

1321

THE DIVINE COMEDY: PURGATORY

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. Purgatory (1321) - The second part of “The Divine Comedy” describes Dante’s voyage up the mountain of Purgatory. Virgil again acts as Dante’s guide up to the entrance of the Earthly Paradise. See “Inferno” and “Paradise.”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CANTO I	10
CANTO II	17
CANTO III	24
CANTO IV	32
CANTO V	39
CANTO VI	46
CANTO VII	54
CANTO VIII	62

CANTO IX 70
CANTO X 77
CANTO XI 84
CANTO XII 91
CANTO XIII 98
CANTO XIV 106
CANTO XV 114
CANTO XVI 122
CANTO XVII 130
CANTO XIX 144

CANTO XX	152
CANTO XXI	160
CANTO XXII	167
CANTO XXIII	175
CANTO XXIV	182
CANTO XXV	190
CANTO XXVI	197
CANTO XXVII	204
CANTO XXVIII	212
CANTO XXIX	220

CANTO XXX 228
CANTO XXXI 236
CANTO XXXII 244
CANTO XXXIII 252
NOTES - CANTO I. 260
NOTES - CANTO II. 262
NOTES - CANTO III. 264
NOTES - CANTO IV. 266
NOTES - CANTO V. 268
NOTES - CANTO VI. 271

NOTES - CANTO VII. 275
NOTES - CANTO VIII. 279
NOTES - CANTO IX. 282
NOTES - CANTO X. 285
NOTES - CANTO XI. 287
NOTES - CANTO XII. 289
NOTES - CANTO XIII. 291
NOTES - CANTO XIV. 293
NOTES - CANTO XV. 298
NOTES - CANTO XVI. 300

NOTES - CANTO XVII. 302
NOTES - CANTO XVIII. 304
NOTES - CANTO XIX. 306
NOTES - CANTO XX. 308
NOTES - CANTO XXI. 313
NOTES - CANTO XXII. 315
NOTES - CANTO XXIII. 319
NOTES - CANTO XXIV. 321
NOTES - CANTO XXV. 324
NOTES - CANTO XXVI. 326

NOTES - CANTO XXVII.	329
NOTES - CANTO XXVIII.	331
NOTES - CANTO XXIX.	333
NOTES - CANTO XXX.	337
NOTES - CANTO XXXI.	339
NOTES - CANTO XXXII.	341
NOTES - CANTO XXXIII.	345

CANTO I

The poet comes to Purgatory, beholds four stars seen
only by our first parents, and meets Cato of Utica.

O'ER better waves to speed her rapid course
The light bark of my genius lifts the sail,
Well pleased to leave so cruel sea behind;
And of that second region will I sing,
In which the human spirit from sinful blot
Is purged, and for ascent to Heaven prepares.

Here, O ye hallow'd Nine! for in your train
I follow, here the deaden'd strain revive;
Nor let Calliope refuse to sound
A somewhat higher song, of that loud tone
Which when the wretched birds of chattering note
Had heard, they of forgiveness lost all hope.

Sweet hue of eastern sapphire, that was spread
O'er the serene aspect of the pure air,

High up as the first circle, to mine eyes
Unwonted joy renew'd, soon as I 'scaped
Forth from the atmosphere of deadly gloom,
That had mine eyes and bosom fill'd with grief.
The radiant planet, that to love invites,
Made all the orient laugh, and veil'd beneath
The Pisces' light, that in his escort came.

To the right hand I turn'd, and fix'd my mind
On the other pole attentive, where I saw
Four stars ne'er seen before save by the ken
Of our first parents. Heaven of their rays
Seem'd joyous. O thou northern site! bereft
Indeed, and widow'd, since of these deprived.

As from this view I had desisted, straight
Turning a little toward the other pole,
There from whence now the wain had disappear'd,
I saw an old man standing by my side
Alone, so worthy of reverence in his look,
That ne'er from son to father more was owed.
Low down his beard, and mix'd with hoary white,

Descended, like his locks, which, parting, fell
Upon his breast in double fold. The beams
Of those four luminaries on his face
So brightly shone, and with such radiance clear
Deck'd it, that I beheld him as the sun.

“Say who are ye, that stemming the blind stream,
Forth from the eternal prison-house have fled?”
He spoke and moved those venerable plumes.
“Who hath conducted, or with lantern sure
Lights you emerging from the depth of night,
That makes the infernal valley ever black?
Are the firm statutes of the dread abyss
Broken, or in high heaven new laws ordain'd,
That thus, condemn'd, ye to my caves approach?”

My guide, then laying hold on me, by words
And intimations given with hand and head,
Made my bent knees and eye submissive pay
Due reverence; then thus to him replied:

“Not of myself I come; a Dame from heaven

Descending, him besought me in my charge
To bring. But since thy will implies, that more
Our true condition I unfold at large,
Mine is not to deny thee thy request.
This mortal ne'er hath seen the furthest gloom;
But erring by his folly had approach'd
So near, that little space was left to turn.
Then, as before I told, I was despatch'd
To work his rescue; and no way remain'd
Save this which I have ta'en. I have display'd
Before him all the regions of the bad;
And purpose now those spirits to display,
That under thy command are purged from sin.
How I have brought him would be long to say.
From high descends the virtue, by whose aid
I to thy sight and hearing him have led.
Now may our coming please thee. In the search
Of liberty he journeys: that how dear,
They know who for her sake have life refused.
Thou knowest, to whom death for her was sweet
In Utica, where thou didst leave those weeds,
That in the last great day will shine so bright.

He breathes, and I of Minos am not bound,
For us the eternal edicts are unmoved
Abiding in that circle, where the eyes
Of thy chaste Marcia beam, who still in look
Prays thee, O hallow'd spirit! to own her thine.
Then by her love we implore thee, let us pass
Through thy seven regions; for which, best thanks
I for thy favor will to her return,
If mention there below thou not disdain."

"Marcia so pleasing in my sight was found,"
He then to him rejoin'd, "while I was there,
That all she ask'd me I was fain to grant.
Now that beyond the accursed stream she dwells,
She may no longer move me, by that law,
Which was ordain'd me, when I issued thence.
Not so, if Dame from heaven, as thou sayst,
Moves and directs thee; then no flattery needs.
Enough for me that in her name thou ask.
Go therefore now: and with a slender reed
See that thou duly gird him, and his face
Lave, till all sordid stain thou wipe from thence.

For not with eye, by any cloud obscured,
Would it be seemly before him to come,
Who stands the foremost minister in Heaven.
This islet all around, there far beneath,
Where the wave beats it, on the oozy bed
Produces store of reeds. No other plant,
Cover'd with leaves, or harden'd in its stalk,
There lives, not bending to the water's sway.
After, this way return not; but the sun
Will show you, that now rises, where to take
The mountain in its easiest ascent."

He disappear'd; and I myself upraised
Speechless, and to my guide retiring close,
Toward him turn'd mine eyes. He thus began:
"My son! observant thou my steps pursue.
We must retreat to rereward; for that way
The champain to its low extreme declines."

The dawn had chased the matin hour of prime,
Which fled before it, so that from afar
I spied the trembling of the ocean stream.

We traversed the deserted plain, as one
Who, wander'd from his track, thinks every step
Trodden in vain till he regain the path.

When we had come, where yet the tender dew
Strove with the sun, and in a place where fresh
The wind breathed o'er it, while it slowly dried;
Both hands extended on the watery grass
My master placed, in graceful act and kind.
Whence I of his intent before apprised,
Stretch'd out to him my cheeks suffused with tears.
There to my visage he anew restored
That hue which the dun shades of hell conceal'd.

Then on the solitary shore arrived,
That never sailing on its waters saw
Man that could after measure back his course,
He girt me in such manner as had pleased
Him who instructed; and, oh strange to tell!
As he selected every humble plant,
Wherever one was pluck'd another there

Resembling, straightway in its place arose.

CANTO II

Dante and Virgil see a vessel bringing spirits to Purgatory, and Dante recognizes his friend, Casella.

NOW had the sun to that horizon reach'd,
That covers, with the most exalted point
Of its meridian circle, Salem's walls;
And night, that opposite to him her orb
Rounds, from the stream of Ganges issued forth,
Holding the scales, that from her hands are dropt
When she reigns highest: so that where I was,
Aurora's white and vermeil-tinctured cheek
To orange turn'd as she in age increased.

Meanwhile we linger'd by the water's brink,
Like men, who, musing on their road, in thought
Journey, while motionless the body rests.
When lo! as near upon the hour of dawn,
Through the thick vapors Mars with fiery beam
Glares down in the West, over the ocean floor;

So seem'd, what once again I hope to view,
A light, so swiftly coming through the sea,
No winged course might equal its career.
From which when for a space I had withdrawn
Mine eyes, to make inquiry of my guide,
Again I look'd, and saw it grown in size
And brightness: then on either side appear'd
Something, but that I knew not, of bright hue,
And by degrees from underneath it came
Another. My preceptor silent yet
Stood, while the brightness, that we first discern'd,
Open'd the form of wings: then when he knew
The pilot, cried aloud, "Down! Down! Bend low
Thy knees! Behold God's angel! Fold thy hands!
Now shalt thou see true ministers indeed!
Lo! how all human means he sets at naught;
So that nor oar he needs, nor other sail
Except his wings, between such distant shores.
Lo! how straight up to heaven he holds them rear'd,
Winnowing the air with those eternal plumes,
That not like mortal hairs fall off or change."

As more and more toward us came, more bright
Appear'd the bird of God, nor could the eye
Endure his splendor near: I mine bent down.
He drove ashore in a small bark so swift
And light, that in its course no wave it drank.
The heavenly steersman at the prow was seen,
Visibly written "Blessed" in his looks.
Within, a hundred spirits and more there sat.

"In Exitu Israel de Egypto,"
All with one voice together sang, with what
In the remainder of that hymn is writ.
Then soon as with the sign of Holy Cross
He bless'd them, they at once leap'd out on land:
He, swiftly as he came, return'd. The crew,
There left, appear'd astounded with the place,
Gazing around, as one who sees new sights.

From every side the sun darted his beams,
And with his arrowy radiance from mid heaven
Had chased the Capricorn, when that strange tribe,
Lifting their eyes toward us: "If ye know,

Declare what path will lead us to the mount."

Then Virgil answer'd: "Ye suppose, perchance,
Us well acquainted with this place: but here,
We, as yourselves, are strangers. Not long erst
We came, before you but a little space,
By other road so rough and hard, that now
The ascent will seem to us as play." The spirits,
Who from my breathing had perceived I lived,
Grew pale with wonder. As the multitude
Flock round a herald sent with olive branch,
To hear what news he brings, and in their haste
Tread one another down; e'en so at sight
Of me those happy spirits were fix'd, each one
Forgetful of its errand to depart
Where, cleansed from sin, it might be made all fair.

Then one I saw darting before the rest
With such fond ardor to embrace me, I
To do the like was moved. O shadows vain!
Except in outward semblance: thrice my hands
I clasp'd behind it, they as oft return'd

Empty into my breast again. Surprise
I need must think was painted in my looks,
For that the shadow smiled and backward drew.
To follow it I hasten'd, but with voice
Of sweetness it enjoin'd me to desist.
Then who it was I knew, and pray'd of it,
To talk with me it would a little pause.
It answer'd: "Thee as in my mortal frame
I loved, so loosed from it I love thee still,
And therefore pause: but why walkest thou here?"

"Not without purpose once more to return,
Thou find'st me, my Casella, where I am,
Journeying this way"; I said: "but how of thee
Hath so much time been lost?" He answer'd straight:

"No outrage hath been done to me, if he,
Who when and whom he chooses takes, hath oft
Denied me passage here; since of just will
His will he makes. These three months past indeed,
He, who so chose to enter, with free leave
Hath taken; whence I wandering by the shore

Where Tiber's wave grows salt, of him gain'd kind
Admittance, at that river's mouth, toward which
His wings are pointed; for there always throng
All such as not to Acheron descend."

Then I: "If new law taketh not from thee
Memory or custom of love-tuned song,
That whilom all my cares had power to 'swage;
Please thee therewith a little to console
My spirit, that encumber'd with its frame,
Travelling so far, of pain is overcome."

"Love, that discourses in my thoughts," he then
Began in such soft accents, that within
The sweetness thrills me yet. My gentle guide,
And all who came with him, so well were pleased,
That seem'd naught else might in their thoughts have room.

Fast fix'd in mute attention to his notes
We stood, when lo! that old man venerable
Exclaiming, "How is this, ye tardy spirits?
What negligence detains you loitering here?"

Run to the mountain to cast off those scales,
That from your eyes the sight of God conceal."

As a wild flock of pigeons, to their food
Collected, blade or tares, without their pride
Accustom'd, and in still and quiet sort,
If aught alarm them, suddenly desert
Their meal, assail'd by more important care;
So I that new-come troop beheld, the song
Deserting, hasten to the mountain's side,
As one who goes, yet, where he tends, knows not.

Nor with less hurried step did we depart.

CANTO III

Arriving at the foot of the mountain of Purgatory,
they are shown the ascent by a troop of spirits.

THEM sudden flight had scatter'd o'er the plain,
Turn'd toward the mountain, whither reason's voice
Drives us: I, to my faithful company
Adhering, left it not. For how, of him
Deprived, might I have sped? or who, beside,
Would o'er the mountainous tract have led my steps?
He, with the bitter pang of self-remorse,
Seem'd smitten. O clear conscience, and upright!
How doth a little failing wound thee sore.

Soon as his feet desisted (slackening pace)
From haste, that mars all decency of act,
My mind, that in itself before was wrapt,
Its thought expanded, as with joy restored;
And full against the steep ascent I set
My face, where highest to heaven its top o'erflows.

The sun, that flared behind, with ruddy beam
Before my form was broken; for in me
His rays resistance met. I turn'd aside
With fear of being left, when I beheld
Only before myself the ground obscured.
When thus my solace, turning him around,
Bespake me kindly: "Why distrustest thou?
Believest not I am with thee, thy sure guide?
It now is evening there, where buried lies
The body in which I cast a shade, removed
To Naples from Brundisium's wall. Nor thou
Marvel, if before me no shadow fall,
More than that in the skyey element
One ray obstructs not other. To endure
Torments of heat and cold extreme, like frames
That virtue hath disposed, which, how it works,
Wills not to us should be reveal'd. Insane,
Who hopes our reason may that space explore,
Which holds three persons in one substance knit.
Seek not the wherefore, race of human kind;
Could ye have seen the whole, no need had been

For Mary to bring forth. Moreover, ye
Have seen such men desiring fruitlessly;
To whose desires, repose would have been given,
That now but serve them for eternal grief.
I speak of Plato, and the Stagirite,
And others many more." And then he bent
Downward his forehead, and in troubled mood
Broke off his speech. Meanwhile we had arrived
Far as the mountain's foot, and there the rock
Found of so steep ascent, that nimblest steps
To climb it had been vain. The most remote,
Most wild, untrodden path, in all the tract
'Twixt Lerice and Turbia, were to this
A ladder easy and open of access.

"Who knows on which hand now the steep declines,"
My master said, and paused; "so that he may
Ascend, who journeys without aid of wing?"
And while, with looks directed to the ground,
The meaning of the pathway he explored,
And I gazed upward round the stony height;
On the left hand appear'd to us a troop

Of spirits, that toward us moved their steps;
Yet moving seem'd not, they so slow approach'd.

I thus my guide address'd: "Upraise thine eyes:
Lo! that way some, of whom thou mayst obtain
Counsel, if of thyself thou find'st it not."

Straightway he look'd, and with free speech replied:
"Let us tend thither: they but softly come.
And thou be firm in hope, my son beloved."

Now was that crowd from us distant as far,
(When we some thousand steps, I say, had past)
As at a throw the nervous arm could fling;
When all drew backward on the massy crags
Of the steep bank, and firmly stood unmoved,
As one, who walks in doubt, might stand to look.

"O spirits perfect! O already chosen!"
Virgil to them began: "by that blest peace,
Which, as I deem, is for you all prepared,
Instruct us where the mountain low declines,

So that attempt to mount it be not vain.
For who knows most, him loss of time most grieves."

As sheep, that step from forth their fold, by one,
Or pairs, or three at once; meanwhile the rest
Stand fearfully, bending the eye and nose
To ground, and what the foremost does, that do
The others, gathering round her if she stops,
Simple and quiet, nor the cause discern;
So saw I moving to advance the first,
Who of that fortunate crew were at the head,
Of modest mien, and graceful in their gait.
When they before me had beheld the light
From my right side fall broken on the ground,
So that the shadow reach'd the cave; they stopp'd,
And somewhat back retired: the same did all
Who follow'd, though unweeting of the cause.

"Unask'd of you, yet freely I confess,
This is a human body which ye see.
That the sun's light is broken on the ground,
Marvel not: but believe, that not without

Virtue derived from Heaven, we to climb
Over this wall aspire." So them bespake
My master; and that virtuous tribe rejoin'd:
"Turn, and before you there the entrance lies";
Making a signal to us with bent hands.

Then of them one began. "Whoe'er thou art,
Who journey'st thus this way, thy visage turn;
Think if me elsewhere thou hast ever seen."

I toward him turn'd, and with fix'd eye beheld.
Comely and fair, and gentle of aspect
He seem'd, but on one brow a gash was mark'd.

When humbly I disclaim'd to have beheld
Him ever: "Now behold!" he said, and show'd
High on his breast a wound: then smiling spake.

"I am Manfredi, grandson to the Queen
Costanza: whence I pray thee, when return'd,
To my fair daughter go, the parent glad
Of Aragonia and Sicilia's pride;

And of the truth inform her, if of me
Aught else be told. When by two mortal blows
My frame was shatter'd, I betook myself
Weeping to him, who of free will forgives.
My sins were horrible: but so wide arms
Hath goodness infinite, that it receives
All who turn to it. Had this text divine
Been of Cosenza's shepherd better scann'd,
Who then by Clement on my hunt was set,
Yet at the bridge's head my bones had lain,
Near Benevento, by the heavy mole
Protected; but the rain now drenches them,
And the wind drives, out of the kingdom's bounds,
Far as the stream of Verde, where, with lights
Extinguish'd, he removed them from their bed.
Yet by their curse we are not so destroy'd,
But that the eternal love may turn, while hope
Retains her verdant blossom. True it is,
That such one as in contumacy dies
Against the holy Church, though he repent,
Must wander thirty-fold for all the time
In his presumption past: if such decree

Be not by prayers of good men shorter made.
Look therefore if thou canst advance my bliss;
Revealing to my good Costanza, how
Thou hast beheld me, and beside the terms
Laid on me of that interdict; for here
By means of those below much profit comes."

CANTO IV

Dante and Virgil ascend the mountain by a steep and narrow path until they reach a ledge where they find several spirits.

WHEN by sensations of delight or pain,
That any of our faculties hath seized,
Entire the soul collects herself, it seems
She is intent upon that power alone;
And thus the error is disproved, which holds
The soul not singly lighted in the breast.
And therefore when as aught is heard or seen,
That firmly keeps the soul toward it turn'd,
Time passes, and a man perceives it not.
For that, whereby we hearken, is one power;
Another that, which the whole spirit hath:
This is as it were bound, while that is free.

This found I true by proof, hearing that spirit,
And wondering; for full fifty steps aloft

The sun had measured, unobserved of me,
When we arrived where all with one accord
The spirits shouted, "Here is what ye ask."

A larger aperture ofttimes is stopt,
With forked stake of thorn by villager,
When the ripe grape imbrowns, than was the path,
By which my guide, and I behind him close,
Ascended solitary, when that troop
Departing left us. On Sanleo's road
Who journeys, or to Noli low descends,
Or mounts Bismantua's height, must use his feet;
But here a man had need to fly, I mean
With the swift wing and plumes of high desire,
Conducted by his aid, who gave me hope,
And with light furnish'd to direct my way.

We through the broken rock ascended, close
Pent on each side, while underneath the ground
Ask'd help of hands and feet. When we arrived
Near on the highest ridge of the steep bank,
Where the plain level open'd, I exclaim'd,

“O Master! say, which way can we proceed.”

He answer'd, “Let no step of thine recede.
Behind me gain the mountain, till to us
Some practised guide appear.” That eminence
Was lofty, that no eye might reach its point;
And the side proudly rising, more than line
From the mid quadrant to the centre drawn.
I, wearied, thus began: “Parent beloved!
Turn and behold how I remain alone,
If thou stay not.” “My son!” he straight replied,
“Thus far put forth thy strength”; and to a track
Pointed, that, on this side projecting, round
Circles the hill. His words so spurr'd me on,
That I, behind him, clambering, forced myself,
Till my feet press'd the circuit plain beneath.
There both together seated, turn'd we round
To eastward, whence was our ascent: and oft
Many beside have with delight look'd back.

First on the nether shores I turn'd mine eyes,
Then raised them to the sun, and wondering mark'd

That from the left it smote us. Soon perceived
That poet sage, how at the car of light
Amazed I stood, where 'twixt us and the north
Its course it enter'd. Whence he thus to me:
"Were Leda's offspring now in company
Of that broad mirror, that high up and low
Imparts his light beneath, thou mightst behold
The ruddy Zodiac nearer to the Bears
Wheel, if its ancient course it not forsook.
How that may be, if thou wouldst think; within
Pondering, imagine Sion with this mount
Placed on the earth, so that to both be one
Horizon, and two hemispheres apart,
Where lies the path that Phaeton ill knew
To guide his erring chariot: thou wilt see
How of necessity by this, on one,
He passes, while by that on the other side;
If with that clear view thine intellect attend."

"Of truth, kind teacher!" I exclaim'd, "so clear
Aught saw I never, as I now discern,
Where seem'd my ken to fail, that the mid orb

Of the supernal motion (which in terms
Of art is call'd the Equator), and remains
Still 'twixt the sun and winter, for the cause
Thou hast assign'd, from hence toward the north
Departs, when those, who in the Hebrew land
Were dwellers, saw it toward the warmer part.
But if it please thee, I would gladly know,
How far we have to journey: for the hill
Mounts higher, than this sight of mine can mount."

He thus to me: "Such is this steep ascent,
That it is ever difficult at first,
But more a man proceeds, less evil grows.
When pleasant it shall seem to thee, so much
That upward going shall be easy to thee
As in a vessel to go down the tide,
Then of this path thou wilt have reach'd the end.
There hope to rest thee from thy toil. No more
I answer, and thus far for certain know."
As he his words had spoken, near to us
A voice there sounded: "Yet ye first perchance
May to repose you by constraint be led."

At sound thereof each turn'd; and on the left
A huge stone we beheld, of which nor I
Nor he before was ware. Thither we drew;
And there were some, who in the shady place
Behind the rock were standing, as a man
Through idleness might stand. Among them one,
Who seem'd to be much wearied, sat him down,
And with his arms did fold his knees about,
Holding his face between them downward bent.

"Sweet Sir!" I cried, "behold that man who shows
Himself more idle than if laziness
Were sister to him." Straight he turn'd to us,
And, o'er the thigh lifting his face, observed,
Then in these accents spake: "Up then, proceed,
Thou valiant one." Straight who it was I knew;
Nor could the pain I felt (for want of breath
Still somewhat urged me) hinder my approach.
And when I came to him, he scarce his head
Uplifted, saying, "Well hast thou discern'd,
How from the left the sun his chariot leads."

His lazy acts and broken words my lips
To laughter somewhat moved; when I began:
"Belacqua, now for thee I grieve no more.
But tell, why thou art seated upright there.
Waitest thou escort to conduct thee hence?
Or blame I only thine accustomed ways?"
Then he: "My brother! of what use to mount,
When, to my suffering, would not let me pass
The bird of God, who at the portal sits?
Behoves so long that heaven first bear me round
Without its limits, as in life it bore;
Because I, to the end, repentant sighs
Delay'd; if prayer do not aid me first,
That riseth up from heart which lives in grace,
What other kind avails, not heard in heaven?"

Before me now the poet, up the mount
Ascending, cried: "Haste thee: for see the sun
Has touch'd the point meridian; and the night
Now covers with her foot Marocco's shore."

CANTO V

They meet others who had deferred their repentance
until overtaken by a violent death.

NOW had I left those spirits, and pursued
The steps of my conductor; when behind,
Pointing the finger at me, one exclaim'd:
"See, how it seems as if the light not shone
From the left hand of him beneath, and he,
As living, seems to be led on." Mine eyes,
I at that sound reverting, saw them gaze,
Through wonder, first at me; and then at me
And the light broken underneath, by turns.
"Why are thy thoughts thus riveted," my guide
Exclaim'd, "that thou hast slack'd thy pace? or how
Imports it thee, what thing is whisper'd here?
Come after me, and to their babblings leave
The crowd. Be as a tower, that, firmly set,
Shakes not its top for any blast that blows.
He, in whose bosom thought on thought shoots out,

Still of his aim is wide, in that the one
Sicklies and wastes to naught the other's strength."

What other could I answer, save "I come"?
I said it, somewhat with that color tinged,
Which oftentimes pardon meriteth for man.

Meanwhile traverse along the hill there came,
A little way before us, some who sang
The "Miserere" in responsive strains.
When they perceived that through my body I
Gave way not for the rays to pass, their song
Straight to a long and hoarse exclaim they changed;
And two of them, in guise of messengers,
Ran on to meet us, and inquiring ask'd:
"Of your condition we would gladly learn."

To them my guide: "Ye may return, and bear
Tidings to them who sent you, that his frame
Is real flesh. If, as I deem, to view
His shade they paused, enough is answer'd them:
Him let them honor: they may prize him well."

Ne'er saw I fiery vapors with such speed
Cut through the serene air at fall of night,
Nor August's clouds athwart the setting sun
That upward these did not in shorter space
Return; and, there arriving, with the rest
Wheel back on us, as with loose rein a troop.

"Many," exclaim'd the bard, "are these, who throng
Around us: to petition thee, they come.
Go therefore on, and listen as thou go'st."

"O spirit! who go'st on to blessedness,
With the same limbs that clad thee at thy birth,"
Shouting they came: "a little rest thy step.
Look if thou any one amongst our tribe
Hast e'er beheld, that tidings of him there
Thou mayst report. Ah! wherefore go'st thou on?
Ah! wherefore tarriest thou not? We all
By violence died, and to our latest hour
Were sinners, but then warn'd by light from heaven;
So that, repenting and forgiving, we

Did issue out of life at peace with God,
Who, with desire to see him, fills our heart."

Then I: "The visages of all I scan,
Yet none of ye remember. But if aught
That I can do may please you, gentle spirits!
Speak, and I will perform it; by that peace,
Which, on the steps of guide so excellent
Following, from world to world, intent I seek."

In answer he began: "None here distrusts
Thy kindness, though not promised with an oath;
So as the will fail not for want of power.
Whence I, who sole before the other speak,
Entreat thee, if thou ever see that land
Which lies between Romagna and the realm
Of Charles, that of thy courtesy thou pray
Those who inhabit Fano, that for me
Their adorations duly be put up,
By which I may purge off my grievous sins.
From thence I came. But the deep passages,
Whence issued out the blood wherein I dwelt,

Upon my bosom in Antenor's land
Were made, where to be more secure I thought.
The author of the deed was Este's prince,
Who, more than right could warrant, with his wrath
Pursued me. Had I toward Mira fled,
When overta'en at Oriaco, still
Might I have breathed. But to the marsh I sped;
And in the mire and rushes tangled there
Fell, and beheld my life-blood float the plain."

Then said another: "Ah! so may the wish,
That takes thee o'er the mountain, be fulfill'd,
As thou shalt graciously give aid to mine.
Of Montefeltro I; Buonconte I:
Giovanna nor none else have care for me;
Sorrowing with these I therefore go." I thus:
"From Campaldino's field what force or chance
Drew thee, that ne'er thy sepulture was known?"

"Oh!" answer'd he, "at Casentino's foot
A stream there courseth, named Archiano, sprung
In Apennine above the hermit's seat,

E'en where its name is cancel'd, there came I,
Pierced in the throat, fleeing away on foot,
And bloodying the plain. Here sight and speech
Fail'd me; and, finishing with Mary's name,
I fell, and tenantless my flesh remain'd:
I will report the truth; which thou again
Tell to the living. Me God's angel took,
Whilst he of hell exclaim'd: 'O thou from heaven:
Say wherefore hast thou robb'd me? Thou of him
The eternal portion bear'st with thee away,
For one poor tear that he deprives me of.
But of the other, other rule I make.'

“Thou know'st how in the atmosphere collects
That vapor dank, returning into water
Soon as it mounts where cold condenses it.
That evil will, which in his intellect
Still follows evil, came; and raised the wind
And smoky mist, by virtue of the power
Given by his nature. Thence the valley, soon
As day was spent, he cover'd o'er with cloud,
From Pratomagno to the mountain range;

And stretch'd the sky above; so that the air
Impregnate changed to water. Fell the rain;
And to the fosses came all that the land
Contain'd not; and, as mightiest streams are wont,
To the great river, with such headlong sweep,
Rush'd, that naught stay'd its course. My stiffen'd frame
Laid at his mouth, the fell Archiano found,
And dashed it into Arno; from my breast
Loosening the cross, that of myself I made
When overcome with pain. He hurl'd me on,
Along the banks and bottom of his course;
Then in his muddy spoils encircling wrapt."

"Ah! when thou to the world shalt be return'd,
And rested after thy long road," so spake
Next the third spirit; "then remember me.
I once was Pia. Sienna gave me life;
Maremma took it from me. That he knows,
Who me with jewel'd ring had first espoused."

CANTO VI

The spirits beseech Dante to obtain for them the prayers of their friends; the poet is led into an invective against the unnatural dissensions in Italy.

