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THE
DIVINE COMEDY
OF
DANTE ALIGHIERI.

TRANSLATED VERSE FOR VERSE
FROM THE ORIGINAL INTO TERZA RIMA.

BY
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P R E F A C E .

IN the month of August, 1856, I attempted the experiment of translating into *terza rima* the beautiful story of Francesca of Rimini, in the fifth Canto of the "Inferno." I was then employed as a district officer in the Madras Presidency, and I continued to occupy my leisure in the translation of the poem, completing the whole of the "Inferno" early in the following year.

Throughout the year 1857, the year of the Indian Mutiny, my family being in England, I was living as the only English officer in charge of a large sub-district, and throughout that year I was absolutely without any English companion, and with the terrible tales of mutiny and massacre that reached me daily through the Press, I lived unarmed and in absolute security amidst a peaceful agricultural community. Such a life was singularly suitable for literary labour, and during my many hours of solitary leisure in that stirring year I completed in the month of October my translation of the "Divine Comedy." I spent the next year in a careful revision of my work, and then laid it by, hoping that I might live to publish it in after years.

In the year 1866 I returned to England for the first time after an absence of twenty-two years, and at the

request of the late Professor Brewer, of King's College, who was himself a great student of Dante, I placed in his hands the MS. of my translation, which he had heard from a mutual friend that I had completed. Mr. Brewer greatly encouraged me by the favourable opinion he kindly formed of my work, but he did much more than pass such an opinion: he compared my whole translation carefully with the original, and marked every passage in the long poem which he considered to stand in need of alteration, and advised me, after again subjecting it to a complete revision, to bring it before the public, telling me that he considered it the best translation of the "Purgatory" and the "Paradise" that had come under his notice.

On my return to India I devoted the leisure hours of another year to the revision which Mr. Brewer had recommended, and I in fact re-wrote every passage which had been marked by him as unsatisfactory. So many years had elapsed since I had written it that I could judge my work as fairly as if it had not been my own, and I took a critical pleasure in the justice of Professor Brewer's obelisks of condemnation. The correction of the marked passages was no light labour, as the alteration of one crabbed line often entailed a new turning of a whole triplet, the exigencies of rhyme in the *terza rima* being generally the cause of the blots requiring alteration.

After another interval of sixteen years I bring my work before the general judgment of Dante students as the result of the honest labour of many years of a stu-

dious life. I know that I cannot expect any general interest in such work, but I shall be satisfied if it obtain from other students of Dante the favourable opinion which it won from my kindly critic the late Professor Brewer, and I hope it will at least interest my friends as the mature fruit of such literary power as I possess.

The only translations of Dante with which I am acquainted are Cary's, Longfellow's, and Wright's. Cary's work is that of a real scholar, but it is impossible to represent the "Divine Comedy" in Miltonic blank verse. Faithful as is Cary's version, it does not really *represent* Dante to the English reader. Longfellow's work is even more verbally literal, and equally unlike the original. It is translated verse for verse and in terza rima form, but though it is not true blank verse there is no rhyme, and every one fit to appreciate Dante knows that in his interlinked rhyme and marvellous melody consists the most exquisite portion of his charm. It is to these that the sweetest portions of the "Purgatory" and the "Paradise" owe their perfect form, which, robbed of such adjuncts, cannot be presented in a foreign language.

Of the above three translations Wright's is certainly the best representation of the original poem, for it is in rhyme, and the verse is generally melodious. But the metre is not that of the original; it is not terza rima, but an ingenious imitation of it, invented by Mr. Wright to avoid the technical difficulty of the triple rhyme. In my opinion Dante cannot be fairly represented to the English reader without his triple rhyme.

The terza rima is a metre perfectly suited for English poetry, and in that metre only can a true representation of the great Florentine's work be presented in English verse.

I believe that more than one translation into English terza rima has appeared since I made my own, and that one of them by Mr. Cayley is of more than ordinary excellence. The work never fell into my hands, nor was even known to me by repute until I had for many years given up my own Dante studies. I have abstained from seeing his work till my own was through the press, in order to avoid any possibility of assistance by others' labour to my own. Should any similarity be detected anywhere between our translations it can only be the accidental result of two minds having engaged separately in carrying out the same task on the same conditions.

In my opinion, fidelity to the original is a translator's first duty, and that I have refused to sacrifice in any attempt at meretricious ornament. I should have wished to present my own translation side by side with the Italian, but have been deterred by the extra cost of printing which such a mode of publication would involve. I believe that the Italian student who will take the trouble to compare my version with Dante's poem, however slight his knowledge of the Italian language may be, will find no difficulty in following the original line by line; mere paraphrase of foreign poetry is easy, faithful representation is hard. My effort has been to reproduce with exactitude the thoughts, and, where

possible, the words of Dante in verse that may give the English reader some idea of the exquisite harmony of the original.

Wherever Dante has written in Latin I have kept the words unchanged: such lines, if pronounced in the Italian fashion, will generally be found fairly harmonious; of course with the old English pronunciation they do not make verse at all. Proper names must also be pronounced in Italian to keep the harmony of the verse. For instance, Beatrice must be pronounced as a word of four syllables unless it is spelt Beatrix. I trust to the consideration of a fair critic if in a long poem of nearly five thousand triple rhymes he finds here and there a faulty rhyme which would be inadmissible in a sonnet. I have purposely made use of some archaic words in the reproduction of an Italian poem which is at least half a century older than the works of our Chaucer.

The introduction, and the notes which will be found appended to each page, have been written solely with the object of enabling the ordinary reader to comprehend Dante's great poem, the interest of which is often dependent on minute historical details, now little known or forgotten.

JAMES INNES MINCHIN.

October, 1884.

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H E L L.

CANTO I.

Dante having wandered in the middle of his life into a dark forest, which represents the maze of human passions, attempts to climb the mountain of Virtue, and is repulsed by three beasts, the leopard, the lion, and the wolf, representing the lust of Pleasure, Pride, and Avarice. He is rescued from these by the shade of Virgil, who promises to conduct him through Hell and Purgatory, whilst another worthier spirit shall finally lead him to Paradise 1

CANTO II.

Dante having followed Virgil along the mountain until nightfall, is oppressed with fears on account of the greatness of his undertaking, and his own unfitness for such a task. Virgil reproves his cowardice, and inspires him with confidence by the account of the manner in which he was called by Beatrice from Heaven, to speed to his assistance 5

CANTO III.

Dante, following Virgil, arrives at the gates of Hell, and reads the inscription written thereon. Immediately within the precincts he finds the vast crowd of human beings who on earth have done neither good nor evil, and who are punished there, together with the Angels who were neither on the side of God nor Lucifer when the latter rebelled, and who are hence excluded from Heaven and from the circles of Hell itself. From there they reach the bank of the River Acheron, where the Demon Charon ferries over the spirits of the condemned into Hell, and there Dante falls into a sudden swoon 10

CANTO IV.

Dante on recovering from his swoon finds himself on the other side of the River Acheron. He follows Virgil into the "blind world," and enters Limbo, which is the outer circle of Hell. Here he finds all those souls who, from the want of baptism, have lost salvation, but have done nothing to deserve actual punishment 13

CANTO V.

Dante enters the second circle of Hell, where he finds Minos, the judge, who endeavours to stop his progress. Virgil having taken him within, he sees there the punishment of carnal sinners, who are for ever tost about by furious winds. Amongst the condemned he sees and converses with Francesca of Rimini and her lover, and falls fainting to the ground with pity at their fate 17

CANTO VI.

On returning to his senses Dante finds himself in the third circle, that of rain, in which gluttons are punished, under the guardianship of Cerberus. Amongst the condemned he finds a Florentine, nicknamed Hog, and converses with him on the dissensions of their town 21

CANTO VII.

Dante is confronted by Pluto at the entrance of the fourth circle. Conducted by Virgil he obtains a safe passage, and sees within the avaricious and the prodigal, condemned to a like punishment, rolling great weights against each other. Passing onwards to the fifth circle they come to the Stygian lake, in which the souls of the wrathful are immersed. Skirting the lake they reach at last the foot of a tower 25

CANTO VIII.

Phlegyas, the ferryman of Styx, summoned by a signal from the tower, bears Virgil and Dante across the lake. On the way they are attacked by Philippo Argenti, whose punishment is described. They then arrive at the city of Dis, where the fallen angels prevent their entrance, closing the gate at Virgil's approach 28

CANTO IX.

Virgil pauses, waiting for heavenly assistance. In the meantime the three Furies rise upon the walls of Dis and threaten Dante with the sight of Medusa's head. The Angel then arrives across the Styx, and the fiends retiring, the gates of the city are opened. Dante following Virgil finds the heretics of all denominations punished in tombs of fire 32

CANTO X.

Farinata degli Uberti, the Ghibeline leader, and Cavalcante Cavalcanti, the Guelph, rise from the same tomb and converse with Dante. The latter inquires about the welfare of his son Guido, Dante's great friend, and the former predicts Dante's exile. He explains to Dante that, although able to see indistinctly future events, the spirits are entirely ignorant of what is at the time going on in the world, unless they are informed by spirits lately arrived from there 36

CANTO XI.

Resting on a rock that overhangs the seventh circle while they pause to accustom themselves to the fetid atmosphere, Virgil explains to Dante what crimes are punished in the three remaining circles, namely, violence, fraud, and treason. He shows how the crimes punished in the circles outside the city of Dis are of less culpability than those doomed within the walls, and how usury is particularly hateful to God 40

CANTO XII.

