, whose renown
Time covers, the first Florentines. I saw
The Ughi, Catilini, and Filippi,
The Alberichi, Greci, and Ormanni,
Now in their wane, illustrious citizens;
And great as ancient, of Sannella him,
With him of Arca saw, and Soldanieri,
And Ardinghi, and Bostichi. At the poop
That now is laden with new felony
So cumbrous it may speedily sink the bark,
The Ravignani sat, of whom is sprung
The County Guido, and whoso hath since
His title from the famed Bellincion ta'en.
Fair governance was yet an art well prized
By him of Pressa: Galigaio show'd
The gilded hilt and pommel, in his house:
The column, clothed with verrey, still was seen
Unshaken; the Sachetti still were great,

Giouchi, Sifanti, Galli, and Barucci,
With them who blush to hear the bushel named.
Of the Calfucci still the branchy trunk
Was in its strength: and, to the curule chairs,
Sizii and Arrigucci yet were drawn.
How mighty them I saw, whom, since, their pride
Hath undone! And in all their goodly deeds
Florence was, by the bullets of bright gold,
O'erflourish'd. Such the sires of those, who now,
As surely as your church is vacant, flock
Into her consistory, and at leisure
There stall them and grow fat. The o'erweening brood,
That plays the dragon after him that flees,
But unto such as turn and show the tooth,
Ay or the purse, is gentle as a lamb,
Was on its rise, but yet so slight esteem'd,
That Ubertino of Donati grudged
His father-in-law should yoke him to its tribe.
Already Caponsacco had descended
Into the mart from Fesole: and Giuda
And Infangato were good citizens.
A thing incredible I tell, though true:

The gateway, named from those of Pera, led
Into the narrow circuit of your walls.
Each one, who bears the sightly quarterings
Of the great Baron, (he whose name and worth
The festival of Thomas still revives),
His knighthood and his privilege retain'd;
Albeit one, who borders them with gold,
This day is mingled with the common herd.
In Borgo yet the Gualterotti dwelt,
And Importuni: well for its repose,
Had it still lack'd of newer neighborhood.
The house, from whence your tears have had their spring,
Through the just anger, that hath murder'd ye
And put a period to your gladsome days,
Was honor'd; it, and those consorted with it.
O Buondelmonti! what ill counselling
Prevail'd on thee to break the plighted bond?
Many, who now are weeping, would rejoice,
Had God to Ema given thee, the first time
Thou near our city camest. But so was doom'd:
Florence! on that maim'd stone which guards the bridge,
The victim, when thy peace departed, fell.

“With these and others like to them, I saw
Florence in such assured tranquillity,
She had no cause at which to grieve: with these
Saw her so glorious and so just, that ne’er
The lily from the lance had hung reverse,
Or through division been with vermeil dyed.”

CANTO XVII

Cacciaguida predicts Dante's exile and exhorts him to write the present poem.

SUCH as the youth, who came to Clymene,
To certify himself of that reproach
Which had been fasten'd on him (he whose end
Still makes the fathers chary to their sons),
E'en such was I; nor unobserved was such
Of Beatrice, and that saintly lamp,
Who had erewhile for me his station moved;
When thus my lady: "Give thy wish free vent,
That it may issue, bearing true report
Of the mind's impress: not that aught thy words
May to our knowledge add, but to the end
That thou mayst use thyself to own thy thirst,
And men may mingle for thee when they hear."

"O plant, from whence I spring! revered and loved!
Who soar'st so high a pitch, that thou as clear,

As earthly thought determines two obtuse
In one triangle not contain'd, so clear
Dost see contingencies, ere in themselves
Existent, looking at the point whereto
All times are present; I, the whilst I scaled
With Virgil the soul-purifying mount
And visited the nether world of woe,
Touching my future destiny have heard
Words grievous, though I feel me on all sides
Well squared to fortune's blows. Therefore my will
Were satisfied to know the lot awaits me.
The arrow, seen beforehand, slacks his flight."

So said I to the brightness, which erewhile
To me had spoken; and my will declared,
As Beatrice will'd, explicitly.
Nor with oracular response obscure,
Such as, or e'er the Lamb of God was slain,
Beguiled the credulous nations: but, in terms
Precise, and unambiguous lore, replied
The spirit of paternal love, enshrined,
Yet in his smile apparent; and thus spake:

“Contingency, whose verge extendeth not
Beyond the tablet of your mortal mould,
Is all depicted in the eternal sight;
But hence deriveth not necessity,
More than the tall ship, hurried down the flood,
Is driven by the eye that looks on it.
From thence, as to the ear sweet harmony
From organ comes, so comes before mine eye
The time prepared for thee. Such as driven out
From Athens, by his cruel stepdame’s wiles,
Hippolytus departed; such must thou
Depart from Florence. This they wish, and this
Contrive, and will ere long effectuate, there,
Where gainful merchandise is made of Christ
Throughout the live-long day. The common cry,
Will, as ‘tis ever wont, affix the blame
Unto the party injured: but the truth
Shall, in the vengeance it dispenseth, find
A faithful witness. Thou shalt leave each thing
Beloved most dearly: this is the first shaft
Shot from the bow of exile. Thou shalt prove
How salt the savor is of other’s bread;

How hard the passage, to descend and climb
By other's stairs. But that shall gall thee most,
Will be the worthless and vile company,
With whom thou must be thrown into these straits.
For all ungrateful, impious all, and mad,
Shall turn 'gainst thee: but in a little while,
Theirs, and not thine, shall be the crimson'd brow,
Their course shall so evince their brutishness,
To have ta'en thy stand apart shall well become thee.

“First refuge thou must find, first place of rest,
In the great Lombard's courtesy, who bears,
Upon the ladder perch'd, the sacred bird.
He shall behold thee with such kind regard,
That 'twixt ye two, the contrary to that
Which 'falls 'twixt other men, the granting shall
Forerun the asking. With him shalt thou see
That mortal, who was at his birth impressed
So strongly from this star, that of his deeds
The nations shall take note. His unripe age
Yet holds him from observance; for these wheels
Only nine years have compassed him about.

But, ere the Gascon practise on great Harry,
Sparkles of virtue shall shoot forth in him,
In equal scorn of labors and of gold.
His bounty shall be spread abroad so widely,
As not to let the tongues, e'en of his foes,
Be idle in its praise. Look thou to him,
And his beneficence: for he shall cause
Reversal of their lot to many people;
Rich men and beggars interchanging fortunes.
And thou shalt bear this written in thy soul,
Of him, but tell it not": and things he told
Incredible to those who witness them;
Then added: "So interpret thou, my son,
What hath been told thee.- Lo! the ambushment
That a few circling seasons hide for thee.
Yet envy not thy neighbors: time extends
Thy span beyond their treason's chastisement."

Soon as the saintly spirit, by silence, mark'd
Completion of that web, which I had stretch'd
Before it, warp'd for weaving; I began,
As one, who in perplexity desires

Counsel of other, wise, benign, and friendly:
“My father! well I mark how time spurs on
Toward me, ready to inflict the blow,
Which falls most heavily on him who most
Abandoneth himself. Therefore ‘tis good
I should forecast, that, driven from the place
Most dear to me, I may not lose myself
All other by my song. Down through the world
Of infinite mourning; and along the mount,
From whose fair height my lady’s eyes did lift me;
And, after, through this Heaven, from light to light:
Have I learnt that, which if I tell again,
It may with many woefully disrelish:
And, if I am a timid friend to truth,
I fear my life may perish among those,
To whom these days shall be of ancient date.”

The brightness, where enclosed the treasure smiled,
Which I had found there, first shone glisteringly,
Like to a golden mirror in the sun;
Next answer’d: “Conscience, dimm’d or by its own
Or other’s shame, will feel thy saying sharp.

Thou, notwithstanding, all deceit removed,
See the whole vision be made manifest.
And let them wince, who have their withers wrung.
What though, when tasted first, thy voice shall prove
Unwelcome: on digestion, it will turn
To vital nourishment. The cry thou raisest
Shall, as the wind doth, smite the proudest summits;
Which is of honor no light argument.
For this, there only have been shown to thee,
Throughout these orbs, the mountain, and the deep,
Spirits, whom fame hath note of. For the mind
Of him who hears, is loth to acquiesce
And fix its faith, unless the instance brought
Be palpable, and proof apparent urge."

CANTO XVIII

Dante ascends to Jupiter, the sixth heaven, where he finds
the souls of those who had administered justice
rightly in the world.

NOW in his word, sole, ruminating, joy'd
That blessed spirit: and I fed on mine,
Tempering the sweet with bitter. She meanwhile,
Who led me unto God, admonish'd: "Muse
On other thoughts: bethink thee, that near Him
I dwell, who recompenseth every wrong."

At the sweet sounds of comfort straight I turn'd;
And, in the saintly eyes what love was seen,
I leave in silence here, nor through distrust
Of my words only, but that to such bliss
The mind remounts not without aid. Thus much
Yet may I speak; that, as I gazed on her,
Affection found no room for other wish.
While the everlasting pleasure, that did full

On Beatrice shine, with second view
From her fair countenance my gladden'd soul
Contented; vanquishing me with a beam
Of her soft smile, she spake: "Turn thee, and list.
These eyes are not thy only Paradise."

As here, we sometimes in the looks may see
The affection mark'd, when that its sway hath ta'en
The spirit wholly; thus the hallow'd light,
To whom I turn'd, flashing, bewray'd its will
To talk yet further with me, and began:
"On this fifth lodgment of the tree, whose life
Is from its top, whose fruit is ever fair
And leaf unwithering, blessed spirits abide,
That were below, ere they arrived in heaven,
So mighty in renown, as every muse
Might grace her triumph with them. On the horns
Look, therefore, of the cross: he whom I name,
Shall there enact, as doth in summer cloud
Its nimble fire." Along the cross I saw,
At the repeated name of Joshua,
A splendor gliding; nor, the word was said,

Ere it was done: then, at the naming, saw,
Of the great Maccabee, another move
With whirling speed; and gladness was the scourge
Unto that top. The next for Charlemain
And for the peer Orlando, two my gaze
Pursued, intently, as the eye pursues
A falcon flying. Last, along the cross,
William, and Renard, and Duke Godfrey drew
My ken, and Robert Guiscard. And the soul
Who spake with me, among the other lights
Did move away, and mix; and with the quire
Of heavenly songsters proved his tuneful skill

To Beatrice on my right I bent,
Looking for intimation, or by word
Or act, what next behoved; and did descry
Such mere effulgence in her eyes, such joy,
It pass'd all former wont. And, as by sense
Of new delight, the man, who perseveres
In good deeds, doth perceive, from day to day,
His virtue growing; I e'en thus perceived,
Of my ascent, together with the heaven,

The circuit widen'd; noting the increase
Of beauty in that wonder. Like the change
In a brief moment on some maiden's cheek,
Which, from its fairness, doth discharge the weight
Of pudency, that stain'd it; such in her,
And to mine eyes so sudden was the change,
Through silvery whiteness of that temperate star
Whose sixth orb now enfolded us. I saw,
Within that jovial cresset, the clear sparks
Of love, that reign'd there, fashion to my view
Our language. And as birds, from river banks
Arisen, now in round, now lengthen'd troop,
Array them in their flight, greeting, as seems,
Their new-found pastures; so, within the lights,
The saintly creatures flying, sang; and made
Now D, now I, now L, figured i' the air.
First singing to their notes they moved; then, one
Becoming of these signs, a little while
Did rest them, and were mute. O nymph divine
Of Pegasean race! who souls, which thou
Inspirest, makest glorious and long-lived, as they
Cities and realms by thee; thou with thyself

Inform me; that I may set forth the shapes,
As fancy doth present them: be thy power
Display'd in this brief song. The characters,
Vocal and consonant, were five-fold seven.
In order, each, as they appear'd, I mark'd
Diligite Justitiam, the first,
Both verb and noun all blazon'd; and the extreme,
Qui judicatis terram. In the M
Of the fifth word they held their station;
Making the star seem silver streak'd with gold.
And on the summit of the M, I saw
Descending other lights, that rested there,
Singing, methinks, their bliss and primal good.
Then, as at shaking of a lighted brand,
Sparkles innumerable on all sides
Rise scatter'd, source of augury to the unwise:
Thus more than thousand twinkling lustres hence
Seem'd reascending; and a higher pitch
Some mounting, and some less, e'en as the sun,
Which kindleth them, decreed. And when each one
Had settled in his place; the head and neck
Then saw I of an eagle, livelily

Graved in that streaky fire. Who painteth there,
Hath none to guide Him: of Himself he guides:
And every line and texture of the nest
Doth own from Him the virtue fashions it.
The other bright beatitude, that seem'd
Erewhile, with lilies crowning, well content
To over-canopy the M, moved forth,
Following gently the impress of the bird.

Sweet star! what glorious and thick-studded gems
Declared to me our justice on the earth
To be the effluence of that heaven, which thou,
Thyself a costly jewel, dost inlay.
Therefore I pray the Sovran Mind, from whom
Thy motion and thy virtue are begun,
That He would look from whence the fog doth rise,
To vitiate thy beam; so that once more
He may put forth his hand 'gainst such, as drive
Their traffic in that sanctuary, whose walls
With miracles and martyrdoms were built.
Ye host of heaven, whose glory I survey!
O beg ye grace for those, that are, on earth,

All after ill example gone astray.
War once had for his instrument the sword:
But now 'tis made, taking the bread away,
Which the good Father locks from none.- And thou,
That writest but to cancel, think, that they,
Who for the vineyard, which thou wastest, died,
Peter and Paul, live yet, and mark thy doings.
Thou hast good cause to cry, "My heart so cleaves
To him, that lived in solitude remote,
And for a dance was dragg'd to martyrdom,
I wist not of the fisherman nor Paul."

CANTO XIX

The eagle declares the cause for which it is exalted
to the state of glory and discusses salvation
and the day of judgment.

BEFORE my sight appear'd, with open wings,
The beauteous image; in fruition sweet,
Gladdening the thronged spirits. Each did seem
A little ruby, whereon so intense
The sun-beam glow'd, that to mine eyes it came
In clear refraction. And that, which next
Befalls me to portray, voice hath not utter'd,
Nor hath ink written, nor in fantasy
Was e'er conceived. For I beheld and heard
The beak discourse; and, what intention form'd
Of many, singly as of one express,
Beginning: "For that I was just and piteous,
I am exalted to this height of glory,
The which no wish exceeds: and there on earth
Have I my memory left, e'en by the bad

Commended, while they leave its course untrod."

Thus is one heat from many embers felt;
As in that image many were the loves,
And one the voice, that issued from them all:
Whence I address'd them: "O perennial flowers
Of gladness everlasting! that exhale
In single breath your odors manifold;
Breathe now: and let the hunger be appeased,
That with great craving long hath held my soul,
Finding no food on earth. This well I know;
That if there be in heaven a realm, that shows
In faithful mirror the celestial Justice,
Yours without veil reflects it. Ye discern
The heed, wherewith I do prepare myself
To hearken; ye, the doubt, that urges me
With such inveterate craving." Straight I saw,
Like to a falcon issuing from the hood,
That rears his head, and claps him with his wings,
His beauty and his eagerness bewraying;
So saw I move that stately sign, with praise
Of grace divine inwoven, and high song

Of inexpressive joy. "He," it began,
"Who turn'd his compass on the world's extreme,
And in that space so variously hath wrought,
Both openly and in secret; in such wise
Could not, through all the universe, display
Impression of his glory, that the Word
Of his omniscience should not still remain
In infinite excess. In proof whereof,
He first through pride supplanted, who was sum
Of each created being, waited not
For light celestial; and abortive fell.
Whence needs each lesser nature is but scant
Receptacle unto that Good, which knows
No limit measured by itself alone.
Therefore your sight, of the omnipresent Mind
A single beam, its origin must own
Surpassing far its utmost potency.
The ken, your world is gifted with, descends
In the everlasting Justice as low down,
As eye doth in the sea; which, though it mark
The bottom from the shore, in the wide main
Discerns it not; and ne'ertheless it is;

But hidden through its deepness. Light is none,
Save that which cometh from the pure serene
Of ne'er disturbed ether: for the rest,
'Tis darkness all; or shadow of the flesh,
Or else its poison. Here confess reveal'd
That covert, which hath hidden from thy search
The living justice, of the which thou madest
Such frequent question; for thou said'st- 'A man
Is born on Indus' banks, and none is there
Who speaks of Christ, nor who doth read nor write;
And all his inclinations and his acts,
As far as human reason sees, are good;
And he offendeth not in word or deed:
But unbaptized he dies, and void of faith.
Where is the justice that condemns him? where
His blame, if he believeth not?'- What then,
And who art thou, that on the stool wouldst sit
To judge at distance of a thousand miles
With the short-sighted vision of a span?
To him, who subtilizes thus with me,
There would assuredly be room for doubt
Even to wonder, did not the safe word

Of Scripture hold supreme authority.

“O animals of clay! O spirits gross!
The primal will, that in itself is good,
Hath from itself, the chief Good, ne’er been moved.
Justice consists in consonance with it,
Derivable by no created good,
Whose very cause depends upon its beam.”

As on her nest the stork, that turns about
Unto her young, whom lately she hath fed,
Whiles they with upward eyes do look on her;
So lifted I my gaze; and, bending so,
The ever-blessed image waved its wings,
Laboring with such deep counsel. Wheeling round
It warbled, and did say: “As are my notes
To thee, who understand’st them not; such is
The eternal judgment unto mortal ken.”

Then still abiding in that ensign ranged,
Wherewith the Romans overawed the world,
Those burning splendors of the Holy Spirit

Took up the strain; and thus it spake again:

“None ever hath ascended to this realm,
Who hath not a believer been in Christ,
Either before or after the blest limbs
Were nail’d upon the wood. But lo! of those
Who call ‘Christ! Christ!’ there shall be many found,
In judgment, further off from him by far,
Than such to whom his name was never known.
Christians like these the AEthiop shall condemn:
When that the two assemblages shall part;
One rich eternally, the other poor.

“What may the Persians say unto your kings,
When they shall see that volume, in the which
All their dispraise is written, spread to view?
There amidst Albert’s works shall that be read,
Which will give speedy motion to the pen,
When Prague shall mourn her desolated realm.
There shall be read the woe, that he, doth work
With his adulterate money on the Seine,
Who by the tusk will perish: there be read
The thirsting pride, that maketh fool alike

The English and Scot, impatient of their bound.
There shall be seen the Spaniard's luxury;
The delicate living there of the Bohemian,
Who still to worth has been a willing stranger.
The halter of Jerusalem shall see
A unit for his virtue; for his vices,
No less a mark than million. He, who guards
The isle of fire by old Anchises honor'd,
Shall find his avarice there and cowardice;
And better to denote his littleness,
The writing must be letters maim'd, that speak
Much in a narrow space. All there shall know
His uncle and his brother's filthy doings,
Who so renown'd a nation and two crowns
Have bastardized. And they, of Portugal
And Norway, there shall be exposed, with him
Of Ratza, who hath counterfeited ill
The coin of Venice. O blessed Hungary!
If thou no longer patiently abidest
Thy ill-entreating: and, O blest Navarre!
If with thy mountainous girdle thou wouldst arm thee.
In earnest of that day, e'en now are heard

Wailings and groans in Famagosta's streets
And Nicosia's, grudging at their beast,
Who keepeth even footing with the rest."