WHEN from their game of dice men separate,
He who hath lost remains in sadness fix'd,
Revolving in his mind what luckless throws
He cast: but, meanwhile, all the company
Go with the other; one before him runs,
And one behind his mantle twitches, one
Fast by his side bids him remember him.
He stops not; and each one, to whom his hand
Is stretch'd, well knows he bids him stand aside;
And thus he from the press defends himself.
E'en such was I in that close-crowding throng;
And turning so my face around to all,
And promising, I 'scaped from it with pains.

Here of Arezzo him I saw, who fell

By Ghino's cruel arm; and him beside,
Who in his chase was swallow'd by the stream.
Here Frederic Novello with his hand
Stretch'd forth, entreated; and of Pisa he,
Who put the good Marzucco to such proof
Of constancy. Count Orso I beheld;
And from its frame a soul dismiss'd for spite
And envy, as it said, but for no crime;
I speak of Peter de la Brosse: and here,
While she yet lives, that Lady of Brabant,
Let her beware; lest for so false a deed
She herd with worse than these. When I was freed
From all those spirits, who pray'd for other's prayers
To hasten on their state of blessedness;
Straight I began: "O thou, my luminary!
It seems expressly in thy text denied,
That heaven's supreme decree can ever bend
To supplication; yet with this design
Do these entreat. Can then their hope be vain?
Or is thy saying not to me reveal'd?"

He thus to me: "Both what I write is plain,

And these deceived not in their hope; if well
Thy mind consider, that the sacred height
Of judgment doth not stoop, because love's flame
In a short moment all fulfils, which he,
Who sojourns here, in right should satisfy.
Besides, when I this point concluded thus,
By praying no defect could be supplied;
Because the prayer had none access to God.
Yet in this deep suspicion rest thou not
Contented, unless she assure thee so,
Who betwixt truth and mind infuses light:
I know not if thou take me right; I mean
Beatrice. Her thou shalt behold above,
Upon this mountain's crown, fair seat of joy."

Then I: "Sir! let us mend our speed; for now
I tire not as before: and lo! the hill
Stretches its shadow far." He answer'd thus:
"Our progress with this day shall be as much
As we may now despatch; but otherwise
Than thou supposest is the truth. For there
Thou canst not be, ere thou once more behold

Him back returning, who behind the steep
Is now so hidden, that, as erst, his beam
Thou dost not break. But lo! a spirit there
Stands solitary, and toward us looks:
It will instruct us in the speediest way."

We soon approach'd it. O thou Lombard spirit!
How didst thou stand, in high abstracted mood,
Scarce moving with slow dignity thine eyes.
It spoke not aught, but let us onward pass,
Eying us as a lion on his watch.
But Virgil, with entreaty mild, advanced,
Requesting it to show the best ascent.
It answer to his question none return'd;
But of our country and our kind of life
Demanded. When my courteous guide began,
"Mantua," the shadow, in itself absorb'd,
Rose toward us from the place in which it stood,
And cried, "Mantuan! I am thy countryman,
Sordello." Each the other then embraced.

Ah, slavish Italy! thou inn of grief!

Vessel without a pilot in loud storm!
Lady no longer of fair provinces,
But brothel-house impure! this gentle spirit,
Even from the pleasant sound of his dear land
Was prompt to greet a fellow-citizen
With such glad cheer: while now thy living ones
In thee abide not without war; and one
Malicious gnaws another; ay, of those
Whom the same wall and the same moat contains.
Seek, wretched one! around the sea-coasts wide;
Then homeward to thy bosom turn; and mark,
If any part of thee sweet peace enjoy.
What boots it, that thy reins Justinian's hand
Refitted, if thy saddle be unprest?
Naught doth he now but aggravate thy shame.
Ah, people! thou obedient still should'st live,
And in the saddle let thy Caesar sit,
If well thou marked'st that which God commands.

Look how that beast to fellness hath relapsed,
From having lost correction of the spur,
Since to the bridle thou hast set thine hand,

O German Albert! who abandon'st her
That is grown savage and unmanageable,
When thou shouldst clasp her flanks with forked heels,
Just judgment from the stars fall on thy blood;
And be it strange and manifest to all;
Such as may strike thy successor with dread;
For that thy sire and thou have suffer'd thus,
Through greediness of yonder realms detain'd,
The garden of the empire to run waste.
Come, see the Capulets and Montagues.
The Filippeschi and Monaldi, man
Who carest for naught! those sunk in grief, and these
With dire suspicion rack'd. Come, cruel one!
Come, and behold the oppression of the nobles,
And mark their injuries; and thou mayst see
What safety Santafiore can supply.
Come and behold thy Rome, who calls on thee,
Desolate widow, day and night with moans,
"My Caesar, why dost thou desert my side?"
Come, and behold what love among thy people:
And if no pity touches thee for us,
Come, and blush for thine own report. For me,

If it be lawful, O Almighty Power!
Who wast in earth for our sakes crucified,
Are thy just eyes turn'd elsewhere? or is this
A preparation, in the wondrous depth
Of thy sage counsel made, for some good end,
Entirely from our reach of thought cut off?
So are the Italian cities all o'erthrong'd
With tyrants, and a great Marcellus made
Of every petty factious villager.

My Florence! thou mayst well remain unmoved
At this digression, which affects not thee:
Thanks to thy people, who so wisely speed.
Many have justice in their heart, that long
Waiteth for counsel to direct the bow,
Or ere it dart unto its aim: but thine
Have it on their lips' edge. Many refuse
To bear the common burdens: readier thine
Answer uncall'd, and cry, "Behold I stoop!"

Make thyself glad, for thou hast reason now,
Thou wealthy! thou at peace! thou wisdom-fraught!

Facts best will witness if I speak the truth.
Athens and Lacedaemon, who of old
Enacted laws, for civil arts renown'd,
Made little progress in improving life
Toward thee, who usest such nice subtlety,
That to the middle of November scarce
Reaches the thread thou in October weavest.
How many times within thy memory,
Customs, and laws, and coins, and offices
Have been by thee renew'd, and people changed.

If thou remember'st well and canst see clear,
Thou wilt perceive thyself like a sick wretch,
Who finds no rest upon her down, but oft
Shifting her side, short respite seeks from pain.

CANTO VII

Sordello conducts the poets to an eminence where they see a pleasant recess and many famous spirits.

AFTER their courteous greetings joyfully
Seven times exchanged, Sordello backward drew
Exclaiming, "Who are ye?" "Before this mount
By spirits worthy of ascent to God
Was sought, my bones had by Octavius' care
Been buried. I am Virgil; for no sin
Deprived of heaven, except for lack of faith."
So answer'd him in few my gentle guide.

As one, who aught before him suddenly
Beholding, whence his wonder riseth, cries,
"It is, yet is not," wavering in belief;
Such he appear'd; then downward bent his eyes,
And, drawing near with reverential step,
Caught him, where one of mean estate might clasp
His lord. "Glory of Latium!" he exclaim'd,

“In whom our tongue its utmost power display’d;
Boast of my honor’d birth-place! what desert
Of mine, what favor, rather, undeserved,
Shows thee to me? If I to hear that voice
Am worthy, say if from below thou comest,
And from what cloister’s pale.” “Through every orb
Of that sad region,” he replied, “thus far
Am I arrived, by heavenly influence led:
And with such aid I come. Not for my doing,
But for not doing, have I lost the sight
Of that high Sun, whom thou desirest, and who
By me too late was known. There is a place
There underneath, not made by torments sad,
But by dun shades alone; where mourning’s voice
Sounds not of anguish sharp, but breathes in sighs.
There I with little innocents abide,
Who by death’s fangs were bitten, ere exempt
From human taint. There I with those abide,
Who the three holy virtues put not on,
But understood the rest, and without blame
Follow’d them all. But, if thou know’st, and canst,
Direct us how we soonest may arrive,

Where Purgatory its true beginning takes."

He answer'd thus: "We have no certain place
Assign'd us: upward I may go, or round.
Far as I can, I join thee for thy guide.
But thou beholdest now how day declines;
And upward to proceed by night, our power
Excels: therefore it may be well to choose
A place of pleasant sojourn. To the right
Some spirits sit apart retired. If thou
Consentest, I to these will lead thy steps:
And thou wilt know them, not without delight."

"How chances this?" was answer'd: "whoso wish'd
To ascend by night, would he be thence debarr'd
By other, or through his own weakness fail?"

The good Sordello then, along the ground
Trailing his finger, spoke: "Only this line
Thou shalt not overpass, soon as the sun
Hath disappear'd; not that aught else impedes
Thy going upward, save the shades of night.

These, with the want of power, perplex the will.
With them thou haply mightst return beneath,
Or to and fro around the mountain's side
Wander, while day is in the horizon shut."

My master straight, as wondering at his speech,
Exclaim'd: "Then lead us quickly, where thou sayst
That, while we stay, we may enjoy delight."

A little space we were removed from thence,
When I perceived the mountain hollow'd out,
Even as large valleys hollow'd out on earth.

"That way," the escorting spirit cried, "we go,
Where in a bosom the high bank recedes:
And thou await renewal of the day."

Betwixt the steep and plain, a crooked path
Led us traverse into the ridge's side,
Where more than half the sloping edge expires.
Refulgent gold, and silver thrice refined,
And scarlet grain and ceruse, Indian wood

Of lucid dye serene, fresh emeralds
But newly broken, by the herbs and flowers
Placed in that fair recess, in color all
Had been surpass'd, as great surpasses less.
Nor nature only there lavish'd her hues,
But of the sweetness of a thousand smells
A rare and undistinguish'd fragrance made.

“Salve Regina,” on the grass and flowers,
Here chanting, I beheld those spirits sit,
Who not beyond the valley could be seen.

“Before the westering sun sink to his bed,”
Began the Mantuan, who our steps had turn'd,
“Mid those, desire not that I lead ye on.
For from this eminence ye shall discern
Better the acts and visages of all,
Than, in the nether vale, among them mix'd.
He, who sits high above the rest, and seems
To have neglected that he should have done,
And to the others' song moves not his lip,
The Emperor Rodolph call, who might have heal'd

The wounds whereof fair Italy hath died,
So that by others she revives but slowly.
He, who with kindly visage comforts him,
Sway'd in that country, where the water springs,
That Moldaw's river to the Elbe, and Elbe
Rolls to the ocean: Ottocar his name:
Who in his swaddling-clothes was of more worth
Than Wenceslaus his son, a bearded man,
Pamper'd with rank luxuriousness and ease,
And that one with the nose deprest, who close
In counsel seems with him of gentle look,
Flying, expired, withering the lily's flower.
Look there, how he doth knock against his breast.
The other ye behold, who for his cheek
Makes of one hand a couch, with frequent signs.
They are the father and the father-in-law
Of Gallia's bane: his vicious life they know
And foul; thence comes the grief that rends them thus.

“He, so robust of limb, who measure keeps
In song with him of feature prominent,
With every virtue bore his girdle braced.

And if that stripling, who behind him sits,
King after him had lived, his virtue then
From vessel to like vessel had been pour'd;
Which may not of the other heirs be said.
By James and Frederick his realms are held;
Neither the better heritage obtains.
Rarely into the branches of the tree
Doth human worth mount up: and so ordains
He who bestows it, that as his free gift
It may be call'd. To Charles my words apply
No less than to his brother in the song;
Which Pouille and Provence now with grief confess.
So much that plant degenerates from its seed,
As, more than Beatrix and Margaret,
Costanza still boasts of her valorous spouse.

“Behold the King of simple life and plain,
Harry of England, sitting there alone:
He through his branches better issue spreads.

“That one, who, on the ground, beneath the rest,
Sits lowest, yet his gaze directs aloft,

Is William, that brave Marquis, for whose cause,
The deed of Alexandria and his war
Makes Montferrat and Canavese weep."

CANTO VIII

Two angels keep watch over the valley where Dante meets
a former friend. Three bright stars appear and
a serpent flees before the angelic guards.

NOW was the hour that wakens fond desire
In men at sea, and melts their thoughtful heart
Who in the morn have bid sweet friends farewell,
And pilgrim newly on his road with love
Thrills, if he hear the vesper bell from far,
That seems to mourn for the expiring day:
When I, no longer taking heed to hear,
Began, with wonder, from those spirits to mark
One risen from its seat, which with its hand
Audience implored. Both palms it join'd and raised,
Fixing its steadfast gaze toward the east,
As telling God, "I care for naught beside."

"Te Lucis Ante," so devoutly then
Came from its lip, and in so soft a strain,

That all my sense in ravishment was lost.
And the rest after, softly and devout,
Follow'd through all the hymn, with upward gaze
Directed to the bright supernal wheels.

Here, reader! for the truth make thine eyes keen:
For of so subtle texture is this veil,
That thou with ease mayst pass it through unmark'd.

I saw that gentle band silently next
Look up, as if in expectation held,
Pale and in lowly guise; and, from on high,
I saw, forth issuing descend beneath,
Two angels, with two flame-illumined swords,
Broken and mutilated of their points.
Green as the tender leaves but newly born,
Their vesture was, the which, by wings as green
Beaten, they drew behind them, fann'd in air.
A little over us one took his stand;
The other lighted on the opposing hill;
So that the troop were in the midst contain'd.

Well I descried the whiteness on their heads;
But in their visages the dazzled eye
Was lost, as faculty that by too much
Is overpower'd. "From Mary's bosom both
Are come," exclaim'd Sordello, "as a guard
Over the vale, 'gainst him, who hither tends,
The serpent." Whence, not knowing by which path
He came, I turn'd me round; and closely press'd,
All frozen, to my leader's trusted side.

Sordello paused not: "To the valley now
(For it is time) let us descend; and hold
Converse with those great shadows: haply much
Their sight may please ye." Only three steps down
Methinks I measured, ere I was beneath,
And noted one who look'd as with desire
To know me. Time was now that air grew dim;
Yet not so dim, that, 'twixt his eyes and mine,
It clear'd not up what was conceal'd before.
Mutually toward each other we advanced.
Nino, thou courteous judge! what joy I felt,
When I perceived thou wert not with the bad.

No salutation kind on either part
Was left unsaid. He then inquired: "How long,
Since thou arrived'st at the mountain's foot,
Over the distant waves?" "Oh!" answer'd I,
"Through the sad seats of woe this morn I came;
And still in my first life, thus journeying on,
The other strive to gain." Soon as they heard
My words, he and Sordello backward drew,
As suddenly amazed. To Virgil one,
The other to a spirit turn'd, who near
Was seated, crying: "Conrad! up with speed:
Come, see what of his grace high God hath will'd."
Then turning round to me: "By that rare mark
Of honor, which thou owest to him, who hides
So deeply his first cause it hath no ford;
When thou shalt be beyond the vast of waves,
Tell my Giovanna, that for me she call
There, where reply to innocence is made.
Her mother, I believe, loves me no more;
Since she has changed the white and wimpled folds,
Which she is doom'd once more with grief to wish.

By her it easily may be perceived,
How long in woman lasts the flame of love,
If sight and touch do not relume it oft.
For her so fair a burial will not make
The viper, which calls Milan to the field,
As had been made by shrill Gallura's bird."

He spoke, and in his visage took the stamp
Of that right zeal, which with due temperature
Glowes in the bosom. My insatiate eyes
Meanwhile to heaven had travel'd, even there
Where the bright stars are slowest, as a wheel
Nearest the axle; when my guide inquired:
"What there aloft, my son, has caught thy gaze?"

I answer'd: "The three torches, with which here
The pole is all on fire." He then to me:
"The four resplendent stars, thou saw'st this morn,
Are there beneath; and these, risen in their stead."

While yet he spoke, Sordello to himself
Drew him, and cried: "Lo there our enemy!"

And with his hand pointed that way to look.

Along the side, where barrier none arose
Around the little vale, a serpent lay,
Such haply as gave Eve the bitter food.
Between the grass and flowers, the evil snake
Came on, reverting oft his lifted head;
And, as a beast that smooths its polish'd coat,
Licking his back. I saw not, nor can tell,
How those celestial falcons from their seat
Moved, but in motion each one well descried.
Hearing the air cut by their verdant plumes,
The serpent fled; and, to their stations, back
The angels up return'd with equal flight.

The spirit (who to Nino, when he call'd,
Had come), from viewing me with fixed ken,
Through all that conflict, loosen'd not his sight.

"So may the lamp, which leads thee up on high,
Find, in thy free resolve, of wax so much,
As may suffice thee to the enamel'd height,"

It thus began: "If any certain news
Of Valdimagra and the neighbor part
Thou know'st, tell me, who once was mighty there.
They call'd me Conrad Malaspina; not
That old one; but from him I sprang. The love
I bore my people is now here refined."

"In your domains," I answer'd, "ne'er was I.
But, through all Europe, where do those men dwell,
To whom their glory is not manifest?
The fame, that honors your illustrious house,
Proclaims the nobles, and proclaims the land;
So that he knows it, who was never there.
I swear to you, so may my upward route
Prosper, your honored nation not impairs
The value of her coffer and her sword.
Nature and use give her such privilege,
That while the world is twisted from his course
By a bad head, she only walks aright,
And has the evil way in scorn." He then:
"Now pass thee on: seven times the tired sun
Revisits not the couch, which with four feet

The forked Aries covers, ere that kind
Opinion shall be nail'd into thy brain
With stronger nails than other's speech can drive;
If the sure course of judgment be not stay'd."

CANTO IX

Asleep and dreaming, Dante is carried up the mountain by Lucia, and on wakening, finds himself with Virgil at the gate of Purgatory.

NOW the fair consort of Tithonus old,
Arise from her mate's beloved arms,
Look'd palely o'er the eastern cliff; her brow,
Lucent with jewels, glitter'd, set in sign
Of that chill animal, who with his train
Smites fearful nations: and where then we were,
Two steps of her ascent the night had past;
And now the third was closing up its wing,
When I, who had so much of Adam with me,
Sank down upon the grass, o'ercome with sleep,
There where all five were seated. In that hour,
When near the dawn the swallow her sad lay,
Remembering haply ancient grief, renews;
And when our minds, more wanderers from the flesh,
And less by thought restrain'd, are, as 'twere, full

Of holy divination in their dreams;
Then, in a vision, did I seem to view
A golden-feather'd eagle in the sky,
With open wings, and hovering for descent;
And I was in that place, methought, from whence
Young Ganymede, from his associates reft,
Was snatch'd aloft to the high consistory.

“Perhaps,” thought I within me, “here alone
He strikes his quarry, and elsewhere disdains
To pounce upon the prey.” Therewith, it seem'd,
A little wheeling in his aery tour,
Terrible as the lightning, rush'd he down,
And snatch'd me upward, even to the fire.
There both, I thought, the eagle and myself
Did burn; and so intense the imagined flames,
That needs my sleep was broken off. As erst
Achilles shook himself, and round him roll'd
His waken'd eyeballs, wondering where he was,
Whenas his mother had from Chiron fled
To Scyros, with him sleeping in her arms;
(There whence the Greeks did after sunder him);

E'en thus I shook me, soon as from my face
The slumber parted, turning deadly pale,
Like one ice-struck with dread. Sole at my side
My comfort stood: and the bright sun was now
More than two hours aloft: and to the sea
My looks were turn'd. "Fear not," my master cried,
"Assured we are at happy point. Thy strength
Shrink not, but rise dilated. Thou art come
To Purgatory now. Lo! there the cliff
That circling bounds it. Lo! the entrance there,
Where it doth seem departed. Ere the dawn
Usher'd the day-light, when thy wearied soul
Slept in thee, o'er the flowery vale beneath
A lady came, and thus bespake me: 'I
Am Lucia. Suffer me to take this man,
Who slumbers. Easier so his way shall speed.'
Sordello and the other gentle shapes
Tarrying, she bare thee up: and, as day shone,
This summit reach'd: and I pursued her steps.
Here did she place thee. First, her lovely eyes
That open entrance show'd me; then at once
She vanish'd with thy sleep." Like one, whose doubts

Are chased by certainty, and terror turn'd
To comfort on discovery of the truth,
Such was the change in me: and as my guide
Beheld me fearless, up along the cliff
He moved, and I behind him, toward the height.

Reader! thou markest how my theme doth rise;
Nor wonder therefore, if more artfully
I prop the structure. Nearer now we drew,
Arrived whence, in that part, where first a breach
As of a wall appear'd, I could descry
A portal, and three steps beneath, that led
For inlet there, of different color each;
And one who watch'd, but spake not yet a word.
As more and more mine eye did stretch its view,
I mark'd him seated on the highest step,
In visage such, as past my power to bear.
Grasp'd in his hand, a naked sword glanced back
The rays so toward me, that I oft in vain
My sight directed. "Speak, from whence ye stand;"
He cried: "What would ye? Where is your escort?
Take heed your coming upward harm ye not."

“A heavenly dame, not skillless of these things,”
Replied the instructor, “told us, even now,
‘Pass that way: here the gate is.’” “And may she,
Befriending, prosper your ascent,” resumed
The courteous keeper of the gate: “Come then
Before our steps.” We straightway thither came.

The lowest stair was marble white, so smooth
And polish’d, that therein my mirror’d form
Distinct I saw. The next of hue more dark
Than sablest grain, a rough and singed block,
Crack’d lengthwise and across. The third, that lay
Massy above, seem’d porphyry, that flamed
Red as the life-blood spouting from a vein.
On this God’s angel either foot sustain’d,
Upon the threshold seated, which appear’d
A rock of diamond. Up the trinal steps
My leader cheerly drew me. “Ask,” said he,
“With humble heart, that he unbar the bolt.”

Piously at his holy feet devolved

I cast me, praying him for pity's sake
That he would open to me; but first fell
Thrice on my bosom prostrate. Seven times
The letter, that denotes the inward stain,
He, on my forehead, with the blunted point
Of his drawn sword, inscribed. And "Look," he cried,
"When enter'd, that thou wash these scars away."

Ashes, or earth ta'en dry out of the ground,
Were of one color with the robe he wore.
From underneath that vestment forth he drew
Two keys, of metal twain: the one was gold,
Its fellow silver. With the pallid first,
And next the burnish'd, he so ply'd the gate,
As to content me well. "Whenever one
Faieth of these, that in the key-hole straight
It turn not, to this alley then expect
Access in vain." Such were the words he spake.
"One is more precious: but the other needs
Skill and sagacity, large share of each,
Ere its good task to disengage the knot
Be worthily perform'd. From Peter these

I hold, of him instructed that I err
Rather in opening, than in keeping fast;
So but the suppliant at my feet implore."

Then of that hallow'd gate he thrust the door,
Exclaiming, "Enter, but this warning hear:
He forth again departs who looks behind."

As in the hinges of that sacred ward
The swivels turn'd, sonorous metal strong,
Harsh was the grating; nor so surlily
Roar'd the Tarpeian, when by force bereft
Of good Metellus, thenceforth from his loss
To leanness doom'd. Attentively I turn'd,
Listening the thunder that first issued forth;
And "We praise thee, O God," methought I heard,
In accents blended with sweet melody.
The strains came o'er mine ear, e'en as the sound
Of choral voices, that in solemn chant
With organ mingle, and, now high and clear
Come swelling, now float indistinct away.

CANTO X

On a level space within Purgatory, the poets see artfully engraved stories of humility and spirits expiating the sin of pride.

WHEN we had passed the threshold of the gate
(Which the soul's ill affection doth disuse,
Making the crooked seem the straighter path),
I heard its closing sound. Had mine eyes turn'd,
For that offence what plea might have avail'd?

We mounted up the riven rock, that wound
On either side alternate, as the wave
Flies and advances. "Here some little art
Behoves us," said my leader, "that our steps
Observe the varying flexure of the path."

Thus we so slowly sped, that with cleft orb
The moon once more o'erhangs her watery couch,
Ere we that strait have threaded. But when free,

We came, and open, where the mount above
One solid mass retires; I spent with toil,
And both uncertain of the way, we stood,
Upon a plain more lonesome than the roads
That traverse desert wilds. From whence the brink
Borders upon vacuity, to foot
Of the steep bank that rises still, the space
Had measured thrice the stature of a man:
And, distant as mine eye could wing its flight,
To leftward now and now to right despatch'd,
That cornice equal in extent appear'd.

Not yet our feet had on that summit moved,
When I discover'd that the bank, around
Whose proud uprising all ascent denied,
Was marble white; and so exactly wrought
With quaintest sculpture, that not there alone
Had Polycletus, but e'en nature's self
Been shamed. The angel (who came down to earth
With tidings of the peace so many years
Wept for in vain, that oped the heavenly gates
From their long interdict) before us seem'd,

In a sweet act, so sculptured to the life,
He look'd no silent image. One had sworn
He had said "Hail!" for she was imaged there,
By whom the key did open to God's love;
And in her act as sensibly imprest
That word, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord,"
As figure seal'd on wax. "Fix not thy mind
On one place only," said the guide beloved,
Who had me near him on that part where lies
The heart of man. My sight forthwith I turn'd,
And mark'd, behind the virgin mother's form,
Upon that side where he that moved me stood,
Another story graven on the rock.

I pass'd athwart the bard, and drew me near,
That it might stand more aptly for my view.
There, in the self-same marble, were engraved
The cart and kine, drawing the sacred ark,
That from unbidden office awes mankind.
Before it came much people; and the whole
Parted in seven quires. One sense cried "Nay,"
Another, "Yes, they sing." Like doubt arose

Betwixt the eye and smell, from the curl'd fume
Of incense breathing up the well-wrought toil.
Preceding the blest vessel, onward came,
With light dance leaping, girt in humble guise,
Israel's sweet harper: in that hap he seem'd
Less, and yet more, than kingly. Opposite,
At a great palace, from the lattice forth
Look'd Michol, like a lady full of scorn
And sorrow. To behold the tablet next,
Which, at the back of Michol, whitely shone,
I moved me. There, was storied on the rock
The exalted glory of the Roman prince,
Whose mighty worth moved Gregory to earn
His mighty conquest, Trajan the Emperor.
A widow at his bridle stood, attired
In tears and mourning. Round about them troop'd
Full throng of knights; and overhead in gold
The eagles floated, struggling with the wind.
The wretch appear'd amid all these to say:
"Grant vengeance, Sire! for, woe beshrew this heart,
My son is murder'd." He replying seem'd:
"Wait now till I return." And she, as one

Made hasty by her grief: "O Sire! if thou
Dost not return?" "Where I am, who then is,
May right thee." "What to thee is other's good,
If thou neglect thy own?" "Now comfort thee";
At length he answers. "It beseemeth well
My duty be perform'd, ere I move hence:
So justice wills; and pity bids me stay."

He, whose ken nothing new surveys, produced
That visible speaking, new to us and strange,
The like not found on earth. Fondly I gazed
Upon those patterns of meek humbleness,
Shapes yet more precious for their artist's sake;
When "Lo!" the poet whisper'd, "where this way
(But slack their pace) a multitude advance.
These to the lofty steps shall guide us on."

Mine eyes, though bent on view of novel sights,
Their loved allurements, were not slow to turn.

Reader! I would not that amazed thou miss
Of thy good purpose, hearing how just God

Decrees our debts be cancel'd. Ponder not
The form of suffering. Think on what succeeds:
Think that, at worst, beyond the mighty doom
It cannot pass. "Instructor!" I began,
"What I see hither tending, bears no trace
Of human semblance, nor of aught beside
That my foil'd sight can guess." He answering thus:
"So curb'd to earth, beneath their heavy terms
Of torment stoop they, that mine eye at first
Struggled as thine. But look intently thither;
And disentangle with thy laboring view,
What, underneath those stones, approacheth: now,
E'en now, mayst thou discern the pangs of each."

Christians and proud! O poor and wretched ones!
That, feeble in the mind's eye, lean your trust
Upon untaught perverseness: know ye not
That we are worms, yet made at last to form
The winged insect, imp'd with angel plumes,
That to heaven's justice unobstructed soars?
Why buoy ye up aloft your unfledged souls?
Abortive then and shapeless ye remain,

Like the untimely embryon of a worm.

As, to support incumbent floor or roof,
For corbel, is a figure sometimes seen,
That crumples up its knees unto its breast;
With the feign'd posture, stirring ruth unfeign'd
In the beholder's fancy; so I saw
These fashion'd, when I noted well their guise.

Each, as his back was laden, came indeed
Or more or less contracted; and it seem'd
As he, who show'd most patience in his look,
Wailing exclaim'd: "I can endure no more."

CANTO XI

After a prayer uttered by the spirits, Virgil inquires the way upward. He and Dante discourse with several spirits.

“O THOU Almighty Father! who dost make
The heavens thy dwelling, not in bounds confined,
But that, with love intenser, there thou view'st
Thy primal effluence; hallow'd be thy name:
Join, each created being, to extol
Thy might; for worthy humblest thanks and praise
Is thy blest Spirit. May thy kingdom's peace
Come unto us; for we, unless it come,
With all our striving, thither tend in vain.
As, of their will, the angels unto thee
Tender meet sacrifice, circling thy throne
With loud hosannas; so of theirs be done
By saintly men on earth. Grant us, this day,
Our daily manna, without which he roams
Through this rough desert retrograde, who most

Toils to advance his steps. As we to each
Pardon the evil done us, pardon thou
Benign, and of our merit take no count.
'Gainst the old adversary, prove thou not
Our virtue, easily subdued; but free
From his incitements, and defeat his wiles.
This last petition, dearest Lord! is made
Not for ourselves; since that were needless now;
But for their sakes who after us remain."