Descending the bank into the seventh circle, they find it guarded by the Minotaur. Having reached the bottom of the cliff, Dante sees a river of blood, in which are punished those who have committed violence against their neighbour, being prevented from rising out of the boiling stream by a band of Centaurs, who gallop with bows and arrows along its bank. Three of them advance to meet Virgil and Dante, and, at the former's request, one of them guides the poets along the bank, and finally carries Dante across the stream on his back 43

CANTO XIII.

Entering the second division of the seventh circle, Dante finds himself in a weird wood, the trees of which are the spirits of those who have committed violence against their own persons, and who are punished by being fed upon by Harpies. While Virgil converses with Pietro delle Vigne, the confidant and Chancellor of the Emperor Frederic II., two spirits rush through the forest, chased by black bitches, who tear them to pieces, such being the punishment of those who have committed violence against themselves in their estate 47

CANTO XIV.

The poets reach the boundary of the wood and see before them the third compartment of this circle, a plain of burning sand, where are punished in various ways those who have committed violence against God, Nature, and Art. Amongst the first they see Capaneus, one of the seven before Thebes. They reach a rivulet of blood, the river of Phlegethon, which traverses the burning desert, and whose petrified margins afford Dante a passage across the sand 51

CANTO XV.

Following the petrified margins of the stream through the circle, they meet a troop of tormented spirits who have committed violence against Nature. Amongst those Dante recognises his old preceptor, Ser Brunetto, who accompanies him for some distance, and predicts his coming exile 55

CANTO XVI.

The poets having almost crossed the desert, where they can hear the falling of the torrent into the next circle, meet another troop punished for the same vice, amongst whom Dante converses with three distinguished Florentines. Having reached the precipice, Virgil throws a rope down the waterfall, upon which signal a monster rises 59

CANTO XVII.

The form of the monster Gerion is described. Virgil and Dante descend a short distance to reach him, and then Dante returns alone to the extreme verge of the sandy desert, where he sees seated under the rain of fire those who have committed violence against art, or usurers. On returning to Virgil he finds him seated on the back of Gerion, and taking his place before him, the poets are carried down by the monster to the next circle 63

CANTO XVIII.

A description of the eighth circle, which is divided into ten wards, in which are punished those who have committed frauds of ten different kinds. Virgil and Dante pass through the first two wards; in the first are punished those who have deceived women, who are naked and lashed by demons; in the second all flatterers, who are doomed to wallow in human excrement 66

CANTO XIX.

Dante describes the third valley, in which Simonists are punished by being buried head downwards in round apertures of the rock, their legs from the knees downwards being alone visible, which they kick convulsively, while the soles of the feet burn with a lambent flame. Virgil bears Dante down the impassable bank into the bottom of the valley, where he converses with the soul of Pope Nicholas the Third, and bitterly rebukes him for his Simony and prostitution of his high office . . . 70

CANTO XX.

In the fourth ward of Malebolge Dante sees the doomed passing in slow procession. On closer inspection he finds that their heads are turned the face behind, and that they have consequently to walk backwards. These are necromancers who deceived themselves or others by attempting to look into the future. Amongst them is Manto, the sight of whom leads Virgil into a digression on the origin of his native city . . . 74

CANTO XXI.

The poets pass into the fifth ward, and, looking down from the bridge, Dante discovers it to be a lake of boiling pitch. While gazing into its depths a demon alights on the bridge, bearing a sinner on his back, whom he throws into the lake. As the wretch rises to the surface a crowd of demons, hitherto concealed under the bridge, attack him with their hooks and force him to dive into the boiling pitch. Virgil issues forth to obtain a safe passage for Dante, and being told that the bridge over the sixth valley is in ruins they follow a band of demons, whom their chief has directed to guide the poets to another bridge over the next ward 78

CANTO XXII.

The poets following the ten demons, they come suddenly upon a sinner, who before he can escape into the lake is speared by one of the fiends. With the permission of the leader, Virgil questions the sinner as to himself and his companions. The trickster then induces the demons to stand aside, under pretence that he will lure more of his comrades into their clutches, and takes the opportunity of plunging into the burning pitch; two of the demons chasing him are caught in the slimy lake, and while the rest are extricating them the poets continue their way 81

CANTO XXIII.

Dante expresses to Virgil his fear that they will be pursued by the revengeful demons, and as his alarm is fulfilled Virgil lifts him in his arms and carries him down the cliff into the next valley of Malebolge. There they find hypocrites punished by being clothed in long cloaks and weighty cowls of lead. Amongst these Dante converses with two Rejoicing Friars, who, under the cloak of impartiality, had inflicted grievous wrong on the Ghibeline party in Florence 85

CANTO XXIV.

Dante, with great difficulty, under Virgil's guidance climbs the broken bridge to the ridge that looks down into the seventh valley. Descending into it, he finds robbers punished there, surrounded by multitudes of pestiferous serpents. Amongst them the soul of Gianni Fucci, who had robbed the sacristy in Pistoia, predicts to him the evils that will shortly ensue to his own city and the Florentines 89

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CANTO XXV.

While Fucci vents his rage in blasphemy he is attacked by the serpents, and flees away, pursued by Cacus in the shape of a centaur, whose croup is covered with adders, while a fiery dragon is seated on his crest. A party of Florentines then advance under the bank where the poets are standing, and four of them go through the most extraordinary transformations 98

CANTO XXVI.

Dante ironically compliments Florence on its renown in the Infernal Regions, and prophesies its approaching misfortunes. He passes with Virgil into the eighth pit, over which he sees hovering flames, like will-o'-the-wisps. These he finds to be the souls of fraudulent counsellors. Virgil converses with a flame with two horns, in which are the spirits of Ulysses and Diomed, and the former relates the final voyage which he and his old companions ventured into the unknown regions of the West, beyond the gates of Hercules 97

CANTO XXVII.

The flame which contained Ulysses and Diomed having departed, another comes near the poets and addresses them finally in Tuscan. On being questioned by Dante he states that he was Count Guido da Montefeltro, and relates why he was condemned to such a punishment 101

CANTO XXVIII.

The poets reach the ninth valley, in which the promoters of schisms are punished, being hewed by a fiend with a sword in frightful wounds. Amongst these Dante converses with Mahomet, Pier da Medicina, Mosca de' Uberti, and Bertram dal Bornio 104

CANTO XXIX.

Dante still lingers, gazing on the maimed spirits in the ninth valley, in anticipation of seeing there a relation who had been murdered, and whose death his family had not avenged. He then follows Virgil over the ridge which crowns the last ward of Malebolge, in which are punished falsifiers of various descriptions. Descending into the valley, he finds them afflicted with fearful diseases, and discourses with two alchemists, Grifolino of Arezzo and Capocchio of Siena 109

CANTO XXX.

Two wild spirits rush by, tearing and haling the other plague-smitten victims. These are they who in life falsified their own persons. On their departure Dante listens to an altercation between Master Adam of Brescia, a coiner, and Simon of Troy. He is rebuked by Virgil for taking an interest in so base a dispute 112

CANTO XXXI.

The poets, turning from the last valley of Malebolge, advance towards the ninth circle of Hell, the lowest and central pit. Around that pit, standing within it, but rising above it from their middle upwards, stand vast giants. Of these Dante sees Nimrod, Fialte, and Antæus. The last places the poets in safety at the bottom of the pit 116

CANTO XXXII.

Dante finds himself in the bottomless pit, in which is the frozen lake of Cocytus. In the outer circle are frozen the first class of traitors, their heads alone being raised above the ice. The circle is called *Caina*, after the first murderer. *Camiccione de' Pazzi* names to Dante several of those punished in this circle. The poets then advance to the second circle, called *Antenora*, after *Antenor*, the betrayer of *Troy*, where are punished in like manner traitors to their country. *Bocca degli Abbati* names to Dante several of his companions in suffering. Finally Dante sees two forms frozen, the head of one overlapping the other, and devouring the lower skull with fierce hatred 120

CANTO XXXIII.

Count Ugolin relates to Dante the fearful end of himself and his sons, left to die of hunger in the *Tower of Famine*. The poets then pass onwards to the third division of the last circle, called *Idomea*, in which are punished those who have betrayed their benefactors. The friar *Alberigo* explains to Dante that when men have committed the height of perfidy their spirits are at once sent to torment, a fiend taking possession of the body which appears to be still alive on earth 124

CANTO XXXIV.

The poets advance into the fourth quarter of the last circle, called *Judecca*; there the damned are wholly submerged beneath the frozen lake of *Cocytus*. Advancing towards the icy blast that meets them, *Virgil* shows Dante the gigantic form of *Lucifer* piercing through the lake. *Virgil* then takes up Dante, and descends along the body of the fallen archangel into the centre of the earth. From thence he ascends on the other side, and, after a weary climb through a deep cavern, the poets at length issue on the *Antipodes* 128

PURGATORY.

CANTO I.

Dante describes the calm delight he experienced at issuing to the tender light of early morning from the black night of Hell. The poets meet the shade of *Cato of Utica*, the appointed guardian of the mountain of *Purgatory*. On his direction they proceed to the seashore, and there *Virgil* washes from Dante's face with dew the stains of Hell, and girds him with the reeds that grow there 133

CANTO II.

A light rises on the distant ocean, which, advancing with marvellous speed, is seen to be the bark in which the spirits are brought to *Purgatory* by an angel. When the troop land upon the shore, Dante vainly endeavours to embrace one of the spirits, whom he recognises for his friend *Casella*. The latter, to please Dante, sings one of his canzoni, to which while all are rapt in attention *Cato* rebukes them for dallying on their way, and all hurry towards the mountain 137

CANTO III.

As the poets advance towards the hill, Dante is alarmed at seeing only his own shadow cast by the sun behind them, and thinks that *Virgil* has deserted him. Cleared from his error they reach the foot of the mountain, and while in perplexity as to their ascent, meet a troop of spirits, who show them the way. Amongst them *Manfred*, King of *Naples*, urges Dante to tell his daughter of his fate, as by her prayers she can shorten the time of his wanderings in the *Ante-Purgatory* 140

CANTO IV.