CANTO XX

The eagle celebrates the praise of certain kings
and explains how the souls of those who had no
means of believing in Christ came to heaven.

WHEN, disappearing from our hemisphere,
The world's enlightener vanishes, and day
On all sides wasteth; suddenly the sky,
Erewhile irradiate only with his beam,
Is yet again unfolded, putting forth
Innumerable lights wherein one shines.
Of such vicissitude in Heaven I thought;
As the great sign, that marshalleth the world
And the world's leaders, in the blessed beak
Was silent: for that all those living lights,
Waxing in splendor, burst forth into songs,
Such as from memory glide and fall away.

Sweet Love, that dost apparel thee in smiles!
How lustrous was thy semblance in those sparkles,

Which merely are from holy thoughts inspired.

After the precious and bright beaming stones,
That did ingem the sixth light, ceased the chiming
Of their angelic bells; methought I heard
The murmuring of a river, that doth fall
From rock to rock transpicuous, making known
The richness of his spring-head: and as sound
Of cittern, at the fret-board, or of pipe,
Is, at the wind-hole, modulate and tuned;
Thus up the neck, as it were hollow, rose
That murmuring of the eagle; and forthwith
Voice there assumed; and thence along the beak
Issued in form of words, such as my heart
Did look for, on whose tables I inscribed them.

“The part in me, that sees and bears the sun
In mortal eagles," it began, “must now
Be noted steadfastly: for, of the fires,
That figure me, those, glittering in mine eye,
Are chief of all the greatest. This, that shines
Midmost for pupil, was the same who sang

The Holy Spirit's song, and bare about
The ark from town to town: now doth he know
The merit of his soul-impassion'd strains
By their well-fitted guerdon. Of the five,
That make the circle of the vision, he,
Who to the beak is nearest, comforted
The widow for her son: now doth he know,
How dear it costeth not to follow Christ;
Both from experience of this pleasant life,
And of its opposite. He next, who follows
In the circumference, for the over-arch,
By true repenting slack'd the pace of death:
Now knoweth he, that the decrees of heaven
Alter not, when, through pious prayer below,
To-day is made to-morrow's destiny.
The other following, with the laws and me,
To yield the shepherd room, pass'd o'er to Greece;
From good intent, producing evil fruit:
Now knoweth he, how all the ill, derived
From his well doing, doth not harm him aught;
Though it have brought destruction on the world.
That, which thou seest in the under bow,

Was William, whom that land bewails, which weeps
For Charles and Frederick living: now he knows,
How well is loved in heaven the righteous king;
Which he betokens by his radiant seeming.
Who, in the erring world beneath, would deem
That Trojan Ripheus, in this round, was set,
Fifth of the saintly splendors? now he knows
Enough of that, which the world cannot see;
The grace divine: albeit e'en his sight
Reach not its utmost depth." Like to the lark,
That warbling in the air expatiates long,
Then, trilling out his last sweet melody,
Drops, satiate with the sweetness; such appear'd
That image, stamped by the everlasting pleasure,
Which fashions, as they are, all things that be.

I, though my doubting were as manifest,
As is through glass the hue that mantles it,
In silence waited not; for to my lips
"What things are these?" involuntary rush'd,
And forced a passage out: whereat I mark'd
A sudden lightening and new revelry.

The eye was kindled; and the blessed sign,
No more to keep me wondering and suspense,
Replied: "I see that thou believest these things,
Because I tell them, but discern'st not how;
So that thy knowledge waits not on thy faith:
As one, who knows the name of thing by rote,
But is a stranger to its properties,
Till other's tongue reveal them. Fervent love,
And lively hope, with violence assail
The kingdom of the heavens, and overcome
The will of the Most High; not in such sort
As man prevails o'er man; but conquers it,
Because 'tis willing to be conquer'd; still,
Though conquer'd, by its mercy, conquering.

"Those, in the eye who live the first and fifth,
Cause thee to marvel, in that thou behold'st
The region of the angels deck'd with them.
They quitted not their bodies, as thou deem'st,
Gentiles, but Christians; in firm rooted faith,
This, of the feet in future to be pierced,
That, of feet nail'd already to the cross.

One from the barrier of the dark abyss,
Where never any with good-will returns,
Came back unto his bones. Of lively hope
Such was the meed; of lively hope, that wing'd
The prayers sent up to God for his release,
And put power into them to bend His will.
The glorious Spirit, of whom I speak to thee,
A little while returning to the flesh,
Believed in him, who had the means to help;
And, in believing, nourish'd such a flame
Of holy love, that at the second death
He was made sharer in our gamesome mirth.
The other, through the riches of that grace,
Which from so deep a fountain doth distil,
As never eye created saw its rising,
Placed all his love below on just and right:
Wherefore, of grace, God oped in him the eye
To the redemption of mankind to come;
Wherein believing, he endured no more
The filth of Paganism, and for their ways
Rebuked the stubborn nations. The three nymphs,
Whom at the right wheel thou beheld'st advancing,

Were sponsors for him, more than thousand years
Before baptizing. O how far removed,
Predestination! is thy root from such
As see not the First Cause entire: and ye,
O mortal men! be wary how ye judge:
For we, who see our Maker, know not yet
The number of the chosen; and esteem
Such scantiness of knowledge our delight:
For all our good is, in that primal good,
Concentrate; and God's will and ours are one."

So, by that form divine, was given to me
Sweet medicine to clear and strengthen sight.
And, as one handling skilfully the harp,
Attendant on some skilful songster's voice,
Bids the chord vibrate; and therein the song
Acquires more pleasure: so the whilst it spake,
It doth remember me, that I beheld
The pair of blessed luminaries move,
Like the accordant twinkling of two eyes,
Their beamy circlets, dancing to the sounds.

CANTO XXI

Dante ascends to Saturn, the seventh heaven, for the souls
of those who had passed their lives in holy retirement
and contemplation.

AGAIN mine eyes were fix'd on Beatrice;
And, with mine eyes, my soul that in her looks
Found all contentment. Yet no smile she wore:
And, "Did I smile," quoth she, "thou wouldst be straight
Like Semele when into ashes turn'd:
For, mounting these eternal palace-stairs,
My beauty, which the loftier it climbs,
As thou hast noted, still doth kindle more,
So shines, that, were no tempering interposed,
Thy mortal puissance would from its rays
Shrink, as the leaf doth from the thunderbolt.
Into the seventh splendor are we wafted,
That, underneath the burning lion's breast,
Beams, in this hour, commingled with his might.
Thy mind be with thine eyes; and, in them, mirror'd

The shape, which in this mirror shall be shown."

Whoso can deem, how fondly I had fed
My sight upon her blissful countenance,
May know, when to new thoughts I changed, what joy
To do the bidding of my heavenly guide;
In equal balance, poising either weight.

Within the crystal, which records the name
(As its remoter circle girds the world)
Of that loved monarch, in whose happy reign
No ill had power to harm, I saw rear'd up,
In color like to sun-illumined gold,
A ladder, which my ken pursued in vain,
So lofty was the summit; down whose steps
I saw the splendors in such multitude
Descending, every light in heaven, methought,
Was shed thence. As the rooks, at dawn of day,
Bestirring them to dry their feathers chill,
Some speed their way a-field; and homeward some,
Returning, cross their flight; while some abide,
And wheel around their airy lodge: so seem'd

That glitterance, wafted on alternate wing,
As upon certain stair it came, and clash'd
Its shining. And one, lingering near us, wax'd
So bright, that in my thought I said: "The love,
Which this betokens me, admits no doubt."

Unwillingly from question I refrain;
To her, by whom my silence and my speech
Are order'd, looking for a sign: whence she,
Who in the sight of Him, that seeth all,
Saw wherefore I was silent, prompted me
To indulge the fervent wish; and I began:
"I am not worthy, of my own desert,
That thou shouldst answer me: but for her sake,
Who hath vouchsafed my asking, spirit blest,
That in thy joy are shrouded! say the cause,
Which bringeth thee so near: and wherefore, say,
Doth the sweet symphony of Paradise
Keep silence here, pervading with such sounds
Of rapt devotion every lower sphere?"
"Mortal art thou in hearing, as in sight";
Was the reply: "and what forbade the smile

Of Beatrice interrupts our song.
Only to yield thee gladness of my voice,
And of the light that vests me, I thus far
Descend these hallow'd steps; not that more love
Invites me; for, lo! there aloft, as much
Or more of love is witness'd in those flames:
But such my lot by charity assign'd,
That makes us ready servants, as thou seest,
To execute the counsel of the Highest."

"That in this court," said I, "O sacred lamp!
Love no compulsion needs, but follows free
The eternal Providence, I well discern:
This harder find to deem: why, of thy peers,
Thou only, to this office wert foredoom'd."

I had not ended, when, like rapid mill,
Upon its centre whirl'd the light; and then
The love that did inhabit there, replied:
"Splendor eternal, piercing through these folds,
Its virtue to my vision knits; and thus
Supported, lifts me so above myself,

That on the sovran essence, which it wells from,
I have the power to gaze: and hence the joy,
Wherewith I sparkle, equalling with my blaze
The keenness of my sight. But not the soul,
That is in heaven most lustrous, nor the seraph,
That hath his eyes most fix'd on God, shall solve
What thou hast ask'd: for in the abyss it lies
Of th' everlasting statute sunk so low,
That no created ken may fathom it.
And, to the mortal world when thou return'st,
Be this reported: that none henceforth dare
Direct his footsteps to so dread a bourn.
The mind, that here is radiant, on the earth
Is wrapt in mist. Look then if she may do
Below, what passeth her ability
When she is ta'en to heaven." By words like these
Admonish'd, I the question urged no more;
And of the spirit humbly sued alone
To instruct me of its state. "'Twixt either shore
Of Italy, nor distant from thy land,
A stony ridge ariseth; in such sort,
The thunder doth not lift his voice so high.

They call it Catria: at whose foot, a cell
Is sacred to the lonely Eremite;
For worship set apart and holy rites."
A third time thus it spake; then added: "There
So firmly to God's service I adhered,
That with no costlier viands than the juice
Of olives, easily I pass'd the heats
Of summer and the winter frosts; content
In heaven-ward musings. Rich were the returns
And fertile, which that cloister once was used
To render to these heavens: now 'tis fallen
Into a waste so empty, that ere long
Detection must lay bare its vanity.
Pietro Damiano there was I y-clept:
Pietro the sinner, when before I dwelt,
Beside the Adriatic, in the house
Of our blessed Lady. Near upon my close
Of mortal life, through much importuning
I was constrained to wear the hat, that still
From bad to worse is shifted.- Cephias came;
He came, who was the Holy Spirit's vessel;
Barefoot and lean; eating their bread, as chanced,

At the first table. Modern Shepherds need
Those who on either hand may prop and lead them,
So burly are they grown; and from behind,
Others to hoist them. Down the palfrey's sides
Spread their broad mantles, so as both the beasts
Are cover'd with one skin. O patience! thou
That look'st on this, and dost endure so long."

I at those accents saw the splendors down
From step to step alight, and wheel, and wax,
Each circuiting, more beautiful. Round this
They came, and stay'd them; utter'd then a shout
So loud, it hath no likeness here: nor I
Wist what it spake, so deafening was the thunder.

CANTO XXII

St. Benedict inveighs against the corruption of the monks.
Dante mounts to the eighth heaven; the fixed stars.

ASTOUNDED, to the guardian of my steps
I turn'd me, like the child, who always runs
Thither for succor, where he trusteth most:
And she was like the mother, who her son
Beholding pale and breathless, with her voice
Soothes him, and he is cheer'd; for thus she spake,
Soothing me: "Know'st not thou, thou art in heaven?
And know'st not thou, whatever is in heaven,
Is holy; and that nothing there is done,
But is done zealously and well? Deem now,
What change in thee the song, and what my smile
Had wrought, since thus the shout had power to move thee;
In which, couldst thou have understood their prayers,
The vengeance were already known to thee,
Which thou must witness ere thy mortal hour.
The sword of heaven is not in haste to smite,

Nor yet doth linger; save unto his seeming,
Who, in desire or fear, doth look for it.
But elsewhere now I bid thee turn thy view;
So shalt thou many a famous spirit behold."

Mine eyes directing, as she will'd, I saw
A hundred little spheres, that fairer grew
By interchange of splendor. I remain'd,
As one, who fearful of o'er-much presuming,
Abates in him the keenness of desire,
Nor dares to question; when, amid those pearls,
One largest and most lustrous onward drew,
That it might yield contentment to my wish;
And, from within it, these the sounds I heard.

"If thou, like me, beheld'st the charity
That burns amongst us; what thy mind conceives,
Were utter'd. But that, ere the lofty bound
Thou reach, expectance may not weary thee;
I will make answer even to the thought,
Which thou hast such respect of. In old days,
That mountain, at whose side Cassino rests,

Was, on its height, frequented by a race
Deceived and ill-disposed: and I it was,
Who thither carried first the name of Him,
Who brought the soul-subliming truth to man.
And such a speeding grace shone over me,
That from their impious worship I reclaim'd
The dwellers round about, who with the world
Were in defusion lost. These other flames,
The spirits of men contemplative, were all
Enliven'd by that warmth, whose kindly force
Gives birth to flowers and fruits of holiness.
Here is Macarius; Romoaldo here;
And here my brethren, who their steps refrain'd
Within the cloisters, and held firm their heart."

I answering thus: "My gentle words and kind,
And this the cheerful semblance I behold,
Not unobservant, beaming in ye all,
Have raised assurance in me; wakening it
Full-blossom'd in my bosom, as a rose
Before the sun, when the consummate flower
Has spread to utmost amplitude. Of thee

Therefore intreat I, father, to declare
If I may gain such favor, as to gaze
Upon thine image by no covering veil'd."

"Brother!" he thus rejoin'd, "in the last sphere
Expect completion of thy lofty aim:
For there on each desire completion waits,
And there on mine; where every aim is found
Perfect, entire, and for fulfilment ripe.
There all things are as they have ever been:
For space is none to bound; nor pole divides.
Our ladder reaches even to that clime;
And so, at giddy distance, mocks thy view.
Thither the patriarch Jacob saw it stretch
Its topmost round; when it appear'd to him
With angels laden. But to mount it now
None lifts his foot from earth: and hence my rule
Is left a profitless stain upon the leaves;
The walls, for abbey rear'd, turn'd into dens;
The cowl, to sacks chok'd up with musty meal.
Foul usury doth not more lift itself
Against God's pleasure, than that fruit, which makes

The hearts of monks so wanton: for whate'er
Is in the Church's keeping, all pertains
To such, as sue for heaven's sweet sake; and not
To those, who in respect of kindred claim,
Or on more vile allowance. Mortal flesh
Is grown so dainty, good beginnings last not
From the oak's birth unto the acorn's setting.
His convent Peter founded without gold
Or silver; I, with prayers and fasting, mine;
And Francis, his in meek humility.
And if thou note the point, whence each proceeds,
Then look what it hath err'd to; thou shalt find
The white gown murky. Jordan was turn'd back.
And a less wonder, than the refluent sea,
May, at God's pleasure, work amendment here."

So saying, to his assembly back he drew:
And they together cluster'd into one;
Then all roll'd upward, like an eddy wind.

The sweet dame beckon'd me to follow them:
And, by that influence only, so prevail'd

Over my nature, that no natural motion,
Ascending or descending here below,
Had, as I mounted, with my pennon vied.

So, reader, as my hope is to return
Unto the holy triumph, for the which
I ofttimes wail my sins, and smite my breast;
Thou hadst been longer drawing out and thrusting
Thy finger in the fire, than I was, ere
The sign, that followeth Taurus, I beheld,
And enter'd its precinct. O glorious stars!
O light impregnate with exceeding virtue!
To whom whate'er of genius lifteth me
Above the vulgar, grateful I refer;
With ye the parent of all mortal life
Arose and set, when I did first inhale
The Tuscan air; and afterward, when grace
Vouchsafed me entrance to the lofty wheel
That in its orb impels ye, fate decreed
My passage at your clime. To you my soul
Devoutly sighs, for virtue, even now,
To meet the hard emprise that draws me on.

“Thou art so near the sum of blessedness,”
Said Beatrice, “that behoves thy ken
Be vigilant and clear. And, to this end,
Or ever thou advance thee further, hence
Look downward, and contemplate, what a world
Already stretch’d under our feet there lies:
So as thy heart may, in its blithest mood,
Present itself to the triumphal throng,
Which, through the ethereal concave, comes rejoicing.”

I straight obey’d; and with mine eye return’d
Through all the seven spheres; and saw this globe
So pitiful of semblance, that perforce
It moved my smiles: and him in truth I hold
For wisest, who esteems it least; whose thoughts
Elsewhere are fix’d, him worthiest call and best.
I saw the daughter of Latona shine
Without the shadow, whereof late I deem’d
That dense and rare were cause. Here I sustain’d
The visage, Hyperion, of thy son;
And mark’d, how near him with their circles, round

Move Maia and Dione; here discern'd
Jove's tempering 'twixt his sire and son; and hence,
Their changes and their various aspects,
Distinctly scann'd. Nor might I not descry
Of all the seven, how bulky each, how swift;
Nor, of their several distances, not learn.
This petty area (o'er the which we stride
So fiercely), as along the eternal Twins
I wound my way, appear'd before me all,
Forth from the havens stretch'd unto the hills.
Then, to the beauteous eyes, mine eyes return'd.

CANTO XXIII

He sees Christ triumphing with his church. The Saviour
ascends, followed by the Virgin Mother.
The others remain with St. Peter.

E'EN as the bird, who midst the leafy bower
Has, in her nest, sat darkling through the night,
With her sweet brood; impatient to descry
Their wished looks, and to bring home their food,
In the fond quest unconscious of her toil:
She, of the time prevenient, on the spray,
That overhangs their couch, with wakeful gaze
Expects the sun; nor ever, till the dawn,
Removeth from the east her eager ken:
So stood the dame erect, and bent her glance
Wistfully on that region, where the sun
Abateth most his speed; that, seeing her
Suspense and wondering, I became as one,
In whom desire is waken'd, and the hope
Of somewhat new to come fills with delight.