Thus for themselves and us good speed imploring,
Those spirits went beneath a weight like that
We sometimes feel in dreams; all, sore beset,
But with unequal anguish; wearied all;
Round the first circuit; purging as they go
The world's gross darkness off. In our behoof
If their vows still be offer'd, what can here
For them be vow'd and done by such, whose wills
Have root of goodness in them? Well beseems
That we should help them wash away the stains
They carried hence; that so, made pure and light,
They may spring upward to the starry spheres.

“Ah! so may mercy-temper’d justice rid
Your burdens speedily; that ye have power
To stretch your wing, which e’en to your desire
Shall lift you; as ye show us on which hand
Toward the ladder leads the shortest way.
And if there be more passages than one,
Instruct us of that easiest to ascend:
For this man, who comes with me, and bears yet
The charge of fleshly raiment Adam left him,
Despite his better will, but slowly mounts.”
From whom the answer came unto these words,
Which my guide spake, appear’d not; but ‘twas said:
“Along the bank to rightward come with us;
And ye shall find a pass that mocks not toil
Of living man to climb: and were it not
That I am hinder’d by the rock, wherewith
This arrogant neck is tamed, whence needs I stoop
My visage to the ground; him, who yet lives,
Whose name thou speak’st not, him I fain would view;
To mark if e’er I knew him, and to crave
His pity for the fardel that I bear.

I was of Latium; of a Tuscan born,
A mighty one: Aldobrandesco's name
My sire's, I know not if ye e'er have heard.
My old blood and forefathers' gallant deeds
Made me so haughty, that I clean forgot
The common mother; and to such excess
Wax'd in my scorn of all men, that I fell,
Fell therefore; by what fate, Sienna's sons,
Each child in Campagnatico, can tell.
I am Umberto: not me, only, pride
Hath injured, but my kindred all involved
In mischief with her. Here my lot ordains
Under this weight to groan, till I appease
God's angry justice, since I did it not
Amongst the living, here amongst the dead."

Listening I bent my visage down: and one
(Not he who spake) twisted beneath the weight
That urged him, saw me, knew me straight, and call'd;
Holding his eyes with difficulty fix'd
Intent upon me, stooping as I went
Companion of their way. "O!" I exclaim'd,

“Art thou not Oderigi? art not thou
Agobbio’s glory, glory of that art
Which they of Paris call the limner’s skill?”

“Brother!” said he, “with tints, that gayer smile,
Bolognian Franco’s pencil lines the leaves.
His all the honor now; my light obscured.
In truth, I had not been thus courteous to him
The whilst I lived, through eagerness of zeal
For that pre-eminence my heart was bent on.
Here, of such pride, the forfeiture is paid.
Nor were I even here, if, able still
To sin, I had not turn’d me unto God.
O powers of man! how vain your glory, nipt
E’en in its height of verdure, if an age
Less bright succeed not. Cimabue thought
To lord it over painting’s field; and now
The cry is Giotto’s, and his name eclipsed.
Thus hath one Guido from the other snatch’d
The letter’d prize: and he, perhaps, is born,
Who shall drive either from their nest. The noise
Of worldly fame is but a blast of wind,

That blows from diverse points, and shifts its name,
Shifting the point it blows from. Shalt thou more
Live in the mouths of mankind, if thy flesh
Part shrivel'd from thee, than if thou hadst died
Before the coral and the pap were left;
Or e'er some thousand years have pass'd? and that
Is, to eternity compared, a space
Briefer than is the twinkling of an eye
To the heaven's slowest orb. He there, who treads
So leisurely before me, far and wide
Through Tuscany resounded once; and now
Is in Sienna scarce with whispers named:
There was he sovereign, when destruction caught
The maddening rage of Florence, in that day
Proud as she now is loathsome. Your renown
Is as the herb, whose hue doth come and go;
And his might withers it, by whom it sprang
Crude from the lap of earth." I thus to him:
"True are thy sayings: to my heart they breathe
The kindly spirit of meekness, and allay
What tumors rankle there. But who is he,
Of whom thou speakest but now?" "This," he replied,

“Is Provenzano. He is here, because
He reach’d, with a grasp presumptuous, at the sway
Of all Sienna. Thus he still hath gone,
Thus goeth never-resting, since he died.
Such is the acquittance render’d back of him,
Who, in the mortal life, too much hath dared.”
I then: “If soul, that to life’s verge delays
Repentance, linger in that lower space,
Nor hither mount (unless good prayers befriend),
Or ever time, long as it lived, be past;
How chanced admittance was vouchsafed to him?”

“When at his glory’s topmost height,” said he,
“Respect of dignity all cast aside,
Freely he fix’d him on Sienna’s plain,
A suitor to redeem his suffering friend,
Who languish’d in the prison-house of Charles;
Nor, for his sake, refused through every vein
To tremble. More I will not say: and dark,
I know, my words are; but thy neighbors soon
Shall help thee to a comment on the text.
This is the work, that from these limits freed him.”

CANTO XII

Dante observes the ground is covered with imagery exhibiting instances of pride in history and fable.

WITH equal pace, as oxen in the yoke,
I, with that laden spirit, journey'd on,
Long as the mild instructor suffer'd me;
But, when he bade me quit him, and proceed,
(For "Here," said he, "behoves with sail and oars
Each man, as best he may, push on his bark,")
Upright, as one disposed for speed, I raised
My body, still in thought submissive bow'd.

I now my leader's track not loth pursued;
And each had shown how light we fared along,
When thus he warn'd me: "Bend thine eyesight down:
For thou, to ease the way, shalt find it good
To ruminat the bed beneath thy feet."

As, in memorial of the buried, drawn

Upon earth-level tombs, the sculptured form
Of what was once, appears (at sight whereof
Tears often stream forth, by remembrance waked,
Whose sacred stings the piteous often feel),
So saw I there, but with more curious skill
Of portraiture o'erwrought, whate'er of space
From forth the mountain stretches. On one part
Him I beheld, above all creatures erst
Created noblest, lightning fall from heaven:
On the other side, with bolt celestial pierced,
Briareus; cumbering earth he lay, through dint
Of mortal ice-stroke. The Thymbraean god,
With Mars, I saw, and Pallas, round their sire,
Arm'd still, and gazing on the giants' limbs
Strewn o'er the ethereal field. Nimrod I saw:
At foot of the stupendous work he stood,
As if bewilder'd, looking on the crowd
Leagued in his proud attempt on Sennaar's plain.

O Niobe! in what a trance of woe
Thee I beheld, upon that highway drawn,
Seven sons on either side thee slain. O Saul!

How ghastly didst thou look, on thine own sword
Expiring, in Gilboa, from that hour
Ne'er visited with rain from heaven, or dew.

O fond Arachne! thee I also saw,
Half spider now, in anguish, crawling up
The unfinish'd web thou weaved'st to thy bane.

O Rehoboam! here thy shape doth seem
Louring no more defiance; but fear-smote,
With none to chase him, in his chariot whirl'd.

Was shown beside upon the solid floor,
How dear Alcmaeon forced his mother rate
That ornament, in evil hour received:
How, in the temple, on Sennacherib fell
His sons, and how a corpse they left him there.
Was shown the scath, and cruel mangling made
By Tomyris on Cyrus, when she cried,
"Blood thou didst thirst for: take thy fill of blood."
Was shown how routed in the battle fled
The Assyrians, Holofernes slain, and e'en

The relics of the carnage. Troy I mark'd,
In ashes and in caverns. Oh! how fallen,
How abject, Ilium, was thy semblance there.

What master of the pencil or the style
Had traced the shades and lines, that might have made
The subtlest workman wonder? Dead, the dead;
The living seem'd alive: with clearer view,
His eye beheld not, who beheld the truth,
Than mine what I did tread on, while I went
Low bending. Now swell out, and with stiff necks
Pass on, ye sons of Eve! veil not your looks,
Lest they descry the evil of your path.

I noted not (so busied was my thought)
How much we now had circled of the mount;
And of his course yet more the sun had spent;
When he, who with still wakeful caution went,
Admonish'd: "Raise thou up thy head: for know
Time is not for slow suspense. Behold,
That way, an angel hasting toward us. Lo!
When duly the sixth handmaid doth return

From service on the day. Wear thou, in look
And gesture, seemly grace of reverent awe;
That gladly he may forward us aloft.
Consider that this day ne'er dawns again."

Time's loss he had so often warn'd me 'gainst,
I could not miss the scope at which he aim'd.

The goodly shape approach'd us, snowy white
In vesture, and with visage casting streams
Of tremulous lustre like the matin star.
His arms he open'd, then his wings; and spake:
"Onward! the steps, behold, are near; and now
The ascent is without difficulty gain'd."

A scanty few are they, who, when they hear
Such tidings, hasten. O, ye race of men!
Though born to soar, why suffer ye a wind
So slight to baffle ye? He led us on
Where the rock parted; here, against my front,
Did beat his wings; then promised I should fare
In safety on my way. As to ascend

That steep, upon whose brow the chapel stands
(O'er Rubaconte, looking lordly down
On the well-guided city), up the right
The impetuous rise is broken by the steps
Carved in that old and simple age, when still
The registry and label rested safe;
Thus is the acclivity relieved, which here,
Precipitous, from the other circuit falls:
But, on each hand, the tall cliff presses close.

As, entering, there we turn'd, voices, in strain
Ineffable, sang: "Blessed are the poor
In spirit." Ah! how far unlike to these
The straits of hell: here songs to usher us,
There shrieks of woe. We climb the holy stairs:
And lighter to myself by far I seem'd
Than on the plain before; whence thus I spake:
"Say, master, of what heavy thing have I
Been lighten'd; that scarce aught the sense of toil
Affects me journeying?" He in few replied:
"When sin's broad characters, that yet remain
Upon thy temples, though well nigh effaced,

Shall be, as one is, all clean razed out:
Then shall thy feet by heartiness of will
Be so o'ercome, they not alone shall feel
No sense of labor, but delight much more
Shall wait them, urged along their upward way."

Then like to one, upon whose head is placed
Somewhat he deems not of, but from the becks
Of others, as they pass him by; his hand
Lends therefore help to assure him, searches, finds,
And well performs such office as the eye
Wants power to execute; so stretching forth
The fingers of my right hand, did I find
Six only of the letters, which his sword,
Who bare the keys, had traced upon my brow.
The leader, as he mark'd mine action, smiled.

CANTO XIII

They gain the second cornice where sin of envy is purged,
hear voices recounting famous examples of charity,
and behold the shades of the envious.

WE reach'd the summit of the scale, and stood
Upon the second buttress of that mount
Which healeth him who climbs. A cornice there,
Like to the former, girdles round the hill;
Save that its arch, with sweep less ample, bends.

Shadow, nor image there, is seen: all smooth
The rampart and the path, reflecting naught
But the rock's sullen hue. "If here we wait
For some to question," said the bard, "I fear
Our choice may haply meet too long delay."

Then fixedly upon the sun his eyes
He fasten'd; made his right the central point
From whence to move; and turn'd the left aside.

“O pleasant light, my confidence and hope!
Conduct us thou," he cried, "on this new way,
Where now I venture; leading to the bourn
We seek. The universal world to thee
Owes warmth and lustre. If no other cause
Forbid, thy beams should ever be our guide."

Far, as is measured for a mile on earth,
In brief space had we journey'd; such prompt will
Impell'd; and toward us flying, now were heard
Spirits invisible, who courteously
Unto love's table bade the welcome guest.
The voice, that first flew by, call'd forth aloud,
“They have no wine,” so on behind us past,
Those sounds reiterating, nor yet lost
In the faint distance, when another came
Crying, “I am Orestes,” and alike
Wing'd fleet away. “O father!” I exclaim'd,
“What tongues are these?” and as I question'd, lo!
A third exclaiming, “Love ye those have wrong'd you.”

“This circuit,” said my teacher, “knots the scourge

For envy; and the cords are therefore drawn
By charity's correcting hand. The curb
Is of a harsher sound; as thou shalt hear
(If I deem rightly) ere thou reach the pass,
Where pardon sets them free. But fix thine eyes
Intently through the air; and thou shalt see
A multitude before thee seated, each
Along the shelving grot." Then more than erst
I oped mine eyes; before me view'd; and saw
Shadows with garments dark as was the rock;
And when we pass'd a little forth, I heard
A crying, "Blessed Mary! pray for us,
Michael and Peter! all ye saintly host!"

I do not think there walks on earth this day
Man so remorseless, that he had not yearn'd
With pity at the sight that next I saw.
Mine eyes a load of sorrow teem'd, when now
I stood so near them, that their semblances
Came clearly to my view. Of sackcloth vile
Their covering seem'd; and, on his shoulder, one
Did stay another, leaning; and all lean'd

Against the cliff. E'en thus the blind and poor,
Near the confessionals, to crave an alms,
Stand, each his head upon his fellow's sunk;
So most to stir compassion, not by sound
Of words alone, but that which moves not less,
The sight of misery. And as never beam
Of noon-day visiteth the eyeless man,
E'en so was heaven a niggard unto these
Of this fair light: for, through the orbs of all,
A thread of wire, impiercing, knits them up,
As for the taming of a haggard hawk.

It were a wrong, methought, to pass and look
On others, yet myself the while unseen.
To my sage counsel therefore did I turn.
He knew the meaning of the mute appeal,
Nor waited for my questioning, but said:
"Speak; and be brief, be subtile in thy words."

On that part of the cornice, whence no rim
Engarlands its steep fall, did Virgil come;
On the other side me were the spirits, their cheeks

Bathing devout with penitential tears,
That through the dread impalement forced a way.

I turn'd me to them, and "O shades!" said I,
"Assured that to your eyes unveil'd shall shine
The lofty light, sole object of your wish,
So may heaven's grace clear whatsoe'er of foam
Floats turbid on the conscience, that thenceforth
The stream of mind roll limpid from its source;
As ye declare (for so shall ye impart
A boon I dearly prize) if any soul
Of Latium dwell among ye: and perchance
That soul may profit, if I learn so much."

"My brother! we are, each one, citizens
Of one true city. Any, thou wouldst say,
Who lived a stranger in Italia's land."

So heard I answering, as appear'd, a voice
That onward came some space from whence I stood.

A spirit I noted, in whose look was mark'd

Expectance. Ask ye how? The chin was raised
As in one reft of sight. "Spirit," said I,
"Who for thy rise art tutoring (if thou be
That which didst answer to me), or by place,
Or name, disclose thyself, that I may know thee."

"I was," it answer'd, "of Sienna: here
I cleanse away with these the evil life,
Soliciting with tears that He, who is,
Vouchsafe him to us. Though Sapia named,
In sapience I excell'd not; gladder far
Of other's hurt, than of the good befell me.
That thou mayst own I now deceive thee not,
Hear, if my folly were not as I speak it.
When now my tears sloped waning down the arch,
It so bechanced, my fellow-citizens
Near Colle met their enemies in the field;
And I pray'd God to grant what He had will'd.
There were they vanquish'd, and betook themselves
Unto the bitter passages of flight.
I mark'd the hunt; and waxing out of bounds
In gladness, lifted up my shameless brow,

And, like the merlin cheated by a gleam,
Cried, 'It is over. Heaven! I fear thee not.'
Upon my verge of life I wish'd for peace
With God; nor yet repentance had supplied
What I did lack of duty, were it not
The hermit Piero, touch'd with charity,
In his devout orisons thought on me.
But who art thou that question'st of our state,
Who go'st, as I believe, with lids unclosed,
And breathest in thy talk?" "Mine eyes," said I,
"May yet be here ta'en from me; but not long;
For they have not offended grievously
With envious glances. But the woe beneath
Urges my soul with more exceeding dread.
That nether load already weighs me down."

She thus: "Who then, among us here aloft,
Hath brought thee, if thou weenest to return?"

"He," answered I, "who standeth mute beside me.
I live: of me ask therefore, chosen spirit!
If thou desire I yonder yet should move

For thee my mortal feet." "Oh!" she replied,
"This is so strange a thing, it is a great sign
That God doth love thee. Therefore with thy prayer
Sometime assist me: and, by that I crave,
Which most thou covetest, that if thy feet
E'er tread on Tuscan soil, thou save my fame
Among my kindred. Them shalt thou behold
With that vain multitude, who set their hope
On Telamone's haven; there to fail
Confounded, more than when the fancied stream
They sought, of Dian call'd: but they, who lead
Their navies, more than ruin'd hopes shall mourn."

CANTO XIV

The poet listens to certain souls inveigh against dwellers
on the banks of the Arno and in Romagna,
and hears more instances of envy.

“SAY, who is he around our mountain winds,
Or ever death has pruned his wing for flight;
That opes his eyes, and covers them at will?”

“I know not who he is, but know thus much;
He comes not singly. Do thou ask of him,
For thou art nearer to him; and take heed,
Accost him gently, so that he may speak.”

Thus on the right two spirits, bending each
Toward the other, talk’d of me; then both
Addressing me, their faces backward lean’d,
And thus the one began: “O soul, who yet
Pent in the body, tendest toward the sky!
For charity, we pray thee, comfort us;

Recounting whence thou comest, and who thou art:
For thou dost make us, at the favor shown thee,
Marvel, as at a thing that ne'er hath been."

"There stretches through the midst of Tuscany,"
I straight began, "a brooklet, whose well-head
Springs up in Falterona; with his race
Not satisfied, when he some hundred miles
Hath measured. From his banks bring I this frame.
To tell you who I am were words mis-spent:
For yet my name scarce sounds on rumor's lip."

"If well I do incorporate with my thought
The meaning of thy speech," said he, who first
Address'd me, "thou dost speak of Arno's wave."

To whom the other: "Why hath he conceal'd
The title of that river, as a man
Doth of some horrible thing?" The spirit, who
Thereof was question'd, did acquit him thus:
"I know not: but 'tis fitting well the name
Should perish of that vale; for from the source,

Where teems so plenteously the Alpine steep
Maim'd of Pelorus (that doth scarcely pass
Beyond that limit), even to the point
Where unto ocean is restored what heaven
Drains from the exhaustless store for all earth's streams,
Throughout the space is virtue worried down,
As 'twere a snake by all, for mortal foe;
Or through disastrous influence on the place,
Or else distortion of misguided wills
That custom goads to evil: whence in those,
The dwellers in that miserable vale,
Nature is so transform'd, it seems as they
Had shared of Circe's feeding. 'Midst brute swine,
Worthier of acorns than of other food
Created for man's use, he shapeth first
His obscure way; then, sloping onward, finds
Curs, snarlers more in spite than power, from whom
He turns with scorn aside: still journeying down,
By how much more the curst and luckless foss
Swells out to largeness, e'en so much it finds
Dogs turning into wolves. Descending still
Through yet more hollow eddies, next he meets

A race of foxes, so replete with craft,
They do not fear that skill can master it.
Nor will I cease because my words are heard
By other ears than thine. It shall be well
For this man, if he keep in memory
What from no erring spirit I reveal.
Lo! I behold thy grandson, that becomes
A hunter of those wolves, upon the shore
Of the fierce stream; and crows them all with dread.
Their flesh, yet living, sets he up to sale,
Then, like an aged beast, to slaughter dooms.
Many of life he 'reaves, himself of worth
And goodly estimation. Smear'd with gore,
Mark how he issues from the rueful wood;
Leaving such havoc, that in thousand years
It spreads not to prime lustihood again."

As one, who tidings hears of woe to come,
Changes his looks perturb'd, from whate'er part
The peril grasp him; so beheld I change
That spirit, who had turn'd to listen; struck
With sadness, soon as he had caught the word.

His visage, and the other's speech, did raise
Desire in me to know the names of both;
Whereof, with meek entreaty, I inquired.

The shade, who late address'd me, thus resumed:
"Thy wish imports, that I vouchsafe to do
For thy sake what thou wilt not do for mine.
But, since God's will is that so largely shine
His grace in thee, I will be liberal too.
Guido of Duca know then that I am.
Envy so parch'd my blood, that had I seen
A fellow man made joyous, thou hadst mark'd
A livid paleness overspread my cheek.
Such harvest reap I of the seed I sow'd.
O man! why place thy heart where there doth need
Exclusion of participants in good?
This is Rinieri's spirit; this, the boast
And honor of the house of Calboli;
Where of his worth no heritage remains.
Nor his the only blood, that hath been stript
(Twixt Po, the mount, the Reno, and the shore)

Of all that truth or fancy asks for bliss:
But, in those limits, such a growth has sprung
Of rank and venom'd roots, as long would mock
Slow culture's toil. Where is good Lizio? where
Manardi, Traversaro, and Carpigna?
O bastard slips of old Romagna's line!
When in Bologna the low artisan,
And in Faenza yon Bernardin sprouts,
A gentle cyon from ignoble stem.
Wonder not, Tuscan, if thou see me weep,
When I recall to mind those once loved names,
Guido of Prata, and of Azzo him
That dwelt with us; Tignoso and his troop,
With Traversaro's house and Anastagio's
(Each race disherited); and beside these,
The ladies and the knights, the toils and ease,
That witch'd us into love and courtesy;
Where now such malice reigns in recreant hearts.
O Brettinoro! wherefore tarriest still,
Since forth of thee thy family hath gone,
And many, hating evil, join'd their steps?
Well doeth he, that bids his lineage cease,

Bagnacavallo; Castracaro ill,
And Conio worse, who care to propagate
A race of Counties from such blood as theirs.
Well shall ye also do, Pagani, then
When from among you hies your demon child;
Not so, howe'er, that thenceforth there remain
True proof of what ye were. O Hugolin,
Thou sprung of Fantolini's line! thy name
Is safe; since none is look'd for after thee
To cloud its lustre, warping from thy stock.
But, Tuscan! go thy ways; for now I take
Far more delight in weeping, than in words.
Such pity for your sakes hath wrung my heart."

We knew those gentle spirits, at parting, heard
Our steps. Their silence therefore, of our way,
Assured us. Soon as we had quitted them,
Advancing onward, lo! a voice, that seem'd
Like volley'd lightning, when it rives the air,
Met us, and shouted, "Whosoever finds
Will slay me"; and then fled from us, as the bolt
Lanced sudden from a downward-rushing cloud.

When it had given short truce unto our hearing,
Behold the other with a crash as loud
As the quick-following thunder: "Mark in me
Aglauros, turn'd to rock." I, at the sound
Retreating, drew more closely to my guide.

Now in mute stillness rested all the air;
And thus he spake: "There was the galling bit
Which should keep man within his boundary.
But your old enemy so baits the hook,
He drags you eager to him. Hence nor curb
Avails you, nor reclaiming all. Heaven calls,
And, round about you wheeling, courts your gaze
With everlasting beauties. Yet your eye
Turns with fond doting still upon the earth.
Therefore He smites you who discerneth all."

CANTO XV

When they reach the third cornice where the sin of anger
is purged, the poet beholds remarkable instances of patience.

AS much as 'twixt the third hour's close and dawn,
Appeareth of heaven's sphere, that ever whirls
As restless as an infant in his play;
So much appear'd remaining to the sun
Of his slope journey toward the western goal.

Evening was there, and here the noon of night;
And full upon our forehead smote the beams.
For round the mountain, circling, so our path
Has led us, that toward the sunset now
Direct we journey'd; when I felt a weight
Of more exceeding splendor, than before,
Press on my front. The cause unknown, amaze
Possess'd me! and both hands against my brows
Lifting, I interposed them, as a screen,
That of its gorgeous superflux of light

Clips the diminish'd orb. As when the ray,
Striking on water or the surface clear
Of mirror, leaps unto the opposite part,
Ascending at a glance, e'en as it fell,
And as much differs from the stone, that falls
Through equal space (so practic skill hath shown);
Thus with refracted light, before me seem'd
The ground there smitten; whence, in sudden haste,
My sight recoil'd. "What is this, sire beloved!
'Gainst which I strive to shield the sight in vain?"
Cried I, "and which toward us moving seems?"

"Marvel not, if the family of heaven,"
He answer'd, "Yet with dazzling radiance dim
Thy sense. It is a messenger who comes,
Inviting man's ascent. Such sights ere long,
Not grievous, shall impart to thee delight,
As thy perception is by nature wrought
Up to their pitch." The blessed angel, soon
As we had reach'd him, hailed us with glad voice:
"Here enter on a ladder far less steep
Than ye have yet encounter'd." We forthwith

Ascending, heard behind us chanted sweet,
"Blessed the merciful," and "Happy thou,
That conquer'st." Lonely each, my guide and I,
Pursued our upward way; and as we went,
Some profit from his words I hoped to win,
And thus of him inquiring, framed my speech:
"What meant Romagna's spirit, when he spake
Of bliss exclusive, with no partner shared?"

He straight replied: "No wonder, since he knows
What sorrow waits on his own worst defect,
If he chide others, that they less may mourn.
Because ye point your wishes at a mark,
Where, by communion of possessors, part
Is lessen'd, envy bloweth up men's sighs.
No fear of that might touch ye, if the love
Of higher sphere exalted your desire.
For there, by how much more they call it ours,
So much propriety of each in good
Increases more, and heighten'd charity
Wraps that fair cloister in a brighter flame."

“Now lack I satisfaction more,” said I,
“Than if thou hadst been silent at the first;
And doubt more gathers on my laboring thought.
How can it chance, that good distributed,
The many, that possess it, makes more rich,
Than if ‘twere shared by few?” He answering thus:
“Thy mind reverting still to things of earth,
Strikes darkness from true light. The highest good
Unlimited, ineffable, doth so speed
To love, as beam to lucid body darts,
Giving as much of ardor as it finds.
The sempiternal effluence streams abroad,
Spreading, wherever charity extends.
So that the more aspirants to that bliss
Are multiplied, more good is there to love,
And more is loved; as mirrors, that reflect,
Each unto other, propagated light.
If these my words avail not to allay
Thy thirsting, Beatrice thou shalt see,
Who of this want, and of all else thou hast,
Shall rid thee to the full. Provide but thou,
That from thy temples may be soon erased,

E'en as the two already, those five scars,
That, when they pain thee worst, then kindest heal."

"Thou," I had said, "content'st me"; when I saw
The other round was gain'd, and wondering eyes
Did keep me mute. There suddenly I seem'd
By an ecstatic vision wrapt away;
And in a temple saw, methought, a crowd
Of many persons; and at the entrance stood
A dame, whose sweet demeanor did express
A mother's love, who said, "Child! why hast thou
Dealt with us thus? Behold thy sire and I
Sorrowing have sought thee"; and so held her peace;
And straight the vision fled. A female next
Appear'd before me, down whose visage coursed
Those waters, that grief forces out from one
By deep resentment stung who seem'd to say:
"If thou, Pisistratus, be lord indeed
Over this city, named with such debate
Of adverse gods, and whence each science sparkles,
Avenge thee of those arms, whose bold embrace
Hath clasp'd our daughter"; and to her, meseem'd,

Benign and meek, with visage undisturb'd,
Her sovereign spake: "How shall we those requite
Who wish us evil, if we thus condemn
The man that loves us?" After that I saw
A multitude, in fury burning, slay
With stones a stripling youth, and shout amain
"Destroy, destroy"; and him I saw, who bow'd
Heavy with death unto the ground, yet made
His eyes, unfolded upward, gates to heaven,
Praying forgiveness of the Almighty Sire,
Amidst that cruel conflict, on his foes,
With looks that win compassion to their aim.

Soon as my spirit, from her airy flight
Returning, sought again the things whose truth
Depends not on her shaping, I observed
She had not roved to falsehood in her dreams.

Meanwhile the leader, who might see I moved
As one who struggles to shake off his sleep,
Exclaim'd: "What ails thee, that thou canst not hold
Thy footing firm; but more than half a league

Hast travell'd with closed eyes and tottering gait,
Like to a man by wine or sleep o'ercharged?"

"Beloved father! so thou deign," said I,
"To listen, I will tell thee what appear'd
Before me, when so fail'd my sinking steps."

He thus: "Not if thy countenance were mask'd
With hundred visors could a thought of thine,
How small so'er, elude me. What thou saw'st
Was shown, that freely thou mightst ope thy heart
To the waters of peace, that flow diffused
From their eternal fountain. I not ask'd,
What ails thee? for such cause as he doth, who
Looks only with that eye, which sees no more,
When spiritless the body lies; but ask'd,
To give fresh vigor to thy foot. Such goads,
The slow and loitering need; that they be found
Not wanting when their hour of watch returns."

So on we journey'd, through the evening sky
Gazing intent, far onward as our eyes,

With level view, could stretch against the bright
Vespertine ray: and lo! by slow degrees
Gathering, a fog made toward us, dark as night.
There was no room for 'scaping; and that mist
Bereft us, both of sight and the pure air.

CANTO XVI

Marco Lombardo shows that much human depravity results from the mixture of spiritual and temporal authority in rulers.

HELL'S dunnest gloom, or night unglorious, dark,
Of every planet reft, and pall'd in clouds,
Did never spread before the sight a veil
In thickness like that fog, nor to the sense
So palpable and gross. Entering its shade,
Mine eye endured not with unclosed lids;
Which marking, near me drew the faithful guide,
Offering me his shoulder for a stay.

As the blind man behind his leader walks,
Lest he should err, or stumble unawares
On what might harm him or perhaps destroy;
I journey'd through that bitter air and foul,
Still listening to my escort's warning voice,

“Look that from me thou part not.” Straight I heard
Voices, and each one seem’d to pray for peace,
And for compassion, to the Lamb of God
That taketh sins away. Their prelude still
Was “Agnus Dei”; and through all the quire,
One voice, one measure ran, that perfect seem’d
The concord of their song. “Are these I hear
Spirits, O master?” I exclaim’d; and he,
“Thou aim’st aright: these loose the bonds of wrath.”