Guided by the spirits, the poets turn into a narrow fissure cloven in the hillside, and continue their ascent. Pausing on the top of a ledge for rest, Dante marvels at seeing the sun travelling in the northern portion of the sky, instead of in the southern, as in the other hemisphere. They then become aware of the presence of another troop of spirits, among whom Dante recognises one Belacqua, who informs him that they are condemned to wander in the Ante-Purgatory for as many years as they delayed repentance in life 144

CANTO V.

The poets meet with others, who, having deferred their repentance until death, suffered violent ends, but had time to repent, and obtain pardon at the last. Amongst these, Giacopo del Cassero, Buonconte da Montefeltro, and Pia, a Siennese lady, describe their deaths, and urge Dante to obtain on earth prayers in their behalf 148

CANTO VI.

The poet continues amongst the same troop, of whom he names several more. At last, freed from their importunities, he advances with Virgil till they meet another solitary shade, who proves to be the Mantuan Sordello. On seeing his affectionate greeting with his countryman, Dante bursts into an invective against the whole of Italy divided by party feuds, where, especially in Florence, such a spirit was entirely lost 151

CANTO VII.

The poets learn from Sordello that it is impossible to ascend the mountain during the night, and he guides them to a retired valley, where they see those who, from being engrossed with affairs of State, deferred their repentance to the last, and are detained in the Ante-Purgatory. Amongst these are named the Emperor Rodolph, Ottocar, King of Bohemia, Philip III. of France, Henry of Navarre, Peter III. of Arragon, Charles of Anjou, Henry III. of England, and William, Marquis of Montferrat 156

CANTO VIII.

At evening fall one of the spirits sings the hymn of the Church, "Te lucis ante terminum," and on its close two angels, with flaming swords broken off at the points, descend to guard the vale. The poets then enter it, and Dante meets with joy his friend Nino, the Judge of Gallura. A serpent creeps into the valley, but flees at once on the advance of the angels; and Dante converses with Conrad Malaspina, who predicts to him his own exile 160

CANTO IX.

Dante dreams that he is carried by an angel to the sphere of fire. On waking he finds himself alone with Virgil, who tells him that in his sleep he was borne up by Lucia to that spot, which is close to the gate of Purgatory. Reaching the portal, they are admitted by the Angel who stands in ward over it, as the vicar of Saint Peter 163

CANTO X.

The poets issue from the gate through a spiral staircase upon the first cornice on the mountain of Purgatory. On the wall which bars the further ascent of the mountain they see carved bas-reliefs representing various examples of humility. Finally they advance slowly towards these spirits, who, bowed under vast weights, are purged of the sin of Pride 167

CANTO XI.

After the spirits have recited the Lord's Prayer, Virgil demands of them the way up the mountain. One of them directs them to accompany them along the ledge, and declares himself to be Umberto, who was murdered at Campagnatico. Dante then recognises in another Oderisi the Illuminator, who discourses on the vanity of worldly fame, and points out to him Provenzana Salvani, a chief in Siena . . . 171

CANTO XII.

The poets leave the burdened spirits, and as they rapidly advance, Dante's attention is drawn by Virgil to the effigies which are drawn upon the ledge, and which represent various examples of pride. They are finally met by an Angel, who points out to them the stairs by which they are to ascend, and touching Dante's forehead with his wing effaces one of the seven P's which had been engraved there at the entrance into Purgatory . . . 175

CANTO XIII.

They reach the second cornice, on which is purged the sin of Envy. As they proceed along it they hear voices from invisible spirits inculcating charity. Further on they see the souls of the envious, clad in sackcloth, and with their eyes sewed up with an iron wire. Amongst these Dante converses with Sapia, a lady of Siena, who acquaints him with her story . . . 179

CANTO XIV.

Dante is addressed by two shadows, Guido del Duca of Bretinoro and Rinieri de' Caldoli of Romagna. The former, on Dante's mentioning that he has come from the vale of Arno, inveighs against the degeneracy of its inhabitants. On leaving these, the poets hear voices recording instances of the crime of Envy . . . 188

CANTO XV.

The poets advancing meet an Angel, who invites them to ascend to the next steep. Mounting the stairs they issue on the third cornice, where the sin of Anger is purged. Dante falling into a waking trance, beholds in vision various famous examples of patience—the Virgin seeking Jesus amongst the doctors in the Temple, Pisistratus calming his indignant wife, and the martyrdom of Stephen. As the evening advances, the poets are enveloped in a thick smoke . . . 187

CANTO XVI.

Dante proceeds through the smoke, guided by Virgil, and hears the voices of spirits who are purged there from the sin of Anger. He converses with Marco Lombardo, from whom he inquires the reason of the degeneracy of the age. The spirit points out to him the error of attributing it to necessity, or the starry influences, as man is gifted with free will, and explains it as the consequence of the union of temporal and spiritual powers in the Papal Government . . . 191

CANTO XVII.

The poets issue from the smoke, and various scenes of anger are shown to Dante in vision—Philomel, Haman, Amata. He is roused by the appearance of an Angel, who directs them to mount to the next cornice. The night closes as they reach the summit of the stairs, and halting there Virgil informs Dante that spiritual sloth is purged in that circle . . . 195

CANTO XVIII.

- Virgil, continuing his discourse, explains the nature of love, which, though innate in its affections, in man, does not do away with the restraining influences of his free will. At the close of his disquisition, a troop of shadows rush by, compensating by their present ardour for their former lukewarmness in life. Two in the van encourage the rest by reciting examples of zeal: the Abbot of San Zenò declares himself to the poets while racing by, and two bring up the rear, shouting out instances of the sin which they are there purging away. On their departure, Dante falls into a dreamy slumber 198

CANTO XIX.

- Dante beholds in vision Falsehood and Virtue, personified in two female shapes. He is then led by an Angel to the stairs, and ascends to the fifth cornice. There he finds the shades prostrate on the ground, purging the sin of Avarice, and amongst them he converses with Pope Adrian V. 202

CANTO XX.

- Continuing their journey round the cornice, Dante hears a spirit relate illustrious examples of Poverty and Liberality. He tells him that he is Hugh Capet, and mourns over the career of his descendants. He concludes by relating notorious examples of Avarice. As the poets continue their way the mountain trembles as with an earthquake, and all the spirits sing "Gloria in excelsis." 206

CANTO XXI.

- Proceeding on their way, the poets are joined by the shadow of Statius, who explains to them that the earthquake on the mountain takes place whenever a spirit in Purgatory is released Heavenwards, when all the spirits unite in praising God. He tells the poets who he is, and describes his enthusiasm for Virgil, whom he then learns to his delight to be one of his companions 211

CANTO XXII.

- The poets ascend to the sixth circle, in which the sin of Gluttony is purged. As they mount the stairs, Statius informs Virgil that he had been a prodigal in his life, which sin, and not avarice, he had cleansed in the preceding circle. As they advance round the sixth cornice, they find a tree covered with odorous fruits, from which issues a voice, recording brilliant examples of Temperance . . . 214

CANTO XXIII.

- As the poets advance round the cornice, they are overtaken by a troop of spirits utterly emaciated in appearance. Amongst them Dante recognises an old friend, Forese, by his voice. The spirit tells him that his rapid advance through Purgatory is due to the prayers of his virtuous wife, and from her he takes occasion to inveigh against the general shamelessness of the women of Florence. 218

CANTO XXIV.

- Forese names some of the other spirits, and amongst the rest Buonagiunta of Lucca, who afterwards converses with Dante. When the troop of shadows depart, Forese still lingers with Dante, and foretells to him the death of his political enemy, Corso Donati. Forese then follows his companions, and the poets advance to a second tree, from which issues a voice relating examples of intemperance. After passing the tree, an Angel points out to them the ascent to the next cornice 222

CANTO XXV.

As they ascend the stair, Dante expresses his wonder at the leanness of the spirits in the last circle, who as spirits stand in no need of nourishment. On Virgil's request, Statius, to explain his difficulty, describes the generation of the human body, its junction with the soul, and the nature of the latter after its passage to another world. They then reach the seventh cornice, where those who have been guilty of incontinence are purified in fire. The spirits in the fire record celebrated examples of Chastity 226

CANTO XXVI.

While the poets advance along the brink of the cornice, the spirits are astonished at the shadow cast on the flames by Dante's body. Ere he can satisfy their curiosity, another troop of spirits advance in the fire from the opposite direction, and the two bands embrace and pass on their way, reprobating their earthly sins. On their departure Dante tells the shadows beside him that he is still alive, and he is then addressed by Guido Guinicelli, the Italian poet, who afterwards points out to him Arnault Daniel, the Provençal 230

CANTO XXVII.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE great poem of Dante has been finely called the voice of the Dark Ages. From that age of strife and brute oppression, of the slumber of intellect, and the tyranny of force, when the seeds of knowledge and the aspirations of thought were buried in the cloister, the great cry of one of the mightiest intellects the world has produced gave form to the highest spirit of its own era, and created it to live for all time. Though like all great intellects Dante was in advance of his time, he was still of it. The weaknesses of his age were engrafted on his own strength, and neither his principles of ethics nor politics can be judged fairly by the light of the present day. Nearly six centuries divide us from the great Florentine, whose genius was produced at a time when its fruit was to preserve the memory of long ages which would otherwise have sunk in endless silence.