Short space ensued; I was not held, I say,
Long in expectance, when I saw the heaven
Wax more and more resplendent; and, "Behold,"
Cried Beatrice, "the triumphal hosts
Of Christ, and all the harvest gather'd in,
Made ripe by these revolving spheres." Meseem'd,
That, while she spake, her image all did burn;
And in her eyes such fulness was of joy,
As I am fain to pass unconstrued by.

As in the calm full moon, when Trivia smiles,
In peerless beauty, 'mid the eternal nymphs,
That paint through all its gulfs the blue profound;
In bright pre-eminence so saw I there
O'er million lamps a sun, from whom all drew
Their radiance, as from ours the starry train:
And, through the living light, so lustrous glow'd
The substance, that my ken endured it not.

O Beatrice! sweet and precious guide,
Who cheer'd me with her comfortable words:

“Against the virtue, that o’erpowereth thee,
Avails not to resist. Here is the Might,
And here the Wisdom, which did open lay
The path, that had been yearned for so long,
Betwixt the heaven and earth.” Like to the fire,
That, in a cloud imprison’d, doth break out
Expansive, so that from its womb enlarged,
It falleth against nature to the ground;
Thus, in that heavenly banqueting, my soul
Outgrew herself; and, in the transport lost,
Holds now remembrance none of what she was.

“Ope thou thine eyes, and mark me: thou hast seen
Things that empower thee to sustain my smile.”

I was as one, when a forgotten dream
Doth come across him, and he strives in vain
To shape it in his fantasy again:
Whenas that gracious boon was proffer’d me,
Which never may be cancel’d from the book
Wherein the past is written. Now were all
Those tongues to sound, that have, on sweetest milk

Of Polyhymnia and her sisters, fed
And fatten'd; not with all their help to boot,
Unto the thousandth parcel of the truth,
My song might shadow forth that saintly smile,
How merely, in her saintly looks, it wrought.
And, with such figuring of Paradise,
The sacred strain must leap, like one that meets
A sudden interruption to his road.
But he, who thinks how ponderous the theme,
And that 'tis laid upon a mortal shoulder,
May pardon, if it tremble with the burden.
The track, our venturous keel must furrow, brooks
No unribb'd pinnacle, no self-sparing pilot.

"Why doth my face," said Beatrice, "thus
Enamour thee, as that thou dost not turn
Unto the beautiful garden, blossoming
Beneath the rays of Christ? Here is the rose,
Wherein the Word Divine was made incarnate;
And here the lilies, by whose odor known
The way of life was follow'd." Prompt I heard
Her bidding, and encounter'd once again

The strife of aching vision. As, erewhile,
Through glance of sun-light, stream'd through broken cloud,
Mine eyes a flower-besprinkled mead have seen;
Though veil'd themselves in shade: so saw I there
Legions of splendors, on whom burning rays
Shed lightnings from above; yet saw I not
The fountain whence they flow'd. O gracious virtue!
Thou, whose broad stamp is on them, higher up
Thou didst exalt thy glory, to give room
To my o'erlabor'd sight; when at the name
Of that fair flower, whom duly I invoke
Both morn and eve, my soul with all her might
Collected, on the goodliest ardor fix'd.
And, as the bright dimensions of the star
In heaven excelling, as once here on earth,
Were, in my eye-balls livelily portray'd;
Lo! from within the sky a cresset fell,
Circling in fashion of a diadem;
And girt the star; and, hovering, round it wheel'd.

Whatever melody sounds sweetest here,
And draws the spirit most unto itself,

Might seem a rent cloud, when it grates the thunder;
Compared unto the sounding of that lyre,
Wherewith the goodliest sapphire, that inlays
The floor of heaven, was crown'd. "Angelic Love
I am, who thus with hovering flight enwheel
The lofty rapture from that womb inspired,
Where our desire did dwell: and round thee so,
Lady of Heaven! will hover; long as thou
Thy Son shalt follow, and diviner joy
Shall from thy presence gild the highest sphere."

Such close was to the circling melody:
And, as it ended, all the other lights
Took up the strain, and echoed Mary's name.

The robe, that with its regal folds enwraps
The world, and with the nearer breath of God
Doth burn and quiver, held so far retired
Its inner hem and skirting over us,
That yet no glimmer of its majesty
Had stream'd unto me: therefore were mine eyes
Unequal to pursue the crowned flame,

That towering rose, and sought the seed it bore.
And like to babe, that stretches forth its arms
For very eagerness toward the breast,
After the milk is taken; so outstretch'd
Their wavy summits all the fervent band,
Through zealous love to Mary: then, in view,
There halted; and "Regina Coeli" sang
So sweetly, the delight hath left me never.

Oh! what o'erflowing plenty is up-piled
In those rich-laden coffers, which below
Sow'd the good seed, whose harvest now they keep.
Here are the treasures tasted, that with tears
Were in the Babylonian exile won,
When gold had fail'd them. Here, in synod high
Of ancient council with the new convened,
Under the Son of Mary and of God,
Victorious he his mighty triumph holds,
To whom the keys of glory were assign'd.

CANTO XXIV

St. Peter examines Dante touching Faith
and is contented with his answers.

“O YE! in chosen fellowship advanced
To the great supper of the blessed Lamb,
Whereon who feeds hath every wish fulfill’d;
If to this man through God’s grace be vouchsafed
Foretaste of that, which from your table falls,
Or ever death his fated term prescribe;
Be ye not heedless of his urgent will:
But may some influence of your sacred dews
Sprinkle him. Of the fount ye alway drink,
Whence flows what most he craves." Beatrice spake;
And the rejoicing spirits, like to spheres
On firm-set poles revolving, trail’d a blaze
Of comet splendor: and as wheels, that wind
Their circles in the horologe, so work
The stated rounds, that to the observant eye
The first seems still, and as it flew, the last;

E'en thus their carols weaving variously,
They, by the measure paced, or swift or slow,
Made me to rate the riches of their joy.

From that, which I did note in beauty most
Excelling, saw I issue forth a flame
So bright, as none was left more goodly there.
Round Beatrice thrice it wheel'd about,
With so divine a song, that fancy's ear
Records it not; and the pen passeth on,
And leaves a blank: for that our mortal speech,
Nor e'en the inward shaping of the brain,
Hath colors fine enough to trace such folds.

"O saintly sister mine! thy prayer devout
Is with so vehement affection urged,
Thou dost unbind me from that beauteous sphere."

Such were the accents toward my lady breathed
From that blest ardor, soon as it was stay'd;
To whom she thus: "O everlasting light
Of him, within whose mighty grasp our Lord

Did leave the keys, which of this wondrous bliss
He bare below! tent this man as thou wilt,
With lighter probe or deep, touching the faith,
By the which thou didst on the billows walk.
If he in love, in hope, and in belief,
Be steadfast, is not hid from thee: for thou
Hast there thy ken, where all things are beheld
In liveliest portraiture. But since true faith
Has peopled this fair realm with citizens;
Meet is, that to exalt its glory more,
Thou, in his audience, shouldst thereof discourse."

Like to the bachelor, who arms himself,
And speaks not, till the master have proposed
The question, to approve, and not to end it;
So I, in silence, arm'd me, while she spake,
Summoning up each argument to aid;
As was behoveful for such questioner,
And such profession: "As good Christian ought,
Declare thee, what is faith?" Whereat I raised
My forehead to the light, whence this had breathed;
Then turn'd to Beatrice; and in her looks

Approval met, that from their inmost fount
I should unlock the waters. "May the grace,
That giveth me the captain of the church
For confessor," said I, "vouchsafe to me
Apt utterance for my thoughts"; then added: "Sire,
E'en as set down by the unerring style
Of thy dear brother, who with thee conspired
To bring Rome in unto the way of life,
Faith of things hoped is substance, and the proof
Of things not seen; and herein doth consist
Methinks its essence." "Rightly hast thou deem'd,"
Was answer'd; "if thou well discern, why first
He hath defined it substance, and then proof."

"The deep things," I replied, "which here I scan
Distinctly, are below from mortal eye
So hidden, they have in belief alone
Their being; on which credence, hope sublime
Is built: and, therefore substance, it intends.
And inasmuch as we must needs infer
From such belief our reasoning, all respect
To other view excluded; hence of proof

The intention is derived." Forthwith I heard:
"If thus, whate'er by learning men attain,
Were understood; the sophist would want room
To exercise his wit." So breathed the flame
Of love; then added: "Current is the coin
Thou utter'st, both in weight and in alloy.
But tell me, if thou hast it in thy purse."

"Even so glittering and so round," said I,
"I not a whit misdoubt of its assay."

Next issued from the deep-imbosom'd splendor:
"Say, whence the costly jewel, on the which
Is founded every virtue, came to thee."

"The flood," I answer'd, "from the Spirit of God
Rain'd down upon the ancient bond and new,-
Here is the reasoning, that convinceth me,
So feelingly, each argument beside
Seems blunt, and forceless, in comparison."
Then heard I: "Wherefore holdest thou that each,
The elder proposition and the new

Which so persuade thee, are the voice of heaven?"

"The works, that follow'd, evidence their truth";
I answer'd: "Nature did not make for these
The iron hot, or on her anvil mould them."

"Who voucheth to thee of the works themselves,"
Was the reply, "that they in very deed
Are that they purport? None hath sworn so to thee."

"That all the world," said I, "should have been turn'd
To Christian, and no miracle been wrought,
Would in itself be such a miracle,
The rest were not an hundredth part so great.
E'en thou went'st forth in poverty and hunger
To set the goodly plant, that, from the vine
It once was, now is grown unsightly bramble."

That ended, through the high celestial court
Resounded all the spheres, "Praise we one God!"
In song of most unearthly melody.
And when that Worthy thus, from branch to branch,

Examining, had led me, that we now
Approach'd the topmost bough; he straight resumed:
"The grace, that holds sweet dalliance with thy soul
So far discreetly hath thy lips unclosed;
That, whatsoe'er has passed them, I commend.
Behoves thee to express, what thou believest,
The next; and, whereon, thy belief hath grown."

"O saintly sire and spirit!" I began,
"Who seest that, which thou didst so believe,
As to outstrip feet younger than thine own,
Toward the sepulchre; thy will is here,
That I the tenor of my creed unfold;
And thou, the cause of it, hast likewise ask'd.
And I reply: I in one God believe;
One sole eternal Godhead, of whose love
All Heaven is moved, himself unmoved the while.
Nor demonstration physical alone,
Or more intelligential and abstruse,
Persuades me to this faith: but from that truth
It cometh to me rather, which is shed
Through Moses; the rapt Prophets; and the Psalms;

The Gospel; and what ye yourselves did write,
When ye were gifted of the Holy Ghost.
In three eternal Persons I believe;
Essence threefold and one; mysterious league
Of union absolute, which, many a time,
The word of gospel lore upon my mind
Imprints: and from this germ, this firstling spark
The lively flame dilates; and, like heaven's star,
Doth glitter in me." As the master hears,
Well pleased, and then enfoldeth in his arms
The servant, who hath joyful tidings brought,
And having told the errand keeps his peace;
Thus benediction uttering with song,
Soon as my peace I held, compass'd me thrice
The apostolic radiance, whose behest
Had oped my lips: so well their answer pleased.

CANTO XXV

St. James questions the poet concerning Hope.
St. John informs him Christ and the Virgin
alone had come with their bodies into heaven.

IF e'er the sacred poem, that hath made
Both heaven and earth copartners in its toil,
And with lean abstinence, through many a year,
Faded my brow, be destined to prevail
Over the cruelty, which bars me forth
Of the fair sheep-fold, where, a sleeping lamb,
The wolves set on and fain had worried me;
With other voice, and fleece of other grain,
I shall forthwith return; and, standing up
At my baptismal font, shall claim the wreath
Due to the poet's temples: for I there
First enter'd on the faith, which maketh souls
Acceptable to God: and, for its sake,
Peter had then circled my forehead thus.

Next from the squadron, whence had issued forth
The first fruit of Christ's vicars on the earth,
Toward us moved a light, at view whereof
My Lady, full of gladness, spake to me:
"Lo! lo! behold the peer of mickle might,
That makes Galicia throng'd with visitants."

As when the ring-dove by his mate alights;
In circles, each about the other wheels,
And, murmuring, coos his fondness: thus saw I
One, of the other great and glorious prince,
With kindly greeting, hail'd; extolling, both,
Their heavenly banqueting: but when an end
Was to their gratulation, silent, each,
Before me sat they down, so burning bright,
I could not look upon them. Smiling then,
Beatrice spake: "O life in glory shrined!
Who didst the largess of our kingly court
Set down with faithful pen; let now thy voice,
Of hope the praises, in this height resound.
For well thou know'st, who figurest it as oft,
As Jesus, to ye three, more brightly shone."

“Lift up thy head; and be thou strong in trust:
For that, which hither from the mortal world
Arriveth, must be ripen’d in our beam.”

Such cheering accents from the second flame
Assured me; and mine eyes I lifted up
Unto the mountains, that had bow’d them late
With over-heavy burden. “Sith our Liege
Wills of his grace, that thou, or e’er thy death,
In the most secret council with his lords
Shouldst be confronted, so that having view’d
The glories of our court, thou mayst therewith
Thyself, and all who hear, invigorate
With hope, that leads to blissful end; declare,
What is that hope? how it doth flourish in thee?
And whence thou hadst it?” Thus, proceeding still,
The second light: and she, whose gentle love
My soaring pennons in that lofty flight
Escorted, thus preventing me, rejoin’d:
“Among her sons, not one more full of hope,
Hath the church militant: so ‘tis of him

Recorded in the sun, whose liberal orb
Enlighteneth all our tribe: and ere his term
Of warfare, hence permitted he is come,
From Egypt to Jerusalem, to see.
The other points, both which thou hast inquired.
Not for more knowledge, but that he may tell
How dear thou hold'st the virtue; these to him
Leave I: for he may answer thee with ease,
And without boasting, so God give him grace."

Like to the scholar, practised in his task,
Who, willing to give proof of diligence,
Seconds his teacher gladly; "Hope," said I,
"Is of the joy to come a sure expectance,
The effect of grace divine and merit preceding.
This light from many a star, visits my heart;
But flow'd to me, the first, from him who sang
The songs of the Supreme; himself supreme
Among his tuneful brethren. 'Let all hope
In thee,' so spake his anthem, 'who have known
Thy name'; and, with my faith, who know not that?
From thee, the next, distilling from his spring,

In thine epistle, fell on me the drops
So plenteously, that I on others shower
The influence of their dew." While as I spake,
A lamping, as of quick and volley'd lightning,
Within the bosom of that mighty sheen
Play'd tremulous; then forth these accents breathed:
"Love for the virtue, which attended me
E'en to the palm, and issuing from the field,
Glows vigorous yet within me; and inspires
To ask of thee, whom also it delights,
What promise thou from hope, in chief, dost win."

"Both scriptures, new and ancient," I replied,
"Propose the mark (which even now I view)
For souls beloved of God. Isaias saith,
'That, in their own land, each one must be clad
In twofold vesture'; and their proper land
Is this delicious life. In terms more full,
And clearer far, thy brother hath set forth
This revelation to us, where he tells
Of the white raiment destined to the saints."
And, as the words were ending, from above,

“They hope in thee!” first heard we cried: whereto
Answer’d the carols all. Amidst them next,
A light of so clear amplitude emerged,
That winter’s month were but a single day,
Were such a crystal in the Cancer’s sign.

Like as a virgin riseth up, and goes,
And enters on the mazes of the dance;
Though gay, yet innocent of worse intent,
Than to do fitting honor to the bride:
So I beheld the new effulgence come
Unto the other two, who in a ring
Wheel’d, as became their rapture. In the dance,
And in the song, it mingled. And the dame
Held on them fix’d her looks; e’en as the spouse,
Silent, and moveless. “This is he, who lay
Upon the bosom of our pelican:
This he, into whose keeping, from the cross,
The mighty charge was given.” Thus she spake;
Yet therefore naught the more removed her sight
From marking them: or e’er her words began,
Or when they closed. As he, who looks intent,

And strives with searching ken, how he may see
The sun in his eclipse, and, through desire
Of seeing, loseth power of sight; so I
Peer'd on that last resplendence, while I heard:
"Why dazzlest thou thine eyes in seeking that,
Which here abides not? Earth my body is,
In earth; and shall be, with the rest, so long,
As till our number equal the decree
Of the Most High. The two that have ascended,
In this our blessed cloister, shine alone
With the two garments. So report below."

As when, for ease of labor, or to shun
Suspected peril, at a whistle's breath,
The oars, erewhile dash'd frequent in the wave,
All rest: the flamy circle at that voice
So rested; and the mingling sound was still,
Which from the trinal band, soft-breathing, rose.
I turn'd, but ah! how trembled in my thought,
When, looking at my side again to see
Beatrice, I descried her not; although,
Not distant, on the happy coast she stood.

CANTO XXVI

St. John examines Dante touching Charity, and tells him about Adam's creation, residence in Paradise, fall and admittance to heaven.

WITH dazzled eyes, whilst wondering I remain'd;
Forth of the beamy flame, which dazzled me,
Issued a breath, that in attention mute
Detain'd me; and these words it spake: "'Twere well,
That, long as till thy vision, on my form
O'erspent, regain its virtue, with discourse
Thou compensate the brief delay. Say then,
Beginning, to what point thy soul aspires:
And meanwhile rest assured, that sight in thee
Is but o'erpower'd a space, not wholly quench'd;
Since thy fair guide and lovely, in her look
Hath potency, the like to that, which dwelt
In Ananias' hand." I answering thus:
"Be to mine eyes the remedy, or late
Or early, at her pleasure; for they were

The gates, at which she enter'd, and did light
Her never-dying fire. My wishes here
Are centred: in this palace is the weal,
That Alpha and Omega are, to all
The lessons love can read me." Yet again
The voice, which had dispersed my fear when dazed
With that excess, to converse urged, and spake:
"Behoves thee sift more narrowly thy terms;
And say, who level'd at this scope thy bow."

"Philosophy," said I, "hath arguments,
And this place hath authority enough,
To imprint in me such love: for, of constraint,
Good, inasmuch as we perceive the good,
Kindles our love; and in degree the more,
As it comprises more of goodness in 't.
The essence then, where such advantage is,
That each good, found without it, is naught else
But of his light the beam, must needs attract
The soul of each one, loving, who the truth
Discerns, on which this proof is built. Such truth
Learn I from him, who shows me the first love

Of all intelligential substances
Eternal: from his voice I learn, whose word
Is truth; that of himself to Moses saith,
'I will make all my good before thee pass':
Lastly, from thee I learn, who chief proclaim'st
E'en at the outset of thy heralding,
In mortal ears the mystery of heaven."