“Now who art thou, that through our smoke dost cleave,
And speak’st of us, as thou thyself e’en yet
Dividest time by calends?” So one voice
Bespoke me; whence my master said, “Reply;
And ask, if upward hence the passage lead.”

“O being! who dost make thee pure, to stand
Beautiful once more in thy Maker’s sight;
Along with me: and thou shalt hear and wonder.”
Thus I, whereto the spirit answering spake:
“Long as ‘tis lawful for me, shall my steps
Follow on thine; and since the cloudy smoke

Forbids the seeing, hearing in its stead
Shall keep us join'd." I then forthwith began:
"Yet in my mortal swathing, I ascend
To higher regions; and am hither come
Through the fearful agony of Hell.
And, if so largely God hath doled his grace,
That, clean beside all modern precedent,
He wills me to behold his kingly state;
From me conceal not who thou wast, ere death
Had loosed thee; but instruct me: and instruct
If rightly to the pass I tend; thy words
The way directing, as a safe escort."

"I was of Lombardy, and Marco call'd:
Not inexperienced of the world, that worth
I still affected, from which all have turn'd
The nerveless bow aside. Thy course tends right
Unto the summit": and, replying thus,
He added, "I beseech thee pray for me,
When thou shalt come aloft." And I to him:
"Accept my faith for pledge I will perform
What thou requirest. Yet one doubt remains,

That wrings me sorely, if I solve it not.
Singly before it urged me, doubled now
By thine opinion, when I couple that
With one elsewhere declared; each strengthening other.
The world indeed is even so forlorn
Of all good, as thou speak'st it, and so swarms
With every evil. Yet, beseech thee, point
The cause out to me, that myself may see,
And unto others show it: for in heaven
One places it, and one on earth below."

Then heaving forth a deep and audible sigh,
"Brother!" he thus began, "the world is blind;
And thou in truth comest from it. Ye, who live,
Do so each cause refer to Heaven above,
E'en as its motion, of necessity,
Drew with it all that moves. If this were so,
Free choice in you were none; nor justice would
There should be joy for virtue, woe for ill.
Your movements have their primal bent from heaven;
Not all: yet said I all: what then ensues?
Light have ye still to follow evil or good,

And of the will free power, which, if it stand
Firm and unwearied in Heaven's first assay,
Conquers at last, so it be cherish'd well,
Triumphant over all. To mightier force,
To better nature subject, ye abide
Free, not constrain'd by that which forms in you
The reasoning mind uninfluenced of the stars.
If then the present race of mankind err,
Seek in yourselves the cause, and find it there.
Herein thou shalt confess me no false spy.

“Forth from his plastic hand, who charm'd beholds
Her image ere she yet exist, the soul
Comes like a babe, that wantons sportively,
Weeping and laughing in its wayward moods;
As artless, and as ignorant of aught,
Save that her Maker being one who dwells
With gladness ever, willingly she turns
To whate'er yields her joy. Of some slight good
The flavor soon she tastes; and, snared by that,
With fondness she pursues it; if no guide
Recall, no rein direct her wandering course.

Hence it behoved, the law should be a curb;
A sovereign hence behoved, whose piercing view
Might mark at least the fortress and main tower
Of the true city. Laws indeed there are:
But who is he who observes them? None; not he,
Who goes before, the shepherd of the flock,
Who chews the cud but doth not cleave the hoof.
Therefore the multitude, who see their guide
Strike at the very good they covet most,
Feed there and look no further. Thus the cause
Is not corrupted nature in yourselves,
But ill-conducting, that hath turn'd the world
To evil. Rome, that turn'd it unto good,
Was wont to boast two suns, whose several beams
Cast light on either way, the world's and God's.
One since hath quench'd the other; and the sword
Is grafted on the crook; and, so conjoin'd,
Each must perforce decline to worse, unawed
By fear of other. If thou doubt me, mark
The blade: each herb is judged of by its seed.
That land, through which Adice and the Po
Their waters roll, was once the residence

Of courtesy and valor, ere the day
That frown'd on Frederick; now secure may pass
Those admits, whosoe'er hath left, for same,
To talk with good men, or come near their haunts.
Three aged ones are still found there, in whom
The old time chides the new: these deem it long
Ere God restore them to a better world:
The good Gherardo; of Plazzo he,
Conrad; and Guido of Castello, named
In Gallic phrase more fitly the plain Lombard.
On this at last conclude. The church of Rome,
Mixing two governments that ill assort,
Hath miss'd her footing, fallen into the mire,
And there herself and burden much defiled."

"O Marco!" I replied, "thine arguments
Convince me: and the cause I now discern,
Why of the heritage no portion came
To Levi's offspring. But resolve me this:
Who that Gherardo is, that as thou say'st
Is left a sample of the perish'd race,
And for rebuke to this untoward age?"

“Either thy words,” said he, “deceive, or else
Are meant to try me; that thou, speaking Tuscan,
Appear’st not to have heard of good Gherardo;
The sole addition that, by which I know him;
Unless I borrow’d from his daughter Gaia
Another name to grace him. God be with you.
I bear you company no more. Behold
The dawn with white ray glimmering through the mist
I must away- the angel comes- ere he
Appear.” He said, and would not hear me more.

CANTO XVII

The poet imagines some noted instances of anger,
and an angel takes them to the fourth cornice where
the sin of gloominess or indifference is purged.

CALL to remembrance, reader, if thou e'er
Hast on an Alpine height been ta'en by cloud,
Through which thou saw'st no better than the mole
Doth through opacous membrane; then, whene'er
The watery vapors dense began to melt
Into thin air, how faintly the sun's sphere
Seem'd wading through them: so thy nimble thought
May image, how at first I rebeheld
The sun, that bedward now his couch o'erhung.

Thus, with my leader's feet still equalling pace,
From forth that cloud I came, when now expired
The parting beams from off the nether shores.

O quick and forgetive power! that sometimes dost

So rob us of ourselves, we take no mark
Though round about us thousand trumpets clang;
What moves thee, if the senses stir not? Light
Moves thee from heaven, spontaneous, self-inform'd;
Or, likelier, gliding down with swift illapse
By will divine. Portray'd before me came
The traces of her dire impiety,
Whose form was changed into the bird, that most
Delights itself in song: and here my mind
Was inwardly so wrapt, it gave no place
To aught that ask'd admittance from without.
Next shower'd into my fantasy a shape,
As of one crucified, whose visage spake
Fell rancor, malice deep, wherein he died;
And round in Ahasuerus the great king;
Esther his bride; and Mordecai the just,
Blameless in word and deed. As of itself
That unsubstantial coinage of the brain
Burst, like a bubble, when the water fails
That fed it; in my vision straight uprose
A damsel weeping loud, and cried, "O queen!
O mother! wherefore has intemperate ire

Driven thee to loathe thy being? Not to lose
Lavinia, desperate thou hast slain thyself.
Now hast thou lost me. I am she, whose tears
Mourn, ere I fall, a mother's timeless end."

E'en as a sleep breaks off, if suddenly
New radiance strike upon the closed lids,
The broken slumber quivering ere it dies;
Thus, from before me, sunk the imagery,
Vanishing, soon as on my face there struck
The light, outshining far our earthly beam.
As round I turn'd me to survey what place
I had arrived at, "Here ye mount": exclaim'd
A voice, that other purpose left me none
Save will so eager to behold who spake,
I could not choose but gaze. As 'fore the sun,
That weighs our vision down, and veils his form
In light transcendent, thus my virtue fail'd
Unequal. "This is Spirit from above,
Who marshals us our upward way, unsought;
And in his own light shrouds him. As a man
Doth for himself, so now is done for us.

For whoso waits imploring, yet sees need
Of his prompt aidance, sets himself prepared
For blunt denial, ere the suit be made.
Refuse we not to lend a ready foot
At such inviting: haste we to ascend,
Before it darken: for we may not then,
Till morn again return." So spake my guide;
And to one ladder both address'd our steps;
And the first stair approaching, I perceived
Near me as 'twere the waving of a wing,
That fann'd my face, and whisper'd: "Blessed they,
The peace-makers: they know not evil wrath."

Now to such height above our heads were raised
The last beams, follow'd close by hooded night,
That many a star on all sides through the gloom
Shone out. "Why partest from me, O my strength?"
So with myself I communed; for I felt
My o'ertoil'd sinews slacken. We had reach'd
The summit, and were fix'd like to a bark
Arrived at land. And waiting a short space,
If aught should meet mine ear in that new round,

Then to my guide I turn'd, and said: "Loved sire!
Declare what guilt is on this circle purged.
If our feet rest, no need thy speech should pause."

He thus to me: "The love of good, whate'er,
Wanted of just proportion, here fulfils.
Here plies afresh the oar, that loiter'd ill.
But that thou mayst yet clearer understand,
Give ear unto my words; and thou shalt cull
Some fruit may please thee well, from this delay.

"Creator, nor created being, e'er,
My son," he thus began, "was without love,
Or natural, or the free spirit's growth,
Thou hast not that to learn. The natural still
Is without error: but the other swerves,
If on ill object bent, or thought excess
Of vigor, or defect. While e'er it seeks
The primal blessings, or with measure due
The inferior, no delight, that flows from it,
Partakes of ill. But let it warp to evil,
Or with more ardor than behoves, or less,

Pursue the good; the thing created then
Works 'gainst its Maker. Hence thou must infer
That love is germin of each virtue in ye,
And of each act no less, that merits pain.
Now since it may not be, but love intend
The welfare mainly of the thing it loves,
All from self-hatred are secure: and since
No being can be thought to exist apart,
And independent of the first, a bar
Of equal force restrains from hating that.

“Grant the distinction just; and it remains
The evil must be another's, which is loved.
Three ways such love is gender'd in your clay.
There is who hopes (his neighbor's worth deprest)
Pre-eminence himself; and covets hence,
For his own greatness, that another fall.
There is who so much fears the loss of power,
Fame, favor, glory (should his fellow mount
Above him), and so sickens at the thought,
He loves their opposite: and there is he,
Whom wrong or insult seems to gall and shame,

That he doth thirst for vengeance; and such needs
Must dote on other's evil. Here beneath,
This threefold love is mourn'd. Of the other sort
Be now instructed; that which follows good,
But with disorder'd and irregular course.

“All indistinctly apprehend a bliss,
On which the soul may rest; the hearts of all
Yearn after it; and to that wished bourn
All therefore strive to tend. If ye behold,
Or seek it, with a love remiss and lax;
This cornice, after just repenting, lays
Its penal torment on ye. Other good
There is, where man finds not his happiness:
It is not true fruition; not that blest
Essence, of every good the branch and root.
The love too lavishly bestow'd on this,
Along three circles over us, is mourn'd.
Account of that division tripartite
Expect not, fitter for thine own research.”

CANTO_XVIII

CANTO XVIII

Virgil discourses on the nature of love. Two spirits record instances of zeal and fervent affection, and others shout memorable examples of sin for which they suffer.

THE teacher ended, and his high discourse
Concluding, earnest in my looks inquired
If I appear'd content; and I, whom still
Unsated thirst to hear him urged, was mute,
Mute outwardly, yet inwardly I said:
"Perchance my too much questioning offends."
But he, true father, mark'd the secret wish
By diffidence restrain'd; and, speaking, gave
Me boldness thus to speak: "Master! my sight
Gathers so lively virtue from thy beams,
That all, thy words convey, distinct is seen.
Wherefore I pray thee, father, whom this heart
Holds dearest, thou wouldst deign by proof t' unfold
That love, from which, as from their source, thou bring'st
All good deeds and their opposite." He then:
"To what I now disclose be thy clear ken
Directed; and thou plainly shalt behold

How much those blind have err'd, who make themselves
The guides of men. The soul, created apt
To love, moves versatile which way soe'er
Aught pleasing prompts her, soon as she is waked
By pleasure into act. Of substance true
Your apprehension forms its counterfeit;
And, in you the ideal shape presenting,
Attracts the soul's regard. If she, thus drawn,
Incline toward it; love is that inclining,
And a new nature knit by pleasure in ye.
Then, as the fire points up, and mounting seeks
His birth-place and his lasting seat, e'en thus
Enters the captive soul into desire,
Which is a spiritual motion, that ne'er rests
Before enjoyment of the thing it loves.
Enough to show thee, how the truth from those
Is hidden, who aver all love a thing
Praiseworthy in itself; although perhaps
Its matter seem still good. Yet if the wax
Be good, it follows not the impression must."

"What love is," I return'd, "thy words, O guide!

And my own docile mind, reveal. Yet thence
New doubts have sprung. For, from without, if love
Be offer'd to us, and the spirit knows
No other footing; tend she right or wrong,
Is no desert of hers." He answering thus:
"What reason here discovers, I have power
To show thee: that which lies beyond, expect
From Beatrice, faith not reason's task.
Spirit, substantial form, with matter join'd,
Not in confusion mix'd, hath in itself
Specific virtue of that union born,
Which is not felt except it work, nor proved
But through effect, as vegetable life
By the green leaf. From whence his intellect
Deduced its primal notices of things,
Man therefore knows not, or his appetites
Their first affections; such in you, as zeal
In bees to gather honey; at the first,
Volition, meriting nor blame nor praise.
But o'er each lower faculty supreme,
That, as she list, are summon'd to her bar,
Ye have that virtue in you, whose just voice

Uttereth counsel, and whose word should keep
The threshold of assent. Here is the source,
Whence cause of merit in you is derived;
E'en as the affections, good or ill, she takes,
Or severs, winnow'd as the chaff. Those men,
Who, reasoning, went to depth profoundest, mark'd
That innate freedom; and were thence induced
To leave their moral teaching to the world.
Grant then, that from necessity arise
All love that glows within you; to dismiss
Or harbor it, the power is in yourselves.
Remember, Beatrice, in her style,
Denominates free choice by eminence
The noble virtue; if in talk with thee
She touch upon that theme." The moon, well nigh
To midnight hour belated, made the stars
Appear to wink and fade; and her broad disk
Seem'd like a crag on fire, as up the vault
That course she journey'd, which the sun then warms;
When they of Rome behold him at his set
Betwixt Sardinia and the Corsic isle.
And now the weight, that hung upon my thought,

Was lighten'd by the aid of that clear spirit,
Who raiseth Andes above Mantua's name.
I therefore, when my questions had obtain'd
Solution plain and ample, stood as one
Musing in dreamy slumber; but not long
Slumber'd; for suddenly a multitude,
The steep already turning from behind,
Rush'd on. With fury and like random rout,
As echoing on their shores at midnight heard
Ismenus and Asopus, for his Thebes
If Bacchus' help were needed; so came these
Tumultuous, curving each his rapid step,
By eagerness impell'd of holy love.

Soon they o'ertook us; with such swiftness moved
The mighty crowd. Two spirits at their head
Cried, weeping, "Blessed Mary sought with haste
The hilly region. Caesar, to subdue
Ilerda, darted in Marseilles his sting,
And flew to Spain." "Oh, tarry not: away!"
The others shouted; "let not time be lost
Through slackness of affection. Hearty zeal

To serve reanimates celestial grace."

"O ye! in whom intenser fervency
Haply supplies, where lukewarm erst ye fail'd,
Slow or neglectful, to absolve your part
Of good and virtuous; this man, who yet lives
(Credit my tale, though strange), desires to ascend,
So morning rise to light us. Therefore say
Which hand leads nearest to the rifted rock."

So spake my guide; to whom a shade return'd:
"Come after us, and thou shalt find the cleft.
We may not linger: such resistless will
Speeds our unwearied course. Vouchsafe us then
Thy pardon, if our duty seem to thee
Discourteous rudeness. In Verona I
Was Abbot of San Zeno, when the hand
Of Barbarossa grasp'd imperial sway,
That name e'er utter'd without tears in Milan
And there is he, hath one foot in his grave,
Who for that monastery ere long shall weep,
Ruining his power misused: for that his son,

Of body ill compact, and worse in mind,
And born in evil, he hath set in place
Of its true pastor." Whether more he spake,
Or here was mute, I know not: he had sped
E'en now so far beyond us. Yet thus much
I heard, and in remembrance treasured it.

He then, who never fail'd me at my need,
Cried, "Hither turn. Lo! two with sharp remorse
Chiding their sin." In rear of all the troop
These shouted: "First they died, to whom the sea
Open'd, or ever Jordan saw his heirs:
And they, who with AEneas to the end
Endured not suffering, for their portion chose
Life without glory." Soon as they had fled
Past reach of sight, new thought within me rose
By others follow'd fast, and each unlike
Its fellow: till led on from thought to thought,
And pleased with the fleeting train, mine eye
Was closed, and meditation changed to dream.

CANTO XIX

After describing his dream, the poet ascends to the fifth cornice where the sin of avarice is cleansed.

IT was the hour, when of diurnal heat
No reliques chafe the cold beams of the moon,
O'erpower'd by earth, or planetary sway
Of Saturn; and the geomancer sees
His Greater Fortune up the east ascend,
Where gray dawn checkers first the shadowy cone;
When, 'fore me in my dream, a woman's shape
There came, with lips that stammer'd, eyes aslant,
Distorted feet, hands maim'd, and color pale.

I look'd upon her: and, as sunshine cheers
Limbs numb'd by nightly cold, e'en thus my look
Unloosed her tongue; next, in brief space, her form
Decrepit raised erect, and faded face
With love's own hue illumed. Recovering speech,
She forthwith, warbling, such a strain began,

That I, how loath soe'er, could scarce have held
Attention from the song. "I," thus she sang,
"I am the Siren, she, whom mariners
On the wide sea are wilder'd when they hear:
Such fulness of delight the listener feels.
I, from his course, Ulysses by my lay
Enchanted drew. Whoe'er frequents me once,
Parts seldom: so I charm him, and his heart
Contented knows no void." Or ere her mouth
Was closed, to shame her, at my side appear'd
A dame of semblance holy. With stern voice
She utter'd: "Say, O Virgil! who is this?"
Which hearing, he approach'd, with eyes still bent
Toward that goodly presence: the other seized her,
And, her robes tearing, open'd her before,
And show'd the belly to me, whence a smell,
Exhaling loathsome, waked me. Round I turn'd
Mine eyes: and thus the teacher: "At the least
Three times my voice hath call'd thee. Rise, begone.
Let us the opening find where thou mayst pass."

I straightway rose. Now day, pour'd down from high,

Fill'd all the circuits of the sacred mount;
And, as we journey'd, on our shoulder smote
The early ray. I follow'd, stooping low
My forehead, as a man, o'ercharged with thought,
Who bends him to the likeness of an arch
That midway spans the flood; when thus I heard,
"Come, enter here," in tone so soft and mild,
As never met the ear on mortal strand.

With swan-like wings dispread and pointing up,
Who thus had spoken marshal'd us along,
Where, each side of the solid masonry,
The sloping walls retired; then moved his plumes,
And fanning us, affirm'd that those, who mourn,
Are blessed, for that comfort shall be theirs.

"What aileth thee, that still thou look'st to earth?"
Began my leader; while the angelic shape
A little over us his station took.

"New vision," I replied, "hath raised in me
Surmisings strange and anxious doubts, whereon

My soul intent allows no other thought
Or room, or entrance." "Hast thou seen," said he,
"That old enchantress, her, whose wiles alone
The spirits o'er us weep for? Hast thou seen
How man may free him of her bonds? Enough.
Let thy heels spurn the earth; and thy raised ken
Fix on the lure, which heaven's eternal King
Whirls in the rolling spheres." As on his feet
The falcon first looks down, then to the sky
Turns, and forth stretches eager for the food,
That woos him thither; so the call I heard:
So onward, far as the dividing rock
Gave way, I journey'd, till the plain was reach'd.

On the fifth circle when I stood at large,
A race appear'd before me, on the ground
All downward lying prone and weeping sore.
"My soul hath cleaved to the dust," I heard
With sighs so deep, they well nigh choked the words.

"O ye elect of God! whose penal woes
Both hope and justice mitigate, direct

Toward the steep rising our uncertain way."

"If ye approach secure from this our doom,
Prostration, and would urge your course with speed,
See that ye still to rightward keep the brink."

So them the bard besought; and such the words,
Beyond us some short space, in answer came.

I noted what remain'd yet hidden from them:
Thence to my liege's eyes mine eyes I bent,
And he, forthwith interpreting their suit,
Beckon'd his glad assent. Free then to act
As pleased me, I drew near, and took my stand
Over that shade whose words I late had mark'd.
And, "Spirit!" I said, "in whom repentant tears
Mature that blessed hour when thou with God
Shalt find acceptance, for a while suspend
For me that mightier care. Say who thou wast;
Why thus ye grovel on your bellies prone;
And if, in naught, ye wish my service there,
Whence living I am come." He answering spake:

“The cause why Heaven our back toward his cope
Reverses, shalt thou know: but me know first,
The successor of Peter, and the name
And title of my lineage, from that stream
That ‘twixt Chiaveri and Siestri draws
His limpid waters through the lowly glen.
A month and little more by proof I learnt,
With what a weight that robe of sovereignty
Upon his shoulder rests, who from the mire
Would guard it; that each other fardel seems
But feathers in the balance. Late, alas!
Was my conversion: but, when I became
Rome’s pastor, I discerned at once the dream
And cozenage of life; saw that the heart
Rested not there, and yet no prouder height
Lured on the climber: wherefore, of that life
No more enamor’d, in my bosom love
Of purer being kindled. For till then
I was a soul in misery, alienate
From God, and covetous of all earthly things;
Now, as thou seest, here punish’d for my dotting.
Such cleansing from the taint of avarice,

Do spirits, converted, need. This mount inflicts
No direr penalty. E'en as our eyes
Fasten'd below, nor e'er to loftier clime
Were lifted; thus hath justice level'd us,
Here on the earth. As avarice quench'd our love
Of good, without which is no working; thus
Here justice holds us prison'd, hand and foot
Chain'd down and bound, while heaven's just Lord shall please,
So long to tarry, motionless, outstretch'd."

My knees I stoop'd and would have spoke; but he,
Ere my beginning, by his ear perceived
I did him reverence; and "What cause," said he,
"Hath bow'd thee thus?" "Compunction," I rejoin'd,
"And inward awe of your high dignity."

"Up," he exclaim'd, "brother! upon thy feet
Arise; err not: thy fellow-servant I,
(Thine and all others') of one Sovereign Power.
If thou hast ever mark'd those holy sounds
Of gospel truth, 'nor shall be given in marriage,'
Thou mayst discern the reasons of my speech.

Go thy ways now; and linger here no more.
Thy tarrying is a let unto the tears,
With which I hasten that whereof thou speakest.
I have on earth a kinswoman; her name
Alagia, worthy in herself, so ill
Example of our house corrupt her not:
And she is all remaineth of me there."

CANTO XX

Hugh Capet tells of illustrious examples of voluntary poverty and bounty, and some noted instances of avarice.

ILL strives the will, 'gainst will more wise that strives:
His pleasure therefore to mine own preferr'd,
I drew the sponge yet thirsty from the wave.

Onward I moved: he also onward moved,
Who led me, coasting still, wherever place
Along the rock was vacant; as a man
Walks near the battlements on narrow wall.
For those on the other part, who drop by drop
Wring out their all-infecting malady,
Too closely press the verge. Accurst be thou,
Inveterate wolf! whose gorge ingluts more prey,
Than every beast beside, yet is not fill'd;
So bottomless thy maw.- Ye spheres of heaven!
To whom there are, as seems, who attribute
All change in mortal state, when is the day

Of his appearing, for whom fate reserves
To chase her hence?- With wary steps and slow
We pass'd; and I attentive to the shades,
Whom piteously I heard lament and wail;
And, 'midst the wailing, one before us heard
Cry out "O blessed Virgin!" as a dame
In the sharp pangs of childbed; and "How poor
Thou wast," it added, "witness that low roof
Where thou didst lay thy sacred burden down.
O good Fabricius! thou didst virtue choose
With poverty, before great wealth with vice."

The words so pleased me, that desire to know
The spirit, from whose lip they seem'd to come,
Did draw me onward. Yet it spake the gift
Of Nicholas, which on the maidens he
Bounteous bestow'd, to save their youthful prime
Unblemish'd. "Spirit! who dost speak of deeds
So worthy, tell me who thou wast," I said,
"And why thou dost with single voice renew
Memorial of such praise. That boon vouchsafed
Haply shall meet reward; if I return

To finish the short pilgrimage of life,
Still speeding to its close on restless wing."

"I," answer'd he, "will tell thee; not for help,
Which thence I look for; but that in thyself
Grace so exceeding shines, before thy time
Of mortal dissolution. I was root
Of that ill plant whose shade such poison sheds
O'er all the Christian land, that seldom thence
Good fruit is gather'd. Vengeance soon should come,
Had Ghent and Douay, Lille and Bruges power;
And vengeance I of heaven's great Judge implore.
Hugh Capet was I hight: from me descend
The Philips and the Louis, of whom France
Newly is govern'd: born of one, who plied
The slaughterer's trade at Paris. When the race
Of ancient kings had vanish'd (all save one
Wrapt up in sable weeds) within my gripe
I found the reins of empire, and such powers
Of new acquirement, with full store of friends,
That soon the widow'd circlet of the crown
Was girt upon the temples of my son,

He, from whose bones the anointed race begins.
Till the great dower of Provence had removed
The stains, that yet obscured our lowly blood,
Its sway indeed was narrow; but howe'er
It wrought no evil: there, with force and lies,
Began its rapine: after, for amends,
Poitou it seized, Navarre and Gascony.
To Italy came Charles; and for amends,
Young Conradine, an innocent victim, slew;
And sent the angelic teacher back to heaven,
Still for amends. I see the time at hand,
That forth from France invites another Charles
To make himself and kindred better known.
Unarm'd he issues, saving with that lance,
Which the arch-traitor tilted with, and that
He carries with so home a thrust, as rives
The bowels of poor Florence. No increase
Of territory hence, but sin and shame
Shall be his guerdon; and so much the more
As he more lightly deems of such foul wrong.
I see the other (who a prisoner late
Had stepped on shore) exposing to the mart

His daughter, whom he bargains for, as do
The Corsairs for their slaves. O avarice!
What canst thou more, who hast subdued our blood
So wholly to thyself, they feel no care
Of their own flesh? To hide with direr guilt
Past ill and future, lo! the flower-de-luce
Enters Alagna; in his Vicar Christ
Himself a captive, and his mockery
Acted again. Lo! to his holy lip
The vinegar and gall once more applied;
And he 'twixt living robbers doom'd to bleed.
Lo! the new Pilate, of whose cruelty
Such violence cannot fill the measure up,
With no decree to sanction, pushes on
Into the temple his yet eager sails.

“O sovereign Master! when shall I rejoice
To see the vengeance, which thy wrath, well-pleased,
In secret silence broods?- While daylight lasts,
So long what thou didst hear of her, sole spouse
Of the Great Spirit, and on which thou turn'dst
To me for comment, is the general theme

Of all our prayers: but, when it darkens, then
A different strain we utter; then record
Pygmalion, whom his gluttonous thirst of gold
Made traitor, robber, parricide: the woes
Of Midas, which his greedy wish ensued,
Mark'd for derision to all future times:
And the fond Achan, how he stole the prey,
That yet he seems by Joshua's ire pursued.
Sapphira with her husband next to blame;
And praise the fore feet, that with furious ramp
Spurn'd Heliodorus. All the mountain round
Rings with the infamy of Thracia's king,
Who slew his Phrygian charge: and last a shout
Ascends: 'Declare, O Crassus! for thou know'st,
The flavor of thy gold.' The voice of each
Now high, now low, as each his impulse prompts,
Is led through many a pitch, acute or grave.
Therefore, not singly, I erewhile rehearsed
That blessedness we tell of in the day:
But near me, none, beside, his accent raised."

From him we now had parted, and essay'd

With utmost efforts to surmount the way;
When I did feel, as nodding to its fall,
The mountain tremble; whence an icy chill
Seized on me, as on one to death convey'd.
So shook not Delos, when Latona there
Couch'd to bring forth the twin-born eyes of heaven.

Forthwith from every side a shout arose
So vehement, that suddenly my guide
Drew near, and cried: "Doubt not, while I conduct thee."
"Glory!" all shouted (such the sounds mine ear
Gather'd from those, who near me swell'd the sounds)
"Glory in the highest be to God." We stood
Immovably suspended, like to those,
The shepherds, who first heard in Bethlehem's field
That song: till ceased the trembling, and the song
Was ended: then our hallow'd path resumed,
Eying the prostrate shadows, who renew'd
Their custom'd mourning. Never in my breast
Did ignorance so struggle with desire
Of knowledge, if my memory do not err,
As in that moment; nor through haste dared I

To question, nor myself could aught discern.
So on I fared, in thoughtfulness and dread.

CANTO XXI

The two poets are overtaken by the spirit of Statius who is on his way to Paradise.

THE natural thirst, ne'er quench'd but from the well
Whereof the woman of Samaria craved,
Excited; haste, along the cumber'd path,
After my guide, impell'd; and pity moved
My bosom for the 'vengeful doom though just.
When lo! even as Luke relates, that Christ
Appear'd unto the two upon their way,
New-risen from his vaulted grave; to us
A shade appear'd, and after us approach'd,
Contemplating the crowd beneath its feet.
We were not ware of it; so first it spake,
Saying, "God give you peace, my brethren!" then
Sudden we turn'd: and Virgil such salute,
As fitted that kind greeting, gave; and cried:
"Peace in the blessed council be thy lot,
Awarded by that righteous court which me

To everlasting banishment exiles."