Dante appeared in the twilight which, succeeding the long night of the centuries, preceded the returning dawn of Learning. In his time Italy was the foremost nation of Europe, and her leading sons were preparing the glorious revival. Art was still in its infancy, though Cimabue had found the boy Giotto drawing from Nature amongst his father's sheep, and in that discovery called to his true vocation the first great artist who heads the school of Italian painting. Architecture alone of the Fine Arts had attained maturity, but the solemn aisles and gorgeous traceries of the Gothic cathedrals seem to have had little effect on Dante's imagination, who, at least, has not drawn one allusion from the subject throughout his poem. His sympathies and studies were devoted to man, though the incidental sketches of outward scenery show

that he possessed a keen eye for the beauties of Nature, and could draw them in a way unsurpassed by the mere landscape poets of modern days.

Previous to the time of Dante Latin was the sole language for composition known in Europe. The vernacular languages of the time were considered beneath the notice of men of learning, and though some fugitive poetry was written by Dante's Italian predecessors, the "Divina Commedia" was the first great work composed in one of the modern languages of Europe. Dante may be considered to have created the very language in which he wrote. When the English reader remembers that Chaucer, the father of English poetry, wrote at least half a century after the date of Dante's poem he will be surprised to find that the latter, with the exception of a few archaisms, is still the pure Tuscan of the present day. Like Minerva, that language of Poetry and Passion sprang forth in complete maturity at birth.

The historical allusions are so numerous throughout the "Divine Comedy" that it is necessary for its appreciation to recall to memory the state of the different countries of Europe at its date. Written early in the fourteenth century, Dante, for the purpose of introducing as prophecy many past events, supposes his vision to have taken place in the year 1300, when he himself was thirty-five years of age. At that period Italy was the battle-field of the nations. Nominally under the sway of the Western Emperor, those potentates were in general too much occupied with struggles in the Germanic States to admit of their acquiring any permanent hold on Italy. Called there frequently by their chronic struggles against the encroachments of the Papacy, the whole country became divided into the rival factions of those who supported the temporal authority and those who upheld the power of the Church—the Ghibeline and the Guelph.

"The lands of Italy now swarm with the brood
Of tyrants, and a new Marcellus grows
Each peasant who takes up some party feud."

"Purgatory," Canto VI., lines 124—6.

No part of Italy, however governed, was free from those

factions. The Northern portion was split up into the petty Republics of Lombardy and Tuscany, and in each of these the strife of the rival parties was endless. The Southern portion formed the powerful kingdom of Naples, which in the middle of the twelfth century was held firmly by its line of Norman kings. Towards the close of the century, however, the failure of heirs to William left Constantia, daughter of King Roger, as sole heiress, and thus induced the Emperor Frederic I. to obtain her in marriage for his son Henry, for which purpose she was taken by force from a convent when already arrived at middle age. She is thus introduced in the "Paradise":—

"This is great Constance' light, who from the rude
Wind that the second blew from Suabia's plain
Produced the third, and latest of the brood."

"Paradise," Canto III., lines 119—21.

Henry VI., the second Suabian blast, succeeded in deposing a bastard branch of the family of Roger, and joined the kingdom of Sicily to the Western Empire. His death shortly followed, but not before his son Frederic, the last of the line, was elected King of the Romans while still in his infancy, and succeeded afterwards to the empire. Frederic II., famous for his determined opposition to the Popes, is placed in Hell as a heretic amongst the followers of Epicurus, who believed that there could be no separation of soul and body. His firm and enterprising character is, however, acknowledged in the 13th Canto, where his Chancellor Pietro delle Vigne recounts his sad end and asserts his constant fidelity to his master, "che fu d'onor si degno." His whole reign was spent in a series of incursions into Italy, during which he took ruthless execution on the independent towns of Lombardy that sided with the Church. At his death in 1252 Eccelino became the tyrant over several of these, and his excesses were so enormous that, though he died before Dante's birth, the memory of them was still vivid in the country, and he is prominent amongst the tyrants placed by the poet in the river of blood ("Hell," Canto XII.), while his sister Cunizza,

who appears in "Paradise," describes him in Canto IX. as a firebrand

"That to that region caused sore miseries."

"Paradise," Canto IX., line 30.

Frederic II. left the kingdom of Sicily to his son Conrad, under the regency of his bastard son Manfred. The latter, who inherited his father's warlike spirit, succeeded in winning the goodwill of the nation, and after the death of Conrad became king, in spite of the armed opposition of successive Popes, who refused the investiture to one who employed Saracens in his army. They consequently supported Curradino, the infant son of Conrad, until Urban IV., a Frenchman, called in the aid of the French prince, Charles of Anjou, to whom he offered the Sicilian crown. Manfred had strengthened himself by marrying his daughter Constance to Peter of Arragon, and her sons eventually ruled the island of Sicily, then separated from Naples, and the kingdom of Arragon.

The advent of Charles of Anjou into Italy cost Manfred his kingdom and his life. Charles, having been invested by Clement IV., who had succeeded Urban in the Papacy, advanced rapidly with his forces, and was met by Manfred near the town of Benevent. In the terrible defeat which followed, A.D. 1266, Manfred, determined not to survive the loss of his kingdom, and throwing himself into the thickest of the fight, fell sword in hand. His body was not discovered amongst the slain, in spite of a close search, until the third day, so terrible had been the slaughter, and then on the injunction of the Papal Legate the recusant to the Church was denied a Christian burial, and his body was thrown into a hole by the bridge of Benevent, over which the French, in admiration of his bravery, raised a soldier's monument, each man dropping a stone upon his grave. But the anger of the Church was not even then satisfied. The remains of Manfred were disinterred and carried like those of a dog beyond the kingdom, being thrown into the stream of the Verde, which forms the north-east boundary of the Neapolitan State. These circumstances of his death are described in a beautiful passage

of the "Purgatory," where the soul of Manfred addresses Dante.—Canto III., lines 112—132.

The death of Manfred placed Charles of Anjou at once on the throne of Naples, but his rapid successes, in conjunction with the Pope, so alarmed the Ghibeline party that they made overtures to Curradino, the son of Conrad, to advance to their assistance and claim his rightful crown. The gallant youth, who was only sixteen years of age, entered Florence with a force of 10,000 Germans in answer to their appeal, and his ranks being rapidly swelled in his advance, entered Naples, where his arrival was heartily welcomed by the people, tired out by one year of French exactions. Charles brought up his forces to oppose him, and the decisive action took place at Tagliacozzo :—

" Where less to arms, than him
The old Alardo, Charles his victory owes."
" Hell," XXVIII., lines 17, 18.

Young Curradino was at first successful, and his forces drove before them the greater portion of the French. But when thrown into disorder by their too eager pursuit the critical moment was seized by Charles. Acting on the advice of an old French commander, Allarde Saint Valori, they were attacked in turn by the French reserve, and the fate of the day was suddenly changed. The Germans and Ghibelines were utterly routed, and Curradino himself taken prisoner, who, with many of his noblest companions, was shortly afterwards ruthlessly executed by the conqueror. The bloodshed with which Charles of Anjou stained his victory brought a rapid retribution. As his grandson, Charles Martel, whom Dante places in Paradise, tells the poet, the beautiful Trinacria would have had his sons for kings :—

" If evil ruling, which makes desperate
The subject people, had not roused the cry
Of Death, still Death, within Palermo's gate."
" Paradise," Canto VIII., lines 74—6.

John of Procida, a nobleman ruined by the fall of Manfred and Charles's confiscation of his estates, stirred up the Sicilians to rise on their French masters, and the massacre of the latter

throughout the island, on the ringing of the vesper bells at Palermo, followed on his instigation and their own tyrannical excesses. The island gave itself to Peter of Arragon, who had married Manfred's daughter, all efforts of Charles to recover it were fruitless, and it remained permanently severed from the kingdom of Naples under the rule of Manfred's descendants, whose grandson, Frederic II., enjoyed the crown at the date of Dante's poem.

In the "Purgatory" both Peter of Arragon and Charles of Anjou are introduced, with other sovereigns of their time, and their superiority to their living descendants is maintained.—"Purgatory," Canto VII., lines 112—127. In the same group appears the Emperor Rodolph, the founder of the house of Hapsburg,

"Who had power alone
To heal the wounds that Italy hath slain."

Lines 94, 95.

His neglect of Italy throughout the twenty years of his reign was a keen subject of regret to the poet, who reproaches him and his son and successor Albert with being the cause of the miseries of his country, which they did nothing to prevent.—"Purgatory," VI., lines 97—118. Rodolph was occupied throughout his reign in consolidating the fortunes of his house in Germany, and Dante represents him in Purgatory by the side of Ottocar II., King of Bohemia, the last opponent whom he overthrew. Ottocar was slain in the decisive battle between them, and Rodolph married his own daughter to Ottocar's son, Vinceslaus, whom he left in possession of his kingdom. Dante's sympathies were entirely with the martial Ottocar, who refused all submission to the Emperor rather than with his more submissive son, so that he declares that

"In his youth
Far better he than Vinceslaus his son,
Who, bearded, sank in luxury and sloth."

"Purgatory," VII., lines 101—3.

During the struggle between Rodolph and Ottocar three Popes succeeded within one year to the Papal seat. Adrian V.,

introduced in the "Purgatory" as suffering for the sin of avarice, and who tells Dante

"How weigheth the great garb, kept free from shame,
A month, and little longer, did I know :
All other loads are feathers by the same."

"Purgatory," XIX., lines 103—5.

He died thirty-nine days after his accession, and was succeeded by John XXI., who only survived him for eight months. Under his own name of Pietro of Spain he is introduced amongst the holy fathers in the "Paradise" in the 12th Canto. He was succeeded by Nicholas III., of the family of the Orsini, who, on account of his nepotism, is the principal figure in that circle of Hell where simony is punished :—

"And of the Bears a worthy son, in haste
Desirous to advance the little Bears,
There riches, here myself in purse I placed."