"Through human wisdom, and the authority
Therewith agreeing," heard I answer'd, "keep
The choicest of thy love for God. But say,
If thou yet other cords within thee feel'st,
That draw thee toward him; so that thou report
How many are the fangs, with which this love
Is grappled to thy soul." I did not miss,
To what intent the eagle of our Lord
Had pointed his demand; yea, noted well
The avowal which he led to; and resumed:
"All grappling bonds, that knit the heart to God,
Confederate to make fast our charity.
The being of the world; and mine own being;
The death which He endured, that I should live;

And that, which all the faithful hope, as I do;
To the foremention'd lively knowledge join'd;
Have from the sea of ill love saved my bark,
And on the coast secured it of the right.
As for the leaves, that in the garden bloom,
My love for them is great, as is the good
Dealt by the eternal hand, that tends them all."

I ended: and therewith a song most sweet
Rang through the spheres; and "Holy! Holy! Holy!"
Accordant with the rest, my lady sang.
And as a sleep is broken and dispersed
Through sharp encounter of the nimble light,
With the eye's spirit running forth to meet
The ray, from membrane on to membrane urged;
And the upstartled wight loathes that he sees;
So, at his sudden waking, he misdeems
Of all around him, till assurance waits
On better judgment: thus the saintly dame
Drove from before my eyes the motes away,
With the resplendence of her own, that cast
Their brightness downward, thousand miles below.

Whence I my vision, clearer than before,
Recover'd; and well-nigh astounded, ask'd
Of a fourth light, that now with us I saw.

And Beatrice: "The first living soul,
That ever the first virtue framed, admires
Within these rays his Maker." Like the leaf,
That bows its lithe top till the blast is blown;
By its own virtue rear'd, then stands aloof:
So I, the whilst she said, awe-stricken bow'd.
Then eagerness to speak embolden'd me;
And I began: "O fruit! that wast alone
Mature, when first engender'd; ancient father!
That doubly seest in every wedded bride
Thy daughter, by affinity and blood;
Devoutly as I may, I pray thee hold
Converse with me: my will thou seest: and I,
More speedily to hear thee, tell it not."

It chanceth oft some animal bewrays,
Through the sleek covering of his furry coat,
The fondness, that stirs in him, and conforms

His outside seeming to the cheer within:
And in like guise was Adam's spirit moved
To joyous mood, that through the covering shone,
Transparent, when to pleasure me it spake:
"No need thy will be told, which I untold
Better discern, than thou whatever thing
Thou hold'st most certain: for that will I see
In Him, who is truth's mirror; and Himself,
Parhelion unto all things, and naught else,
To Him. This wouldst thou hear: how long since, God
Placed me in that high garden, from whose bounds
She led me up this ladder, steep and long;
What space endured my season of delight;
Whence truly sprang the wrath that banish'd me;
And what the language, which I spake and framed.
Not that I tasted of the tree, my son,
Was in itself the cause of that exile,
But only my transgressing of the mark
Assign'd me. There, whence at thy lady's hest
The Mantuan moved him, still was I debarr'd
This council, till the sun had made complete,
Four thousand and three hundred rounds and twice,

His annual journey; and, through every light
In his broad pathway, saw I him return,
Thousand save seventy times, the whilst I dwelt
Upon the earth. The language I did use
Was worn away, or ever Nimrod's race
Their unaccomplishable work began.
For naught, that man inclines to, e'er was lasting;
Left by his reason free, and variable
As is the sky that sways him. That he speaks,
Is nature's prompting: whether thus, or thus,
She leaves to you, as ye do most affect it.
Ere I descended into hell's abyss,
El was the name on earth of the Chief Good,
Whose joy enfolds me: Eli then 'twas call'd.
And so beseemeth: for, in mortals, use
Is as the leaf upon the bough: that goes,
And other comes instead. Upon the mount
Most high above the waters, all my life,
Both innocent and guilty, did but reach
From the first hour, to that which cometh next
(As the sun changes quarter) to the sixth."

CANTO XXVII

St. Peter bitterly rebukes his successors in the apostolic see.
Afterward, Dante is borne to the ninth heaven.

THEN "Glory to the Father, to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit," rang aloud
Throughout all Paradise; that with the song
My spirit reel'd, so passing sweet the strain.
And what I saw was equal ecstasy:
One universal smile it seem'd of all things;
Joy past compare; gladness unutterable;
Imperishable life of peace and love;
Exhaustless riches, and unmeasured bliss.

Before mine eyes stood the four torches lit:
And that, which first had come, began to wax
In brightness, and, in semblance, such became,
As Jove might be, if he and Mars were birds,
And interchanged their plumes. Silence ensued,
Through the blessed quire; by Him, who here appoints

Vicissitude of ministry, enjoin'd;
When thus I heard: "Wonder not, if my hue
Be changed; for, while I speak, these shalt thou see
All in like manner change with me. My place
He who usurps on earth (my place, ay, mine,
Which in the presence of the Son of God
Is void), the same hath made my cemetery
A common sewer of puddle and of blood:
The more below his triumph, who from hence
Malignant fell." Such color, as the sun,
At eve or morning, paints an adverse cloud,
Then saw I sprinkled over all the sky
And as the unblemish'd dame, who, in herself
Secure of censure, yet at bare report
Of other's failing, shrinks with maiden fear;
So Beatrice, in her semblance, changed:
And such eclipse in heaven, methinks, was seen,
When the Most Holy suffer'd. Then the words
Proceeded, with voice, alter'd from itself
So clean, the semblance did not alter more.
"Not to this end was Christ's spouse with my blood
With that of Linus, and of Cletus, fed;

That she might serve for purchase of base gold:
But for the purchase of this happy life,
Did Sextus, Pius, and Calixtus bleed,
And Urban; they, whose doom was not without
Much weeping seal'd. No purpose was of ours,
That on the right hand of our successors,
Part of the Christian people should be set,
And part upon their left; nor that the keys,
Which were vouchsafed me, should for ensign serve
Unto the banners, that do levy war
On the baptized: nor I, for sigil-mark,
Set upon sold and lying privileges:
Which makes me oft to bicker and turn red.
In shepherd's clothing, greedy wolves below
Range wide o'er all the pastures. Arm of God!
Why longer sleep'st thou? Cahorsines and Gascons
Prepare to quaff our blood. O good beginning!
To what a vile conclusion must thou stoop.
But the high providence, which did defend,
Through Scipio, the world's empery for Rome,
Will not delay its succor: and thou, son,
Who through thy mortal weight shalt yet again

Return below, open thy lips, nor hide
What is by me not hidden." As a flood
Of frozen vapors streams adown the air,
What time the she-goat with her skyey horn
Touches the sun; so saw I there stream wide
The vapors, who with us had linger'd late,
And with glad triumph deck the ethereal cope.
Onward my sight their semblances pursued;
So far pursued, as till the space between
From its reach sever'd them: whereat the guide
Celestial, marking me no more intent
On upward gazing, said, "Look down and see
What circuit thou hast compassed." From the hour
When I before had cast my view beneath,
All the first region overpast I saw,
Which from the midmost to the boundary winds,
That onward, thence, from Gade's, I beheld
The unwise passage of Laertes' son;
And hitherward the shore, where thou, Europa,
Madest thee a joyful burden; and yet more
Of this dim spot had seen, but that the sun,
A constellation off and more, had ta'en

His progress in the zodiac underneath.

Then by the spirit, that doth never leave
Its amorous dalliance with my lady's looks,
Back with redoubled ardor were mine eyes
Led unto her: and from her radiant smiles,
Whenas I turn'd me, pleasure so divine
Did lighten on me, that whatever bait
Or art or nature in the human flesh,
Or in its limn'd resemblance, can combine
Through greedy eyes to take the soul withal,
Were, to her beauty, nothing. Its boon influence
From the fair nest of Leda rapt me forth,
And wafted on into the swiftest heaven.

What place for entrance Beatrice chose,
I may not say; so uniform was all,
Liveliest and loftiest. She my secret wish
Divined; and, with such gladness, that God's love
Seem'd from her visage shining, thus began:
"Here is the goal, whence motion on his race
Starts: motionless the centre, and the rest

All moved around. Except the soul divine,
Place in this heaven is none; the soul divine,
Wherein the love, which ruleth o'er its orb,
Is kindled, and the virtue, that it sheds:
One circle, light and love, enclasping it,
As this doth clasp the others; and to Him,
Who draws the bound, its limit only known.
Measured itself by none, it doth divide
Motion to all, counted unto them forth,
As by the fifth or half ye count forth ten.
The vase, wherein time's roots are plunged, thou seest
Look elsewhere for the leaves. O mortal lust!
That canst not lift thy head above the waves
Which whelm and sink thee down. The will in man
Bears goodly blossoms; but its ruddy promise
Is, by the dripping of perpetual rain,
Made mere abortion: faith and innocence
Are met with but in babes; each taking leave,
Ere cheeks with down are sprinkled: he, that fasts
While yet a stammerer, with his tongue let loose
Gluts every food alike in every moon:
One, yet a babbler, loves and listens to

His mother; but no sooner hath free use
Of speech, that he doth wish her in her grave.
So suddenly doth the fair child of him,
Whose welcome is the morn and eve his parting,
To negro blackness change her virgin white.

“Thou, to abate thy wonder, note, that none
Bears rule in earth; and its frail family
Are therefore wanderers. Yet before the date,
When through the hundredth in his reckoning dropped
Pale January must be shoved aside
From Winter’s calendar, these heavenly spheres
Shall roar so loud, that fortune shall be fain
To turn the poop, where she hath now the prow;
So that the fleet run onward: and true fruit,
Expected long, shall crown at last the bloom.”

CANTO XXVIII

The poet is permitted to behold the divine essence,
and then sees nine choirs of angels.

SO she, who doth imparadise my soul,
Had drawn the veil from off our present life,
And bared the truth of poor mortality:
When lo! as one who, in a mirror, spies
The shining of a flambeau at his back,
Lit sudden ere he deem of its approach,
And turneth to resolve him, if the glass
Have told him true, and sees the record faithful
As note is to its metre; even thus,
I well remember, did befall to me,
Looking upon the beauteous eyes, whence love
Had made the leash to take me. As I turn'd:
And that which none, who in that volume looks,
Can miss of, in itself apparent, struck
My view; a point I saw, that darted light
So sharp, no lid, unclosing, may bear up

Against its keenness. The least star we ken
From hence, had seem'd a moon; set by its side,
As star by side of star. And so far off,
Perchance, as is the halo from the light
Which paints it, when most dense the vapor spreads;
There wheel'd about the point a circle of fire,
More rapid than the motion which surrounds,
Speediest, the world. Another this enring'd;
And that a third; the third a fourth, and that
A fifth encompass'd; which a sixth next bound;
And over this, a seventh, following, reach'd
Circumference so ample, that its bow,
Within the span of Juno's messenger,
Had scarce been held entire. Beyond the seventh,
Ensued yet other two. And every one,
As more in number distant from the first,
Was tardier in motion: and that glow'd
With flame most pure, that to the sparkle of truth,
Was nearest; as partaking most, methinks,
Of its reality. The guide beloved
Saw me in anxious thought suspense, and spake:
"Heaven and all nature hangs upon that point

The circle thereto most conjoin'd observe;
And know, that by intenser love its course
Is, to this swiftness, wing'd." To whom I thus:
"It were enough; nor should I further seek,
Had I but witness'd order, in the world
Appointed, such as in these wheels is seen.
But in the sensible world such difference is,
That in each round shows more divinity,
As each is wider from the centre. Hence,
If in this wondrous and angelic temple,
That hath, for confine, only light and love,
My wish may have completion, I must know,
Wherefore such disagreement is between
The exemplar and its copy: for myself,
Contemplating, I fail to pierce the cause."

"It is no marvel, if thy fingers foil'd
Do leave the knot untied: so hard 'tis grown
For want of tenting." Thus she said: "But take,"
She added, "if thou wish thy cure, my words,
And entertain them subtly. Every orb,
Corporeal, doth proportion its extent

Unto the virtue through its parts diffused.
The greater blessedness preserves the more,
The greater is the body (if all parts
Share equally) the more is to preserve.
Therefore the circle, whose swift course enwheels
The universal frame, answers to that
Which is supreme in knowledge and in love.
Thus by the virtue, not the seeming breadth
Of substance, measuring, thou shalt see the heavens,
Each to the intelligence that ruleth it,
Greater to more, and smaller unto less,
Suited in strict and wondrous harmony."

As when the north blows from his milder cheek
A blast, that scours the sky, forthwith our air,
Clear'd of the rack that hung on it before,
Glitters; and, with his beauties all unveil'd,
The firmament looks forth serene, and smiles:
Such was my cheer, when Beatrice drove
With clear reply the shadows back, and truth
Was manifested, as a star in heaven.
And when the words were ended, not unlike

To iron in the furnace, every cirque,
Ebullient, shot forth scintillating fires:
And every sparkle shivering to new blaze,
In number did outmillion the account
Reduplicate upon the checker'd board.
Then heard I echoing on, from choir to choir,
“Hosanna,” to the fixed point, that holds,
And shall forever hold them to their place,
From everlasting, irremovable.

Musing awhile I stood: and she, who saw
My inward meditations, thus began:
“In the first circles, they, whom thou beheld'st
Are seraphim and cherubim. Thus swift
Follow their hoops, in likeness to the point,
Near as they can, approaching; and they can
The more, the loftier their vision. Those
That round them fleet, gazing the Godhead next,
Are thrones; in whom the first trine ends. And all
Are blessed, even as their sight descends
Deeper into the truth, wherein rest is
For every mind. Thus happiness hath root

In seeing, not in loving, which of sight
Is aftergrowth. And of the seeing such
The meed, as unto each, in due degree,
Grace and good-will their measure have assign'd.
The other trine, that with still opening buds
In this eternal springtide blossom fair,
Fearless of bruising from the nightly ram,
Breathe up in warbled melodies threefold
Hosannas, blending ever; from the three,
Transmitted, hierarchy of gods, for aye
Rejoicing; dominations first; next them,
Virtues; and powers the third; the next to whom
Are pryncedoms and archangels, with glad round
To tread their festal ring; and last, the band
Angelical, disporting in their sphere.
All, as they circle in their orders, look
Aloft; and, downward, with such sway prevail,
That all with mutual impulse tend to God.
These once a mortal view beheld. Desire,
In Dionysius, so intensely wrought,
That he, as I have done, ranged them; and named
Their orders, marshal'd in his thought. From him,

Dissentient, one refused his sacred reed.
But soon as in this heaven his doubting eyes
Were open'd, Gregory at his error smiled.
Nor marvel, that a denizen of earth
Should scan such secret truth; for he had learnt
Both this and much beside of these our orbs,
From an eye-witness to heaven's mysteries."

CANTO XXIX

After resolving further doubts in Dante's mind, Beatrice digresses into a vehement reprehension of certain theologians and preachers.

NO longer, than what time Latona's twins
Cover'd of Libra and the fleecy star,
Together both, girding the horizon hang;
In even balance, from the zenith poised;
Till from that verge, each, changing hemisphere,
Part the nice level; e'en so brief a space
Did Beatrice's silence hold. A smile
Sat painted on her cheek; and her fix'd gaze
Bent on the point, at which my vision fail'd:
When thus, her words resuming, she began:
"I speak, nor what thou wouldst inquire demand;
For I have mark'd it, where all time and place
Are present. Not for increase to himself
Of good, which may not be increased, but forth
To manifest his glory by its beams;

Inhabiting his own eternity,
Beyond time's limit or what bound soe'er
To circumscribe his being; as he will'd,
Into new natures, like unto himself,
Eternal love unfolded: nor before,
As if in dull inaction, torpid, lay,
For, not in process of before or aft,
Upon these waters moved the Spirit of God.
Simple and mix'd, both form and substance, forth
To perfect being started, like three darts
Shot from a bow three-corded. And as ray
In crystal, glass, and amber, shines entire,
E'en at the moment of its issuing; thus
Did, from the eternal Sovran, beam entire
His threefold operation, at one act
Produced coeval. Yet, in order, each
Created his due station knew: those highest,
Who pure intelligence were made; mere power,
The lowest; in the midst, bound with strict league,
Intelligence and power, unsever'd bond.
Long tract of ages by the angels past,
Ere the creating of another world,

Described on Jerome's pages, thou hast seen.
But that what I disclose to thee is true,
Those penmen, whom the Holy Spirit moved
In many a passage of their sacred book,
Attest; as thou by diligent search shalt find:
And reason, in some sort, discerns the same,
Who scarce would grant the heavenly ministers,
Of their perfection void, so long a space.
Thus when and where these spirits of love were made,
Thou know'st, and how: and, knowing, hast allay'd
Thy thirst, which from the triple question rose.
Ere one had reckon'd twenty, e'en so soon,
Part of the angels fell: and in their fall,
Confusion to your elements ensued.
The others kept their station: and this task,
Whereon thou look'st, began, with such delight,
That they surcease not ever, day nor night,
Their circling. Of that fatal lapse the cause
Was the curst pride of him, whom thou hast seen
Pent with the world's incumbrance. Those, whom here
Thou seest, were lowly to confess themselves
Of his free bounty, who had made them apt

For ministries so high: therefore their views
Were, by enlightening grace and their own merit,
Exalted; so that in their will confirm'd
They stand, nor fear to fall. For do not doubt,
But to receive the grace, which Heaven vouchsafes,
Is meritorious, even as the soul
With prompt affection welcometh the guest.
Now, without further help, if with good heed
My words thy mind have treasured, thou henceforth
This consistory round about mayst scan,
And gaze thy fill. But, since thou hast on earth
Heard vain disputers, reasoners in the schools,
Canvass the angelic nature, and dispute
Its powers of apprehension, memory, choice;
Therefore, 'tis well thou take from me the truth,
Pure and without disguise; which they below,
Equivocating, darken and perplex.

“Know thou, that, from the first, these substances,
Rejoicing in the countenance of God,
Have held unceasingly their view, intent
Upon the glorious vision, from the which

Naught absent is nor hid: where then no change
Of newness, with succession, interrupts,
Remembrance, there, needs none to gather up
Divided thought and images remote.