"How!" he exclaim'd, nor from his speed meanwhile
Desisting; "If that ye be spirits whom God
Vouchsafes not room above; who up the height
Has been thus far your guide?" To whom the bard:
"If thou observe the tokens, which this man,
Traced by the finger of the angel, bears;
'Tis plain that in the kingdom of the just
He needs must share. But sithence she, whose wheel
Spins day and night, for him not yet had drawn
That yarn, which on the fatal distaff piled,
Clotho apportions to each wight that breathes;
His soul, that sister is to mine and thine,
Not of herself could mount; for not like ours
Her ken: whence I, from forth the ample gulf
Of Hell, was ta'en, to lead him, and will lead
Far as my lore avails. But, if thou know,
Instruct us for what cause, the mount erewhile
Thus shook, and trembled: wherefore all at once
Seem'd shouting, even from his wave-wash'd foot."

That questioning so tallied with my wish,
The thirst did feel abatement of its edge
E'en from expectance. He forthwith replied:
"In its devotion, naught irregular
This mount can witness, or by punctual rule
Unsanction'd; here from every change exempt,
Other than that, which heaven in itself
Doth of itself receive, no influence
Can reach us. Tempest none, shower, hail, or snow,
Hoar frost, or dewy moistness, higher falls
Than that brief scale of threefold steps: thick clouds,
Nor scudding rack, are ever seen: swift glance
Ne'er lightens; nor Thaumantian Iris gleams,
That yonder often shifts on each side Heaven.
Vapor adust doth never mount above
The highest of the trinal stairs, whereon
Peter's vicegerent stands. Lower perchance,
With various motion rock'd, trembles the soil:
But here, through wind in earth's deep hollow pent,
I know not how, yet never trembled: then
Trembles, when any spirit feels itself
So purified, that it may rise, or move

For rising; and such loud acclaim ensues.
Purification, by the will alone,
Is proved, that free to change society
Seizes the soul rejoicing in her will.
Desire of bliss is present from the first;
But strong propension hinders, to that wish
By the just ordinance of heaven opposed;
Propension now as eager to fulfil
The allotted torment, as erewhile to sin.
And I, who in this punishment had lain
Five hundred years and more, but now have felt
Free wish for happier clime. Therefore thou felt'st
The mountain tremble; and the spirits devout
Heard'st, over all his limits, utter praise
To that liege Lord, whom I entreat their joy
To hasten." Thus he spake: and, since the draught
Is grateful ever as the thirst is keen,
No words may speak my fulness of content.

"Now," said the instructor sage, "I see the net
That takes ye here; and how the toils are loosed;
Why rocks the mountain, and why ye rejoice.

Vouchsafe, that from thy lips I next may learn
Who on the earth thou wast; and wherefore here,
So many an age, were prostrate." "In that time,
When the good Titus, with heaven's King to help,
Avenge those piteous gashes, whence the blood
By Judas sold did issue; with the name
Most lasting and most honor'd, there, was I
Abundantly renown'd," the shade replied,
"Not yet with faith endued. So passing sweet
My vocal spirit; from Tolosa, Rome
To herself drew me, where I merited
A myrtle garland to inwreath my brow.
Statius they name me still. Of Thebes I sang,
And next of great Achilles; but i' the way
Fell with the second burden. Of my flame
Those sparkles were the seeds, which I derived
From the bright fountain of celestial fire
That feeds unnumber'd lamps; the song I mean
Which sounds Aeneas' wanderings: that the breast
I hung at; that the nurse, from whom my veins
Drank inspiration: whose authority
Was ever sacred with me. To have lived

Coeval with the Mantuan, I would bide
The revolution of another sun
Beyond my stated years in banishment."

The Mantuan, when he heard him, turn'd to me;
And holding silence, by his countenance
Enjoin'd me silence: but the power, which wills,
Bears not supreme control: laughter and tears
Follow so closely on the passion prompts them,
They wait not for the motions of the will
In nature most sincere. I did but smile,
As one who winks; and thereupon the shade
Broke off, and peer'd into mine eyes, where best
Our looks interpret. "So to good event
Mayst thou conduct such great emprise," he cried,
"Say, why across thy visage beam'd, but now,
The lightning of a smile." On either part
Now am I straiten'd; one conjures me speak,
The other to silence binds me: whence a sigh
I utter, and the sigh is heard. "Speak on,"
The teacher cried: "and do not fear to speak;
But tell him what so earnestly he asks."

Whereon I thus: "Perchance, O ancient spirit!
Thou marvel'st at my smiling. There is room
For yet more wonder. He, who guides my ken
On high, he is that Mantuan, led by whom
Thou didst presume of men and gods to sing.
If other cause thou deem'dst for which I smiled,
Leave it as not the true one: and believe
Those words, thou spakest of him, indeed the cause."

Now down he bent to embrace my teacher's feet;
But he forbade him: "Brother! do it not:
Thou art a shadow, and behold'st a shade."
He, rising, answer'd thus: "Now hast thou proved
The force and ardor of the love I bear thee,
When I forget we are but things of air,
And, as a substance, treat an empty shade."

CANTO XXII

Dante, Virgil, and Statius mount to the sixth cornice where the sin of gluttony is purged. Voices record examples of temperance.

NOW we had left the angel, who had turn'd
To the sixth circle our ascending step;
One gash from off my forehead razed; while they,
Whose wishes tend to justice, shouted forth,
“Blessed!” and ended with “I thirst”: and I,
More nimble than along the other straits,
So journey'd, that, without the sense of toil,
I follow'd upward the swift-footed shades;
When Virgil thus began: “Let its pure flame
From virtue flow, and love can never fail
To warm another's bosom, so the light
Shine manifestly forth. Hence, from that hour,
When, 'mongst us in the purlieu of the deep,
Came down the spirit of Aquinum's bard,
Who told of thine affection, my good will

Hath been for thee of quality as strong
As ever link'd itself to one not seen.
Therefore these stairs will now seem short to me.
But tell me: and, if too secure, I loose
The rein with a friend's license, as a friend
Forgive me, and speak now as with a friend:
How chanced it covetous desire could find
Place in that bosom, 'midst such ample store
Of wisdom, as thy zeal had treasured there?"

First somewhat moved to laughter by his words,
Staius replied: "Each syllable of thine
Is a dear pledge of love. Things oft appear,
That minister false matter to our doubts,
When their true causes are removed from sight.
Thy question doth assure me, thou believest
I was on earth a covetous man; perhaps
Because thou found'st me in that circle placed.
Know then I was too wide of avarice:
And e'en for that excess, thousands of moons
Have wax'd and waned upon my sufferings.
And were it not that I with heedful care

Noted, where thou exclaim'st as if in ire
With human nature, 'Why, thou cursed thirst
Of gold! dost not with juster measure guide
The appetite of mortals?' I had met
The fierce encounter of the voluble rock.
Then was I ware that, with too ample wing,
The hands may haste to lavishment; and turn'd,
As from my other evil, so from this,
In penitence. How many from their grave
Shall with shorn locks arise, who living, ay,
And at life's last extreme, of this offence,
Through ignorance, did not repent! And know,
The fault, which lies direct from any sin
In level opposition, here, with that,
Wastes its green rankness on one common heap.
Therefore, if I have been with those, who wail
Their avarice, to cleanse me; through reverse
Of their transgression, such hath been my lot."

To whom the sov'reign of the pastoral song:
"While thou didst sing that cruel warfare waged
By the twin sorrow of Jocasta's womb,

From thy discourse with Clio there, it seems
As faith had not been thine; without the which,
Good deeds suffice not. And if so, what sun
Rose on thee, or what candle pierced the dark,
That thou didst after see to hoist the sail,
And follow where the fisherman had led?"

He answering thus: "By thee conducted first,
I enter'd the Parnassian grots, and quaff'd
Of the clear spring: illumined first by thee,
Open'd mine eyes to God. Thou didst, as one,
Who, journeying through the darkness, bears a light
Behind, that profits not himself, but makes
His followers wise, when thou exclaimed'st, 'Lo!
A renovated world, Justice return'd,
Times of primeval innocence restored,
And a new race descended from above.'
Poet and Christian both to thee I owed.
That thou mayst mark more clearly what I trace,
My hand shall stretch forth to inform the lines
With livelier coloring. Soon o'er all the world,
By messengers from Heaven, the true belief

Teem'd now prolific; and that word of thine,
Accordant, to the new instructors chimed.
Induced by which agreement, I was wont
Resort to them; and soon their sanctity
So won upon me, that, Domitian's rage
Pursuing them, I mix'd my tears with theirs;
And, while on earth I stay'd, still succor'd them;
And their most righteous customs made me scorn
All sects besides. Before I led the Greeks,
In tuneful fiction, to the streams of Thebes,
I was baptized: but secretly, through fear,
Remain'd a Christian, and conform'd long time
To Pagan rites. Four centuries and more
I, for that lukewarmness, was fain to pace
Round the fourth circle. Thou then, who hast raised
The covering which did hide such blessing from me,
Whilst much of this ascent is yet to climb,
Say, if thou know, where our old Terence bides,
Caecilius, Plautus, Varro: if condemn'd
They dwell, and in what province of the deep."
"These," said my guide, "with Persius and myself,
And others many more, are with that Greek,

Of mortals, the most cherish'd by the nine,
In the first ward of darkness. There, ofttimes,
We of that mount hold converse, on whose top
For aye our nurses live. We have the bard
Of Pella and the Teian, Agatho,
Simonides, and many a Grecian else
Ingarlanded with laurel. Of thy train,
Antigone is there, Deiphile,
Argia, and as sorrowful as erst
Ismene, and who show'd Langia's wave:
Deidamia with her sisters there,
And blind Tiresias' daughter, and the bride
Sea-born of Peleus." Either poet now
Was silent; and no longer by the ascent
Or the steep walls obstructed, round them cast
Inquiring eyes. Four handmaids of the day
Had finish'd now their office, and the fifth
Was at the chariot-beam, directing still
Its flamy point aloof; when thus my guide:
"Methinks, it well behoves us to the brink
Bend the right shoulder, circuiting the mount,
As we have ever used." So custom there

Was usher to the road; the which we chose
Less doubtful, as that worthy shade complied.

They on before me went: I sole pursued,
Listening their speech, that to my thoughts convey'd
Mysterious lessons of sweet poesy.
But soon they ceased; for midway of the road
A tree we found, with goodly fruitage hung,
And pleasant to the smell: and as a fir,
Upward from bough to bough, less ample spreads;
So downward this less ample spread; that none,
Methinks, aloft may climb. Upon the side,
That closed our path, a liquid crystal fell
From the steep rock, and through the sprays above
Stream'd showering. With associate step the bards
Drew near the plant; and, from amidst the leaves,
A voice was heard: "Ye shall be chary of me";
And after added: "Mary took more thought
For joy and honor of the nuptial feast,
Than for herself, who answers now for you.
The women of old Rome were satisfied
With water for their beverage. Daniel fed

On pulse, and wisdom gain'd. The primal age
Was beautiful as gold: and hunger then
Made acorns tasteful; thirst, each rivulet
Run nectar. Honey and locusts were the food,
Whereon the Baptist in the wilderness
Fed, and that eminence of glory reach'd
And greatness, which the Evangelist records."

CANTO XXIII

They are overtaken by the spirit of Forese who inveighs
bitterly against the immodest dress of their
countrywomen of Florence.

ON the green leaf mine eyes were fix'd, like his
Who throws away his days in idle chase
Of the diminutive birds, when thus I heard
The more than father warn me: "Son! our time
Asks thriftier using. Linger not: away!"

Thereat my face and steps at once I turn'd
Toward the sages, by whose converse cheer'd
I journey'd on, and felt no toil: and lo!
A sound of weeping, and a song: "My lips,
O Lord!" and these so mingled, it gave birth
To pleasure and to pain. "O Sire beloved!
Say what is this I hear." Thus I inquired.

"Spirits," said he, "who, as they go, perchance,

Their debt of duty pay." As on their road
The thoughtful pilgrims, overtaking some
Not known unto them, turn to them, and look,
But stay not; thus, approaching from behind
With speedier motion, eyed us, as they pass'd,
A crowd of spirits, silent and devout.
The eyes of each were dark and hollow; pale
Their visage, and so lean withal, the bones
Stood staring through the skin. I do not think
Thus dry and meagre Erisichthon show'd,
When pinch'd by sharp-set famine to the quick.

"Lo!" to myself I mused, "the race, who lost
Jerusalem, when Mary with dire beak
Prey'd on her child." The sockets seem'd as rings,
From which the gems were dropt. Who reads the name
Of man upon his forehead, there the M
Had traced most plainly. Who would deem, that scent
Of water and an apple could have proved
Powerful to generate such pining want,
Not knowing how it wrought? While now I stood,
Wondering what thus could waste them (for the cause

Of their gaunt hollowness and scaly rind
Appear'd not), lo! a spirit turn'd his eyes
In their deep-sunken cells, and fasten'd them
On me, then cried with vehemence aloud:
"What grace is this vouchsafed me?" By his looks
I ne'er had recognized him: but the voice
Brought to my knowledge what his cheer conceal'd.
Remembrance of his altered lineaments
Was kindled from that spark; and I agnized
The visage of Forese. "Ah! respect
This wan and leprous-wither'd skin," thus he
Suppliant implored, "this macerated flesh.
Speak to me truly of thyself. And who
Are those twain spirits, that escort thee there?
Be it not said thou scorn'st to talk with me."

"That face of thine," I answer'd him, "which dead
I once bewail'd, disposes me not less
For weeping, when I see it thus transform'd.
Say then, by Heaven, what blasts ye thus? The whilst
I wonder, ask not speech from me: unapt
Is he to speak, whom other will employs."

He thus: "The water and the plant, we pass'd,
With power are gifted, by the eternal will
Infused; the which so pines me. Every spirit,
Whose song bewails his gluttony indulged
Too grossly, here in hunger and in thirst
Is purified. The odor, which the fruit
And spray that showers upon the verdure, breathe,
Inflames us with desire to feed and drink.
Nor once alone, encompassing our route,
We come to add fresh fuel to the pain:
Pain, said I? solace rather: for that will
To the tree leads us, by which Christ was led
To call on Eli, joyful, when he paid
Our ransom from his vein." I answering thus:
"Forese! from that day, in which the world
For better life thou changedst, not five years
Have circled. If the power of sinning more
Were first concluded in thee, ere thou knew'st
That kindly grief which re-espouses us
To God, how hither art thou come so soon?
I thought to find thee lower, there, where time

Is recompense for time." He straight replied:
"To drink up the sweet wormwood of affliction
I have been brought thus early, by the tears
Stream'd down my Nella's cheeks. Her prayers devout,
Her sighs have drawn me from the coast, where oft
Expectance lingers; and have set me free
From the other circles. In the sight of God
So much the dearer is my widow prized.
She whom I loved so fondly, as she ranks
More singly eminent for virtuous deeds.
The tract, most barbarous of Sardinia's isle,
Hath dames more chaste, and modester by far,
Than that wherein I left her. O sweet brother!
What wouldst thou have me say? A time to come
Stands full within my view, to which this hour
Shall not be counted of an ancient date,
When from the pulpit shall be loudly warn'd
The unblushing dames of Florence, lest they bare
Unkerchief'd bosoms to the common gaze.
What savage women hath the world e'er seen,
What Saracens, for whom there needed scourge
Of spiritual or other discipline,

To force them walk with covering on their limbs?
But did they see, the shameless ones, what Heaven
Wafts on swift wing toward them while I speak,
Their mouths were oped for howling: they shall taste
Of sorrow (unless foresight cheat me here)
Or e'er the cheek of him be clothed with down,
Who is now rock'd with lullaby asleep.
Ah! now, my brother, hide thyself no more;
Thou seest how not I alone, but all,
Gaze, where thou veil'st the intercepted sun."

Whence I replied: "If thou recall to mind
What we were once together, even yet
Remembrance of those days may grieve thee sore,
That I forsook that life, was due to him
Who there precedes me, some few evenings past,
When she was round, who shines with sister lamp
To his great glisters yonder," and I show'd
The sun. "'Tis he, who through profoundest night
Of the true dead has brought me, with this flesh
As true, that follows. From that gloom the aid
Of his sure comfort drew me on to climb,

And, climbing, wind along this mountain-steep,
Which rectifies in you whate'er the world
Made crooked and depraved. I have his word,
That he will bear me company as far
As till I come where Beatrice dwells:
But there must leave me. Virgil is that spirit,
Who thus hath promised," and I pointed to him:
"The other is that shade, for whom so late
Your realm, as he arose, exulting, shook
Through every pendent cliff and rocky bound."

CANTO XXIV

Forese points out several purifying themselves of gluttony, and predicts the violent end of Dante's political enemy, Corso Donati; the three poets proceed to the next cornice.

OUR journey was not slacken'd by our talk,
Nor yet our talk by journeying. Still we spake,
And urged our travel stoutly, like a ship
When the wind sits astern. The shadowy forms,
That seem'd things dead and dead again, drew in
At their deep-delved orbs rare wonder of me,
Perceiving I had life; and I my words
Continued, and thus spake: "He journeys up
Perhaps more tardily than else he would,
For others' sake. But tell me, if thou know'st,
Where is Piccarda? Tell me, if I see
Any of mark, among this multitude
Who eye me thus." "My sister (she for whom,
'Twixt beautiful and good, I cannot say
Which name was fitter) wears e'en now her crown,

And triumphs in Olympus." Saying this,
He added: "Since spare diet hath so worn
Our semblance out, 'tis lawful here to name
Each one. This," and his finger then he raised,
"Is Buonaggiunta- Buonaggiunta, he
Of Lucca: and that face beyond him, pierced
Unto a leaner fineness than the rest,
Had keeping of the church; he was of Tours
And purges by wan abstinence away
Bolsena's eels and cups of muscadel."

He show'd me many others, one by one:
And all, as they were named, seem'd well content;
For no dark gesture I discern'd in any.
I saw, through hunger, Ubaldino, grind
His teeth on emptiness; and Boniface,
That waved the crozier o'er a numerous flock:
I saw the Marquis, who had time erewhile
To swill at Forli with less drought; yet so,
Was one ne'er sated. I howe'er, like him
That, gazing 'midst a crowd, singles out one,
So singled him of Lucca; for methought

Was none among them took such note of me.
Somewhat I heard him whisper of Gentucca:
The sound was indistinct, and murmur'd there,
Where justice, that so strips them, fix'd her sting.

“Spirit!” said I, “it seems as thou wouldst fain
Speak with me. Let me hear thee. Mutual wish
To converse prompts, which let us both indulge.”

He, answering, straight began: “Woman is born,
Whose brow no wimple shades yet, that shall make
My city please thee, blame it as they may.
Go then with this forewarning. If aught false
My whisper too implied, the event shall tell.
But say, if of a truth I see the man
Of that new lay the inventor, which begins
With ‘Ladies, ye that con the lore of love.’”

To whom I thus: “Count of me but as one,
Who am the scribe of love; that, when he breathes,
Take up my pen, and, as he dictates, write.”

“Brother!” said he, “the hindrance, which once held
The notary, with Guittone and myself,
Short of that new and sweeter style I hear,
Is now disclosed: I see how ye your plumes
Stretch, as the inditer guides them; which, no question,
Ours did not. He that seeks a grace beyond,
Sees not the distance parts one style from other.”
And, as contented, here he held his peace.

Like as the birds, that winter near the Nile,
In squared regiment direct their course,
Then stretch themselves in file for speedier flight;
Thus all the tribe of spirits, as they turn’d
Their visage, faster fled, nimble alike
Through leanness and desire. And as a man,
Tired with the motion of a trotting steed,
Slacks pace, and stays behind his company,
Till his o’erbreathed lungs keep temperate time;
E’en so Forese let that holy crew
Proceed, behind them lingering at my side,
And saying: “When shall I again behold thee?”

“How long my life may last,” said I, “I know not.
This know, how soon soever I return,
My wishes will before me have arrived:
Sithence the place, where I am set to live,
Is, day by day, more scoop’d of all its good;
And dismal ruin seems to threaten it.”

“Go now,” he cried: “lo! he, whose guilt is most
Passes before my vision, dragg’d at heels
Of an infuriate beast. Toward the vale,
Where guilt hath no redemption, on it speeds,
Each step increasing swiftness on the last;
Until a blow it strikes, that leaveth him
A corse most vilely shatter’d. No long space
Those wheels have yet to roll” (therewith his eyes
Look’d up to heaven), “ere thou shalt plainly see
That which my words may not more plainly tell.
I quit thee: time is precious here: I lose
Too much, thus measuring my pace with thine.”

As from a troop of well-rank’d chivalry,
One knight, more enterprising than the rest,

Pricks forth at gallop, eager to display
His prowess in the first encounter proved;
So parted he from us, with lengthen'd strides;
And left me on the way with those twain spirits,
Who were such mighty marshals of the world.

When he beyond us had so fled, mine eyes
No nearer reach'd him, than my thought his words;
The branches of another fruit, thick hung,
And blooming fresh, appear'd. E'en as our steps
Turn'd thither; not far off, it rose to view.
Beneath it were a multitude, that raised
Their hands, and shouted forth I know not what
Unto the boughs; like greedy and fond brats,
That beg, and answer none obtain from him,
Of whom they beg; but more to draw them on,
He, at arm's length, the object of their wish
Above them holds aloft, and hides it not.

At length, as undeceived, they went their way:
And we approach the tree, whom vows and tears
Sue to in vain; the mighty tree. "Pass on,

And come not near. Stands higher up the wood,
Whereof Eve tasted: and from it was ta'en
This plant." Such sounds from midst the thickets came
Whence I, with either bard, close to the side
That rose, pass'd forth beyond. "Remember," next
We heard, "those unblest creatures of the clouds,
How they their twifold bosoms, overgorged,
Opposed in fight to Theseus: call to mind
The Hebrews, how, effeminate, they stoop'd
To ease their thirst; whence Gideon's ranks were thinn'd,
As he to Madian march'd adown the hills."

Thus near one border coasting, still we heard
The sins of gluttony, with woe erewhile
Reguerdon'd. Then along the lonely path,
Once more at large, full thousand paces on
We travel'd, each contemplative and mute.

"Why pensive journey so ye three alone?"
Thus suddenly a voice exclaim'd: whereat
I shook, as doth a scared and paltry beast;
Then raised my head, to look from whence it came.

Was ne'er, in furnace, glass, or metal, seen
So bright and glowing red, as was the shape
I now beheld. "If ye desire to mount,"
He cried; "here must ye turn. This way he goes,
Who goes in quest of peace." His countenance
Had dazzled me; and to my guides I faced
Backward, like one who walks as sound directs.

As when, to harbinger the dawn, springs up
On freshen'd wing the air of May, and breathes
Of fragrance, all impregn'd with herb and flowers;
E'en such a wind I felt upon my front
Blow gently, and the moving of a wing
Perceived, that, moving, shed ambrosial smell;
And then a voice: "Blessed are they, whom grace
Doth so illumine, that appetite in them
Exhaleth no inordinate desire,
Still hungering as the rule of temperance wills."

CANTO XXV

At the last cornice where the sin of incontinence
is purged, the spirits record illustrious
instances of chastity.

IT was an hour, when he who climbs had need
To walk uncrippled; for the sun had now
To Taurus the meridian circle left,
And to the Scorpion left the night. As one,
That makes no pause, but presses on his road,
Whate'er betide him, if some urgent need
Impel; so enter'd we upon our way,
One before other; for, but singly, none
That steep and narrow scale admits to climb.

E'en as the young stork lifteth up his wing
Through wish to fly, yet ventures not to quit
The nest, and drops it; so in me desire
Of questioning my guide arose, and fell,
Arriving even to the act that marks

A man prepared for speech. Him all our haste
Restrain'd not; but thus spake the sire beloved:
"Fear not to speed the shaft, that on thy lip
Stands trembling for its flight." Encouraged thus,
I straight began: "How there can leanness come,
Where is no want of nourishment to feed?"

"If thou," he answer'd, "hadst remember'd thee,
How Meleager with the wasting brand
Wasted alike, by equal fires consumed;
This would not trouble thee: and hadst thou thought,
How in the mirror your reflected form
With mimic motion vibrates; what now seems
Hard, and appear'd no harder than the pulp
Of summer-fruit mature. But that thy will
In certainty may find its full repose,
Lo Statius here! on him I call, and pray
That he would now be healer of thy wound."

"If, in thy presence, I unfold to him
The secrets of heaven's vengeance, let me plead
Thine own injunction to exculpate me."

So Statius answer'd, and forthwith began:
“Attend my words, O son, and in thy mind
Receive them; so shall they be light to clear
The doubt thou offer'st. Blood, concocted well,
Which by the thirsty veins is ne'er imbibed,
And rests as food superfluous, to be ta'en
From the replenish'd table, in the heart
Derives effectual virtue, that informs
The several human limbs, as being that
Which passes through the veins itself to make them.
Yet more concocted it descends, where shame
Forbids to mention: and from thence distils
In natural vessels on another's blood.
There each unite together; one disposed
To endure, to act the other, through that power
Derived from whence it came; and being met,
It 'gins to work, coagulating first;
Then vivifies what its own substance made
Consist. With animation now endued,
The active virtue (differing from a plant
No further, than that this is on the way,
And at its limit that) continues yet

To operate, that now it moves, and feels,
As sea-sponge clinging to the rock: and there
Assumes the organic powers its seed convey'd.
This is the moment, son! at which the virtue,
That from the generating heart proceeds,
Is pliant and expansive; for each limb
Is in the heart by forgeful nature plann'd.
How babe of animal becomes, remains
For thy considering. At this point, more wise,
Than thou, has err'd, making the soul disjoin'd
From passive intellect, because he saw
No organ for the latter's use assign'd.

“Open thy bosom to the truth that comes.
Know, soon as in the embryo, to the brain
Articulation is complete, then turns
The primal Mover with a smile of joy
On such great work of nature; and imbreathe
New spirit replete with virtue, that what here
Active it finds, to its own substance draws;
And forms an individual soul, that lives,
And feels, and bends reflective on itself.

And that thou less may'st marvel at the word,
Mark the sun's heat; how that to wine doth change,
Mix'd with the moisture filter'd through the vine.

“When Lachesis hath spun the thread, the soul
Takes with her both the human and divine,
Memory, intelligence, and will, in act
Far keener than before; the other powers
Inactive all and mute. No pause allow'd,
In wondrous sort self-moving, to one strand
Of those, where the departed roam, she falls:
Here learns her destined path. Soon as the place
Receives her, round the plastic virtue beams,
Distinct as in the living limbs before:
And as the air, when saturate with showers,
The casual beam refracting, decks itself
With many a hue; so here the ambient air
Weareth that form, which influence of the soul
Imprints on it: and like the flame, that where
The fire moves, thither follows; so, henceforth,
The new form on the spirit follows still:
Hence hath it semblance, and is shadow call'd,

With each sense, even to the sight, endued:
Hence speech is ours, hence laughter, tears and sighs,
Which thou mayst oft have witness'd on the mount.
The obedient shadow fails not to present
Whatever varying passion moves within us.
And this the cause of what thou marvel'st at."

Now the last flexure of our way we reach'd;
And to the right hand turning other care
Awaits us. Here the rocky precipice
Hurls forth redundant flames; and from the rim
A blast up-blown, with forcible rebuff
Driveth them back, sequester'd from its bound.

Behoved us, one by one, along the side,
That border'd on the void, to pass; and I
Fear'd on one hand the fire, on the other fear'd
Headlong to fall: when thus the instructor warn'd;
"Strict rein must in this place direct the eyes.
A little swerving and the way is lost."

Then from the bosom of the burning mass,

“O God of mercy!” heard I sung, and felt
No less desire to turn. And when I saw
Spirits along the flame proceeding, I
Between their footsteps and mine own was fain
To share by turns my view. At the hymn’s close
They shouted loud, “I do not know a man”;
Then in low voice again took up the strain;
Which once more ended, “To the wood,” they cried,
“Ran Dian, and drave forth Callisto stung
With Cytherea’s poison”: then return’d
Unto their song; then many a pair extoll’d,
Who lived in virtue chastely and the bands
Of wedded love. Nor from that task, I ween,
Surcease they; whilesoe’er the scorching fire
Enclasps them. Of such skill appliance needs,
To medicine the wound that healeth last.

CANTO XXVI

A spirit wondering at the shadow cast by Dante's body addresses him and proves to be Guido Guinicelli, the Italian poet.

WHILE singly thus along the rim we walk'd,
Oft the good master warn'd me, "Look thou well.
Avail it that I caution thee." The sun
Now all the western clime irradiate changed
From azure tinct to white; and, as I pass'd,
My passing shadow made the umber'd flame
Burn ruddier. At so strange a sight I mark'd
That many a spirit marvel'd on his way.

This bred occasion first to speak of me.
"He seems," said they, "no insubstantial frame";
Then, to obtain what certainty they might,
Stretch'd toward me, careful not to overpass
The burning pale. "O thou! who followest
The others, haply not more slow than they,

But moved by reverence; answer me, who burn
In thirst and fire: nor I alone, but these
All for thine answer do more thirst, than doth
Indian or Aethiop for the cooling stream.
Tell us, how is it that thou makest thyself
A wall against the sun, as thou not yet
Into the inextricable toils of death
Hadst enter'd?" Thus spake one: and I had straight
Declared me, if attention had not turn'd
To new appearance. Meeting these, there came,
Midway the burning path, a crowd, on whom
Earnestly gazing, from each part I view
The shadows all press forward, severally
Each snatch a hasty kiss, and then away.
E'en so the emmets, 'mid their dusky troops,
Peer closely one at other, to spy out
Their mutual road perchance, and how they thrive.