"Hell," XIX., lines 70—2.

He was, however, an energetic ruler, and in his time what afterwards constituted the Papal territories were finally ceded to the See by the Emperor Rodolph. On his death, in 1281, he was succeeded by Martin IV., represented as purging his gluttony in Purgatory :—

"And that face
Thinner than all the rest, beyond him, there
Possess the holy Church in his embrace :
He came from Tours, and fasting doth atone
The wine-steeped eels of famed Bolsena's race."

Canto XXIV., lines 20—4.

Martin IV. died in 1285, and his successors, Honorius IV. and Nicholas IV., who completed the long period of Rodolph's reign, are not alluded to by Dante throughout his poem. In July, 1291, Rodolph died, and his efforts to retain the empire in his family seemed at first doomed to failure, as Adolphus Count of Nassau was elected King of the Romans, and crowned at Aix la Chappelles. Shortly after the Papal See became vacant, and remained so, owing to the intrigues of rival cardinals, for two years. The astonishment of Europe was not so great at this protracted vacancy as when it was known that the cardinals' choice had fallen upon Pietro, the

Hermit of Merrone. After much hesitation the aged recluse accepted his marvellous metamorphosis, and was crowned Pope under the title of Celestine V. But the cares of sovranity and worldly intrigues were so unsuited to the dreamer of the mountains that he soon abandoned his uncongenial dignity and retired again from the world. This abdication seems to have been prompted by the purest motives, but Dante could not appreciate such a lack of energetic qualities, and amidst the miserable Angel crew, who sided neither with God nor Lucifer, he places the unfortunate recluse whom hostile Fate had made a Pope:—

“I looked, and there his shadow met my view,
 Who made the great refusal fear advised.
 Straightway I understood, and surely knew,
 That this was that most miserable band,
 Hateful to God and to His enemies too.”

“Hell,” III., lines 59—63.

The cardinal, who was reputed to have both secured the election and prompted the retirement of Celestine, obtained the succession for himself, and as Boniface VIII. entered like a fox into the holy See, where he was to govern like a lion and die like a dog. Still alive in 1300, at the supposed date of Dante's vision, the poet ingeniously prefigures his certain fate by putting into the mouth of Nicholas III. the welcome to Hell of his mighty successor.—Canto XIX., lines 53—7. Boniface revived the traditions of Papal supremacy arrogated by Gregory VII., and his reign was a continued contest with the monarchs of his time, the Emperor Albert and Philip the Fair of France. Adolphus, who had been elected Emperor on the death of Rodolph, was shortly deposed by the Electors and Albert chosen in his place. His success was followed by a decisive victory in the field, in which Adolphus was slain by his rival, and Albert, to prevent cavil, went through the form of a second election, and was crowned King of the Romans in 1298. Pope Boniface, however, would acknowledge no such mutations in the Western Empire for which his concurrence had not been obtained, and refusing the investiture to Albert he received his ambassador with the

crown of Charlemagne on his own head, declaring that he was the Emperor. For five years he stirred up the Electors by his intrigues to resist the rule of Albert, and undertake another election; and it was only when his quarrel with Philip the Fair rendered it necessary for him to moderate his tone, that in order to obtain Albert's alliance he at length recognised his rule and invited him to Rome to receive at his hands the Imperial crown.

By this time the contest between the Pope and the French king had become of long standing. It had commenced with an attempt on the part of Boniface to prevent Philip from levying taxes from his clergy when engaged in war with our Edward I. In reply the resolute monarch past a law that no money might be transported from his kingdom on any account, and thus cut off the ample revenues which the Popes had previously drawn from the wealthy Gallican Church. Boniface on this occasion endeavoured to conciliate his opponent, and the storm that had been brewing blew over for a time. But the imperious Pope was now engaged by war in the very Lateran:—

“The leader of the modern Pharisees
Being at war within the Lateran,
And neither with the Saracens or Jews,
For of his foes each was a Christian man.”

“Hell,” XXVII., lines 85—8.

Two Cardinals of the Colonna family declared the illegality of Pope Celestine's abdication, and the consequent nullity of his successor's election. It was enough to make Boniface determine on the total destruction of that princely house. The Cardinals were degraded, a crusade preached against the family, their houses destroyed, and their stronghold of Palestrina, obtained under false pretences, “scant execution of a promise strong,” was levelled to the ground. This episode in the life of Boniface is related in the twenty-seventh Canto of “Hell,” where the old partisan leader, Guido da Montefeltro, is introduced as suffering for the fraudulent advice he gave to Boniface on this occasion. The retreat of the proscribed Cardinals to France stung to the quick the haughty Pontiff

against his former foe. Philip was threatened with excommunication, and the Pope, as God's vicegerent upon earth, offered his kingdom to Albert, the German Emperor. Philip determined now to enlist his whole people in the struggle. The Three Estates were for the first time called in France, and unanimously supported their monarch in his resistance to the Papal encroachments. The Pope then published a Bull explicitly asserting the supremacy of the Church over kings and princes. The Bull was burnt publicly by Philip, now secure of the support of his people, and before a second meeting of the Three Estates the Pope was charged with every imaginable iniquity, and a General Council was appealed to, as well as the future Pope, to be lawfully elected. Boniface now retorted by excommunicating Philip, and decreeing that his kingdom had past into the hands of Albert. But the days of Gregory VII. had now past by, and the thunders of the Vatican fell harmlessly on a united king and people. Boniface, mistrusting the citizens of Rome, retired to his native town of Anagni, where he thought that his person would be more safe from insult in the deadly struggle he had courted. But Italy was now full of French troops, led by the banished Colonna Cardinals, and encouraged by the disaffected Ghibeline leaders. Boniface fell into the very fate he sought to avoid, and was taken prisoner in Anagni by the French forces, under his most inveterate enemy, the injured Sciarra Colonna. Although he was released in a few days, and returned to Rome, so heavily did the blow fall upon his proud heart that it affected his reason: visions of armed men breaking in on his privacy were ever passing through his mind, and amidst paroxysms of despairing rage he died within a few months of the outrage, A.D. 1303, which proved to him a deathblow by showing that not only the supremacy but the personal sanctity of the Popes had past away. This act of sacrilege, as it was then considered, was viewed with horror even by the Ghibelines, and Dante, whose hostile spirit to Boniface is evident throughout his poem, makes the shade of Hugh Capet in

Purgatory thus groan in prophecy over the deed of his impious descendant:—

“ All evil past and future to efface
 Into Anagni bursts the Fleur-de-lis,
 And in his vicar, Christ doth there disgrace .
 Again I see Him shamed with mockery :
 I see renewed the vinegar and gall,
 Him slain 'twixt living thieves once more I see.”
 “ Purgatory,” XX., lines 86—91.

After the death of Boniface, and the short reign of his successor Benedict XI., the Papal See fell into the hands of a Frenchman, Clement V., who made up the old quarrel with Philip, and after some stay in his own country finally transferred the seat of the Church to Avignon, and for nearly a century Italy was free from the presence of one of the rival Powers, whose disputes had ever filled her States with strife. The Gascon, as Dante calls Clement V., was even more contemptible in his eyes than his worst predecessors, and his place in Hell is thus prescribed for him, probably at a time when he still ruled the Church from his seat in France:—

“ Since after him, with laidlier renown,
 Will come a lawless shepherd from the West,
 Such as befitteth him and me to crown.
 A second Jason will he prove at least,
 Like him in Maccabees, to whom was pliant
 His king, as France will be to his behest.”
 “ Hell,” XIX., lines 83—8.

Such being the position of the greater Powers of Europe and Italy during the last half of the thirteenth century, we must now revert to Dante's native State, the politics of which are the source of constant allusion throughout his poem. Of all the Tuscan Republics Florence was at this period the most important, though both before and after she had secured an independent Government the divisions amongst her citizens were a constant hindrance to the growth of her power. The rude but honourable simplicity of the State in the twelfth century is described in the 15th Canto of the “ Paradise,” where the shade of Dante's ancestor, Cacciaguida,

describes to him the happy condition of its citizens in his time. The city was then nominally under the rule of the Emperors or their lieutenants, one of whom, the Marchese Ugo, is alluded to as the great Baron in Cacciaguida's sketch of his own period. As the temporal power of the Popes increased their partisans gradually grew in Florence, though no open separation of parties took place till the commencement of the thirteenth century, when a private feud between the great families of the Buondelmonti and the Uberti led to the whole city espousing one or other of the rival factions :—

“ O Buondelmonte, to what ill ye fled '
 That plighted wedding, on another fain,
 Many would now be joyous, who are sad,
 If God thy form in Ema's stream had thrown
 The first time to the city thou wast led.”

“ Paradise,” XVI., lines 140—44.

The head of the Buondelmonti having been engaged to marry one of the Amadei, closely connected with the Uberti, broke off the match at the last moment, through a sudden passion for a maiden of the Donati family, and on the curt advice of Mosca Lamberti,

“ Who said, alas ! a deed is crowned when done,
 Which to the Tuscan race caused evil fare.”

“ Hell,” XXVIII., lines 107, 8.