“So that men, thus at variance with the truth,
Dream, though their eyes be open; reckless some
Of error; others well aware they err,
To whom more guilt and shame are justly due.
Each the known track of sage philosophy
Deserts, and has a by-way of his own:
So much the restless eagerness to shine,
And love of singularity, prevail.
Yet this, offensive as it is, provokes
Heaven’s anger less, than when the book of God
Is forced to yield to man’s authority,
Or from its straightness warp’d: no reckoning made
What blood the sowing of it in the world
Has cost; what favor for himself he wins,
Who meekly clings to it. The aim of all
Is how to shine: e’en they, whose office is
To preach the gospel, let the gospel sleep,

And pass their own inventions off instead.
One tells, how at Christ's suffering the wan moon
Bent back her steps, and shadow'd o'er the sun
With intervenient disc, as she withdrew:
Another, how the light shrouded itself
Within its tabernacle, and left dark
The Spaniard, and the Indian, with the Jew.
Such fables Florence in her pulpit hears,
Bandied about more frequent, than the names
Of Bindi and of Lapi in her streets.
The sheep, meanwhile, poor witless ones, return
From pasture, fed with wind: and what avails
For their excuse, they do not see their harm?
Christ said not to his first conventicle,
'Go forth and preach impostures to the world,'
But gave them truth to build on; and the sound
Was mighty on their lips: nor needed they,
Beside the Gospel, other spear or shield,
To aid them in their warfare for the faith.
The preacher now provides himself with store
Of jests and gibes; and, so there be no lack
Of laughter, while he vents them, his big cowl

Distends, and he has won the meed he sought:
Could but the vulgar catch a glimpse the while
Of that dark bird which nestles in his hood,
They scarce would wait to hear the blessing said,
Which now the dotards hold in such esteem,
That every counterfeit, who spreads abroad
The hands of holy promise, finds a throng
Of credulous fools beneath. Saint Anthony
Fattens with this his swine, and others worse
Than swine, who diet at his lazy board,
Paying with unstamped metal for their fare.

“But (for we far have wander’d) let us seek
The forward path again; so as the way
Be shorten’d with the time. No mortal tongue,
Nor thought of man, hath ever reach’d so far,
That of these natures he might count the tribes.
What Daniel of their thousands hath reveal’d,
With finite number, infinite conceals.
The fountain, at whose source these drink their beams,
With light supplies them in as many modes,
As there are splendors that it shines on: each

According to the virtue it conceives,
Differing in love and sweet affection.
Look then how lofty and how huge in breadth
The eternal might, which, broken and dispersed
Over such countless mirrors, yet remains
Whole in itself and one, as at the first."

CANTO XXX

Dante is taken to the empyrean and sees the triumph
of the angels and the souls of the blessed.

NOON's fervid hour perchance six thousand miles
From hence is distant; and the shadowy cone
Almost to level on our earth declines;
When, from the midmost of this blue abyss,
By turns some star is to our vision lost,
And straightway as the handmaid of the sun
Puts forth her radiant brow, all, light by light,
Fade; and the spangled firmament shuts in,
E'en to the loveliest of the glittering throng;
Thus vanish'd gradually from my sight
The triumph, which plays ever round the point,
That overcame me, seeming (for it did)
Engirt by that it girdeth. Wherefore love,
With loss of other object, forced me bend
Mine eyes on Beatrice once again.

If all, that hitherto is told of her,
Were in one praise concluded, 'twere too weak
To furnish out this turn. Mine eyes did look
On beauty, such, as I believe in sooth,
Not merely to exceed our human; but,
That save its Maker, none can to the full
Enjoy it. At this point o'erpower'd I fail;
Unequal to my theme; as never bard
Of buskin or of sock hath fail'd before.
For as the sun doth to the feeblest sight,
E'en so remembrance of that witching smile
Hath dispossessed my spirit of itself.
Not from that day, when on this earth I first
Beheld her charms, up to that view of them,
Have I with song applausive ever ceased
To follow; but now follow them no more;
My course here bounded, as each artist's is,
When it doth touch the limit of his skill.

She (such as I bequeath her to the bruit
Of louder trump than mine, which hasteneth on
Urging its arduous matter to the close)

Her words resumed, in gesture and in voice
Resembling one accustom'd to command:
"Forth from the last corporeal are we come
Into the heaven, that is unbodied light;
Light intellectual, replete with love;
Love of true happiness, replete with joy;
Joy, that transcends all sweetness of delight.
Here shalt thou look on either mighty host
Of Paradise; and one in that array,
Which in the final judgment thou shalt see."
As when the lightning, in a sudden spleen
Unfolded, dashes from the blinding eyes
The visive spirits, dazzled and bedimm'd;
So, round about me, fulminating streams
Of living radiance play'd, and left me swathed
And veil'd in dense impenetrable blaze.
Such weal is in the love, that stills this heaven
For its own flame the torch thus fitting ever.

No sooner to my listening ear had come
The brief assurance, than I understood
New virtue into me infused, and sight

Kindled afresh, with vigor to sustain
Excess of light however pure. I look'd;
And, in the likeness of a river, saw
Light flowing, from whose amber-seeming waves
Flash'd up effulgence, as they glided on
'Twixt banks, on either side, painted with spring,
Incredible how fair: and, from the tide,
There ever and anon, outstarting, flew
Sparkles instinct with life; and in the flowers
Did set them, like to rubies chased in gold:
Then, as if drunk with odors, plunged again
Into the wondrous flood; from which, as one
Re-enter'd, still another rose. "The thirst
Of knowledge high, whereby thou art inflamed,
To search the meaning of what here thou seest,
The more it warms thee, pleases me the more,
But first behoves thee of this water drink,
Or e'er that longing be allay'd." So spake
The day-star of mine eyes: then thus subjoin'd:
"This stream; and these, forth issuing from its gulf,
And dividing back, a living topaz each;
With all this laughter on its bloomy shores;

Are but a preface, shadowy of the truth
They emblem: not that, in themselves, the things
Are crude; but on thy part is the defect,
For that thy views not yet aspire so high."

Never did babe that had outslept his wont,
Rush, with such eager straining, to the milk,
As I toward the water; bending me,
To make the better mirrors of mine eyes
In the refining wave: and as the eaves
Of mine eyelids did drink of it, forthwith
Seem'd it unto me turn'd from length to round.
Then as a troop of maskers, when they put
Their vizors off, look other than before;
The counterfeited semblance thrown aside:
So into greater jubilee were changed
Those flowers and sparkles; and distinct I saw,
Before me, either court of heaven display'd.

O prime enlightener! thou who gavest me strength
On the high triumph of thy realm to gaze;
Grant virtue now to utter what I kenn'd.

There is in heaven a light, whose goodly shine
Makes the Creator visible to all
Created, that in seeing him alone
Have peace; and in a circle spreads so far,
That the circumference were too loose a zone
To girdle in the sun. All is one beam,
Reflected from the summit of the first,
That moves, which being hence and vigor takes.
And as some cliff, that from the bottom eyes
His image mirror'd in the crystal flood,
As if to admire his brave apparelling
Of verdure and of flowers; so, round about,
Eying the light, on more than million thrones,
Stood, eminent, whatever from our earth
Has to the skies return'd. How wide the leaves,
Extended to their utmost, of this rose,
Whose lowest step embosoms such a space
Of ample radiance! Yet, nor amplitude
Nor height impeded, but my view with ease
Took in the full dimensions of that joy.
Near or remote, what there avails, where God

Immediate rules, and Nature, awed, suspends
Her sway? Into the yellow of the rose
Perennial, which, in bright expansiveness,
Lays forth its gradual blooming, redolent
Of praises to the never-wintering sun,
As one, who fain would speak yet holds his peace,
Beatrice led me; and, "Behold," she said,
"This fair assemblage; stoles of snowy white,
How numberless. The city, where we dwell,
Behold how vast; and these our seats so throng'd,
Few now are wanting here. In that proud stall,
On which, the crown, already o'er its state
Suspended, holds thine eyes- or e'er thyself
Mayst at the wedding sup- shall rest the soul
Of the great Harry, he who, by the world
Augustus hail'd, to Italy must come,
Before her day be ripe. But ye are sick,
And in your tetchy wantonness as blind,
As is the bantling, that of hunger dies,
And drives away the nurse. Nor may it be,
That he, who in the sacred forum sways,
Openly or in secret, shall with him

Accordant walk: whom God will not endure
I' the holy office long; but thrust him down
To Simon Magus, where Alagna's priest
Will sink beneath him: such will be his meed."

CANTO XXXI

Beatrice disappears, and Dante finds at his side an old man,
St. Bernard, who tells him she has returned to her throne.

IN fashion, as a snow white rose, lay then
Before my view the saintly multitude,
Which in his own blood Christ espoused. Meanwhile,
That other host, that soar aloft to gaze
And celebrate his glory, whom they love,
Hover'd around; and, like a troop of bees,
Amid the vernal sweets alighting now,
Now, clustering, where their fragrant labor glows,
Flew downward to the mighty flower, or rose
From the redundant petals, streaming back
Unto the steadfast dwelling of their joy,
Faces had they of flame, and wings of gold:
The rest was whiter than the driven snow;
And, as they flitted down into the flower,
From range to range, fanning their plummy loins,

Whisper'd the peace and ardor, which they won
From that soft winnowing. Shadow none, the vast
Interposition of such numerous flight
Cast, from above, upon the flower, or view
Obstructed aught. For, through the universe,
Wherever merited, celestial light
Glides freely, and no obstacle prevents.

All there, who reign in safety and in bliss,
Ages long past or new, on one sole mark
Their love and vision fix'd. O trinal beam
Of individual star, that charm'st them thus!
Vouchsafe one glance to gild our storm below.

If the grim brood, from Arctic shores that roam'd
(Where Helice forever, as she wheels,
Sparkles a mother's fondness on her son),
Stood in mute wonder 'mid the works of Rome,
When to their view the Lateran arose
In greatness more than earthly; I, who then
From human to divine had passed, from time
Unto eternity, and out of Florence

To justice and to truth, how might I chuse
But marvel too? 'Twixt gladness and amaze,
In sooth no will had I to utter aught,
Or hear. And, as a pilgrim, when he rests
Within the temple of his vow, looks round
In breathless awe, and hopes some time to tell
Of all its goodly state; e'en so mine eyes
Coursed up and down along the living light,
Now low, and now aloft, and now around,
Visiting every step. Looks I beheld,
Where charity in soft persuasion sat;
Smiles from within, and radiance from above;
And, in each gesture, grace and honor high.

So roved my ken, and in its general form
All Paradise survey'd: when round I turn'd
With purpose of my lady to inquire
Once more of things, that held my thought suspense,
But answer found from other than I ween'd;
For, Beatrice, when I thought to see,
I saw instead a senior, at my side,
Robed, as the rest, in glory. Joy benign

Glow'd in his eye, and o'er his cheek diffused,
With gestures such as spake a father's love.
And, "Whither is she vanish'd?" straight I ask'd.

"By Beatrice summon'd," he replied,
"I come to aid thy wish. Looking aloft
To the third circle from the highest, there
Behold her on the throne, wherein her merit
Hath placed her." Answering not, mine eyes I raised,
And saw her, where aloof she sat, her brow
A wreath reflecting of eternal beams.
Not from the centre of the sea so far
Unto the region of the highest thunder,
As was my ken from hers; and yet the form
Came through that medium down, unmix'd and pure.

"O lady! thou in whom my hopes have rest;
Who, for my safety, hast not scorn'd, in hell
To leave the traces of thy footsteps mark'd;
For all mine eyes have seen, I to thy power
And goodness, virtue owe and grace. Of slave
Thou hast to freedom brought me: and no means,

For my deliverance apt, hast left untried.
Thy liberal bounty still toward me keep:
That, when my spirit, which thou madest whole,
Is loosen'd from this body, it may find
Favor with thee." So I my suit preferr'd:
And she, so distant, as appear'd, look'd down,
And smiled; then toward the eternal fountain turn'd.

And thus the senior, holy and revered:
"That thou at length mayst happily conclude
Thy voyage (to which end I was despatch'd,
By supplication moved and holy love),
Let thy upsoaring vision range, at large,
This garden through: for so, by ray divine
Kindled, thy ken a higher flight shall mount;
And from heaven's queen, whom fervent I adore,
All gracious aid befriend us; for that I
Am her own faithful Bernard." Like a wight,
Who haply from Croatia wends to see
Our Veronica; and the while 'tis shown,
Hangs over it with never-sated gaze,
And, all that he hath heard revolving, saith

Unto himself in thought: "And didst thou look
E'en thus, O Jesus, my true Lord and God?
And was this semblance thine?" So gazed I then
Adoring; for the charity of him,
Who musing, in this world that peace enjoy'd,
Stood livelily before me. "Child of grace!"
Thus he began: "thou shalt not knowledge gain
Of this glad being, if thine eyes are held
Still in this depth below. But search around
The circles, to the furthest, till thou spy
Seated in state, the queen, that of this realm
Is sovrän." Straight mine eyes I raised; and bright,
As, at the birth of morn, the eastern clime
Above the horizon, where the sun declines;
So to mine eyes, that upward, as from vale
To mountain sped, at the extreme bound, a part
Excell'd in lustre all the front opposed.
And as the glow burns ruddiest o'er the wave,
That waits the ascending team, which Phaeton
Ill knew to guide, and on each part the light
Diminish'd fades, intensest in the midst;
So burn'd the peaceful oriflamb, and slack'd

On every side the living flame decay'd.
And in that midst their sportive pennons waved
Thousands of angels; in resplendence each
Distinct, and quaint adornment. At their glee
And carol, smiled the Lovely One of Heaven,
That joy was in the eyes of all the blessed.

Had I a tongue in eloquence as rich,
As is the coloring in fancy's loom,
'Twere all too poor to utter the least part
Of that enchantment. When he saw mine eyes
Intent on her, that charm'd him; Bernard gazed
With so exceeding fondness, as infused
Ardor into my breast, unfelt before.

CANTO XXXII

St. Bernard shows Dante blessed souls of the New and Old Testaments and explains that their places are assigned by grace and not according to merit.

FREELY the sage, though wrapt in musings high,
Assumed the teacher's part, and mild began:
"The wound, that Mary closed, she open'd first,
Who sits so beautiful at Mary's feet.
The third in order, underneath her, lo!
Rachel with Beatrice: Sarah next;
Judith; Rebecca; and the gleaner-maid,
Meek ancestress of him, who sang the songs
Of sore repentance in his sorrowful mood.
All, as I name them, down from leaf to leaf,
Are, in gradation, throned on the rose.
And from the seventh step, successively,
Adown the breathing tresses of the flower,
Still doth the file of Hebrew dames proceed.
For these are a partition wall, whereby

The sacred stairs are sever'd, as the faith
In Christ divides them. On this part, where bloom
Each leaf in full maturity, are set
Such as in Christ, or e'er he came, believed.
On the other, where an intersected space
Yet shows the semicircle void, abide
All they, who look'd to Christ already come
And as our Lady on her glorious stool,
And they who on their stools beneath her sit,
This way distinction make; e'en so on his,
The mighty Baptist that way marks the line
(He who endured the desert, and the pains
Of martyrdom, and, for two years, of hell,
Yet still continued holy), and beneath,
Augustin; Francis; Benedict; and the rest,
Thus far from round to round. So Heaven's decree
Forecasts, this garden equally to fill,
With faith in either view, past or to come.
Learn too, that downward from the step, which cleaves,
Midway, the twain compartments, none there are
Who place obtain for merit of their own,
But have through others' merit been advanced,

On set conditions; spirits all released,
Ere for themselves they had the power to chuse.
And, if thou mark and listen to them well,
Their childish looks and voice declare as much.

“Here, silent as thou art, I know thy doubt;
And gladly will I loose the knot, wherein
Thy subtile thoughts have bound thee. From this realm
Excluded, chance no entrance here may find;
No more than hunger, thirst, or sorrow can.
A law immutable hath stablish’d all;
Nor is there aught thou seest, that doth not fit,
Exactly, as the finger to the ring.
It is not, therefore, without cause, that these
O’erspeedy comers to immortal life,
Are different in their shares of excellence.
Our Sovran Lord, that settleth this estate
In love and in delight so absolute,
That wish can dare no further, every soul,
Created in his joyous sight to dwell,
With grace, at pleasure, variously endows.
And for a proof the effect may well suffice.

And 'tis moreover most expressly mark'd
In holy Scripture, where the twins are said
To have struggled in the womb. Therefore, as grace
Inweaves the coronet, so every brow
Weareth its proper hue of orient light.
And merely in respect to his prime gift,
Not in reward of meritorious deed,
Hath each his several degree assign'd.
In early times with their own innocence
More was not wanting, than the parents' faith,
To save them: those first ages past, behoved
That circumcision in the males should imp
The flight of innocent wings: but since the day
Of grace hath come, without baptismal rites
In Christ accomplish'd, innocence herself
Must linger yet below. Now raise thy view
Unto the visage most resembling Christ:
For, in her splendor only, shalt thou win
The power to look on him." Forthwith I saw
Such floods of gladness on her visage shower'd,
From holy spirits, winging that profound;
That, whatsoever I had yet beheld,

Had not so much suspended me with wonder
Or shown me such similitude of God.
And he, who had to her descended, once,
On earth, now hail'd in heaven; and on poised wing,
"Ave, Maria! Gratia Plena!" sang:
To whose sweet anthem all the blissful court,
From all parts answering, rang: that holier joy
Brooded the deep serene. "Father revered!
Who deign'st, for me, to quit the pleasant place
Wherein thou sittest, by eternal lot;
Say, who that angel is, that with such glee
Beholds our queen, and so enamour'd glows
Of her high beauty, that all fire he seems."

So I again resorted to the lore
Of my wise teacher, he, whom Mary's charms
Embellish'd, as the sun the morning star;
Who thus in answer spake: "In him are summ'd,
Whate'er of buxomness and free delight
May be in spirit, or in angel, met:
And so beseems: for that he bare the palm
Down unto Mary, when the Son of God

Vouchsafed to clothe him in terrestrial weeds.
Now let thine eyes wait heedful on my words;
And note thou of this just and pious realm
The chiefest nobles. Those, highest in bliss,
The twain, on each hand next our empress throned,
Are as it were two roots unto this rose:
He to the left, the parent, whose rash taste
Proves bitter to this seed; and, on the right,
That ancient father of the holy church,
Into whose keeping Christ did give the keys
Of this sweet flower; near whom behold the seer,
That, ere he died, saw all the grievous times
Of the fair bride, who with the lance and nails
Was won. And, near unto the other, rests
The leader, under whom, on manna, fed
The ungrateful nation, fickle and perverse.
On the other part, facing to Peter, lo!
Where Anna sits, so well content to look
On her loved daughter, that with moveless eye
She chants the loud hosanna: while, opposed
To the first father of your mortal kind,
Is Lucia, at whose hest thy lady sped,

When on the edge of ruin closed thine eye.

“But (for the vision hasteneth to an end)
Here break we off, as the good workman doth,
That shapes the cloak according to the cloth;
And to the primal love our ken shall rise;
That thou mayst penetrate the brightness, far
As sight can bear thee. Yet, alas! in sooth
Beating thy pennons, thinking to advance,
Thou backward fall'st. Grace then must first be gain'd,
Her grace, whose might can help thee. Thou in prayer
Seek her: and, with affection, whilst I sue,
Attend, and yield me all thy heart." He said;
And thus the saintly orison began.