That friendly greeting parted, ere despatch
Of the first onward step, from either tribe
Loud clamor rises: those, who newly come,
Shout "Sodom and Gomorrah!" these, "The cow

Pasiphae enter'd, that the beast she woo'd
Might rush unto her luxury." Then as cranes,
That part toward the Rhiphaen mountains fly,
Part toward the Lybic sands, these to avoid
The ice, and those the sun; so hasteth off
One crowd, advances the other; and resume
Their first song, weeping, and their several shout.

Again drew near my side the very same,
Who had erewhile besought me; and their looks
Mark'd eagerness to listen. I, who twice
Their will had noted, spake: "O spirits! secure,
Whene'er the time may be, of peaceful end;

"My limbs, nor crude, nor in mature old age,
Have I left yonder: here they bear me, fed
With blood, and sinew-strung. That I no more
May live in blindness, hence I tend aloft.
There is a dame on high, who wins for us
This grace, by which my mortal through your realm
I bear. But may your utmost wish soon meet
Such full fruition, that the orb of heaven,

Fullest of love, and of most ample space,
Receive you; as ye tell (upon my page
Henceforth to stand recorded) who ye are;
And what this multitude, that at your backs
Have pass'd behind us." As one, mountain-bred,
Rugged and clownish, if some city's walls
He chance to enter, round him stares agape,
Confounded and struck dumb; e'en such appear'd
Each spirit. But when rid of that amaze
(Not long the inmate of a noble heart),
He, who before had question'd, thus resumed:
"O blessed! who, for death preparing takest
Experience of our limits, in thy bark;
Their crime, who not with us proceed, was that
For which, as he did triumph, Caesar heard
The shout of 'Queen!' to taunt him. Hence their cry
Of 'Sodom!' as they parted; to rebuke
Themselves, and aid the burning by their shame.
Our sinning was Hermaphrodite: but we,
Because the law of human kind we broke,
Following like beasts our vile concupiscence,
Hence parting from them, to our own disgrace

Record the name of her, by whom the beast
In bestial tire was acted. Now our deeds
Thou know'st, and how we sinn'd. If thou by name
Wouldst haply know us, time permits not now
To tell so much, nor can I. Of myself
Learn what thou wishest. Guinicelli I;
Who having truly sorrow'd ere my last,
Already cleanse me." With such pious joy,
As the two sons upon their mother gazed
From sad Lycurgus rescued; such my joy
(Save that I more repress'd it) when I heard
From his own lips the name of him pronounced,
Who was a father to me, and to those
My betters, who have ever used the sweet
And pleasant rhymes of love. So naught I heard,
Nor spake; but long time thoughtfully I went
Gazing on him; and, only for the fire,
Approach'd not nearer. When my eyes were fed
By looking on him; with such solemn pledge,
As forces credence, I devoted me
Unto his service wholly. In reply
He thus bespake me: "What from thee I hear

Is graved so deeply on my mind, the waves
Of Lethe shall not wash it off, nor make
A whit less lively. But as now thy oath
Has seal'd the truth, declare what cause impels
That love, which both thy looks and speech bewray."

"Those dulcet lays," I answer'd; "which, as long
As of our tongue the beauty does not fade,
Shall make us love the very ink that traced them."

"Brother!" he cried, and pointed at the shade
Before him, "there is one, whose mother speech
Doth owe to him a fairer ornament.
He in love ditties, and the tales of prose,
Without a rival stands; and let the fools
Talk on, who think the songster of Limoges
O'ertops him. Rumor and the popular voice
They look to, more than truth; and so confirm
Opinion, ere by art or reason taught.
Thus many of the elder time cried up
Guittone, giving him the prize, till truth
By strength of numbers vanquish'd. If thou own

So ample privilege, as to have gain'd
Free entrance to the cloister, whereof Christ
Is Abbot of the college; say to him
One paternoster for me, far as needs
For dwellers in this world, where power to sin
No longer tempts us." Haply to make way
For one that follow'd next, when that was said,
He vanish'd through the fire, as through the wave
A fish, that glances diving to the deep.

I, to the spirit he had shown me, drew
A little onward, and besought his name,
For which my heart, I said, kept gracious room.
He frankly thus began: "Thy courtesy
So wins on me, I have nor power nor will
To hide me. I am Amault; and with songs,
Sorely lamenting for my folly past,
Through this ford of fire I wade, and see
The day, I hope for, smiling in my view.
I pray ye by the worth that guides ye up
Unto the summit of the scale, in time
Remember ye my sufferings." With such words

He disappear'd in the refining flame.

CANTO XXVII

The fall of night hinders their further ascent, and the poet dreams of two females representing the active and contemplative life.

NOW was the sun so station'd, as when first
His early radiance quivers on the heights,
Where stream'd his Maker's blood; while Libra hangs
Above Hesperian Ebro; and new fires,
Meridian, flash on Ganges' yellow tide.

So day was sinking, when the angel of God
Appear'd before us. Joy was in his mien.
Forth of the flame he stood upon the brink;
And with a voice, whose lively clearness far
Surpass'd our human, "Blessed are the pure
In heart," he sang: then near him as we came,
"Go ye not further, holy spirits!" he cried,
"Ere the fire pierce you: enter in; and list
Attentive to the song ye hear from thence."

I, when I heard his saying, was as one
Laid in the grave. My hands together clasp'd,
And upward stretching, on the fire I look'd;
And busy, fancy conjured up the forms
Erewhile beheld alive consumed in flames.
The escorting spirits turn'd with gentle looks
Toward me; and the Mantuan spake: "My son,
Here torment thou mayst feel, but canst not death.
Remember thee, remember thee, if I
Safe e'en on Geryon brought thee; now I come
More near to God, wilt thou not trust me now?
Of this be sure; though in its womb that flame
A thousand years contain'd thee, from thy head
No hair should perish. If thou doubt my truth,
Approach; and with thy hands thy vesture's hem
Stretch forth, and for thyself confirm belief.
Lay now all fear, oh! lay all fear aside.
Turn hither, and come onward undismay'd."

I still, though conscience urged, no step advanced.

When still he saw me fix'd and obstinate,
Somewhat disturb'd he cried: "Mark now, my son,
From Beatrice thou art by this wall
Divided." As at Thisbe's name the eye
Of Pyramus was open'd (when life ebb'd
Fast from his veins), and took one parting glance,
While vermeil dyed the mulberry; thus I turn'd
To my sage guide, relenting, when I heard
The name that springs for ever in my breast.

He shook his forehead; and, "How long," he said,
"Linger we now?" then smiled, as one would smile
Upon a child that eyes the fruit and yields.
Into the fire before me then he walk'd;
And Statius, who erewhile no little space
Had parted us, he pray'd to come behind.

I would have cast me into molten glass
To cool me, when I enter'd; so intense
Raged the conflagrant mass. The sire beloved,
To comfort me, as he proceeded, still
Of Beatrice talk'd. "Her eyes," saith he,

“E’en now I seem to view.” From the other side
A voice, that sang, did guide us; and the voice
Following, with heedful ear, we issued forth,
There where the path led upward. “Come,” we heard,
“Come, blessed of my Father.” Such the sounds,
That hail’d us from within a light, which shone
So radiant, I could not endure the view.
“The sun,” it added, “hastes: and evening comes.
Delay not: ere the western sky is hung
With blackness, strive ye for the pass.” Our way
Upright within the rock arose, and faced
Such part of heaven, that from before my steps
The beams were shrouded of the sinking sun.

Nor many stairs were overpast, when now
By fading of the shadow we perceived
The sun behind us couch’d; and ere one face
Of darkness o’er its measureless expanse
Involved the horizon, and the night her lot
Held individual, each of us had made
A stair his pallet; not that will, but power,
Had fail’d us, by the nature of that mount

Forbidden further travel. As the goats,
That late have skipt and wanton'd rapidly
Upon the craggy cliffs, ere they had ta'en
Their supper on the herb, now silent lie
And ruminat beneath the umbrage brown,
While noon-day rages; and the goatherd leans
Upon his staff, and leaning watches them:
And as the swain, that lodges out all night
In quiet by his flock, lest beast of prey
Disperse them: even so all three abode,
I as a goat, and as the shepherds they,
Close pent on either side by shelving rock.

A little glimpse of sky was seen above;
Yet by that little I beheld the stars,
In magnitude and lustre shining forth
With more than wonted glory. As I lay,
Gazing on them, and in that fit of musing
Sleep overcame me, sleep, that bringeth oft
Tidings of future hap. About the hour,
As I believe, when Venus from the east
First lighten'd on the mountain, she whose orb

Seems always glowing with the fire of love,
A lady young and beautiful, I dream'd,
Was passing o'er a lea; and, as she came,
Methought I saw her ever and anon
Bending to cull the flowers; and thus she sang:
"Know ye, whoever of my name would ask,
That I am Leah: for my brow to weave
A garland, these fair hands unwearied ply.
To please me at the crystal mirror, here
I deck me. But my sister Rachel, she
Before her glass abides the livelong day,
Her radiant eyes beholding, charm'd no less,
Than I with this delightful task. Her joy
In contemplation, as in labor mine."

And now as glimmering dawn appear'd, that breaks
More welcome to the pilgrim still, as he
Sojourns less distant on his homeward way,
Darkness from all sides fled, and with it fled
My slumber; whence I rose, and saw my guide
Already risen. "That delicious fruit,
Which through so many a branch the zealous care

Of mortals roams in quest of, shall this day
Appease thy hunger." Such the words I heard
From Virgil's lip; and never greeting heard,
So pleasant as the sounds. Within me straight
Desire so grew upon desire to mount,
Thenceforward at each step I felt the wings
Increasing for my flight. When we had run
O'er all the ladder to its topmost round,
As there we stood, on me the Mantuan fix'd
His eyes, and thus he spake: "Both fires, my son,
The temporal and eternal, thou hast seen;
And art arrived, where of itself my ken
No further reaches. I, with skill and art,
Thus far have drawn thee. Now thy pleasure take
For guide. Thou hast o'ercome the steeper way,
O'ercome the straiter. Lo! the sun, that darts
His beam upon my forehead: lo! the herb,
The arborets and flowers, which of itself
This land pours forth profuse. Till those bright eyes
With gladness come, which, weeping, made me haste
To succor thee, thou mayst or seat thee down,
Or wander where thou wilt. Expect no more

Sanction of warning voice or sign from me,
Free of thy own arbitrament to choose,
Discreet, judicious. To distrust thy sense
Were henceforth error. I invest thee then
With crown and mitre, sovereign o'er thyself."

CANTO XXVIII

Wandering through terrestrial Paradise, Dante is stopped
by a stream on the other side of which he sees
a fair lady culling flowers.

THROUGH that celestial forest, whose thick shade
With lively greenness the new-springing day
Attemper'd, eager now to roam, and search
Its limits round, forthwith I left the bank;
Along the champain leisurely my way
Pursuing, o'er the ground, that on all sides
Delicious odor breathed. A pleasant air,
That intermitted never, never veer'd,
Smote on my temples, gently, as a wind
Of softest influence: at which the sprays,
Obedient all, lean'd trembling to that part
Where first the holy mountain casts his shade;
Yet were not so disorder'd, but that still
Upon their top the feather'd choristers
Applied their wonted art, and with full joy

Welcomed those hours of prime, and warbled shrill
Amid the leaves, that to their jocund lays
Kept tenor; even as from branch to branch,
Along the piny forests on the shore
Of Chiassi, rolls the gathering melody,
When Eolus hath from his cavern loosed
The dripping south. Already had my steps,
Though slow, so far into that ancient wood
Transported me, I could not ken the place
Where I had enter'd; when, behold! my path
Was bounded by a rill, which, to the left,
With little rippling waters bent the grass
That issued from its brink. On earth no wave,
How clean soe'er, that would not seem to have
Some mixture in itself, compared with this,
Transpicuous clear; yet darkly on it roll'd,
Darkly beneath perpetual gloom, which ne'er
Admits or sun or moonlight there to shine.

My feet advanced not; but my wondering eyes
Pass'd onward, o'er the streamlet, to survey
The tender may-bloom, flush'd through many a hue,

In prodigal variety: and there,
As object, rising suddenly to view,
That from our bosom every thought beside
With the rare marvel chases, I beheld
A lady all alone, who, singing, went,
And culling flower from flower, wherewith her way
Was all o'er painted. "Lady beautiful!
Thou, who (if looks, that use to speak the heart,
Are worthy of our trust), with love's own beam
Dost warm thee," thus to her my speech I framed;
"Ah! please thee hither toward the streamlet bend
Thy steps so near, that I may list thy song.
Beholding thee and this fair place, methinks,
I call to mind where wander'd and how look'd
Proserpine, in that season, when her child
The mother lost, and she the bloomy spring."

As when a lady, turning in the dance,
Doth foot it featly, and advances scarce
One step before the other to the ground;
Over the yellow and vermilion flowers,
Thus turn'd she at my suit, most maiden-like

Veiling her sober eyes; and came so near,
That I distinctly caught the dulcet sound.
Arriving where the limpid waters now
Laved the greensward, her eyes she deign'd to raise,
That shot such splendor on me, as I ween
Ne'er glanced from Cytherea's, when her son
Had sped his keenest weapon to her heart.
Upon the opposite bank she stood and smiled;
As through her graceful fingers shifted still
The intermingling dyes, which without seed
That lofty land unbosoms. By the stream
Three paces only were we sunder'd: yet,
The Hellespont, where Xerxes pass'd it o'er
(A curb for ever to the pride of man),
Was by Leander not more hateful held
For floating, with inhospitable wave,
'Twixt Sestus and Abydos, than by me
That flood, because it gave no passage thence.

“Strangers ye come; and haply in this place,
That cradled human nature in her birth,
Wondering, ye not without suspicion view

My smiles: but that sweet strain of psalmody,
'Thou, Lord! hast made me glad,' will give ye light,
Which may uncloud your minds. And thou, who stand'st
The foremost, and didst make thy suit to me,
Say if aught else thou wish to hear: for I
Came prompt to answer every doubt of thine."

She spake; and I replied: "I know not how
To reconcile this wave, and rustling sound
Of forest leaves, with what I late have heard
Of opposite report." She answering thus:
"I will unfold the cause, whence that proceeds,
Which makes thee wonder; and so purge the cloud
That hath enwrapt thee. The First Good, whose joy
Is only in himself, created man,
For happiness; and gave this goodly place,
His pledge and earnest of eternal peace.
Favor'd thus highly, through his own defect
He fell; and here made short sojourn; he fell,
And, for the bitterness of sorrow changed
Laughter unblamed and ever-new delight.
That vapors none, exhaled from earth beneath,

Or from the waters (which, wherever heat
Attracts them, follow), might ascend thus far
To vex man's peaceful state, this mountain rose
So high toward the heaven, nor fears the rage
Of elements contending; from that part
Exempted, where the gate his limit bars.
Because the circumambient air, throughout,
With its first impulse circles still, unless
Aught interpose to check or thwart its course;
Upon the summit, which on every side
To visitation of the impassive air
Is open, doth that motion strike, and makes
Beneath its sway the umbrageous wood resound:
And in the shaken plant such power resides,
That it impregnates with its efficacy
The voyaging breeze, upon whose subtle plume
That, wafted, flies abroad; and the other land,
Receiving (as 'tis worthy in itself,
Or in the clime, that warms it), doth conceive;
And from its womb produces many a tree
Of various virtue. This when thou hast heard,
The marvel ceases, if in yonder earth

Some plant, without apparent seed, be found
To fix its fibrous stem. And further learn,
That with prolific foison of all seeds
This holy plain is fill'd, and in itself
Bears fruit that ne'er was pluck'd on other soil.

“The water, thou behold'st, springs not from vein,
Restored by vapor, that the cold converts;
As stream that intermittently repairs
And spends his pulse of life; but issues forth
From fountain, solid, undecaying, sure:
And, by the will omnific, full supply
Feeds whatsoe'er on either side it pours;
On this, devolved with power to take away
Remembrance of offence; on that, to bring
Remembrance back of every good deed done.
From whence its name of Lethe on this part;
On the other, Eunoe: both of which must first
Be tasted, ere it work; the last exceeding
All flavors else. Albeit thy thirst may now
Be well contented, if I here break off,
No more revealing; yet a corollary

I freely give beside, nor deem my words
Less grateful to thee, if they somewhat pass
The stretch of promise. They, whose verse of yore
The golden age recorded and its bliss,
On the Parnassian mountain, of this place
Perhaps had dream'd. Here was man guiltless; here
Perpetual spring, and every fruit; and this
The far-famed nectar." Turning to the bards,
When she had ceased, I noted in their looks
A smile at her conclusion; then my face
Again directed to the lovely dame.

CANTO XXIX

The lady moves along the side of the stream and Dante keeps pace with her on the opposite bank.

SINGING, as if enamor'd, she resumed
And closed the song, with "Blessed they whose sins
Are cover'd." Like the wood-nymphs then, that tripp'd
Singly across the sylvan shadows; one
Eager to view, and one to escape the sun;
So moved she on, against the current, up
The verdant rivage. I, her mincing step
Observing, with as tardy step pursued.

Between us not an hundred paces trod,
The bank, on each side bending equally,
Gave me to face the orient. Nor our way
Far onward brought us, when to me at once
She turn'd, and cried: "My brother! look, and hearken."
And lo! a sudden lustre ran across
Through the great forest on all parts, so bright,

I doubted whether lightning were abroad;
But that, expiring ever in the spleen
That doth unfold it, and this during still,
And waxing still in splendor, made me question
What it might be: and a sweet melody
Ran through the luminous air. Then did I chide,
With warrantable zeal, the hardihood
Of our first parent; for that there, where earth
Stood in obedience to the heavens, she only,
Woman, the creature of an hour, endured not
Restraint of any veil, which had she borne
Devoutly, joys, ineffable as these,
Had from the first, and long time since, been mine.

While, through that wilderness of primy sweets
That never fade, suspense I walk'd, and yet
Expectant of beatitude more high;
Before us, like a blazing fire, the air
Under the green boughs glow'd; and, for a song,
Distinct the sound of melody was heard.

O ye thrice holy virgins! for your sakes

If e'er I suffer'd hunger, cold, and watching,
Occasion calls on me to crave your bounty.
Now through my breast let Helicon his stream
Pour copious, and Urania with her choir
Arise to aid me; while the verse unfolds
Things, that do almost mock the grasp of thought

Onward a space, what seem'd seven trees of gold
The intervening distance to mine eye
Falsely presented; but, when I was come
So near them, that no lineament was lost
Of those, with which a doubtful object, seen
Remotely, plays on the misdeeming sense;
Then did the faculty, that ministers
Discourse to reason, these for tapers of gold
Distinguish; and i' the singing trace the sound
"Hosanna!" Above, their beauteous garniture
Flamed with more ample lustre, than the moon
Through cloudless sky at midnight, in her noon.

I turn'd me, full of wonder, to my guide;
And he did answer with a countenance

Charged with no less amazement: whence my view
Reverted to those lofty things, which came
So slowly moving toward us, that the bride
Would have outstript them on her bridal day.

The lady call'd aloud: "Why thus yet burns
Affection in thee for these living lights,
And dost not look on that which follows them?"

I straightway mark'd a tribe behind them walk,
As if attendant on their leaders, clothed
With raiment of such whiteness, as on earth
Was never. On my left, the watery gleam
Borrow'd, and gave me back, when there I look'd,
As in a mirror, my left side portray'd.

When I had chosen on the river's edge
Such station, that the distance of the stream
Alone did separate me; there I stay'd
My steps for clearer prospect, and beheld
The flames go onward, leaving, as they went,
The air behind them painted as with trail

Of liveliest pencils; so distinct were mark'd
All those seven listed colors, whence the sun
Maketh his bow, and Cynthia her zone.
These streaming gonfalons did flow beyond
My vision; and ten paces, as I guess,
Parted the outermost. Beneath a sky
So beautiful, came four and twenty elders,
By two and two, with flower-de-luces crown'd.
All sang one song: "Blessed be thou among
The daughters of Adam! and thy loveliness
Blessed forever!" After that the flowers,
And the fresh herblets, on the opposite brink,
Were free from that elected race; as light
In heaven doth second light, came after them
Four animals, each crown'd with verdurous leaf.
With six wings each was plumed; the plumage full
Of eyes; and the eyes of Argus would be such,
Were they endued with life. Reader! more rhymes
I will not waste in shadowing forth their form:
For other need so straitens, that in this
I may not give my bounty room. But read
Ezekiel; for he paints them, from the north

How he beheld them come by Chebar's flood,
In whirlwind, cloud, and fire; and even such
As thou shalt find them character'd by him,
Here were they; save as to the pennons: there,
From him departing, John accords with me.

The space, surrounded by the four, enclosed
A car triumphal: on two wheels it came,
Drawn at a Gryphon's neck; and he above
Stretch'd either wing uplifted, 'tween the midst
And the three listed hues, on each side, three;
So that the wings did cleave or injure none;
And out of sight they rose. The members, far
As he was bird, were golden; white the rest,
With vermeil intervein'd. So beautiful
A car, in Rome, ne'er graced Augustus' pomp,
Or Africanus': e'en the sun's itself
Were poor to this; that chariot of the sun,
Erroneous, which in blazing ruin fell
At Tellus' prayer devout, by the just doom
Mysterious of all-seeing Jove. Three nymphs,
At the right wheel, came circling in smooth dance:

The one so ruddy, that her form had scarce
Been known within a furnace of clear flame;
The next did look, as if the flesh and bones
Were emerald; snow new-fallen seem'd the third.
Now seem'd the white to lead, the ruddy now;
And from her song who led, the others took
Their measure, swift or slow. At the other wheel,
A band quaternion, each in purple clad,
Advanced with festal step, as, of them, one
The rest conducted; one, upon whose front
Three eyes were seen. In rear of all this group,
Two old men I beheld, dissimilar
In raiment, but in port and gesture like,
Solid and mainly grave; of whom, the one
Did show himself some favor'd counsellor
Of the great Coan, him, whom nature made
To serve the costliest creature of her tribe:
His fellow mark'd an opposite intent;
Bearing a sword, whose glitterance and keen edge,
E'en as I viewed it with the flood between,
Appall'd me. Next, four others I beheld
Of humble seeming; and, behind them all,

One single old man, sleeping as he came,
With a shrewd visage. And these seven, each
Like the first troop were habited; but wore
No braid of lilies on their temples wreathed.
Rather, with roses and each vermeil flower,
A sight, but little distant, might have sworn,
That they were all on fire above their brow.

When as the car was o'er against me, straight
Was heard a thundering, at whose voice it seem'd
The chosen multitude were stay'd; for there,
With the first ensigns, made they solemn halt.

CANTO XXX

Beatrice descends from heaven and rebukes the poet.

SOON as that polar light, fair ornament
Of the first heaven, which hath never known
Setting nor rising, nor the shadowy veil
Of other cloud than sin, to duty there
Each one convoying, as that lower doth
The steersman to his port, stood firmly fix'd;
Forthwith the saintly tribe, who in the van
Between the Gryphon and its radiance came,
Did turn them to the car, as to their rest:
And one, as if commission'd from above,
In holy chant thrice shouted forth aloud;
"Come, spouse! from Libanus": and all the rest
Took up the song.- At the last audit, so
The blest shall rise, from forth his cavern each
Uplifting lightly his new-vested flesh;
As, on the sacred litter, at the voice
Authoritative of that elder, sprang

A hundred ministers and messengers
Of life eternal. "Blessed thou, who comest!"
And, "Oh!" they cried, "from full hands scatter ye
Unwithering lilies": and, so saying, cast
Flowers over head and round them on all sides.

I have beheld, ere now, at break of day,
The eastern clime all roseate; and the sky
Opposed, one deep and beautiful serene;
And the sun's face so shaded, and with mists
Attemper'd, at his rising, that the eye
Long while endured the sight: thus, in a cloud
Of flowers, that from those hands angelic rose,
And down within and outside of the car
Fell showering, in white veil with olive wreathed,
A virgin in my view appear'd, beneath
Green mantle, robed in hue of living flame:
And o'er my spirit, that so long a time
Had from her presence felt no shuddering dread,
Albeit mine eyes discern'd her not, there moved
A hidden virtue from her, at whose touch
The power of ancient love was strong within me.

No sooner on my vision streaming, smote
The heavenly influence, which, years past, and e'en
In childhood, thrill'd me, than toward Virgil I
Turn'd me to leftward; panting, like a babe,
That flees for refuge to his mother's breast,
If aught have terrified or work'd him woe:
And would have cried, "There is no dram of blood,
That doth not quiver in me. The old flame
Throws out clear tokens of reviving fire."
But Virgil had bereaved us of himself;
Virgil, my best-beloved father; Virgil, he
To whom I gave me up for safety: nor
All, our prime mother lost, avail'd to save
My undew'd cheeks from blur of soiling tears.

"Dante! weep not that Virgil leaves thee; nay,
Weep thou not yet: behoves thee feel the edge
Of other sword; and thou shalt weep for that."

As to the prow or stern, some admiral
Paces the deck, inspiriting his crew,

When 'mid the sail-yards all hands ply aloof;
Thus, on the left side of the car, I saw
(Turning me at the sound of mine own name,
Which here I am compell'd to register)
The virgin station'd, who before appear'd
Veil'd in that festive shower angelical.

Toward me, across the stream, she bent her eyes;
Though from her brow the veil descending, bound
With foliage of Minerva, suffer'd not
That I beheld her clearly: then with act
Full royal, still insulting o'er her thrall,
Added, as one who, speaking, keepeth back
The bitterest saying, to conclude the speech:
"Observe me well. I am, in sooth, I am
Beatrice. What! and hast thou deign'd at last
Approach the mountain? Knewest not, O man!
Thy happiness is here?" Down fell mine eyes
On the clear fount; but there, myself espying,
Recoil'd, and sought the greensward; such a weight
Of shame was on my forehead. With a mien
Of that stern majesty, which doth surround

A mother's presence to her awe-struck child,
She look'd; a flavor of such bitterness
Was mingled in her pity. There her words
Broke off; and suddenly the angels sang,
"In thee, O gracious Lord! my hope hath been":
But went no further than, "Thou, Lord! hast set
My feet in ample room." As snow, that lies,
Amidst the living rafters on the back
Of Italy, congeal'd, when drifted high
And closely piled by rough Sclavonian blasts;
Breathe but the land whereon no shadow falls,
And straightway melting it distils away,
Like a fire-wasted taper: thus was I,
Without a sigh or tear, or ever these
Did sing, that, with the chiming of heaven's sphere,
Still in their warbling chime: but when the strain
Of dulcet symphony express'd for me
Their soft compassion, more than could the words,
"Virgin! why so consumest him?" then, the ice
Congeal'd about my bosom, turn'd itself
To spirit and water; and with anguish forth
Gush'd, through the lips and eyelids, from the heart.

Upon the chariot's same edge still she stood,
Immovable; and thus address'd her words
To those bright semblances with pity touch'd:
"Ye in the eternal day your vigils keep;
So that nor night nor slumber, with close stealth,
Conveys from you a single step, in all
The goings on of time: thence, with more heed
I shape mine answer, for his ear intended,
Who there stands weeping; that the sorrow now
May equal the transgression. Not alone
Through operation of the mighty orbs,
That mark each seed to some predestined aim,
As with aspect or fortunate or ill
The constellations meet; but through benign
Largess of heavenly graces, which rain down
From such a height as mocks our vision, this man
Was, in the freshness of his being, such,
So gifted virtually, that in him
All better habits wonderously had thrived.
The more of kindly strength is in the soil,
So much doth evil seed and lack of culture

Mar it the more, and make it run to wildness.
These looks sometime upheld him; for I show'd
My youthful eyes, and led him by their light
In upright walking. Soon as I had reach'd
The threshold of my second age, and changed
My mortal for immortal; then he left me,
And gave himself to others. When from flesh
To spirit I had risen, and increase
Of beauty and of virtue circled me,
I was less dear to him, and valued less.
His steps were turn'd into deceitful ways,
Following false images of good, that make
No promise perfect. Nor avail'd me aught
To sue for inspirations, with the which,
I, both in dreams of night, and otherwise,
Did call him back; of them, so little reck'd him.
Such depth he fell, that all device was short
Of his preserving, save that he should view
The children of perdition. To this end
I visited the purlieus of the dead:
And one, who hath conducted him thus high,
Received my supplications urged with weeping.

It were a breaking of God's high decree,
If Lethe should be pass'd, and such food tasted,
Without the cost of some repentant tear."

CANTO XXXI

Dante confesses his error, is drawn through the waters of Lethe, and then presented to the four virgins personifying the cardinal virtues and to the Gryffon, a symbol of our Saviour.

“O THOU!” her words she thus without delay
Resuming, turn’d their point on me, to whom
They, with but lateral edge, seem’d harsh before:
“Say thou, who stand’st beyond the holy stream,
If this be true. A charge, so grievous, needs
Thine own avowal.” On my faculty
Such strange amazement hung, the voice expired
Imperfect, ere its organs gave it birth.

A little space refraining, then she spake:
“What dost thou muse on? Answer me. The wave
On thy remembrances of evil yet
Hath done no injury.” A mingled sense
Of fear and of confusion, from my lips

Did such a "Yea" produce, as needed help
Of vision to interpret. As when breaks,
In act to be discharged, a cross-bow bent
Beyond its pitch, both nerve and bow o'erstretch'd;
The flagging weapon feebly hits the mark:
Thus, tears and sighs forth gushing, did I burst,
Beneath the heavy load: and thus my voice
Was slacken'd on its way. She straight began:
"When my desire invited thee to love
The good, which sets a bound to our aspirings;
What bar of thwarting foss or linked chain
Did meet thee, that thou so shouldst quit the hope
Of further progress? or what a bait of ease,
Or promise of allurements, led thee on
Elsewhere, that thou elsewhere shouldst rather wait?"