The Amadei, to revenge the insult, attacked Buondelmonte as he was riding through the city, and slew him at the foot of the ruined statue of Mars, supposed to be the Palladium of Florence. The strife thus originated between the leading families was taken up by all grades in the city, and the factions of Guelph and Ghibeline, previously unknown in Florence, were introduced. The Emperor supported the Uberti, and the Buondelmonti and their followers became Guelphs : by the aid of Frederic II. the Ghibeline faction obtained the ascendancy, and banished their opponents from the State. At his death, 1250, a peace was patched up between the parties, the Guelphs were recalled to the city, and an independent Government was for the first time intro-

duced. The Guelphs, as the supporters of liberty, became the most popular party, and the powers of the independent Government fell naturally into their hands. But the successes of Manfred against the Church, and the establishment of his power in Naples, revived the hopes of the Ghibelines throughout Italy, and those of Florence at once entered into communication with him for the restoration of their authority. They were then driven out by force to Siena, where, being assisted by the forces of Manfred, they advanced under the guidance of their great leader, Farinata degli Uberti, and completely routed the Guelphs at the river Arbia with such slaughter that Florence was at once abandoned to their hands. The Guelphs fled to Lucca, and in a council of war the victorious Ghibelines mooted the proposition utterly to destroy the town, which could never be otherwise than a harbour for their opponents, so utterly Guelph in spirit had Florence become. Farinata alone refused his consent to that wild measure of revenge, and the weight of his influence was sufficient to prevent the whole Ghibeline party carrying out their savage purpose.—“Hell,” Canto X., lines 85—90. The shade of Farinata, rising from his burning tomb, and asserting his love for the city which he had at once saved and injured, is one of the grandest pictures in Dante’s poem.

The defeat and death of Manfred, Charles of Anjou being partly indebted for his victory to the swords of the Guelphs of Florence, again restored the latter to the ascendancy, which from that period they never lost. The irruption of Curradino into Italy gave the Ghibelines a gleam of hope, but on his defeat at Tagliacozzo their cause was lost, and though efforts at mediation were made subsequently by the Popes on several occasions, they were never allowed permanently to return from their long exile. Dante’s family was Guelph, and when Farinata accuses them of having been always hostile to him, so that he twice banished them from the city, Dante replies to the Ghibeline leader :—

“‘If they were banished, each time,’ I replied,
 ‘They came back to their homes from o’er the seas ;
 Unto your friends that art has been denied.’”

“Hell,” X., lines 49—51.

The Government of Florence was now essentially popular, but the Guelph nobles, freed from the presence of their rivals, paid but little respect to the authorities chosen by the people, and tyrannised over the lower orders as ruthlessly as the Ghibelines had ever done. Their acts of lawlessness were not, however, unopposed, and the leaders of the people procured the recall of some of the Ghibeline nobles, to serve as a counterpoise to the insolent power of the Guelphs. At the same time the Government was made more democratic, and the nobles being for a time restrained, Florence remained for some years in unusual repose. At this period they made war on the Aretines and Pisans, defeated the former at the battle of Campaldino, A.D. 1289 (alluded to in the fifth Canto of "Purgatory"), and after forcing the latter to capitulate at Caprona, 1260, on both which occasions Dante was present, obtained a complete ascendancy throughout Tuscany.

The disputes between the nobles and the people now recommenced: the utter disappearance of the Ghibeline faction made the Guelph nobles determine to become the rulers of the city, while the people were equally determined to resist their designs. Corso Donati, a leading aristocrat, whose restless spirit kept the city in strife until his death, killed a citizen in a street combat, and being acquitted by the captain of the magistracy, who was under aristocratic influence, the people took up arms to enforce justice. Giano della Bella, a noble who had sided with the popular party, withdrew from the city into voluntary exile, rather than by his presence encourage a civil war. By the exertions of the friends of peace on both sides the alarming crisis was got over, and agreement between the people and the nobles was patched up, the former retaining the chief seats of power, so it was hoped at the close of the thirteenth century that the troubled city would again enjoy repose. But it appeared that such was never to be the case: as Dante has related the belief of the time, Mars, the tutelar deity of Florence, never forgave it for erecting the Baptist in his place, and "*sempre con l'arte sua la ferà triste.*" Scarcely were the disputes

between the Guelph and the Ghibeline and between the people and the nobles at rest when new factions were imported from the neighbouring State of Pistoia. A quarrel arose there in the family of the Cancellieri, descended from a common ancestor who had married two wives, one of whom was called Bianca. Her descendants taking one side of the quarrel were called Bianchi (Whites), the other Neri (Blacks). The cause of either party was rapidly taken up by the whole town, which was thus divided into two factions, and the Neri being driven out, sought assistance from Florence—

“Though in Pistoia first the Neri fail,
And Florence taketh men and customs new.”

“Hell,” XXIV., lines 148, 4.

Corso Donati at once espoused the cause of the Neri, and the whole of that city also was soon arrayed on the side of one or other of the contending parties. All who yet remained of the Ghibelines joined cause with the Neri, who had also many partisans amongst the Guelphs, and their party became the most powerful. Even the people were ranged on one or the other side in this extraordinary strife. The Neri being the weakest, under the advice of Corso Donati determined to apply to the Pope to send Charles of Valois to assist them and reform Florence. Their plot was discovered, and at this crisis Dante, who had but recently devoted himself to public affairs, was the chief magistrate of the city. Inspired by his energetic counsels, the magistracy at once banished Corso Donati and most of his followers, and at the same time some of the leaders of the Bianchi were also banished, though they were very shortly recalled. Dante then proceeded to Rome to secure the good offices of the Pope, but during his absence Charles of Valois arrived at Florence, ostensibly for the purpose of healing its differences.—“Hell,” VI., 64—75; “Purgatory,” XX., 70—75. By his manœuvres and influence, aided by the opportune return of Corso Donati, the Bianchi were in their turn banished from the town, and Dante returning from his embassy to Rome found himself condemned to ruin and exile. Charles of Valois

having completed his task retired from Florence, and pursued the attempt on Sicily, against Frederic, grandson of Manfred, for which he had left France. In this he signally failed, and returned discomfited to his own country, as Dante, exulting in the shame of the prince who had brought about his own ruin, makes Hugh Capet prophesy in "Purgatory" of the expedition of his descendant—

"No kingdom there, but only sin, and shame,
Will be his gain, to him more grievous far
As such a loss so lightly doth he deem."

"Purgatory," XX., 76—78.

Dante, who thus suddenly appears upon the scene, now as the chief magistrate of his State, and now as a proscribed fugitive, was born in May, 1265, the year in which was fought the battle of the Arbia, one year previous to Manfred's defeat. His father died shortly after his birth, but though of a Guelph family the child appears to have been left quietly in the city during the early misfortunes of his party. During his youth the city enjoyed comparative quiet, and the young Alighieri, who early showed the studious and thoughtful bent of his mind, soon acquired, under the teaching of Ser Brunetto, all the learning of his time. The reverent affection of Dante for his old tutor is clearly shown, although he does place him in Hell for a crime for which we must take Dante's word that he was guilty:—

"It grieves me, what I never can forget,
Your mild paternal image, good and dear,
When in the world before me, you would set
How man can grow eternal in his sphere;
And all my gratitude, while life remains,
'Tis fit that in my language it appear."

"Hell," XV., 82—87.

Little is known of Dante's youth beyond what he has himself incidentally told us in his works; but the guiding influence of his life must be considered his passion for Beatrice, the daughter of Folco Portinari, for whom he has built so durable a memorial in his great poem. The passions wake early in the warm Italian clime, and Dante tells us that he was not nine years old when he first felt that

worship for Beatrice which was to last for life. Love has ever been the spark to light in the heart of genius the flame of poesy, and love, purified by lengthened expectation, and made holy by misfortune, inspired the ardent soul of Dante with the strains that have won for him immortal fame. It was in the praise of Beatrice that he first exercised his art; it was in following this inspiration that he threw off the trammels of his predecessors and created poesy anew in its true law and scope, the realities of Nature. As he tells the poet Buonagiunta,

“ I am a man, who, when
Love breatheth, all its symptoms noteth clear;
I show to others what it says within.”

“Purgatory,” XXIV., 52—54.

It was the love of Beatrice that first woke in him the promptings of ambition, “that for her sake he left the vulgar herd.”—“Hell,” II., 105. It was in memory of her that he chose that pure spirit as his guide through the glories of Paradise when sorrow and age, that could not dim his passion, had purified it from mortal alloy.

Nothing more is known of the youth of Dante than that he completed his studies in the Universities of Padua and Bologna, and Boccaccio tells us that he even travelled at this time in the pursuit of learning to Paris and Oxford. He had, however, returned to Florence in time to take part in the battle of Campaldino, his presence at which campaign he alludes to in the opening lines of the twenty-second Canto of “Hell.”

“Ere now I’ve witnessed knighthood move afield,
Pass in review and rally in the fight,
And prest at times for safety backwards yield:
Over your land I’ve seen the scouts in flight,
O Aretines, and seen the squadrons swell
For tourney and for jousting all bedight.”

He was also present at the capitulation of Caprona in the following year, to which he also alludes in his poem—

“So did I see of yore the soldiers fear
Who issued from Caprona under pact,
Seeing so many enemies appear.”

“Hell,” XXI., lines 94—96.

In the meanwhile had occurred the crowning sorrow of his life. In the spring of that year, 1290, Beatrice died. The dream of his youth, the hope and happiness of his early manhood, was struck down, and life had lost for him its source of aspiration and all its prospect of domestic joy. He was stunned by the blow, and it is said that his friends even despaired of his life. But it is less on the body than the mind that such blows have force. To this great earthly disappointment may be fairly traced much of the bitterness of Dante's spirit. For him the glory had departed from the grass, the splendour from the flower: he looked upon life and Nature with an altered eye. The hues of romance were stripped from the dull truths of life, and the world appeared to him after the receding deluge all bare and desolate, life without an object, existence without joy. After a short interval Dante re-entered the ordinary pursuits of life, and in the next year he yielded to the solicitations of his friends and was married to Gemma Donati. His wife belonged to the family of his constant opponent in after years, Corso Donati, and the marriage was effected solely on political and social considerations. Such a union could not prove a happy one. The affections of Dante were irrevocably fixed elsewhere, and while all his tenderness was concentrated on the Egeria of his soul, it was not to be expected of any woman to remain contented with so subordinate a position in her husband's heart, even though her rival was beyond the tomb. Dante makes no allusion to his wife throughout his poem, unless the reproaches of Beatrice at the close of the "Purgatory" may be supposed to have reference to his marriage, which does not seem likely. Dante did not consider such a marriage as any infidelity to his love. It was a mere worldly alliance, in which the heart had no share. But that he felt the bitterness of his lot is shown by the feeling with which he makes Jacopo Rusticucci allude to a like fate:—

" More than all the rest

A savage wife has caused my martyrdom."