CANTO XXXIII

Dante is permitted to contemplate the Divine Majesty and is admitted a glimpse of the great mystery, the Trinity.

O VIRGIN mother, daughter of thy Son!
Created beings all in lowliness
Surpassing, as in height above them all;
Term by the eternal counsel preordain'd;
Ennobler of thy nature, so advanced
In thee, that its great Maker did not scorn,
To make himself his own creation;
For in thy womb rekindling shone the love
Reveal'd, whose genial influence makes now
This flower to germin in eternal peace:
Here thou to us, of charity and love,
Art, as the noon-day torch; and art, beneath,
To mortal men, of hope a living spring.
So mighty art thou, lady, and so great,
That he, who grace desireth, and comes not
To thee for aidance, fain would have desire

Fly without wings. Not only him, who asks,
Thy bounty succors; but doth freely oft
Forerun the asking. Whatsoe'er may be
Of excellence in creature, pity mild,
Relenting mercy, large munificence,
Are all combined in thee. Here kneeleth one,
Who of all spirits hath review'd the state,
From the world's lowest gap unto this height.
Suppliant to thee he kneels, imploring grace
For virtue yet more high, to lift his ken
Toward the bliss supreme. And I, who ne'er
Coveted sight, more fondly, for myself,
Than now for him, my prayers to thee prefer.
(And pray they be not scant), that thou wouldst drive
Each cloud of his mortality, away,
Through thine own prayers, that on the sovran joy
Unveil'd he gaze. This yet, I pray thee, Queen,
Who canst do what thou wilt; that in him thou
Wouldst, after all he hath beheld, preserve
Affection sound, and human passions quell.
Lo! where, with Beatrice, many a saint
Stretch their clasp'd hands, in furtherance of my suit.

The eyes, that heaven with love and awe regards,
Fix'd on the suitor, witness'd, how benign
She looks on pious prayers: then fasten'd they
On the everlasting light, wherein no eye
Of creature, as may well be thought, so far
Can travel inward. I, meanwhile, who drew
Near to the limit, where all wishes end,
The ardor of my wish (for so behoved),
Ended within me. Beckoning smiled the sage,
That I should look aloft: but, ere he bade,
Already of myself aloft I look'd;
For visual strength, refining more and more,
Bare me into the ray authentic
Of sovran light. Thenceforward, what I saw,
Was not for words to speak, nor memory's self
To stand against such outrage on her skill.

As one, who from a dream awaken'd, straight,
All he hath seen forgets; yet still retains
Impression of the feeling in his dream;
E'en such am I: for all the vision dies,

As 'twere, away; and yet the sense of sweet,
That sprang from it, still trickles in my heart.
Thus in the sun-thaw is the snow unseal'd;
Thus in the winds on flitting leaves was lost
The Sibyl's sentence. O eternal beam!
(Whose height what reach of mortal thought may soar?)
Yield me again some little particle
Of what thou then appearedst; give my tongue
Power, but to leave one sparkle of thy glory,
Unto the race to come, that shall not lose
Thy triumph wholly, if thou waken aught
Of memory in me, and endure to hear
The record sound in this unequal strain.

Such keenness from the living ray I met,
That, if mine eyes had turn'd away, methinks,
I had been lost; but, so embolden'd, on
I pass'd, as I remember, till my view
Hover'd the brink of dread infinitude.

O grace, unenvying of thy boon! that gavest
Boldness to fix so earnestly my ken

On the everlasting splendor, that I look'd,
While sight was unconsumed; and, in that depth,
Saw in one volume clasp'd of love, whate'er
The universe unfolds; all properties
Of substance and of accident, beheld,
Compounded, yet one individual light
The whole. And of such bond methinks I saw
The universal form; for that whene'er
I do but speak of it, my soul dilates
Beyond her proper self; and, till I speak,
One moment seems a longer lethargy,
Than five-and-twenty ages had appear'd
To that emprise, that first made Neptune wonder
At Argo's shadow darkening on his flood.

With fixed heed, suspense and motionless,
Wondering I gazed; and admiration still
Was kindled as I gazed. It may not be,
That one, who looks upon that light, can turn
To other object, willingly, his view.
For all the good, that will may covet, there
Is summ'd; and all, elsewhere defective found,

Complete. My tongue shall utter now, no more
E'en what remembrance keeps, than could the babe's
That yet is moisten'd at his mother's breast.
Not that the semblance of the living light
Was changed (that ever as at first remain'd),
But that my vision quickening, in that sole
Appearance, still new miracles descried,
And toil'd me with the change. In that abyss
Of radiance, clear and lofty, seem'd, methought,
Three orbs of triple hue, clipped in one bound:
And, from another, one reflected seem'd,
As rainbow is from rainbow: and the third
Seem'd fire, breathed equally from both. O speech!
How feeble and how faint art thou, to give
Conception birth. Yet this to what I saw
Is less than little. O eternal light!
Sole in thyself that dwell'st; and of thyself
Sole understood, past, present, or to come;
Thou smiledst, on that circling, which in thee
Seem'd as reflected splendor, while I mused
For I therein, methought, in its own hue
Beheld our image painted: steadfastly

I therefore pored upon the view. As one,
Who versed in geometric lore, would fain
Measure the circle; and, though pondering long
And deeply, that beginning, which he needs,
Finds not: e'en such was I, intent to scan
The novel wonder, and trace out the form,
How to the circle fitted, and therein
How placed: but the flight was not for my wing;
Had not a flash darted athwart my mind,
And, in the spleen, unfolded what I sought.

Here vigor fail'd the towering fantasy:
But yet the will roll'd onward, like a wheel
In even motion, by the love impell'd,
That moves the sun in heaven and all the stars.

NOTES - CANTO I.

Heaven.

The empyrean, seat of God.

Thus far.

One of the peaks of Parnassus was sacred to the Muses, one to Apollo.

Marsyas.

Who challenged Apollo to a musical contest in which the victor could do as he wished with the loser. Apollo flayed Marsyas alive.

Peneian foliage.

From Daphne, daughter of Peneus, who was changed to a laurel.

Through that.

Where the four circles, the horizon, the zodiac, the equator, and the equinoctial colure join; the last three intersect each other so as to form three crosses in the spring equinox.

In happiest constellation.

Aries.

Eternal wheels.

The heavens eternal and ever circling.

Glaucus.

Who saw a fish he had caught recovering life by eating grass; he ate some
himself and became immortal.

So much of heaven.

The sphere of fire.

The heaven.

The empyrean, always motionless.

The substance, that hath greatest speed.

The primum mobile.

NOTES - CANTO II.

The increate perpetual thirst.

The desire for celestial beatitude natural for the soul.

This first star.

The moon.

By bodies dense or rare.

Spots on the moon.

Numberless lights.

The fixed stars which differ in bulk and splendor.

Save one.

Except that principle of rarity and denseness. By “formal principles” are meant constituent or essential causes.

Change the leaves.

Like leaves of parchment, darker in some parts than others.

Within the heaven.

According to the poet's system, there are ten heavens. The heaven where peace divine inhabits is the empyrean; the body within it that circles round is the primum mobile; the following heaven, that of the fixed stars; and the other orbs, the seven lower heavens, are Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon.

By blessed movers.

Angels.

The deep spirit.

The moving angel.

Different virtue.

“There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars for one star differeth from another star in glory.” 1 Cor. xv, 41.

NOTES - CANTO III.

Delusion.

Narcissus mistook a shadow for substance, and Dante, substance for a shadow.

She.

Charity, the divine love of God.

Piccarda.

Sister of Corso Donati and of Forese (Purg., Canto xxiii).

The Lady.

St. Clare, founder of the order called after her; she was born of opulent, noble parents at Assisi in 1193.

God knows.

Her brother Corso, inflamed with rage against his virgin sister, gathered Farnata, an infamous assassin, and twelve other abandoned ruffians, entered the monastery by a ladder, and carried away his sister forcibly to his own house; and then tearing off her religious habit, compelled her to go in a secular garment to her nuptials. Before the spouse of Christ came together with her new husband, she

knelt down before a crucifix and recommended her virginity to Christ. Soon after her whole body was smitten with leprosy and in a few days, through divine disposal, she passed with a palm of virginity to the Lord. According to Rodolfo da Tossignano.

Constance.

Daughter of Ruggieri, king of Sicily, wife of Emperor VI and mother of Frederick II. She was supposed to have been taken from a nunnery by force after she was fifty, and her son was supposedly born after that.

The second.

Henry VI, son of Frederick I, was the emperor of the house of Suabia, and his son Frederick II, “the third and last.”

NOTES - CANTO IV.

Daniel.

See Daniel ii. Beatrice did for Dante what Daniel did for Nebuchadnezzar, when he freed the king from the uncertainty respecting his dream, which had enraged him against the Chaldeans.

Plato.

Plato, Timaeus, ix. “The Creator, when he had framed the universe, distributed to the stars an equal number of souls, appointing to each soul its several star.”

Of Seraphim.

Angels and beatified spirits dwell all and eternally together, only partaking more or less of the divine glory, in the empyrean; although, in condescension to human understanding, they appear to have different spheres allotted to them.

The first circle.

The empyrean.

...him who made

Tobias whole.

The Archangel Raphael.

Timaeus.

Reference to the work of Plato.

Laurence.

Who suffered martyrdom in the third century.

Scaevola.

Mucius Scaevola (died 82 B.C.) whose story is told in Livy, Hist., ii, 12.

His father's.

Amphiaraus.

His own mother.

Eriphyle.

Of will.

Piccarda speaks absolutely and without relation to circumstances, while Beatrice speaks conditionally and respectively.

That truth.

The light of divine truth.

NOTES - CANTO V.

Thou wouldst of theft.

A thief's gift of stolen goods to a poor man should not be called almsgiving.

It was enjoin'd the Israelites.

Lev. xii, xxvii.

Either key.

The authority of the Church; see Canto ix.

Jephthah.

Who sacrificed his daughter in order to keep the vow made to God that he would offer up the first thing that came within his sight. Judges xi, xii.

Leader of the Greeks.

Agamemnon who sacrificed his daughter, Iphigenia, in order to obtain favorable winds to speed his ships from Aulis.

That region.

The east, the equinoctial line, or the empyrean, according to various commentators.

The orb.

Mercury which holds the spirits of those who strove for honor and glory on earth.

This sphere.

Mercury, nearest to the sun, is often hidden by it.

The lustre.

Justinian.

NOTES - CANTO VI.

After that Constantine the eagle turn'd.

Constantine, in transferring the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, carried the eagle, the Imperial ensign, from the west to the east. Aeneas, on the contrary, had, with better augury, moved along with the sun's course, when he passed from Troy to Italy.

A hundred years twice told and more.

The Emperor Constantine entered Byzantium in 324; and Justinian began his reign in 527.

At Europe's extreme point.

Constantinople situated at the extreme of Europe, not far from the mountains near Troy from which the founders of Rome came.

Prime love.

Holy Ghost.

In Christ one nature only.

Justinian is said to have been a follower of the heretical opinions held by Eutyches, “who taught that in Christ there was but one nature, viz. that of the incarnate word.”

Agapete.

Bishop of Rome whose Scheda Regia addressed to Justinian won him a place among the wisest and most judicious writers of his century.

Belisarius.

General of Justinian who reconquered Italy from the Goths.

Who pretend its power.

The Ghibellines; the Guelphs are referred to in the following line.

Pallas.

Son of Evander, King of Latium, killed in battle by Turnus; Dante implies that Aeneas inherited his rights to Latium.

Alba.

Alba Longa built by the son of Aeneas, Ascanius.

The rival three.

The Horatii and the Curiatii.

Brennus.

Leader of the Senonian Gauls, and reputed conqueror of Rome in 390 B.C.

The Epirot prince.

Pyrrhus, King of Epirus.

Torquatus.

Titus Manlius Torquatus, leader of Roman armies; he killed his son for disobeying his commands.

Quintius.

Quintius Cincinnatus, so called for his long hair; named dictator in 458 B.C., he defeated the Aequians, and laid down his extraordinary powers after sixteen days.

Arab hordes.

Barbarians in general.

What then it wrought.

The exploits of Julius Caesar.

In its next bearer's gripe.

Augustus Caesar.

The third Caesar.

The eagle in the hand of Tiberius, the third of the Caesars, outdid all its achievements, both past and future, by becoming the instrument of that mighty and mysterious act of satisfaction made to the divine justice in the crucifixion of our Lord.

Vengeance for vengeance.

Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

Charlemain.

Pope Adrian I asked his aid against Desiderius, last king of the Lombards, in 773.

The one.

The Guelphs.

The yellow lilies.

The French ensign.

The other.

The Ghibellines.

Charles.

Charles II of Anjou, head of the Guelphs opposing the Emperor.

Romeo's light.

Romeo of Villeneuve (1170-1250), prime minister of Raymond Berenger, Count of Provence: his history is uncertain, but the legend is that he rose high in the service of the Count, and when jealousy of the courtiers forced his dismissal, he took up the pilgrim's staff which he had when he entered the Count's service.

Four daughters.

The four kings they married were: Louis IX of France; Henry III of England; Richard, King of the Romans; and Charles I, King of Naples and Sicily.

NOTES - CANTO VII.

Hosanna.

Hosanna holy God of Sabaoth, abundantly illumining with thy brightness the blessed fires of these kingdoms.

That substance bright.

Justinian.

That man.

Adam.

Different effects.

The death of Christ was pleasing to God, inasmuch as it satisfied the divine justice; and to the Jews, because it gratified their malignity: and while heaven opened for joy at the ransom of man, the earth trembled through compassion for its Maker.

A just vengeance.

The punishment of Christ by the Jews, although just as far as regarded the human nature assumed by him, and so a righteous vengeance of sin, yet being unjust

as it regarded the divine nature, was itself justly revenged on the Jews by the destruction of Jerusalem.

What distils.

The things directly created by God without the intervention of secondary causes are immortal.

These tokens of pre-eminence.

The gifts of immediate creation: freedom, immortality and likeness to God.

By both his ways.

Either by mercy and justice united or by mercy alone.

By created virtue inform'd.

Matter is first created and afterward the “informing virtue,” residing in the stars, produces plants, animals, etc., which are secondary forms.

Our resurrection certain.

Adam and Eve, directly created by God, are immortal; their descendants are also immortal because the death of Christ restored them to their former privileges.

NOTES - CANTO VIII.

The world.

In heathen days, sensual love proceeded from the star Venus who along with her mother, Dione, and son, Cupid, was worshipped as a divinity.

Epicycle.

A little sphere revolving by itself in the heavens.

Now obvious.

Venus is a morning star at one part of the year, and an evening star at another.

Lofty seraphim.

Who preside over the primum mobile, the source of all heavenly motion.

Had the time been more.

The spirit now speaking is Charles Martel, crowned King of Hungary and son of Charles II, King of Naples and Sicily; born in 1271, he died before he could succeed his father in Naples, and thus left that kingdom to his brother Robert who resisted Emperor Henry VII.

Thou lovedst me well.

Charles Martel came to Florence in 1295 and may have known Dante there.

The left bank.

Provence.

...that horn

Of fair Ausonia.

The kingdom of Naples.

The land.

Hungary.

The beautiful Trinacria.

Sicily so called from its three mountains, two of which are Pachynus and Pelorus.

Typhoeus.

The giant whom Jupiter overwhelmed under Mt. Aetna where he vomited forth smoke and flame.

Sprung through me from Charles and Rodolph.

Sicily would still be ruled by the descendants of these two.

Had not ill-lording.

The ill-conduct of the governors of Sicily had roused the people to the uprising at Palermo in 1282 called the Sicilian Vespers; as a result, the kingdom fell to Peter III of Aragon.

My brother's foresight.

His brother Robert was a hostage in Catalonia from 1288 to 1295, and when he became king surrounded himself with many Catalonians.

Consult your teacher.

Aristotle.

Solon, etc.

Civil life demands different occupations as represented by Solon, a law-giver, Xerxes, a warrior, and Melchisedec, a priest.

Quirinus.

Romulus was born of so obscure a father that his parentage was attributed to Mars.

NOTES - CANTO IX.

O fair Clemenza.

Daughter of Charles Martel, and second wife of Louis X of France.

The treachery.

The occupation of the Sicilian throne by Robert to the exclusion of his brother's son, Carobert, the rightful heir.

In that part.

Between Rialto in the Venetian territory and the sources of the rivers Brenta and Piava, is situated a castle called Romano, the birthplace of the famous tyrant Ezzolino or Azzolino, the brother of Cunizza, who is now speaking. The tyrant we have seen in "the river of blood." The Inferno, Canto xii

Cunizza.

Who was overcome by the influence of her star Venus; she lived from about 1198 to 1279, was married three times and had many lovers including Sordello.

This.

Folco of Genoa or Marseilles, a noted Provençal poet, who became Bishop of Toulouse in 1205 and persecuted the Albigensians.

By Adice and Tagliamento.

Two rivers, the first to the west and the second to the east.

The hour is near.

For the defeat of Giacomo da Carrara and the Paduans by Can Grande at Vicenza, in 1314.

One.

Riccardo da Camino, murdered at Trevigi where the Cagnano and Sile meet.

Feltro.

The Bishop of Feltro who received a number of Ghibelline refugees from Ferrara with a promise of protection and afterward gave them up; they were taken back to Ferrara where many of them were put to death.

Malta's.

A tower, either in the citadel of Padua, which under the tyranny of Ezzolino had been “with many a foul and midnight murder fed”; or (as some say) near a river of the same name, that falls into the lake of Bolsena, in which the Pope was accustomed to imprison those guilty of irremissible sin.

Six shadowing wings.

“Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings.” Isaiah vi, 2.

The valley of waters.

The Mediterranean; some commentators believe Dante is describing Marseilles, others, Genoa.

Discordant shores.

Europe and Africa.

Meridian.

Extending to the east, the Mediterranean reaches the coast of Palestine which is on its horizon when it enters the Straits of Gibraltar.

...Ebro's stream

And Macra's.

According to those who believe Dante is describing Genoa, these are two streams west and east of Genoa; the believers in the Marseilles theory say the Ebro here mentioned is the Spanish river.

Begga.

In Africa, opposite Genoa in Europe.

Whose haven.

A reference either to the terrible slaughter of the Genoese by the Saracens in 936, or by Julius Caesar; if Dante is referring to Marseilles, he probably means here the slaughter of the Marseillais under Nasidius by Brutus in command of J. Caesar's fleet.

Belus' daughter.

Dido who wronged her husband, Sichaeus, and Aeneas' wife, Creusa, through her love for Aeneas.