A bitter sigh I drew, then scarce found voice
To answer; hardly to these sounds my lips
Gave utterance, wailing: "Thy fair looks withdrawn,
Things present, with deceitful pleasures, turn'd
My steps aside." She answering spake: "Hadst thou
Been silent, or denied what thou avow'st,

Thou hadst not hid thy sin the more; such eye
Observes it. But whene'er the sinner's cheek
Breaks forth into the precious-streaming tears
Of self-accusing, in our court the wheel
Of justice doth run counter to the edge.
Howe'er, that thou mayst profit by the shame
For errors past, and that henceforth more strength
May arm thee, when thou hear'st the Siren-voice;
Lay thou aside the motive to this grief,
And lend attentive ear, while I unfold
How opposite a way my buried flesh
Should have impell'd thee. Never didst thou spy,
In art or nature, aught so passing sweet,
As were the limbs that in their beauteous frame
Enclosed me, and are scatter'd now in dust.
If sweetest thing thus fail'd thee with my death,
What, afterward, of mortal, should thy wish
Have tempted? When thou first hadst felt the dart
Of perishable things, in my departing
For better realms, thy wing thou shouldst have pruned
To follow me; and never stoop'd again,
To 'bide a second blow, for a slight girl,

Or other gaud as transient and as vain.
The new and inexperienced bird awaits,
Twice it may be, or thrice, the fowler's aim;
But in the sight of one whose plumes are full,
In vain the net is spread, the arrow wing'd."

I stood, as children silent and ashamed
Stand, listening, with their eyes upon the earth,
Acknowledging their fault, and self-condemn'd.
And she resumed: "If, but to hear, thus pains thee;
Raise thou thy beard, and lo! what sight shall do."

With less reluctance yields a sturdy holm,
Rent from its fibres by a blast, that blows
From off the pole, or from Iarbas' land,
Than I at her behest my visage raised:
And thus the face denoting by the beard,
I mark'd the secret sting her words convey'd.

No sooner lifted I mine aspect up,
Than I perceived those primal creatures cease
Their flowery sprinkling; and mine eyes beheld

(Yet unassured and wavering in their view)
Beatrice; she, who toward the mystic shape,
That joins two natures in one form, had turn'd:
And, even under shadow of her veil,
And parted by the verdant rill that flow'd
Between, in loveliness she seem'd as much
Her former self surpassing, as on earth
All others she surpass'd. Remorseful goads
Shot sudden through me. Each thing else, the more
Its love had late beguiled me, now the more
Was loathsome. On my heart so keenly smote
The bitter consciousness, that on the ground
O'erpower'd I fell: and what my state was then,
She knows, who was the cause. When now my strength
Flow'd back, returning outward from the heart,
The lady, whom alone I first had seen,
I found above me. "Loose me not," she cried:
"Loose not thy hold": and lo! had dragg'd me high
As to my neck into the stream; while she,
Still as she drew me after, swept along,
Swift as a shuttle, bounding o'er the wave.

The blessed shore approaching, then was heard
So sweetly, "Tu asperges me," that I
May not remember, much less tell the sound.

The beauteous dame, her arms expanding, clasp'd
My temples, and immerged me where 'twas fit
The wave should drench me: and, thence raising up,
Within the fourhold dance of lovely nymphs
Presented me so laved; and with their arm
They each did cover me. "Here are we nymphs,
And in the heaven are stars. Or ever earth
Was visited of Beatrice, we,
Appointed for her handmaids, tended on her.
We to her eyes will lead thee: but the light
Of gladness, that is in them, well to scan,
Those yonder three, of deeper ken than ours,
Thy sight shall quicken." Thus began their song:
And then they led me to the Gryphon's breast,
Where, turn'd toward us, Beatrice stood.
"Spare not thy vision. We have station'd thee
Before the emeralds, whence love, erewhile,
Hath drawn his weapons on thee." As they spake,

A thousand fervent wishes riveted
Mine eyes upon her beaming eyes, that stood,
Still fix'd toward the Gryphon, motionless.
As the sun strikes a mirror, even thus
Within those orbs the twifold being shone;
Forever varying, in one figure now
Reflected, now in other. Reader! muse
How wondrous in my sight it seem'd, to mark
A thing, albeit steadfast in itself,
Yet in its imaged semblance mutable.

Full of amaze, and joyous, while, my soul
Fed on the viand, whereof still desire
Grows with satiety; the other three,
With gesture that declared a loftier line,
Advanced: to their own carol, on they came
Dancing, in festive ring angelical.

“Turn, Beatrice!” was their song: “Oh! turn
Thy saintly sight on this thy faithful one,
Who, to behold thee, many a wearisome pace
Hath measured. Gracious at our prayer, vouchsafe

Unveiled to him thy cheeks; that he may mark
Thy second beauty, now conceal'd." O splendor!
O sacred light eternal! who is he,
So pale with musing in Pierian shades,
Or with that fount so lavishly imbued,
Whose spirit should not fail him in the essay
To represent thee such as thou didst seem,
When under cope of the still-chiming heaven
Thou gavest to open air thy charms reveal'd?

CANTO XXXII

The procession moves on, accompanied by Matilda, Statius and Dante, until it reaches an exceedingly lofty tree.

MINE eyes with such an eager coveting
Were bent to rid them of their ten years' thirst,
No other sense was waking: and e'en they
Were fenced on either side from heed of aught;
So tangled, in its custom'd toils, that smile
Of saintly brightness drew me to itself:
When forcibly, toward the left, my sight
The sacred virgins turn'd; for from their lips
I heard the warning sounds: "Too fix'd a gaze!"

Awhile my vision labor'd; as when late
Upon the o'erstrained eyes the sun hath smote:
But soon, to lesser object, as the view
Was now recover'd (lesser in respect
To that excess of sensible, whence late
I had perforce been sunder'd), on their right

I mark'd that glorious army wheel, and turn,
Against the sun and sevenfold lights, their front.
As when, their bucklers for protection raised,
A well-ranged troop, with portly banners curl'd,
Wheel circling, ere the whole can change their ground,
E'en thus the goodly regiment of heaven,
Proceeding, all did pass us ere the car
Had sloped his beam. Attendant at the wheels
The damsels turn'd; and on the Gryphon moved
The sacred burden, with a pace so smooth,
No feather on him trembled. The fair dame,
Who through the wave had drawn me, companied
By Statius and myself, pursued the wheel,
Whose orbit, rolling, mark'd a lesser arch.

Through the high wood, now void (the more her blame,
Who by the serpent was beguiled) I pass'd,
With step in cadence to the harmony
Angelic. Onward had we moved, as far,
Perchance, as arrow at three several flights
Full wing'd had sped, when from her station down
Descended Beatrice. With one voice

All murmur'd "Adam"; circling next a plant
Despoil'd of flowers and leaf, on every bough.
Its tresses, spreading more as more they rose,
Were such, as 'midst their forest wilds, for height,
The Indians might have gazed at. "Blessed thou,
Gryphon! whose beak hath never pluck'd that tree
Pleasant to taste: for hence the appetite
Was warp'd to evil." Round the stately trunk
Thus shouted forth the rest, to whom return'd
The animal twice-gender'd: "Yea! for so
The generation of the just are saved."
And turning to the chariot-pole, to foot
He drew it of the widow'd branch, and bound
There, left unto the stock whereon it grew.

As when large floods of radiance from above
Stream, with that radiance mingled, which ascends
Next after setting of the scaly sign,
Our plants then bourgeon, and each wears anew
His wonted colors, ere the sun have yoked
Beneath another star his flamy steeds;
Thus putting forth a hue more faint than rose,

And deeper than the violet, was renew'd
The plant, erewhile in all its branches bare.
Unearthly was the hymn, which then arose.
I understood it not, nor to the end
Endured the harmony. Had I the skill
To pencil forth how closed the unpitying eyes
Slumbering, when Syrinx warbled (eyes that paid
So dearly for their watching), then, like painter,
That with a model paints, I might design
The manner of my falling into sleep.
But feign who will the slumber cunningly,
I pass it by to when I waked; and tell,
How suddenly a flash of splendor, rent
The curtain of my sleep, and one cries out,
“Arise: what dost thou?” As the chosen three,
On Tabor's mount, admitted to behold
The blossoming of that fair tree, whose fruit
Is coveted of angels, and doth make
Perpetual feast in Heaven; to themselves
Returning, at the word whence deeper sleeps
Were broken, they their tribe diminish'd saw;
Both Moses and Elias gone, and changed

The stole their master wore; thus to myself
Returning, over me beheld I stand
The piteous one, who cross the stream had brought
My steps. "And where," all doubting, I exclaim'd,
"Is Beatrice?" "See her," she replied,
"Beneath the fresh leaf, seated on its root.
Behold the associate quire that circles her.
The others, with a melody more sweet
And more profound, journeying to higher realms,
Upon the Gryphon tend." If there her words
Were closed, I know not; but mine eyes had now
Ta'en view of her, by whom all other thoughts
Were barr'd admittance. On the very ground
Alone she sat, as she had there been left
A guard upon the wain, which I beheld
Bound the twiform beast. The seven nymphs
Did make themselves a cloister round about her;
And, in their hands, upheld those lights secure
From blast septentrion and the gusty south.

"A little while thou shalt be forester here;
And citizen shalt be, forever with me,

Of that true Rome, wherein Christ dwells a Roman.
To profit the misguided world, keep now
Thine eyes upon the car; and what thou seest,
Take heed thou write, returning to that place."

Thus Beatrice: at whose feet inclined
Devout, at her behest, my thought and eyes
I, as she bade, directed. Never fire,
With so swift motion, forth a stormy cloud
Leap'd downward from the welkin's furthest bound,
As I beheld the bird of Jove descend
Down through the tree; and, as he rush'd, the rind
Disparting crush beneath him; buds much more,
And leaflets. On the car, with all his might
He struck; whence, staggering, like a ship it reel'd,
At random driven, to starboard now, o'ercome,
And now to larboard, by the vaulting waves.

Next, springing up into the chariot's womb,
A fox I saw, with hunger seeming pined
Of all good food. But, for his ugly sins
The saintly maid rebuking him, away

Scampering he turn'd, fast as his hide-bound corpse
Would bear him. Next, from whence before he came,
I saw the eagle dart into the hull
O' the car, and leave it with his feathers lined:
And then a voice, like that which issues forth
From heart with sorrow rived, did issue forth
From heaven, and, "O poor bark of mine!" it cried,
"How badly art thou freighted." Then it seem'd
That the earth open'd between either wheel;
And I beheld a dragon issue thence,
That through the chariot fix'd his forked train;
And like a wasp, that draggeth back the sting,
So drawing forth his baleful train, he dragg'd
Part of the bottom forth; and went his way,
Exulting. What remain'd, as lively turf
With green herb, so did clothe itself with plumes,
Which haply had, with purpose chaste and kind,
Been offer'd; and therewith were clothed the wheels,
Both one and other, and the beam, so quickly,
A sigh were not breathed sooner. Thus transform'd,
The holy structure, through its several parts,
Did put forth heads; three on the beam, and one

On every side: the first like oxen horn'd;
But with a single horn upon their front,
The four. Like monster, sight hath never seen.
O'er it methought there sat, secure as rock
On mountain's lofty top, a shameless whore,
Whose ken roved loosely round her. At her side,
As 'twere that none might bear her off, I saw
A giant stand; and ever and anon
They mingled kisses. But, her lustful eyes
Chancing on me to wander, that fell minion
Scourged her from head to foot all o'er; then full
Of jealousy, and fierce with rage, unloosed
The monster, and dragg'd on, so far across
The forest, that from me its shades alone
Shielded the harlot and the new-form'd brute.

CANTO XXXIII

After the singing of a hymn, Beatrice and the whole band proceed to the fountain which is the source of Lethe and Eunoe.

“THE heathen, Lord! are come”: responsive thus,
The trinal now, and now the virgin band
Quaternion, their sweet psalmody began,
Weeping; and Beatrice listen’d, sad
And sighing, to the song, in such a mood,
That Mary, as she stood beside the cross,
Was scarce more changed. But when they gave her place
To speak, then, risen upright on her feet,
She, with a color glowing bright as fire,
Did answer: “Yet a little while, and ye
Shall see me not; and, my beloved sisters!
Again a little while, and ye shall see me.”

Before her then she marshal’d all the seven;
And, beckoning only, motion’d me, the dame,

And that remaining sage, to follow her.

So on she pass'd; and had not set, I ween,
Her tenth step to the ground, when, with mine eyes,
Her eyes encountered; and, with visage mild,
"So mend thy pace," she cried, "that if my words
Address thee, thou mayst still be aptly placed
To hear them." Soon as duly to her side
I now had hasten'd: "Brother!" she began,
"Why makest thou no attempt at questioning,
As thus we walk together?" Like to those
Who, speaking with too reverent an awe
Before their betters, draw not forth the voice
Alive unto their lips, befell me then
That I in sounds imperfect thus began:
"Lady! what I have need of, that thou know'st;
And what will suit my need." She answering thus:
"Of fearfulness and shame, I will that thou
Henceforth do rid thee; that thou speak no more,
As one who dreams. Thus far be taught of me:
The vessel which thou saw'st the serpent break,
Was, and is not: let him, who hath the blame,

Hope not to scare God's vengeance with a sop.
Without an heir forever shall not be
That eagle, he, who left the chariot plumed,
Which monster made it first and next a prey.
Plainly I view, and therefore speak, the stars
E'en now approaching, whose conjunction, free
From all impediment and bar, brings on
A season, in the which, one sent from God
(Five hundred, five, and ten, do mark him out),
That foul one, and the accomplice of her guilt,
The giant, both, shall slay. And if perchance
My saying, dark as Themis or as Sphinx,
Fail to persuade thee (since like them it foils
The intellect with blindness), yet ere long
Events shall be the Naiads, that will solve
This knotty riddle; and no damage light
On flock or field. Take heed; and as these words
By me are utter'd, teach them even so
To those who live that life, which is a race
To death: and when thou writest them, keep in mind
Not to conceal how thou hast seen the plant,
That twice hath now been spoil'd. This whoso robs,

This whoso plucks, with blasphemy of deed
Sins against God, who for his use alone
Creating hallow'd it. For taste of this,
In pain and in desire, five thousand years
And upward, the first soul did yearn for him
Who punish'd in himself the fatal gust.

“Thy reason slumbers, if it deem this height,
And summit thus inverted, of the plant,
Without due cause: and were not vainer thoughts,
As Elsa's numbing waters, to thy soul,
And their fond pleasures had not dyed it dark
As Pyramus the mulberry; thou hadst seen,
In such momentous circumstance alone,
God's equal justice morally implied
In the forbidden tree. But since I mark thee,
In understanding, harden'd into stone,
And, to that hardness, spotted too and stain'd,
So that thine eye is dazzled at my word;
I will, that, if not written, yet at least
Painted thou take it in thee, for the cause,
That one brings home his staff inwreathed with palm.”

I thus: "As wax by seal, that changeth not
Its impress, now is stamp'd my brain by thee.
But wherefore soars thy wish'd-for speech so high
Beyond my sight, that loses it the more,
The more it strains to reach it?" "To the end
That thou mayst know," she answer'd straight, "the school,
That thou hast follow'd; and how far behind,
When following my discourse, its learning halts:
And mayst behold your art, from the divine
As distant, as the disagreement is
'Twixt earth and heaven's most high and rapturous orb."

"I not remember," I replied, "that e'er
I was estranged from thee; nor for such fault
Doth conscience chide me." Smiling she return'd:
"If thou canst not remember, call to mind
How lately thou hast drunk of Lethe's wave;
And, sure as smoke doth indicate a flame,
In that forgetfulness itself conclude
Blame from thy alienated will incurr'd.
From henceforth, verily, my words shall be

As naked, as will suit them to appear
In thy unpractised view." More sparkling now,
And with retarded course, the sun possess'd
The circle of mid-day, that varies still
As the aspect varies of each several clime;
When, as one, sent in vaward of a troop
For escort, pauses, if perchance he spy
Vestige of somewhat strange and rare; so paused
The sevenfold band, arriving at the verge
Of a dun umbrage hoar, such as is seen,
Beneath green leaves and gloomy branches, oft
To overbrow a bleak and Alpine cliff.
And, where they stood, before them, as it seem'd,
I, Tigris and Euphrates both, beheld
Forth from one fountain issue; and, like friends,
Linger at parting. "O enlightening beam!
O glory of our kind! beseech thee say
What water this, which, from one source derived,
Itself removes to distance from itself.?"

To such entreaty answer thus was made:
"Entreat Matilda, that she teach thee this."

And here, as one who clears himself of blame
Imputed, the fair dame return'd: "Of me
He this and more hath learnt; and I am safe
That Lethe's water hath not hid it from him."

And Beatrice: "Some more pressing care,
That oft the memory 'reaves, perchance hath made
His mind's eye dark. But lo, where Eunoe flows!
Lead thither; and, as thou art wont, revive
His fainting virtue." As a courteous spirit,
That proffers no excuses, but as soon
As he hath token of another's will,
Makes it his own; when she had ta'en me, thus
The lovely maiden moved her on, and call'd
To Statius, with an air most lady-like:
"Come thou with him." Were further space allow'd,
Then, Reader! might I sing, though but in part,
That beverage, with whose sweetness I had ne'er
Been sated. But, since all the leaves are full,
Appointed for this second strain, mine art
With warning bridle checks me. I return'd

From the most holy wave, regenerate,
E'en as new plants renew'd with foliage new,
Pure and made apt for mounting to the stars.

NOTES - CANTO I.

Birds of chattering note.

The daughters of Pierus challenged the muses to sing and were changed by them into magpies.

Planet.

Venus.

The Pisces' light.

The constellation of the Fish veiled by the more luminous body of Venus, then a morning star.

Four stars.

Perhaps personifying the four cardinal virtues of Justice, Fortitude, Prudence and Temperance.

Our first parents.

Adam and Eve could see the four stars mentioned here from Paradise, which was on the top of Mt. Purgatory, which is placed in the Southern hemisphere.

The wain.
Charles's Wain or Bootes.

An old man.
Cato.

A Dame from heaven.
Beatrice.

Leave those weeds.
Cato retired to Utica in North Africa where he committed suicide in 46 B.C.
on hearing of the victory of Caesar at Thapsus.

Through thy seven regions.
The seven rounds of Purgatory in which the seven capital sins are punished.

A slender reed.
Simplicity and patience.

NOTES - CANTO II.

Now had the sun.

Dante was now antipodal to Jerusalem; while the sun was setting in that place which he takes as being the middle of the inhabited earth, it was rising where he was.

The scales.

The constellation Libra.

When she reigns highest.

When the autumnal equinox is past.

In Exitu.

“When Israel came out of Egypt.” Psalms cxiv.

Had chased Capricorn.

Since Capricorn is 90 degrees from the sun now in Aries, it must have left the zenith when the sun rose above the horizon; it is after sunrise, therefore.

My Casella.

A Florentine celebrated for his skill in music, in whose company Dante refreshed his spirits.

If he.

The conducting angel.

These three months past.

Since the time of the Jubilee of Boniface VIII, Christmas 1299; even the dead seem to have had special privileges at that time.

The shore.

Ostia.

NOTES - CANTO III.

To Naples.

Virgil died at Brundisium from which his body is said to have been removed to Naples.

‘Twixt Lerice and Turbia.

The two extremities of the Genoese republic of the time.

Manfredi.

King of Naples and Sicily and natural son of Frederick II, lovely and agreeable in his manners and fond of poetry, music and dancing, but ambitious and without religion. He fell in the battle with Charles of Anjou in 1265 (see The Inferno, Canto xxviii.) Dying excommunicated, he was not allowed to be buried in sacred ground by King Charles, and he was interred near the bridge of Benevento where each soldier in the army cast a stone on his grave; his body was finally removed by order of the Pope from there because it was church land, and buried by the river Verde near Campagna.

My fair daughter.

Costanza, the daughter of Manfredi, and wife of Peter III, king of Aragon. by whom she was mother to Frederick, king of Sicily, and James, king of Aragon. With the latter of these she was at Rome 1296.

Clement.

Clement IV.

The stream of Verde.

A river near Ascoli, that falls into the Tronto. The “extinguished lights” formed part of the ceremony at the interment of one excommunicated.

NOTES - CANTO IV.

Full fifty steps.

Three hours and twenty minutes, fifteen degrees reckoned to the hour.

Sanleo.

A fortress on the summit of Montefeltro.

Noli.

In the Genoese territory between Finale and Savona.

Bismantua.

A steep mountain in Reggio.

Amazed.

Dante does not remember he is antipodal to Europe where the sun took an opposite course.

Were Leda's offspring.

The constellation of the Gemini is nearer the Bears than Aries. If the sun, instead of being in Aries, had been in Gemini, both the sun and that portion of the

Zodiac made “ruddy” by the sun would have been seen to “wheel nearer to the Bears,” and Dante would see the sun still farther north.

The path.

The ecliptic.

Thou wilt see.

Since Purgatory and Sion are antipodal, the sun must rise on opposite sides of their respective eminences.

That the mid orb.

The sun recedes from this mountain toward the north at the time when the Jews on Mount Sion see it depart for the south.

Belacqua.

An excellent master of the harp and lute, but negligent in his affairs. both spiritual and temporal.

Behoves so long.

Those who have put off repentance until late in life.

NOTES - CANTO V.

... as if the light not shone

From the left hand.

The sun was now on their right; before, when seated and looking to the east on their ascent, the sun was on their left. They are ascending the mountain from east to west.

“Miserere.”

The class of negligent who deferred repentance until overtaken by violent death.

That land.

The Marca d’Ancona between Romagna and Apulia, the kingdom of Charles of Anjou.

From thence I came.

Giacopo del Cassero, a citizen of Fano who spoke ill of Azzo da Este, Marquis of Ferrara, and was slain by assassins sent by the latter at Oriaco.

The blood.

Supposed to be the seat of life.

Antenor's land.

Padua, said to have been founded by Antenor, the Trojan prince.

Of Montefeltro I.

Buonconte, son of Guido da Montefeltro (see *The Inferno*, Canto xxxii) who fell in the battle of Campaldino, fighting on the side of the Aretini.

Giovanna.

His wife.

Casentino's foot.

In upper Arno valley.

The hermit's seat.

Hermitage of Camaldoli.

Where its name is cancel'd.

Between Bibbiena and Poppi where the Archiano falls into the Arno.

From Pratomagno to the mountain range.

Pratomagno which divides the Valdarno from Casentino to the Apennines.

Pia.

A Siennese lady of the family of Tolommei whose husband, Nello della Pietra, did away with her by having her thrown out of a window of his castle at Maremma.

NOTES - CANTO VI.

Of Arezzo him.

Benincasa of Arezzo, an eminent judge, who condemned to death the brother of Ghino di Tacco for his robberies in Maremma and was murdered by Ghino, also a violent man and robber.

Him Beside.

Cione or Ciacco de' Tarlatti of Arezzo, said to have been carried by his horse into the Arno and there drowned while he was pursuing his enemies.

Frederic Novello.

Son of the Conte Guido da Battifolle slain by one of the Bostoli.

Of Pisa he.

Farinata, son of Marzucco degli Scornigiani of Pisa; all commentators agree that Farinata was murdered but there is a good deal of difference in the opinions on what his father did about it.

Count Orso.

Son of Napoleone da Cerbala slain by Albert da Mangona, his uncle.

Peter de la Brosse.

Secretary of Philip III of France; the courtiers, envying his high place in the king's favor, prevailed on Mary of Brabant to charge him falsely with an attempt upon her person, for which supposed crime he suffered death. Another story has it that he accused Mary of having poisoned her stepson to secure the throne for her own son.

In thy text.

Virgil, Aeneid, vi, 376.

The hill.

It was now past noon.

Sordello.

A Provençal poet, flourishing in the 13th century, to whom feats of military prowess, as well as poetry, are attributed.

Justinian's hand.

Justinian's reform of Italy's laws.

That which God commands.

"Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's."

O German Albert!

The Emperor Albert I, who succeeded Adolphus in 1298 and was murdered in 1308, neglected Italy.

Thy successor.

Henry of Luxembourg who Dante hoped would deliver Italy.

Thy sire.

Emperor Rudolph who was so intent on increasing his power in Germany that he also neglected Italy.

Capulets and Montagues.

Mentioned as examples of feuding families; Verona is their city.

Filippeschi and Monaldi.

Rival families in Orvieto.

What safety Santafiore can supply.

A place between Pisa and Sienna; this may be a reference to the robbers infesting the region or to the losses of the counts of Santafiore.

Marcellus.

Probably the one who opposed Julius Caesar.

Many refuse.

The Florentines, on the contrary, are eager for public office.

NOTES - CANTO VII.

By Octavius' care.

Which saw to it that Virgil's remains were transferred to Naples from Brundisium.

There is a place.

Limbo. See The Inferno, Canto iv, The first circle.

The three holy virtues.

Faith, Hope and Charity.

The rest.

Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance.

Only this line.

“Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth.” John xii, 35.

Salve Regina.

The beginning of a prayer to the Virgin.

The Emperor Radolph.

See last Canto, v. He died in 1291.

That country.

Bohemia.

Ottocar.

King of Bohemia, killed in the battle of Marchfield, fought with Rudolph, 1278. Wincelau II, his son, who succeeded him, died in 1305.

That one with the nose deprest.

Philip III of France, father of Philip IV, died in 1285, at Perpignan, in his retreat from Aragon.

Him of gentle look.

Henry of Navarre, father of Jane married to Philip IV of France.

Gallia's bane.

Philip IV of France ordered the seizure of all Italians in his country and realm under the pretence of arresting the money-lenders, but many good merchants were included in this round-up, and those of Florence suffered great losses.

He, so robust of limb.

Peter III, King of Aragon, who died in 1285, leaving four sons, Alonzo, James, Frederick, and Peter. The two former succeeded him in the kingdom of Aragon, and Frederick in that of Sicily.

Him of feature prominent.

Charles I, King of Naples, Count of Anjou, and brother of St. Louis. He died in 1284.

That stripling.

Either Alonzo III, King of Aragon, the eldest son of Peter III, who died in 1291 at the age of twenty-seven, or Alonzo's youngest son, Peter.

To Charles.

Charles II, King of Naples, is no less inferior to his father Charles I than James and Frederick to theirs, Peter III. See Canto xx, and Paradise, Canto xix.

Beatrice and Margaret.

The two wives of Charles I of Naples.

Costanza.

Widow of Peter III.

Better issue.

Edward I of whose glory Dante was perhaps a witness on his visit to England.

William, that brave Marquis.

William, Marquis of Montferrat, was treacherously seized by his own subjects at Alessandria in Lombardy, A.D. 1290, and ended his life in prison.

NOTES - CANTO VIII.

Te Lucis Ante.

First verse of the hymn sung by the church at the last service of the day.

Here, reader.

Dante points out the allegory intended in the previous passage to the effect that the soul is still exposed to sin while striving to cleanse itself and that God will send help if prayers ask it.

Nino, thou courteous judge.

Nino di Gallura de' Visconti, judge at Sardinia and later, Pisa, where his uncle, Count Ugolino de' Gherardeschi, betrayed him in the strife between the Guelphs and Ghibellines in 1288. See *The Inferno*, Canto xxxiii.

Conrad.

Currado, father to Marcello Malaspina.

My Giovanna.

Only daughter of Nino.

Her mother.

Beatrice, Marchioness of Este, wife of Nino, and after his death married to Galeazzo de' Visconti of Milan.

The white and wimpled folds.

Weeds of widowhood.

The viper.

Arms of Galeazzo and the ensign of the Milanese.

Shrill Gallura's bird.

The cock was the ensign of Gallura, Nino's province in Sardinia.

The three torches.

The three evangelical virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity.

Conrad Malaspina.

Son of Frederick I, Marquis of Villafranca; died about 1294.

That old one.

Grandfather of the speaker.

Seven times the tired sun.

Dante was hospitably received by the family of Malaspina during his banishment in 1307.

NOTES - CANTO IX.

Now the fair consort.

An obscure passage; some scholars think Dante means the time was morning, some, evening.

All five.

Virgil, Dante, Sordello, Nino and Currado Malaspina.

Remembering haply ancient grief.

Progne was changed into a swallow after she and her sister had served her son, Itys, to her husband to eat.

Young Ganymede.

Ganymede was snatched by the eagle at Mount Ida, and carried to Zeus to become his cup-bearer.

To the fire.

Sphere of fire between the atmosphere and heaven of the moon.

There.

Thetis, Achilles' mother, carried him from Thessaly to Scyros where Ulysses persuaded him to accompany the Greek army to Troy.

Lucia.

Who symbolizes the Enlightening Grace of Heaven.

And one.

The angel who guards the entrance to Purgatory and holds the sword of justice.

The lowest stair.

The white step represents the distinctness with which the conscience of the penitent reflects his offences; the burnt and cracked one, his contrition on their account; the one of porphyry, the fervor with which he resolves on the future pursuit of piety and virtue.

Seven times.

Seven P's, to denote the seven sins, Peccata, of which Dante is to be cleansed in his passage through Purgatory.

One is more precious.

The golden key denotes divine authority by which the priest absolves the sinner, and is the more precious because it was bought by the death of Christ; the silver key expresses the learning and judgment requisite in discharging this office.

Metellus.

The guardian of the public treasure kept in Saturn's temple on the Tarpeian rock which Julius Caesar seized to pay his soldiers.

NOTES - CANTO X.

“Hail!”

The Virgin Mary.