"Hell," XVI., lines 44, 45.

Whether the fault rested with the violent temper of

Dante's wife or with his own neglect, the unhappiness of their married life is certain, and after his exile, while his wife brought up his children in Florence on the wreck of their father's fortune, Dante made no attempt to be joined by his family, and showed clearly that he considered separation from his wife happier for them both. Boccaccio, in his life of Dante, asserts that it was the misery of his wedded life which drove the poet from the pursuits of literature, and made him take up public affairs as a distraction. In this career his powers were immediately recognised, and we have found already that, in the year 1300, he filled the place of chief magistrate in the city. Brought up in a Guelph family, he had hitherto shown great moderation in his views, and his object when in power was clearly to hold the balance straight between the rival parties and restore peace to the State.

The friends of Dante, and especially his loved companion in literary studies, Guido Cavalcanti, were favourers of the Bianchi, and Corso Donati, the most turbulent of the Florentine nobility, had hotly espoused the Neri faction. The city was in arms, and Corso was known to have applied for assistance to Charles of Valois. Dante's energy and prudence entirely overcame both factions. All were compelled to lay aside their arms, and the leaders on both sides were banished from the city. Dante's great success was, however, of short duration. While absent at Rome, seeking to strengthen his Republic with the Pope, his enemies obtained entire possession of the city, and decreed the banishment of Dante, together with all the Bianchi leaders. It was while returning to Florence that the news reached him, and from being the leader of the State he found himself suddenly a proscribed exile, while the confiscation of his property added the trials of poverty to his other cares. Such was the bitter animosity in which those party struggles were carried on, that shortly after the first decree of banishment a second was past, condemning Dante, with the other exiles, to be burnt if they fell into their enemies' hands.

There was little meekness in Dante's disposition, and with his spirit soured by such treatment he at once threw himself into the arms of the Ghibeline party, whom he had hitherto opposed, and whose leaders he now met in exile. Dante loved Florence, and the bitterness of his enforced absence from his country, with what he thought of the companions of his misery, is clearly shown in the beautiful and probably best known passage of the "Paradise," where his ancestor Cacciaguida informs him of his coming doom:—

“ As left Hippolytus his Athens' home,
 Through his perfidious stepdame, passion fraught,
 So to depart from Florence is thy doom,
 Thus is it willed, and thus already sought :
 And soon they'll bring to pass what now they scheme,
 There, where Christ every day is sold and bought.
 Upon the injured side will cast the blame
 The wonted cry, but vengeance will achieve
 Witness to truth, which it doth ever claim.
 Each thing beloved most dearly thou wilt leave:
 And this is but the earliest dart which fares
 From the bow of exile, when it shoots to grieve.
 Thyself wilt prove what bitter taste there bears
 A stranger's bread, and what a weary road
 Is climbing and descending strangers' stairs.
 And that which most of all thy back will load
 Will be the evil troop, with whom thou'lt fall,
 Into this valley, scattered all abroad.
 For all ungrateful, mad, and impious, all
 Against thee will they act, but very soon
 Their brows, not thine, will bear shame's reddened pall.
 Of their bestiality the progress on
 Will be the proof, to thee it will be fair
 To have made thy party by thyself alone.”

“Paradise,” XVII., lines 46—69.

With little sympathy or confidence in his companions, Dante at first joined them at Arezzo, and formed one of the Council who devised the measures of their party. But an ill-advised attempt in the following year to re-enter Florence by force, in which they were completely foiled, broke all the hopes of his party, which then dissolved, and Dante commenced the life of wandering exile, which continued till his

death. The hopes of the Ghibelines were revived on the death of the Emperor Albert, whose murder while preparing to crush the Swiss revolt is alluded to by Dante in his poem as the coming retribution that was to fall on him for his neglect of Italy:—

“ O German Albert, who abandoned her
 Now savage and unconquerable grown
 Whose saddle-bows thou shouldst have strided sure :
 May from the stars just judgment fall adown
 Upon thy blood, and that it cause the dread
 Of thy successor, be it new, and known.”

“Purgatory,” VI., lines 97—102.

All his revived hopes turned on Henry of Luxemburg, who was elected to the Imperial throne, and who at once entered on an expedition to Italy to recover the influence there which his later predecessors had abandoned. But the attempt was made too late. The Italian States were now too much confirmed in their independence to yield without a desperate struggle to the yoke of the Empire. The whole people joined with the Guelph leaders in a resistance which the support of the Ghibeline party did not enable the Emperor to overcome. Deceived by the promises of Pope Clement, who was, in reality, in the interests of the French monarch, and his relation the King of Naples, Henry wasted precious time in a march to Rome for his coronation, and then prepared to face the league which the people, aided by the Pope and Robert of Naples, had prepared against him. He failed in an attempted siege of Florence, being called off by the necessity of marching against the forces of Robert, and on the way, worn out by vexation and disappointment, he died, A.D. 1308, and the Guelphs were at once relieved from the perils with which they had been menaced. Many of the banished nobles of Florence had been recalled by the citizens in the hour of expected danger. But not Dante; he was never forgiven. The death of Henry was not, however, only a personal disappointment to the poet in depriving him of his well-grounded expectation of returning to his native city under his protection, it was the deathblow of his

political hopes for his country; the vision which he had nourished throughout long years of exile, of a happy, united Italy, was shattered, never to be restored.

Dante was no ordinary Ghibeline. He was a patriot in the truest sense of the word; his affections and aspirations were not, as was the case of all others of his time, confined to a petty State or within the walls of his native city. He loved Florence well, but Italy more. Witness of the miseries of his country, torn by dissensions, and shifting ever from change to change, his whole hopes rested on the revival of the glories of the Roman Empire, when the passions of individuals would be controlled for the good of all, beneath the firm sway of a central power. Thus did he apostrophise his loved Florence as he then saw her:—

“ How many times, in days thou dost remember,
 Thy money, habits, offices, and laws,
 Hast thou remodelled, and renewed each member?
 If clearly thou beholdest thy own flaws,
 Like a sick woman thou wilt see thee 'plain,
 Who on her pillow cannot find repose,
 And seeks with constant turns to ease her pain.”

“Purgatory,” VI., lines 145—151.

Such was not the united Italy of his dreams. Dante was eminently national, though he did look to foreign intervention for the restoration of peace to his country. He was no idle sentimentalist, but, like the great founder of united Germany, he believed in blood and iron, and he knew of no remedy but force for anarchy and sedition. Though he had himself been the chief magistrate in a popular Government, he had no sympathy with the populace, and was a rigid aristocrat, who hardly believed in excellence outside his own order. The noble struggle for independence then carried on by the Swiss people is not once alluded to throughout his poem, and seems not to have roused his interest. Whenever any of the lower orders are alluded to by Dante it is without sympathy. The rise of such men is lamented as a sign of the degeneracy of the times:—

“ Ah indeed
 Is changed to bastard every Roman heir!

When in Bologne takes root plebeian breed :
 When in Faenza, Bernardino too,
 Springs up a gentle growth from lowliest weed.”

“Purgatory,” XIV., lines 98—102.

Giano della Bella is reproached in the 16th Canto of “Paradise” for disgracing his nobility by such contact. But the poet expressly avoids such subjects in his poem, and compares his voice to the wind that smites most the loftiest summits:—

“This cry of thine will be like winds unpent
 That strongest smite against the loftiest peaks.
 This to thy honour is some argument.
 Hence in these spheres upon thy vision breaks,
 Upon the mount and in the dolorous vale,
 Those souls alone of whom Fame’s trumpet speaks ;
 Because his mind who heareth would not hail
 With surety the example if its root
 Were hidden and unknown, and ever fail
 Mere barren arguments to bring forth fruit.”

“Paradise,” XVII., lines 133—142.

In the same interview with his ancestor he tells us that even in Paradise he took pleasure in his nobility of birth, adding the true sentiment which can alone render such pride worthy—the necessity it imposes on the holder to prove that he is not degenerate—that best motto for an aristocracy—*Noblesse oblige*:—

“O blood’s nobility of little worth,
 If thou dost make mankind take pride in thee,
 Where every longing wanders wide on earth,
 From henceforth now no marvel will it be,
 For there, where never doth the longing stray,
 I say in Heaven, it glory roused in me.
 Thou art a mantle that doth swiftly fray,
 While Time with shears doth ever clip it round,
 Unless we add to it from day to day.”

“Paradise,” XVI., lines 1—9.

Who were your ancestors? is the first question which Dante puts in the mouth of the great Ghibeline leader Farinata when the poet accosts him as he rises from his burning tomb. The Republics of the Middle Ages were essentially aristocratic in spirit, totally unlike the Democracies of Greece. It would

be folly to judge Dante, the patriot of the fourteenth century, by the liberal shibboleths of the nineteenth. He was a Coriolanus at heart, and loathed the Cleons of every time. He looked to obtain a united Italy by the only means through which at that period his object could be attained. It was the constant struggle between the Pope and the Emperor which he saw had caused all the misfortunes of his country :—

“ Was wont old Rome, which made the world to smile,
 To have two suns, who each of them displayed
 Various, the earthly, and the Godly style.
 One has usurped the other, the sword blade
 Is joined to the crosier, and together grown,
 Through open force the ill accord is made :
 The one fears not the other when thus one.
 If thou believest not, think upon its corn,
 For by its seed is every herbage known.
 Upon the land the Adige and Po adorn
 Valour and courtesy were wont to appear
 Ere Frederic there in battle was outborne.
 Now with security can wander there
 Whoever wishes to avoid, through shame,
 Converse with good men, nor to see them near.”