She of Rhodope.

Phyllis who hanged herself when Demophon did not come to marry her on the promised day.

Jove's son.

Hercules whose wife, Dejanira, was jealous of Hercules' love for Iole.

Rahab.

Heb. xi, 31.

This heaven.

Venus where the shadow of the earth ends, according to Ptolemy.

First, in Christ's triumph.

She was the first saved when Christ released from Hell the spirits of the prophets and patriarchs of the old dispensation.

With either palm.

By both hands nailed to the cross.

The Pope.

Who does not care that the Holy Land is in the possession of the Saracens.

The cursed flower.

The coin of Florence- the florin; the covetous desire of the Pope has caused much evil.

The decretals.

The canon law.

The Vatican.

Allusion either to the death of Boniface VIII in 1303, the coming of Henry VII into Italy, or the removal of the papacy to Avignon under Clement V.

NOTES - CANTO X.

The point.

At the intersection of the equinoctial circle and the zodiac where the common motion of the heavens from east to west strikes with greatest force the motion of the planets; according to Dante's system, the force is greatest here because the velocity of each is increased by its distance from the poles.

Oblique.

The zodiac.

In heaven above.

The planets would not receive or transmit their influences if they did not keep their order of motion and if the zodiac were not oblique.

Minister.

The sun.

Along the spires.

According to Dante's system, the earth is motionless and the sun passes in spiral motion from one tropic to the other.

As a man.

He was quite insensible of it.

Fourth family.

Inhabitants of the sun, the fourth planet.

Of his spirit and of his offspring.

Who manifest the mystery of the Trinity to those studying divine things; the sun is the heaven of the doctors of theology.

Latona's daughter.

The moon.

Such was the song.

Of the ineffable spirits.

I, then, was of the lambs.

The Dominican order.

Albert of Cologne.

Albertus Magnus, born at Laugingen in Thuringia in 1193; he entered the Dominican order and taught theology in Germany, particularly in Cologne: Thomas

Aquinas was his pupil: in 1260, he accepted the bishopric of Ratisbon, but resigned after two years to return to his cell in Cologne where he superintended the school and composed his voluminous works on divinity and natural science.

Of Aquinum, Thomas.

Thomas Aquinas, born of noble parents at Rocca Secca, in 1224, studied under Albertus Magnus in Paris and Cologne, wrote many religious treatises, the most famous of which, his *Summa Theologiae*, is followed closely by Dante.

Gratian.

A Benedictine monk, author of *Decretum Gratiani*, a compendium and correlation of civil and church law.

Peter.

Bishop of Paris, 1155, author of *Liber Sententiarum*, which contained the most complete system of theology that had yet appeared at the time.

The fifth light.

Solomon.

His doom.

It was a common question whether Solomon was saved.

That taper's radiance.

St. Dionysius the Areopagite, a disciple of St. Paul, supposed to have suffered martyrdom, and to have written a book about the different orders of angels and their functions called *De Coelestis Hierarchia*.

That pleader.

Paulus Orosius, a Spanish priest of the fifth century, who wrote a history of the world to refute the charges that the misfortunes of Rome were the result of the introduction of Christianity.

The eighth.

Boetius whose *De Consolatione Philosophiae* was much appreciated in the Middle Ages; he was a senator, and under the suspicion of treason was put in prison by Theodoric and perhaps killed by him in 524.

Cieldauro.

Boetius was buried at Pavia in the monastery of St. Pietro called Ciel d'Oro.

Isidore.

Archbishop of Seville, died 636.

Bede.

The Venerable Bede, a well-known English church historian, who was born in 672.

Richard.

Of St. Victor, a native of Scotland or Ireland; he was canon and prior of St. Victor in Paris, and a noted mystic of his day.

Sigebert.

Sigier of Brabant, died about 1283.

The straw-litter'd street.

The Rue de Fouarre, street of straw, on which the University of Paris stands.

The spouse of God.

The Church.

NOTES - CANTO XI.

Aphorisms.

The study of medicine.

The lustre.

The spirit of Thomas Aquinas.

She.

The Church. Her “well-beloved” is Christ.

One.

Saint Francis; “the other” is Saint Dominic.

Tupino.

Description of the birthplace of Saint Francis between Tupino, a rivulet near Assisi where the saint was born in 1182, and Chiascio, a stream rising in a mountain near Agobbio which was chosen by Saint Ubaldo for the place of his retirement.

Nocera with Gualdo.

Two cities near Assisi whose heavy yoke might be the taxes of Robert of Naples.

A dame.

Personification of the vow of poverty taken by Saint Francis.

Before the spiritual court.

He made the vow of poverty in the presence of the bishop and his natural father.

Her first husband.

Christ.

Amyclas.

A poor fisherman who opened his door to Christ without fear because he knew his poverty protected him.

Bernard.

Of Quintavalle, one of the first followers of the saint.

Egidius.

The third of his disciples, who died in 1262. His work, entitled Verba Aurea, was published in 1534 at Antwerp.

Sylvester.

Another of his earliest associates.

Whom now the cord.

Saint Francis bound his body with a cord, in sign that he considered it as a beast, and that it required, like a beast, to be led by a halter.

Pietro Bernardone.

A man in a humble station at Assisi.

Innocent.

Pope Innocent III who first approved the order in 1210.

Honorius.

His successor, Honorius III, who granted certain privilege, to the Franciscans and gave the order formal confirmation in 1223.

In the proud Soldan's presence.

Saint Francis is said to have preached before the Sultan of Egypt.

On the hard rock.

The mountain Alverna in the Apennines.

The last signet.

The stigmata or marks resembling the wounds of Christ, said to have been found on the saint's body.

His dearest lady.

Poverty.

Our Patriarch.

Saint Dominic to whose order Thomas Aquinas belonged.

NOTES - CANTO XII.

The blessed flame.

Thomas Aquinas.

The holy mill.

The circle of spirits.

Handmaid.

Iris, the rainbow.

In manner of that voice.

One rainbow giving back the image of the other, as sound is reflected by Echo, that nymph who was melted away by her fondness for Narcissus, as vapor is melted by the sun.

One.

Saint Bonaventura, a famous churchman of his day; he was made general of the Franciscan order in 1256, Bishop of Albano and a cardinal in 1272; he was born in Bagnoregio, Tuscany, in 1221.

The love.

Out of courtesy, Bonaventura, a Franciscan, praises the founder of the Dominicans, and Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican, praises the founder of the Franciscans.

The army of Christ.

The Church, in a low state at this time.

In that clime.

Spain.

Those billows.

The Atlantic.

Sometimes.

During the summer solstice.

Callaroga.

Between Osma and Aranda in Old Castile, designated by the royal coat of arms.

The loving minion of the Christian faith.

Dominic, born in 1170 in Callorga.

In the mother's womb.

His mother is said to have dreamed that she should bring forth a white and black dog with a lighted torch in his mouth, which were signs of the habit to be worn by his order, and of his fervent zeal.

The dame.

His godmother's dream was that he had one star in his forehead, and another in the nape of his neck, from which he communicated light to the east and the west.

After the first counsel.

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." Matt. xix, 21.

As men interpret it.

Gift of grace of the Lord.

Ostiense.

Henry of Susa, cardinal of Ostia and Velletri, who was celebrated for his lectures on the five books of the Decretals; lived around 1250.

Taddeo.

Either Taddeo d'Alderotto, a Florentine, called the Hippocratean, who translated the ethics of Aristotle into Latin, and died at an advanced age about the end of the thirteenth century; or Taddeo of Bologna, noted for his legal knowledge, who left no writings behind him.

No dispensation.

Dominic did not ask license to compound for the use of unjust acquisitions by dedicating part of them to pious uses.

Nor the first vacant fortune.

Not the first benefice that fell vacant.

In favor of that seed.

For that seed of the divine word, from which have sprung up these four-and-twenty plants, these holy spirits now surrounding Beatrice and Dante.

One wheel.

Dominic; the other wheel is Francis.

Thomas.

Aquinas.

Rejected tares.

Matt. xiii, 30. The tares were burned and the wheat gathered into the barn.

I question not.

At Casale, in Monferrat, the discipline had been enforced by Uberto with unnecessary rigor; and at Acquasparta, in the territory of Todi, it had been equally relaxed by the Cardinal Matteo, general of the order.

One, who, in discharge.

Bonaventura; see note to Canto xii.

Illuminato... Agostino.

Two of Saint Francis' earliest followers.

Hugues of St. Victor.

A mystic and theologian who spent most of his life at the monastery of St. Victor in Paris where he wrote ten books illustrating the celestial hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite; he died in 1142.

Pietro Mangiadore.

Or Petrus Comestor, the Eater, born at Troyes, canon and dean of the church there and later chancellor of the University of Paris; best known for his *Historia Scolastica*; he retired to St. Victor's where he died in the late twelfth century.

He of Spain.

John XXI, born about 1226, Pope in 1276; he wrote a famous book on logic and others on medicine.

Chrysostom.

John of Antioch, called “Chrysostom,” or golden-mouthed, on account of his eloquence, was born in 347, and died in 407 in Cappadocia where he lived as an exile.

Anselmo.

Anselm, born in Aosta in 1034, prior and later abbot of the monastery of Bec, Normandy, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093.

Donatus.

AElus Donatus, the grammarian, in the fourth century. one of the preceptors of St. Jerome.

Raban.

Born in Mentz in 766, abbot of the monastery of Fulda, Archbishop of Mentz in 847.

Joachim.

Abbot of Flora in Calabria; died 1202.

A peer.

Saint Dominic.

NOTES - CANTO XIII.

Who would conceive.

Dante imagines the double circle formed by the twenty-four theologians as if the seven stars of Ursa Major, the two largest stars of Ursa Minor and fifteen of the brightest stars in the heavens were arranged in two circles like the crown of Ariadne and revolved in opposite directions. The “wain” is Ursa Major, “that horn,” Ursa Minor and “the swiftest heaven,” the primum mobile.

The Chiana.

River in Tuscany near Arezzo.

That luminary.

Thomas Aquinas.

The meek man of God.

Saint Francis.

In the bosom.

Eve was created from Adam’s rib.

By the keen lance.
Christ's suffering redeems man from the original sin.

Light.
The Word; the Son of God.

His love triune with them.
The Holy Ghost.

New existences.
Angels and human souls.

The lowest powers.
Irrational life and brute matter.

Their wax, and that which moulds it.
Matter and the virtue or energy acting on it.

The heaven.
The influence of the planetary bodies.

The brightness of the seal.
The divine idea.

Therefore.

A brief description of the Trinity: the primal virtue is the Father, the lustrous image, the Son, and the fervent love, the Holy Ghost.

The clay.

Adam.

Burden.

Christ.

Who ask'd.

Solomon.

If necessary.

If a necessary conclusion must be drawn from two premises of which one is not necessary.

That first motion.

If one must admit a primal motion that is not the effect of the other motion.

Of the mid-circle.

If a triangle one side of which is the diameter of the semi-circle can be drawn in the semi-circle without forming a right angle.

...Parmenides,
Melissus, Bryso.

The first two are of the Eleatic school, and the last, a mathematician who claimed he squared the circle; all are examples of false reasoning.

Sabellius, Arius.
Well-known heretics.

Dame Birtha and Sir Martin.
Names for anybody with more curiosity than discretion.

NOTES - CANTO XIV.

The goodliest light.
Solomon.

Gleed.
White-hot coal glowing in the centre of a flame.

To more lofty bliss.
The planet Mars.

A holocaust.
Thanksgiving sacrifice.

Its pathway.
Reference to the galaxy which philosophers explain in different ways.

The venerable sign.
The cross placed in the planet of Mars to denote the glory of those who fought
in the crusades.

The atomies of bodies.
Motes.

He.

The heavens or “living seals” become more resplendent the higher Dante goes; and so do the eyes of Beatrice.

NOTES - CANTO XV.

Our greater muse.

Virgil, Aeneid, vi, 684.

I am thy root.

Cacciaguida was the father of Alighieri, Dante's great-grandfather, who began the name of Alighieri and who has been in the first round of Purgatory for more than one hundred years.

Which calls her still.

The public clock was still within the circuit of the ancient walls in the Benedictine church, La Badia.

Sardanapalus.

The luxurious monarch of Assyria, noted for his effeminacy.

Montemalo.

Either an elevated spot between Rome and Viterbo; or Monte Mario, the site of the villa Mellini, commanding a view of Rome.

Our suburban turret.

Uccellatojo near Florence which had a commanding view of the city;
Florence had not yet vied with Rome in the grandeur of her public buildings.

Of Nerli, and of Vecchio.

Two of the most opulent families of Florence.

Each.

None fearful either of dying in banishment, or of being deserted by her husband on a scheme of traffic in France.

A Salterello and Cianghella.

The latter a shameless woman of the family of Tosa, married to Lito degli Aldosi of Imola; the former Lapo Salterello, a lawyer, with whom Dante was at variance.

Mary.

The Virgin was invoked in the pains of childbirth.

Valdipado.

Cacciaguida's wife, whose family name was Alighieri, came from Ferrara, called Val di Pado, from its being watered by the Po.

Conrad.

Emperor Conrad III who died in 1152.

Whose people.

The Mahometans who were left in possession of the Holy Land through the supineness of the Pope.

NOTES - CANTO XVI.

With greeting.

Dante shows his respect by addressing his ancestor with the ceremonious “you.”

Guenever.

Beatrice’s smile reminded him of the female servant who, by her coughing, emboldened Queen Guenever to admit the freedoms of Lancelot.

The fold.

Florence whose patron saint was John the Baptist.

From the day.

From the incarnation of our Lord to the birth of Cacciaguida, the planet Mars had returned five hundred and eighty times to the constellation of Leo, with which it is supposed to have a congenial influence. As Mars then completes his revolution in a period forty-three days short of two years, Cacciaguida was born about 1090.

The last.

The city was divided into four compartments. The Elisei, the ancestors of Dante, resided near the entrance of that, named from the Porta S. Piero, which was the last reached by the competitor in the annual race at Florence.

Mars.

The limits of the city were marked by the statue of Mars on Ponte Vecchio and the baptistery of St. John.

Campi and Certaldo and Figghine.

Country places near Florence.

That these people.

That the inhabitants of the above-mentioned places had not been mixed with the citizens; nor the limits of Florence extended beyond Galluzzo and Trespiano.

Aguglione's hind, and Signa's.

Baldo of Aguglione and Bonifazio of Signa, a small town near Florence.

Had not the people.

If Rome had continued her allegiance to the Emperor and the Guelph and Ghibelline factions had thus been prevented, Florence would not have been polluted by a race of upstarts and lost the most respectable of her old families.

Simifonte.

A castle dismantled by the Florentines.

Montemurlo.

The Conti Guidi sold their castle to the state of Florence when they were unable to defend it from the Pistoians.

The Cerchi.

Chiefs of the Bianchi party who had risen from humble origins in Acone to riches and power through trade.

Valdigreve.

Site in southern France of the castle of the Buondelmonti.

Luni; Urbisaglia.

Formerly important cities now fallen to decay.

Chiusi and Sinigaglia.

Same as Luni, etc.

Ughi.

Well-known Florentine families of Cacciaguida's time.

At the poop.

The Cerchi, Dante's enemies, had succeeded to the houses over the gate of Saint Peter, formerly inhabited by the Ravignani and the Count Giddo.

The gilded hilt and pommel.

Symbols of knighthood.

The column, clothed with verrey.

Arms of the Pigli, also called Billi.

With them.

Either the Chiaramontesi, or the Tosinghi, one of which had committed a fraud in measuring out the wheat from the public granary.

Sizii and Arrigucci.

Families which still held magisterial offices.

Them.

The Uberti.

The bullets of bright gold.

Arms of the Abbati or Lamberti.

The sires of those.

The Visdomini, the Tosinghi and the Cortigiani sprung from the founders of the bishopric of Florence and now curators of its revenues which they use to their own purposes.

The o'erweening brood.

This family was so little esteemed that Ubertino Donato, who had married a daughter of Bellincion Berti, himself derived from the same stock, was offended with his father-in-law for giving another of his daughters in marriage to one of them.

Caponsacco.

The family of Caponsacchi, who had removed from Fesole, lived at Florence in the Mercato Vecchio.

Giuda and Infangato.

Guida Giudi and the family of Infangati.

The great Baron.

The Marchese Ugo, who lived at Florence as a lieutenant of Emperor Otho III and gave many of the chief families their license to bear his arms; according to one story, he had a vision in which he heard he was to suffer the fate of the condemned souls, and thereupon he sold all his possessions in Germany and founded

seven abbeys with the proceeds. His memory was celebrated in Florence on St. Thomas's Day.

One.

Giano della Bella who belonged to one of the families bearing Ugo's arms which were bordered with gold, but who no longer retained his place among the nobility.

Gualterotti dwelt, and Importuni.

Two families in the compartment of the city called Borgo.

Newer neighborhood.

The Bardi, or the Buondelmonti.

The house.

The Amidei, a reference to the murder of Buondelmonti and the division of the city into Guelphs and Ghibellines. See *The Inferno*, Canto xxviii, note.

To Ema.

It had been well for the city if your ancestor had been drowned in the Ema, when he crossed that stream on his way from Montebuono to Florence.

On that maim'd stone.

Near the remains of the statue of Mars, Buondelmonti was slain, as if he had been a victim to the god; and Florence had not since known the blessing of peace.

The lily.

The arms of Florence had never hung reversed on the spear of her enemies in token of her defeat, nor been changed from argent to gules; they afterwards were, when the Guelfi gained the predominance.

NOTES - CANTO XVII.

The youth.

Phaeton, who came to his mother Clymene, to inquire of her if he were indeed the son of Apollo.

That saintly lamp.

Cacciaguida.

Contingency.

That which may or may not be.

Necessity.

The evidence with which we see casual events portrayed in the source of all truth no more necessitates those events than does the image, reflected in the sight by a ship sailing down a stream, necessitate the motion of the vessel.

From thence.

From the eternal sight or the view of the Deity himself.

His cruel stepdame.

Phaedra by false accusations drove Hippolytus from Athens.

There.

At Rome where the expulsion of Dante's party from Florence was being plotted in 1300.

The common cry.

The multitude will, as usual, be ready to blame those who are sufferers, whose cause will at last be vindicated by the overthrow of their enemies.

The great Lombard.

Either Bartolommeo della Scala, or Alboino, his brother; their coat of arms was a ladder and an eagle.

That mortal.

Can Grande della Scala, born under the influence of Mars, but at this time only nine years old. He was, as the other two, a son of Alberto della Scala.

The Gascon.

Pope Clement V.

Great Harry.

Emperor Henry VII of Luxembourg.

The treasure.
Cacciaguida.