That from unbidden office awes mankind.

Uzzah was smitten down by the Lord for touching the ark. 2 Sam. vi, 7.

Preceding.

“And David danced before the Lord with all his might, and David was girded with a linen ephod.” 2 Sam. vi, 14.

Michol.

Daughter of Saul. wife of David, cursed with sterility as a punishment of her pride.

Gregory.

St. Gregory’s prayers were supposed to have delivered Trajan from hell. See Paradise, Canto xx.

The winged insect.

The butterfly was an ancient and well-known symbol of the human soul.

Abortive.

Man's development is arrested by sin.

NOTES - CANTO XI.

I was of Latium.

Omberto, the son of Guglielmo Aldobrandesco, Count of Santafiore, of Siena. His arrogance so provoked his countrymen that they murdered him.

The common mother.

The earth.

Oderigi.

The illuminator or miniature painter, a friend of Giotto and Dante.

Bolognian Franco.

Said to have been a pupil of Oderigi.

The cry is Giotto's.

Discovered by Cimabue, Giotto was afterwards patronized by Pope Benedict XI and Robert King of Naples; he was a friend of Dante and did a portrait of him still extant. He died in 1337.

One Guido from the other.

Guido Cavalcanti, the friend of Dante (see *The Inferno*, Canto x.), had eclipsed the literary fame of Guido Guinicelli of a noble family in Bologna (Canto xxvi). Guinicelli died in 1276, and Cavalcanti, in 1301.

Heaven's slowest orb.

That of the fixed stars which was supposed to move one degree in 100 years.

He, there.

Provenzano Salvani, the head of the Siennese municipal government at the time of the defeat of the Florentine Guelphs at Montaperti, 1260.

A suitor.

Provenzano personally begged the people to contribute the sum demanded by Charles I of Sicily for the ransom of one of his friends.

Thy neighbors soon.

Dante was soon to be banished from Florence and would learn the difficulty of asking charity.

NOTES - CANTO XII.

Briareus.

A hundred-headed monster who was knocked down by a thunderbolt in the war of the Titans against the gods; he was buried at Mt. Aetna.

The Thymbraean god.

Apollo.

Stupendous work.

The tower of Babel.

O Rehoboam.

I Kings xii, 18.

Alcmaeon.

Killed his mother, Eriphyle, for betraying the hiding place of Amphiaraus who was forced to go to the Theban wars and was slain.

Sennacherib.

II Kings xix, 37.

Tomyris.

Queen of Scythians who had the head of Cyrus cut off after his defeat and death and plunged into blood.

The sixth handmaid.

Noon.

Against my front.

One of the P's, the sin of pride, was erased from Dante's forehead.

The chapel stands.

The church of San Miniato in Florence, situated on a height that overlooks the Arno, where it is crossed by the bridge Rubaconte.

The registry.

Reference to certain instances of fraud in the public accounts and measures.

Sin's broad characters.

The six P's still left on Dante's forehead.

NOTES - CANTO XIII.

Spirits invisible.

Who tell of charity, the opposite of envy.

“They have no wine.”

John ii, 3, the words of the Virgin are referred to as an instance of charity.

Orestes.

Pylades said this to save Orestes from death.

“Love ye those have wronged you.”

Matt. v, 44.

“Blessed Mary!”

The litany of the saints.

Haggard hawk.

A wild hawk was tamed by temporarily blinding him with wires fastening his eyelids together.

Citizens of one true city.

“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” Heb. xiii, 14.

Sapia.

A lady of Sienna in exile at Colle who was so overjoyed at a defeat of her countrymen near there that she declared nothing more was wanting to make her die contented.

The merlin.

Induced by a gleam of fine weather in the winter to escape from his master, he soon discovered the cold weather was not over.

The hermit Piero.

Piero Pettinagno, a holy hermit of Florence who died in 1289.

That vain multitude.

The Siennese whose acquisition of Telamone, a seaport on the confines of the Maremma, led them into hopes of rivalling Pisa and Genoa as a naval power.

They, who lead.

Those who were to command the fleets of the Siennese.

NOTES - CANTO XIV.

Say.

The two spirits who speak to each other are Guido del Duca of Brettinoro and Rinieri da Calboli of Romagna.

The one.

Guido del Duca.

A brooklet.

The Arno rises in Falterona, a mountain in the Apennines, and runs a course of 120 miles.

The other.

Rinieri.

From the source.

From the rise of the Arno in the Apennines, from which Pelorus in Sicily was torn by convulsion of the earth, to the point where the same river unites its waters to the ocean, Virtue is persecuted by all.

'Midst brute swine.
The people of Casentino.

Curs.
The people of Arezzo.

Wolves.
The Florentines.

Foxes.
The Pisans.

My words are heard.
Guido is still addressing Rinieri.

Thy grandson.
Fulcieri da Calboli, grandson of Rinieri, who was twice podesta of Florence
and persecuted the Bianchi in 1302.

'Twixt Po, the mount, the Reno, and the shore.
The boundaries of Romagna.

Lizio.

Lizio da Valbona, lord of Ravenna, famous for his generosity and courtesy.

Manardi, Traversaro, and Carpigna.

From Brettinoro, Ravenna and Montefeltro, respectively, and all praised for liberality.

In Bologna the low artisan.

One named Lambertaccia who had been a mechanic and arrived at almost supreme power at Bologna.

Yon Bernardin.

Bernardin di Fosco, a man of low origin but great talents, who governed Pisa in 1249.

Prata.

A place between Faenza and Ravenna.

Of Azzo him.

Ugolino of the Ubaldini family in Tuscany.

Tignoso.

Federigo Tignoso of Rimini.

Traversaro's house and Anastagio's.
Two noble families of Ravenna.

O Brettinoro.

A beautifully situated castle in Romagna, the hospitable residence of Guido del Duca, who is here speaking.

Bagnacavallo.

Castle between Imola and Ravenna.

Castracaro... Conio.

Both of Romagna.

Pagani.

The Pagani were lords of Faenza and Imola. One of them, Machinardo, was named the Demon, from his treachery.

Hugolin.

Ugolino Ubaldini, a noble and virtuous person in Faenza, who on account of his age probably, was not likely to leave any offspring behind him.

"... whosoever finds
Will slay me."

The words of Cain, Gen. iv, 14.

Aglauros.

Ovid, Met. ii, fab. 12.

NOTES - CANTO XV.

As much.

It wanted three hours of sunset.

“Blessed the merciful.”

Matt. v, 7.

Romagna's spirit.

Guido del Duca of Brettinoro, mentioned in the last canto.

A dame.

Luke ii, 48.

Over this city.

Athens, named after Minerva because she had produced a more valuable gift for it in the olive than Neptune had in the horse.

How shall we those requite.

The answer of Pisistratus the tyrant to his wife when she urged him to punish by death a young man who had snatched a kiss from his daughter in public.

A stripling youth.
The protomartyr Stephen.

NOTES - CANTO XVI.

As thou.

As if thou wert still living.

I was of Lombardy, and Marco call'd.

A Venetian gentleman whose surname was Lombardo to denote the country from which he had come. There are many stories about him.

Elsewhere.

What Guido del Duca had said in the fourteenth canto concerning the degeneracy of his countrymen.

The fortress.

Justice, the most necessary virtue in the chief magistrate.

Who.

He compares the Pope, on account of the union of the temporal with the spiritual power in his person, to an unclean beast in the Levitical law.

Two suns.

The spiritual and temporal power represented by the Pope and Emperor.

That land.
Lombardy.

Ere the day.
Before the Emperor Frederick II was defeated at Parma in 1248.

The good Gherardo.
Gherardo di Camino of Trevigi died in 1306.

Conrad.
Currado da Palazzo, a gentleman of Brescia.

Guido of Castello.
Of Reggio. All Italians were called Lombards by the French.

His daughter Gaia.
A lady admired for her modesty, beauty and talents; the first Italian lady to cultivate vernacular poetry.

NOTES - CANTO XVII.

On an Alpine height.

All high mountains are termed Alps in Tuscan phraseology.

...the bird, that most

Delights itself in song.

Probably an allusion to the story of Philomela, who by mistake slew her own son, Itylus, and for her punishment was transformed by Jupiter into a nightingale.

One crucified.

Haman. See Esther vii.

A damsel.

Lavinia, mourning for her mother Amata, who, filled with grief and indignation for the supposed death of Turnus, destroyed herself. Aeneid, lib. xii, 595.

That fann'd my face.

The third P, for anger, is erased from Dante's brow.

The peace-makers.

Matt. v, 9.

The primal blessings.
Spiritual good.

The inferior.
Temporal good.

There is.
The proud.

There is.
The envious.

There is he.
The resentful; the four remaining sins are punished on the terraces to come.

NOTES - CANTO XVIII.

Your apprehension.

It is literally: “your apprehensive faculty derives intension from a thing really existing, and displays that intension within you, so that it makes the soul turn to it.”

Perhaps.

Dante uses the language of the Peripatetics, which denominates the kind of things, as determinable by many differences, matter. Love, then, in kind, perhaps, appears good; and it is said perhaps, because, strictly speaking, in kind there is neither good nor bad, neither praiseworthy nor blameable.

Spirit.

The human soul though united with the body has a separate existence of its own.

Up the vault.

With a motion opposite that of the heavens when the sun is in Scorpion, it appears to set between the isles of Corsica and Sardinia to those in Rome.

Andes.

Now Pietola, the birthplace of Virgil.

Mary.

“And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.”

Luke i, 39, 40.

Caesar.

Caesar left Brutus to complete the siege of Marseilles, and hastened on to the attack of Afranius and Petreius, the generals of Pompey, at Ilerda (Lerida) in Spain.

Abbot.

Alberto, abbot of San Zeno in Verona when Emperor Frederick I reduced Milan to ashes in 1162.

There is he.

Alberto della Scala, Lord of Verona, the natural father of the above-mentioned Albert, whom he made abbot.

NOTES - CANTO XIX.

The hour.

Near the dawn.

The geomancer.

Who drew a figure consisting of 16 marks named from stars and called one of them the greater fortune.

A woman's shape.

Symbol of avarice, gluttony and licentiousness.

Ulysses.

It is not easy to determine why Ulysses, contrary to the authority of Homer, is said to have been drawn aside from his course by the song of the Syren.

A dame.

Philosophy or perhaps Truth.

Who mourn.

Matt. v, 4.

Lure.

A decoy used by falconers to recall their hawks.

My soul.

Psalms cxix, 25.

The successor of Peter.

Ottobuono, of the family of Fieschi, Counts of Lavagno, died thirty-nine days after he became Pope, with the title of Adrian V, in 1276.

That stream.

The river Lavagno in the Genoese territory; to the east are situated Siestri and Chiaveri.

Err not.

Rev. xix, 10.

“Nor shall be given in marriage.”

Matt. xxii, 30.

A kinswoman.

Alagia, the wife of the Marchese Marcello Malaspina, one of the poet's protectors during his exile. See Canto viii.

NOTES - CANTO XX.

I drew the sponge.

I did not persevere in my inquiries from the spirit though anxious to learn more.

Wolf.

Avarice.

Of his appearing.

Can Grande della Scala. See The Inferno, Canto i.

Fabricius.

Caius Fabricius, a Roman general and consul who refused bribes from Pyrrhus, king of Epirus.

Nicholas.

Bishop of Mira, said to have lived in the fourth century; he is supposed to have saved three maidens from shame by throwing three bags of gold for their dowry into the window of their house.

Root.

Hugh Capet, ancestor of Philip IV.

Had Ghent and Douay, Lille and Bruges power.

These cities had lately been seized by Philip IV; the spirit intimates the approaching defeat of the French army by the Flemings at the battle of Courtrai, 1302.

The slaughterer's trade.

This reflection on the birth of his ancestor led Francis I to forbid the reading of Dante in his dominions.

All save one.

The posterity of Charlemagne with the exception possibly of Charles of Lorraine who is said to have always clothed himself in black on account of his melancholy disposition.

My son.

Hugh Capet had his son, Robert, crowned at Orleans in 988.

The great dower of Provence.

Louis IX and his brother, Charles of Anjou, married two of the four daughters of Raymond Berenger, Count of Provence. Hugh's descendants had little power until that time.

Young Conradine.

Charles of Anjou put Conradino, last of the House of Suabia, to death in 1268 and made himself King of Naples.

The angelic teacher.

Thomas Aquinas, reported to have been poisoned by a physician who wished to ingratiate himself with Charles of Anjou.

Another Charles.

Charles of Valois, brother of Philip IV, was sent by Pope Boniface VIII to settle the disturbed state of Florence. He drove Dante and the Bianchi from the city.

The other.

Charles, King of Naples, the eldest son of Charles of Anjou. In a naval battle with Ruggier de Lauria, the admiral of Peter of Aragon, he was made prisoner and was carried into Sicily in 1284. For a large sum of money, he married his daughter to Azzo VIII, Marquis of Ferrara.

The flower-de-luce.

The arms of France; Boniface VII was seized at Alagna in Campagna by the order of Philip IV in 1303 and soon afterward died of grief.

Into the temple.

Reference to the destruction of the order of the Templars in 1312 by Philip IV.

Pygmalion.

Brother of Dido who killed Sichaeus for his money.

Achan.

Joshua vii.

Heliodorus.

“For there appeared unto them an horse, with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran fiercely and smote at Heliodorus with his fore feet.” 2 Maccabees iii, 25.

Thracia’s king.

Polymnestor, the murderer of Polydorus, who had been entrusted to him by his father, Priam of Troy.

Crassus.

Marcus Crassus, famous for his riches, who fell miserably in the Parthian war; his head was carried to the Parthian king who had molten gold poured into his mouth.

Delos.

A floating island which became stationary after the birth of Apollo and Diana.

NOTES - CANTO XXI.

The well.

“The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not.” John iv,
15.

Luke.

Chapter xxiv, 13.

The tokens.

The three P's remaining on Dante's forehead.

She.

Lachesis, one of the three fates.

Thaumantian.

Iris, daughter of Thaumus, was the personification of the rainbow.

Highest of the trinal stairs.

The gate of Purgatory.

Through wind.

The ancients believed subterranean winds caused earthquakes.

Five hundred years.

Statius died in 96 A.D. He had spent five hundred years on the fifth terrace, and been in Purgatory for nearly twelve hundred years.

When the good Titus.

Titus by the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. avenged the death of Christ on the Jews.

The name.

Of poet.

From Tolosa.

Dante confuses Statius the poet, who was a Neapolitan, with the rhetorician of the same name, who was from Toulouse.

Fell.

Statius lived to write only a small part of the Achilleid.

NOTES - CANTO XXII.

Blessed.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Matt. v, 6.

Aquinum’s bard.

Juvenal had celebrated his contemporary, Statius, though some critics imagine that there is a secret derision couched under his praise.

The fierce encounter.

The punishment of the Prodigal Son; see The Inferno, Canto vii.

With shorn locks.

See The Inferno, vii, where the prodigals are so symbolized.

Sov’ reign of the pastoral song.

Virgil.

The twin sorrow of Jocasta’s womb.

Eteocles and Polynices.

And follow.
St. Peter.

Before.
I had composed the Thebaid.

Our old Terence.
Roman comic poet, born at Carthage 185 B.C.

Caecilius.
Caecilius Statius, a Latin comic poet, of whose works some fragments only remain.

Plautus.
Another comic poet, died in 184 B.C.

Varro.
Probably P. Terentius Varro, author of two epic poems.

Persius.
Satiric poet, born in 34 B.C.

That Greek.
Homer.

In the first ward.
Limbo.

Of Pella.
Euripides.

The Teian.
Anacreon or possibly Antiphon.

Agatho.
Tragic poet, contemporary of Euripides.

Simonides.
Greek lyric poet, born 559 B.C.

Of thy train.
Of those celebrated in thy poem.

Who show'd Langia's wave.
Hypsipile showed the spring Langia to Adrastus' soldiers.

Tiresias' daughter.

Manto; see *The Inferno*, Canto xx.

...the bride

Sea-born of Peleus.

Thetis.

Four handmaids.

Four hours; it was now after 10 A.M.

Mary took more thought.

The blessed virgin, who answers for you now in heaven, when she said to Jesus, at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, "they have no wine." regarded not the gratification of her own taste, but the honor of the nuptial banquet.

Dantel.

See *Dan.* i, 11-12, 16-17.

NOTES - CANTO XXIII.

My lips.

“O Lord. open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.”

Psalms li, 15.

Erisichthon.

As punishment for coveting the grove of Ceres, he was inflicted with such an insatiable hunger that he bit his own limbs.

When Mary.

During the Roman siege of Jerusalem, Mary ate half of her child and offered the other half to soldiers demanding food.

Who reads the name.

In the Middle Ages, it was a popular belief that the word OMO had been written on man's face by God, the O's being formed by the eyes, and the M by the nose and eye-sockets.

Forese.

Brother of Corso Donati and of Piccarda; see next Canto and Paradise, Canto
iii.

To call on Eli.
Matt. xxvii, 46.

Lower.
In the Ange-Purgatory. See The Inferno, Canto ii.

My Nella.
The wife of Forese.

The tract, most barbarous.
The Barbagia is part of Sardinia, so named because of the uncivilized state of
its inhabitants.

Saracens.
This word during the Middle Ages was indiscriminately applied to Pagans,
Mahometans, and all but Christians and Jews.

That shade.
Statius.

NOTES - CANTO XXIV.

He journeys.

The soul of Statius perhaps proceeds more slowly so that he may enjoy the company of Virgil.

Piccarda.

See Paradise, Canto iii.

Buonaggiunta.

Buonaggiunta Urbiciani of Lucca who lived toward the end of the thirteenth century; he was a poet who imitated the Troubadours.

He was of Tours.

Simon of Tours became Pope with the title of Martin IV in 1281.

Ubaldo.

Ubaldo degli Ubaldini of Pila, brother of Cardinal Ottaviano (The Inferno, Canto x) and of Ugolino d'Azzo (Purg., Canto xiv) and father of Archbishop Ruggieri (The Inferno, xxxiii).

Boniface.

Archbishop of Ravenna; died in 1295.

The Marquis.

The Marchese de' Rigogliosi, of Forli. When his butler told him it was commonly reported in the city that he did nothing but drink, he is said to have answered: "And do you tell them that I am always thirsty."

Him of Lucca.

Buonaggiunta.

Gentucca.

It is thought Dante became enamored of this lady during his exile.

There.

In the throat, where the torment inflicted by divine justice was felt.

Whose brow no wimple shades yet.

Who has not yet assumed the dress of a married woman.

"Ladies, ye that con the lore of love."

The first verse of a canzone in Dante's Vita Nuova.

The notary.

Jacopo da Lentino, called the Notary, a poet of these times.

Guittone.

Fra Guittone of Arezzo holds a distinguished place in Italian literature; died in 1294.

That new and sweeter style.

The style introduced in our poet's time.

The place.

Florence.

He.

Corso Donati, the brother of Forese and chief of the Neri. He was suspected of trying to aim at the sovereignty of Florence, and to escape the fury of his fellow-citizens he fled on horseback, but was overtaken and slain in 1308.

Creatures of the clouds.

The Centaurs.

The Hebrews.

Judges vii; the story of Gideon.

NOTES - CANTO XXV.

The sun.

The sun was two hours past the meridian now occupied by Taurus and its opposite, Scorpion, was consequently at the meridian of night.

How there can leanness come.

How can spirits not subject to corporeal nourishment be subject to leanness?

Meleager.

As Meleager was wasted away by the decree of the Fates, so by the divine appointment there may be leanness where there is no need of nourishment.

From whence it came.

From the heart.

As sea-sponge.

The foetus is in this stage a zoophyte.

...more wise,

Than thou, has erred.

Averroes is here meant.

Mark the sun's heat.

From Cicero's De Senectute.

When Lachesis hath spun the thread.

When a man's life on earth is ended.

To one strand.

The damned go to the river Acheron, the saved to the mouth of the Tiber.

“O God of mercy.”

The beginning of the hymn sung on the Sabbath at matins as it stands in the ancient breviaries.

Callisto.

Driven from Diana's band and changed to a bear by Juno after she had been seduced by Jupiter, she was transferred to the sky to become the constellation, Ursa Major.

NOTES - CANTO XXVI.

Thus spake one.
Guido Guinicelli.

Emmets.
Ants.

Pasiphae.
Wife of Minos and mother of the Minotaur.

Their first song.
“O God of Mercy”; see last Canto.

A dame on high.
The Virgin Mary.

Orb of heaven.
The Empyrean.

Caesar.

For the opprobrium cast on Caesar's effeminacy, see Suetonius, Julius Caesar, chapter 49.

Guinicelli.

A celebrated poet of Bologna who died in exile in 1276. See Canto xi.

Lycurgus.

When she went to show the Greek the river of Langia, Hypsipile had left her infant charge, the son of Lycurgus, on a bank where it was destroyed by a serpent; when she escaped the effects of Lycurgus' resentment, the joy her own children felt on seeing her matched Dante's on beholding Guinicelli.

He.

Dante and Petrarch place Arnault Daniel at the head of the Provençal poets; Arnault lived in the twelfth century.

The songster of Limoges.

Giraud de Borneil, of Sideuil, a castle in Limoges. He was a Troubadour of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries much admired and caressed in his day, in favor with the monarchs of Castile, Leon Navarre, and Aragon.

Guittone.

From Arezzo, see Canto xxiv.

Thy courtesy.

Arnault here speaks in Provençal, his own tongue.

NOTES - CANTO XXVII.

Libra.

The opposite sign of Aries in which sign the sun is.

Ebro.

Spanish river.

Blessed.

Matt. v, 8.

While vermeil dyed the mulberry.

Ovid, Metam., iv, 55: the story of Thisbe and Pyramus.

The name.

Beatrice.

Come.

Matt. xxv, 34.

I am Leah.

The active life as Rachel personifies the contemplative.

She.

Her delight is in admiring in her mirror, that is, in the Supreme Being, the light, or knowledge, that He vouchsafes her.

NOTES - CANTO XXVIII.

To that part.

The west.

Chiassi.

A large pine forest on the Adriatic near Ravenna.

A lady.

According to some, the Countess Matilda who endowed the Holy See with estates called the Patrimony of St. Peter; she died in 1115. Believed to represent either love for the church or the active life.

Cytherea.

Venus was accidentally wounded by Cupid and fell passionately in love with Adonis.

A cub for ever to the pride of man.

Because Xerxes had been so humbled, when he was compelled to repass the Hellespont in one small bark, after having a little before crossed with a prodigious army, in the hopes of subduing Greece.

The circumambient air.

An explanation of the origin of the breeze: the earth is fixed, the heavens revolve with the Primum Mobile and the aer viva from east to west; the revolution causes the breeze which bends the trees of the Earthly Paradise westward.

The other land.

The continent inhabited by the living and separated from Purgatory by the ocean.

Eunoe.

Lethe brings forgetfulness of sin; Eunoe, joyful consciousness of God's forgiveness.

NOTES - CANTO XXIX.

Blessed they.

Psalm xxxii, 1.

Helicon.

Boeotian mountain range, abode of the muses, containing the fountains of Aganippe and Hippocrene.

Urania.

Muse of Astronomy.

Tapers of gold.

See Rev. i, 12. In his Convito, our author says: "Because these gifts proceed from ineffable charity, and divine charity is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, hence, also, it is that they are called gifts of the Holy Spirit, the which, as Isaiah distinguishes them, are seven."

Listed colors.

Colors of the rainbow.

Four and twenty elders.
Rev. iv, 4.

Blessed be thou.
“Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.” Luke
i. 42.

Four.
The four evangelists.

Ezekiel.
Ezekiel i, 4-6.

John.
St. John gives the four beasts six wings apiece (Rev. iv, 8) but Ezekiel gave
them only four wings; Dante perhaps agrees with St. John because he lived in the
sixth age of man along with St. John while Ezekiel lived in the fourth.

A car triumphal.
The Christian church; the two wheels symbolize the Old and New Testaments
and the Griffon, the double nature of Christ who is both human and divine.

Tellus' prayer.

Jupiter answered his prayer by hurling thunderbolts at Phaeton when the latter drove the sun's chariot out of its course.

Three nymphs.

The three evangelical virtues: the first Charity, the next Hope, and the third Faith.

A band quaternion.

The four moral or cardinal virtues in which Prudence is the director.

The rest conducted.

Prudence, described with three eyes, regards past, present and future.

Two old men.

Saint Luke, the physician, characterized as the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, and Saint Paul, represented with the sword, on account, as it should seem, of the power of his style.

Of the great Coan.

Hippocrates, born in Cos about 460 B.C. "whom nature made for the benefit of her favorite creature, man."

Four others.

Authorities differ as to whether these are the four evangelists, the four principal doctors of the church, or a personification of the Minor Epistles.

One single old man.

Some say St. John in his character as author of the Apocalypse, some say Moses.

Roses.

Symbolic of love.

NOTES - CANTO XXX.

That polar light.

The seven candlesticks of gold, which he calls the polar light of heaven itself, because they perform the same office for Christians that the polar star does for mariners, in guiding them to their port.

Come.

“Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me, from Lebanon.” Song of Solomon iv, 8.

Blessed.

Matt. xxi, 9.

A virgin.

Beatrice; the olive symbolizes peace and wisdom and the color she wears Faith, Hope and Charity.

But.

They sang the thirty-first Psalm, to the end of the eighth verse. What follows in that Psalm would not have suited the place or the occasion.

The land whereon no shadow falls.
When the wind is south.

Those bright semblances.
The angels.

The threshold of my second age.
As she neared twenty-five; according to Dante's divisions of the human life
into four ages.

NOTES - CANTO XXXI.

Counter to the edge.

The weapons of divine justice are blunted by the confession and sorrow of the offender.

For a slight girl.

Commentators differ on the identity; suggestions include Gentucca of Lucca (Canto xiv) or a woman named “Pargoletta,” or possibly Gemma de’ Donati whom Dante married.

From Iarbas’ land.

The south.

The beard.

A severe reflection was implied on Dante’s want of the wisdom which should accompany the age of manhood.

The steam.

Lethe.

“Tu asperges me.”

“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” Ps. li, 7. Sung by the choir, while the priest is sprinkling the people with holy water.

Should drench me.

The immersion meant God’s forgiveness of Dante’s sins and the swallowing of the water, Dante’s oblivion of his sins.

Those yonder three.

Faith, Hope and Charity.

The emeralds.

The eyes of Beatrice.

Twifold being.

The divine and human nature of Christ symbolized by the Griffon.

NOTES - CANTO XXXII.

Their ten years' thirst.

Beatrice had been dead ten years.

But soon.

As soon as his sight was recovered, so as to bear the view of that glorious procession, which, splendid as it was, was yet less so than Beatrice, by whom his vision had been overpowered, &c.

A plant.

The tree of knowledge of good and evil, also symbolizing the Empire the way the chariot symbolizes the Church; the leafless state of the tree represents the depravity of Rome before Christ.

Gryphon.

Our Saviour's submission to the Roman empire appears to be intended, and particularly his injunction, "to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's."

There, left unto the stock.

By his suffering under the sentence of Pilate, the delegate of the Roman emperor, Christ acknowledged and confirmed the supremacy of that emperor over the whole world; he thereby joined the Church to the Empire.

When large floods of radiance.

When the sun enters into Aries, the next constellation to Pisces.

The unpitying eyes.

Argus, guardian of Io; Mercury killed him after he had put Argus to sleep with the story of Syrinx and Pan.

Chosen three.

Peter, James and John.

Deeper sleeps.

The sleep of death, in the instance of the ruler of the Synagogue's daughter and of Lazarus.

Quire.

Seven virtues.

To that place.

The earth.

The bird of Jove.

This imitated from Ezekiel xvii, 3, 4, is typical of the persecutions of the church by the Roman emperors.

A fox.

Probably the treachery of the heretics is meant.

With his feathers lined.

Reference to the donations of Constantine to the church.

A dragon.

Mahomet, or Satan according to those who believe this to be a reference to the great schism of the ninth century.

Heads.

By the seven heads are meant the seven capital sins: by the three with two horns, pride, anger, and avarice, injurious both to man himself and to his neighbor; by the four with one horn, gluttony, gloominess, concupiscence, and envy, hurtful, at least in their primary effects, chiefly to him who is guilty of them. Compare Rev. xvii.

O'er it.

The harlot is thought to be the state of the church under Boniface VIII and the giant to be Philip IV of France who brought the Pope's residence to Avignon.

NOTES - CANTO XXXIII.

The heathen.

Palms lxxix, 1.

Yet a little while.

John xvi, 16.

Was, and is not.

Dante did not consider the church at Avignon the true church.

Hope not to scare God's vengeance with a sop.

In Dante's time, a murderer at Florence imagined himself secure from vengeance if he ate a sop of bread in wine upon the grave of the person murdered, within the space of nine days.

That eagle.

He prognosticates that the Emperor of Germany will not always submit to the usurpations of the Pope, and foretells the coming of Henry VII, Duke of Luxemburgh, signified by the numerical figures DVX, or of Can Grande della Scala, appointed the leader of the Ghibelline forces.

Themis.

Noted for obscurity of her oracles; the Sphinx tore to pieces the travellers who could not solve the riddles he gave them.

Naiads.

Dante should have used Laiades (son of Laius).

Twice.

First by the eagle and next by the giant.

Elsa's numbing waters.

The Elsa, a little stream, which flows into the Arno about twenty miles below Florence, is said to possess a petrifying quality.

That one brings home his staff inwreathed with palm.

“For the same cause that the palmer, returning from Palestine, brings home his staff, or bourdon, bound with palm,” that is, to show where he has been.

THE END