NOTES - CANTO XVIII.

The hallow'd light.

In which the spirit of Cacciaguida was enclosed.

On this fifth lodgment of the tree.

Mars, the fifth of the heavens.

The great Maccabee.

Judas Maccabeus who delivered his people from the tyranny of the King of Syria; see 1 Maccabeus, iii.

Orlando.

Roland, hero of the battle of Roncesvalles, and nephew of Charlemagne.

William.

Of Orange, hero of the southern cycle of French romances.

Renard.

Subject of a long episode in the William cycle; a heathen, ignorant of his high birth, who took service with William.

Duke Godfrey.

Of Bouillon, leader of the first crusade and King of Jerusalem.

Robert Guiscard.

A Norman knight who fought the Saracens in Sicily and Lower Italy, defended Gregory VII, and founded the kingdom of Naples; see *The Inferno*, Canto xxviii.

Through silvery.

“The heaven of Jupiter may be compared to geometry, for two properties: the one is, that it moves between two heavens repugnant to its temperature, as that of Mars and that of Saturn; whence Ptolemy, in the above-cited book, says that Jupiter is a star of temperate complexion, between the coldness of Saturn and the heat of Mars; the other is, that, among all the stars, it shows itself white, as it were silvered.” *Convito*, ii, 14.

O nymph divine.

Urania.

Beatitude.

The band of spirits; “beatitudo” in its original meaning of multitude.

Taking the bread away.

Excommunication or interdiction of the Eucharist now used as a weapon of warfare.

That writest but to cancel.

Boniface VIII, John XXII or the Popes in general.

To him.

The coin of Florence was stamped with the impression of John the Baptist;
and for this the avaricious Pope is made to declare that he felt more devotion than
for either Peter or Paul.

NOTES - CANTO XIX.

The beauteous image.

The eagle.

Who turn'd his compass.

When he prepared the heavens.

The Word.

God's word is still greater than the power of his creatures to understand.

The primal will.

The divine will.

Who call "Christ! Christ!"

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. vii, 21.

The Aethiop.

"The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it." Matt. xii, 41.

That volume.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Rev. xx, 12.

Albert.

See Purgatory, Canto vi.

Prague.

The eagle predicts the devastation of Bohemia in 1304 by Albert of Austria.

He.

Philip IV of France, after the battle of Courtrai, 1302, in which the French were defeated by the Flemings, raised the nominal value of the coin. This king died after his horse was thrown to the ground by a wild boar, in 1314.

The English and Scot.

The disputes between Edward I and Robert Bruce or John Baliol.

The Spaniard's luxury.

Alonzo X of Spain or Ferdinand IV, King of Castile, who died supposedly as a result of extreme intemperance, in 1312.

The Bohemian.

Wincelaus II, died 1305; see Purgatory, Canto vii.

The halter of Jerusalem.

Charles II of Naples and Jerusalem who was lame; see Purgatory, Canto vii, and Canto xx, notes.

He.

Frederick of Sicily, son of Peter III of Aragon; see Purgatory, Canto vii. The isle of fire is Sicily where the tomb of Anchises is located.

His uncle.

James, King of Majorca and Minorca, brother of Peter III.

His brother.

James II of Aragon who died in 1327; see Purgatory, Canto vii.

Crowns.

Majorca and Aragon.

Of Portugal.

Denis was King of Portugal in Dante's time; Denis died in 1325 after a reign of nearly forty-six years and does not seem to have deserved the stigma here cast on him.

Norway.

Haakon, King of Norway, is probably meant; in 1288, he gave refuge to the murderers of Eric VII, King of Denmark, and started a nine-year war against Eric VIII, his successor, which almost ruined both kingdoms.

Him of Ratz.

Possibly Oros I of Serbia, 1275-1307, who debased the coinage of Venice.

Hungary.

The kingdom of Hungary was about this time disputed by Carobert, son of Charles Martel, and Wenceslaus, prince of Bohemia, son of Wenceslaus II.

Navarre.

Navarre was now under the yoke of France. It soon after (in 1328) followed the advice of Dante, and had a monarch of its own.

Mountainous girdle.

The Pyrenees.

Famagosta's streets and Nicosia's.

Cities in the kingdom of Cyprus at that time ruled by Henry II, a pusillanimous prince.

NOTES - CANTO XX.

The great sign.

The eagle, the Imperial ensign.

After.

After the spirits in the sixth planet, Jupiter, had stopped singing.

The part.

The eyes; the highest spirits are those forming the eye.

Who.

David.

He.

Trajan knows the difference between heaven and hell by experience because he was in the latter until the prayers of Pope Gregory released him; see Purgatory, Canto x.

He next.

Hezekiah who delayed his death by fifteen years at his own request; II Kings
xx.

The other following.
Constantine who removed the Empire to Byzantium and left Rome to the
Pope.

William.
William II, King of Sicily in the latter part of the twelfth century; of the Nor-
man line of sovereigns; his loss was as much a subject of regret in his dominions
as the presence of Charles II of Anjou and Frederick of Aragon was of sorrow
and complaint.

This.
Ripheus.

That.
Trajan who lived after the crucifixion.

The prayers.
Of St. Gregory.

The three nymphs.

Faith, Hope and Charity; see Purgatory, Canto xxix.

The pair.

Ripheus and Trajan.

NOTES - CANTO XXI.

Semele.

Who wished to see her lover, Jupiter, in all his glory and was reduced to ashes by the lightning surrounding him.

The seventh splendor.

Saturn, the planet.

The burning lion's breast.

The constellation of Leo.

In them, mirror'd.

Let the form of Saturn, later called the Crystal, be reflected in the mirror of thy sight.

Of that loved monarch.

Saturn; see The Inferno, Canto xvi,- the reign of Saturn was the golden age.

That glitterance.

The multitude of shining spirits.

What forbade the smile.
It would have overcome him.

Thou only.
You only bring up the question of predestination.

Catria.
Now the abbey of Santa Croce, in the duchy of Urbino, about half way between Gubbio and La Pergola. Dante is said to have resided here for some time.

Pietro Damiano.
St. Peter Damiano, supposedly born in Ravenna about 1007; entered the monastery of Fonte Avellano on the side of the mountain Catria; known for his learning and holiness, he was made cardinal and Bishop of Ostia in 1058.

Cephas.
St. Peter.

The Holy Spirit's vessel.
St. Paul; see The Inferno, Canto ii.

Round this.

The spirit of Pietro Damiano.

NOTES - CANTO XXII.

The vengeance.

Reference to captivity of the Popes at Avignon, Purgatory, Canto xxxii, or to the capture of Boniface VIII at Agnani, Purgatory, Canto xx, or to the messenger of God who was to kill a giant, Purgatory, Canto xxxiii.

One largest and most lustrous.

St. Benedict, founder of the Benedictine order; born in 480 in Norcia, Umbria, he became a hermit in a cave near Subiaco, and went in 528 to Monte Cassino where he founded his monastery on the site of a temple of Apollo which he destroyed.

Macarius.

Either an Egyptian monk who was an eminent practical writer of the time, or an anchorite from Alexandria who lived in the desert between the Nile and the Red Sea.

Romoaldo.

S. Romoaldo, a native of Ravenna, and the founder of the order of Camaldoli, died in 1027. He was the author of a commentary on the Psalm.

In the last sphere.

The empyrean, where he afterwards sees Saint Benedict, Canto xxxii. Beatified spirits, though they have different heavens allotted them, have all their seat in that higher sphere.

The patriarch Jacob.

“And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.” Gen. xxviii, 12.

The sign.

Of the constellation Gemini.

The parent.

The sun was in the constellation of the Twins at the time of Dante’s birth.

The lofty wheel.

The eighth heaven, that of the fixed stars.

Daughter of Latona.

The moon.

Without the shadow.
Spots on the moon.

Of thy son.
The sun.

Maia and Dione.
Maia was the mother of Mercury, and Dione, of Venus.

‘Twixt his sire and son.
Between Saturn and Mars.

NOTES - CANTO XXIII.

Prevenient.

Anticipating or going before.

That region.

Towards the south, where the course of the sun appears less rapid than when he is in the east or the west.

Trivia.

A name of Diana.

The eternal nymphs.

The stars.

The Might.

Christ.

Of Polyhymnia.

Muse of lyric poetry.

The rose.

The Virgin Mary, who is termed by the church Rosa Mystica. “I was exalted like a palm-tree in Engaddi, and as a rose-plant in Jericho.” Ecclesiasticus, xxiv, 14.

The lilies.

The Apostles: “And give ye a sweet savor as frankincense, and flourish as a lily.” Ecclesiasticus, xxxix. 14.

Of that fair flower.

The Virgin.

A cresset.

The angel Gabriel.

That lyre.

By synecdoche, the lyre is put for the angel.

The goodliest sapphire.

The Virgin.

The robe.

The ninth heaven, the primum mobile, which enfolds and moves the eight lower heavens.

The crowned flame.

The Virgin with the angel hovering over her.

The seed.

Christ.

“Regina Coeli.”

Beginning of an anthem sung by the Church at Easter in honor of our Lady.

Those rich-laden coffers.

The spirits who sowed the seed of good works on earth and now contain the fruit of their pious endeavors.

In the Babylonian exile.

During their abode on earth.

He.

St. Peter with the other holy men of the Old and New Testaments

NOTES - CANTO XXIV.

From that.

St. Peter.

Tent.

Try, examine.

Bachelor.

Scholar.

Faith.

Reference to St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews xi, 1.

The ancient bond and new.

Old and New Testaments.

That Worthy.

St. Peter.

NOTES - CANTO XXV.

The fair sheep-fold.

Florence from which Dante was banished.

Peer of mickle might.

The Apostle James, brother of St. John; he was reputedly buried at Compostella, Galicia, Spain, and his shrine was the destination of many a pilgrimage in the Middle Ages.

One, of the other.

St. Peter and St. James.

Largess.

Apparently an allusion to the Epistle of James i, 5. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." Or, to 17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights."

I lifted up.

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.” Psalms
cxxi, 1.

From Egypt to Jerusalem.
From the lower world to heaven.

His anthem.

“They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.” Psalms ix, 10. Dante
got the answer to this question from David, and the following from St. James.

That mighty sheen.
The spirit of St. James.

Palm.
Of martyrdom.

Isaias.
“He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with
the robe of righteousness.” Isaiah lxi, 10.

Thy brother.
St. John in Rev. vii, 9.

Winter's month.

If a star as bright as the sun were in the constellation of Cancer during the winter month it is above the horizon, night would become day for a whole month.

This.

St. John; see Gospel of St. John xiii, 23. and xxi, 20.

Pelican.

Christ; see Psalms cii, 6.

Our number.

The Elect; see Rev. vi, 2.

The two.

Christ and Mary.

Two garments.

Body and soul.

Trinal band.

Peter, James and John.

NOTES - CANTO XXVI.

The beamy flame.
St. John.

Ananias' hand.
Ananias restored St. Paul's sight by putting his hand on him; see Acts ix, 17.

From him.
Plato, Aristotle or Dionysius the Areopagite.

I will make.
Exodus xxxiii, 19.

At the outset.
John i, 1.

The eagle of our Lord.
St. John.

The leaves.

Created beings who live in the world or “garden.”

By affinity and blood.

Daughter and daughter-in-law.

Parhelion.

Who enlightens and comprehends all things, but is himself enlightened and comprehended by none.

Whence.

Limbo. Adam says that 5232 years elapsed from his creation to the time of his deliverance, which followed the death of Christ.

All my life.

I remained in the terrestrial Paradise only to the seventh hour.

NOTES - CANTO XXVII.

Four torches.

St. Peter, St. James, St. John and Adam.

That.

St. Peter who looked as the planet Jupiter would if he assumed the sanguine appearance of Mars: he became red with indignation.

He.

Boniface VIII who is not Pope in the eyes of God.

Christ's spouse.

The Church.

Of Linus, and of Cletus.

Bishops of Rome in the first century.

Did Sextus, Pius and Callixtus bleed

And Urban.

The first two were Bishops of Rome in the second century, and the last two, in the fourth; all were persecuted or martyred.

No purpose was of ours.

They did not intend that their successors should take part in the political divisions among Christians like the Guelphs and Ghibellines, or that the seal, “sigil-mark,” of St. Peter should be used to authorize iniquitous grants and privileges, or that the Church should make war as Boniface VIII did against the Colonnas.

Cahorsines and Gascons.

Jacques d’Ossa, a native of Cahors, who became Pope in 1316 as John XXII: and Clement V, a Gascon, for whom see *The Inferno*, Canto xix.

The she-goat.

Capricorn.

From the hour.

Since he had last looked (Canto xxii), Dante had passed from the meridian of Jerusalem to the Atlantic Ocean beyond Gibraltar.

From Gades.

Spain.

Passage of Laerte's son.

Ulysses' journey through the Straits of Gibraltar; see The Inferno, Canto xxvi.

The shore.

Phoenicia where Europa was carried off by Jupiter in the shape of a bull.

The sun.

Dante was in the constellation Gemini, and the sun was in Aries; part of those two constellations and the whole of Taurus lay between them.

The fair nest of Leda.

Gemini; Leda was the mother of the twins, Castor and Pollux.

Swiftest heaven.

The primum mobile which contains all other heavens and gives motion to the others revolving around the motionless earth.

One circle.

The empyrean.

Vase.

The primum mobile which is the root of all heavenly motion.

Before the date.

Reference to the error in Caesar's calendar which would eventually have made January come in the spring; Gregory XIII corrected it.

NOTES - CANTO XXVIII.

That volume.

The ninth heaven according to some: the empyrean, to others.

A circle of fire.

Seraphim around whom in turn revolve the nine orders of the celestial hierarchy.

And that a third, etc.

The primum mobile is surrounded by Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, and Powers.

A seventh, etc.

Principalities and finally Archangels and Angels.

Heaven, and all nature, hangs upon that point.

“From that beginning depend heaven and nature.” Aristotle, Metaph., xii, 7.

The circle.

Seraphim.

Exemplar.

Revolution of the nine orders of angels around God which is so different from the revolution of the nine heavens around the earth.

That.

The Seraphim to which the primum mobile answers; the measure of both angelic orders and heavens is the “ruling intelligence” or degree of divine virtue rather than the size.

In number.

The sparkles exceeded the number which would be produced by the sixty-four squares of a chessboard, if for the first we reckoned one; for the next, two; for the third, four; and so went on doubling to the end of the account.

Fearless of bruising from the nightly ram.

Not injured, like the productions of our spring, by the influence of autumn, when the constellation Aries rises at sunset.

Dionysius.

The Areopagite in his book De Coelesti Hierarchia.

Gregory.

Gregory the Great who learned it from St. Paul, the eyewitness; see II Cor.
xii, 2.

NOTES - CANTO XXIX.

No longer.

As short a space as the sun and moon are in changing hemispheres when they are opposite to each other in Aries and Libra; they both hang for a moment poised at the zenith.

For, not in process of before or aft.

There was no distinction in time until the creation of the world.

Simple and mix'd, both form and substance.

Dante says there are three kinds of creation: the simple and unmixed form is the highest, "the pure intelligence" or pure form; simple and unmixed substance is the lowest, "mere power," or natural phenomena; mixed form and substance is in between, the league of "intelligence and power," or man.

His threefold operation.

He means that spiritual beings, brute matter, and the intermediate part of the creation which participates both of spirit and matter, were produced at once.

On Jerome's pages.

St. Jerome had described the angels as created long before the rest of the universe, an opinion which Thomas Aquinas controverted; the latter, as Dante thinks, had scripture on his side.

Those penmen.

As in Genesis i, 1, and Ecclesiasticus, xviii, 1.

The triple question.

Where, when and how the angels had been created.

Of Bindi and of Lapi.

Common names of men at Florence.

...Saint Anthony

Fattens with this his swine.

The brothers of St. Anthony supported their paramours on the sale of these blessings; Dante may here mean priests in general.

With unstamped metal.

With false indulgences.

Daniel.

“Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.” Daniel vii, 10.

NOTES - CANTO XXX.

Six thousand miles.

He compares the vanishing of the vision to the fading away of the stars at dawn, when it is noonday six thousand miles off, and the shadow formed by the earth over the part of it inhabited by the poet is about to disappear.

Engirt.

Appearing to be encompassed by these angelic bands who really are encompassed by it.

The last corporeal.

From the primum mobile, the limit of the material universe, to the empyrean, the purely spiritual world.

Either mighty host.

Of angels that remained faithful or of beatified souls in the form they will have at the last day.

Topaz.

Angel.

In heaven a light.

The Lake of Light around which sit the Blessed; its circumference is larger than the sun.

Into the yellow.

The Lake which is like the yellow heart of a rose.

Of the great Harry.

Emperor Henry VII, who came to Italy to redress wrongs; Italy was not yet prepared for reform.

He.

Pope Clement V who opposed Henry.

Alagna's priest.

Boniface VIII; see The Inferno, Canto xix.

NOTES - CANTO XXXI.

The saintly multitude.

Human souls advanced to the state of glory through the mediation of Christ.

The other host.

The angels.

Trinal beam.

God, one and triune.

If the grim brood.

The northern hordes who invaded Rome.

Helice.

Callisto and her son Arcas changed into the constellations of the Great Bear,
or Ursa Major, and of Bootes.

Senior.

St. Bernard, the abbot of Clairvaux and the great promoter of the second crusade; he is here the symbol of contemplation by which men attain knowledge of God.

The third circle.

The Virgin is the highest, Eve is the second and Rachel next with Beatrice beside her.

The queen.

The Virgin Mary.

NOTES - CANTO XXXII.

She.

Eve.

Ancestress.

Ruth, the ancestress of David.

Two years.

The time between the death of John the Baptist and his redemption by the death of Christ.

Augustin.

Bishop of Hippo in the fourth century, and a celebrated writer; see Canto x.

In holy Scripture.

Jacob and Esau; see Genesis xxv, 22.

Palm.

Symbol of Annunciation.

The seer.
St. John the Revelator.

Of the fair bride.
The Church.

The leader.
Moses.

Anna.
Mother of Mary.

Lucia.
See The Inferno, Canto ii, and Purgatory, Canto ix.

NOTES - CANTO XXXIII.

Ended within me.

The soul has attained its end when it is granted the vision of God.

Dread infinitude.

Infinite virtue.

All properties.

The substance is that which exists in itself, and the accident is that which is inherent in the substance but not of the essence.

Argo's shadow.

The first known event was the expedition of the Argonauts, the shadow of whose vessel astonished Neptune.

Three orbs of triple hue, clipped in one bound.

The Trinity.

One reflected.

Christ.

The third.
Holy Spirit.

That circling.

Second of the circle, or “Light of Light,” in which he dimly beheld the mystery of the incarnation.

THE END