“Purgatory,” XVI., lines 106—120.

His remedy was a complete separation of temporal and spiritual authority, the union of which in the Popes was the cause of all the misgovernment in Italy. It was in no mere Ghibeline spirit that he opposed the Papacy. It was with a poignant regret that its earthly degradation of feeling should have destroyed its spiritual influence that he wished to restore it to primitive purity on an equality, but totally distinct from, the Cæsars, who were to hold the temporal sway. Nothing could exceed his reverence for the Papal office. He excuses, as it were, his own madness when in Hell he inveighs against the simony of Nicholas III. ; he kneels before the shade of Adrian V. in Purgatory till told that there the head of the Church is but a fellow-servant with him and others to a higher power. In Paradise he makes Peter declare that his seat on earth is vacant, so did the worldly intrigues and turbulence of Boniface render him unworthy to be considered as a true occupant of that holy seat :—

“He who usurps on earth that place of mine,
 That place of mine, that place of mine now vacant,
 Within the presence of God’s Son Divine,
 Has of my cemetery made a fecant
 Cesspool of blood and filth, whence the perverse
 Who fell from Heaven, in Hell doth joy complacent.”
 “Paradise,” XXVII., lines 22—27.

His ideal Government was that of a universal Church and Empire, strong, and at perfect peace, the flock of Christ reposing under the broad wings of the eagle, the standard of Roman rule. He approved as little of the Ghibeline who fought for the Emperor against the Pope to advance his own faction as of the Guelph who opposed the holy standard, and in Paradise he makes the Emperor Justinian condemn each party alike :—

“Now thou canst judge the rival bickerings
 Which I above did blame, their faults expose,
 Which are the cause of all your sufferings.
 The Lilies to the public sign oppose
 One side, the other claim it for a part,
 ’Tis hard to see which most of error shows.
 Work now, ye Ghibelines, work now your art,
 Neath other sign ; this standard now eschew,
 Who it and justice evermore would part ;
 Nor strive to strike it down. This Charles the new,
 With all his Guelphs, its talons let him fear,
 Who lordlier lion has ere now made rue.
 Many a time the sons have wrung a tear
 For the father’s sins, and be it not believed
 That, for his Lilies, God His arms will veer.”
 “Paradise,” VI., lines 97—111.

The enterprise, therefore, undertaken by Henry VII. to revive the Empire in Italy became, in Dante’s eyes, a holy mission, and while revelling, in imagination, in all the glories of the Emyrean, he does not scruple to pause, in the description of its ineffable magnificence, to point out the throne destined for his soul’s hero, and allude to his glorious failure in the regeneration of the world :—

“Beatrice led me on and said, ‘Behold
 How great the gathering of our stoles of white !

Behold what space our city doth enfold!
 Behold our seats already so complete
 That few more guests we wait to see enrolled.
 Where thou dost fix thy eyes, on that high seat
 Marked with a crown, already o'er it placed,
 Or ere that thou this nuptial feast shalt greet,
 Will sit the soul on earth Augustus graced
 Of the great Harry, who will come to heal
 Our Italy, or ere her mood be past."

"Paradise," XXX., lines 128—138.

A united Italy, the mistress of the world! Such was Dante's visionary aspiration for the destiny of his country. But though with the death of Henry his hopes sank for ever, and the poet wore out till death his weary years of exile and disappointment, the seed which he cast broadly over his land has not been lost; buried for centuries of struggle and despair, it has taken root firmly, and has at last sprung to-day. Though dead the spirit of the Florentine patriot yet liveth: the sacred fire has been past on from generation to generation, and the nationality of Italy has at last become no more a dream. One can fancy the shade of Dante watching over the life struggle that so long convulsed his fair land, breathing his ardent soul into her sons, who proved themselves so worthy to recover their lost heritage, and hailing in Victor Emmanuel the ever-looked-for hero, the allegorical greyhound of his poem, who had risen at last to chase the she-wolf back to Hell and liberate his native land.

Such, then, was Dante: such were his passions, weaknesses, and aspirations, when, with a mind stored with all the learning of his time, he resolved to compose the great poem into which he was to pour out all his feelings, knowledge, and genius, and leave a complete image of his age. It is supposed that the work was commenced before he entered on public life in Florence, and that the first seven Cantos then written were laid aside and forgotten in the whirl of politics. Boccaccio tells the story of their accidental discovery in the city during his exile, when they were sent to the Marchese Malespina, with whom the poet at the time had found refuge. Dante acknowledged the work, and, on the

urgent solicitation of his host, resumed his old design. The commencement of the eighth Canto, "Continuing, I say, as soon as we," seems to favour the truth of this tradition, and in that case Dante must have fairly settled to his great labour about the year 1307, as in Canto VIII. of the "Purgatory" Currado Malaspina prophesies to him that at that date he will find a refuge with his descendant. Such a work must have been the occupation of many years, as Dante tells us was the case in that pathetic passage where he looks forward yet to be crowned as poet in his native city:—

"If it should hap, this holy poem e'er,
Which Heaven and earth have helped, and which did mar
My frame with abstinence for many a year,
Conquer the cruelty, which me doth bar
From the fair sheepfold, where I slept a lamb
Hateful to wolves, who on me made their war,
With other voice henceforth, nor hair the same,
A poet I'll return, and o'er the font
Where I was christened, the wreathed laurel claim."

"Paradise," XXV., lines 1—9.

From internal evidence we find that the twenty-seventh Canto of the "Paradise" must have been written after the accession of John XXII. to the Papal See, which took place in 1316, for St. Peter laments

"They of Caorsa and of Gascony
Hasten to drink our blood: to what vile ending
O fair commencement hast thou hurried thee!"

"Paradise," XXVII., lines 58—60.

The Gascon is of course Clement V., and the man of Cahors John XXII., a native of that town. As Dante died within five years of this period, the composition of his great poem may fairly be set down as the occupation and solace of his whole life of exile, and for its fair comprehension his feelings during that time of hope and despair, of bitterness and resignation, must never be forgotten. Throughout the poem the chief figure on the scene is Dante himself, as he travels through the triple world of spirits, from the entrance-gate of Hell to the final presence of the Deity. Dante is his own hero, and it is, therefore, so essential to have some

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knowledge of himself, and the influences which surrounded him, to appreciate properly his mighty work. That work was not original in its general design: the subject of the spiritual world, and descriptions of Hell and Purgatory, were favourites with monkish writers, but it was reserved for Dante to create, in wonderful harmony and the minutest detail, his spirit universe, and so to realise all the scenes painted by his imagination, that, once known, they can never again vanish from the mind.

The first Canto is purely allegorical, and is introductory to the whole poem, divided into three separate portions, each of thirty-three Cantos, descriptive of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. At the age of thirty-five, the middle of life, the poet finds himself lost in a wood representing the maze of human error. He attempts to climb therefrom up the steep hill of Virtue, but is driven back by three wild beasts, the leopard, lion, and she-wolf, Luxury, Ambition, and Avarice. The shade of Virgil, allegorical of human learning, rescues him from his difficulties. He tells him that he was summoned from his place in Limbo, the outer circle of Hell, by Beatrice, who had quitted Paradise to send him to Dante's help, no other means being left for his salvation:—

“So low he fell, all other remedies
Unto his safety had been vainly sped
Except to show him Hell's lost companies.”

“Purgatory,” XXX., lines 187—9.

He came, therefore, to lead him through Hell and Purgatory, while Beatrice herself would guide him through the regions of the Blest. Dante submits himself to Virgil's guidance, and the poets shortly find themselves at the gate of Hell. Within the gate, but outside the regular circles into which Hell is divided, is a region in which roam the innumerable spirits of those who are neither damned nor blest, together with the Angels who sided neither with God nor Lucifer:—

“To these no distant hope of death is lent,
And their blind life is so supremely low,
That any change of fate would give content.

Report of them the world can never know,
 Mercy and Justice only can despise,
 Speak not about them : look, and onwards go."

"Hell," III., lines 47—52.

The River Acheron divides this miserable crew from the habitations of the damned, and after crossing it Dante follows his guide into the first circle of Hell, or Limbo, which is not a place of real punishment, except that its inhabitants are shut out for ever from the hope of bliss and the presence of God. Dante, who accepted without question every dogma of his Church, could allow no place in Paradise to any one without its fold. Even Virgil, who conducts him not only through Hell, but ascends with him through all the purifying stages of the Mount of Purgatory, cannot alter his immutable doom, and after wandering through the calm delights of Eden, or the earthly Paradise, returns to pass eternity in Limbo. There are confined the souls of all who are free from sin, and who yet, from wanting baptism, or a knowledge of Christ to come, can never enter the regions of the Blest. The place is thus described by Virgil when questioned by a spirit in Purgatory of his own fate:—

"There is a place below, not sad with pain,
 But only doomed to darkness, where laments
 Sound not like wailings, but are sighings fain.

There do I stay with little innocents
 Bit by the teeth of Death, before that they
 From sin original were made exempts.

There do I stay, with those who failed to essay
 The sacred virtues three, though without sin
 They knew the rest, and followed them alway."

"Purgatory," VII., lines 28—36.

Here Dante meets the heroes of antiquity, and is admitted by Homer into the sacred band of poets. From this place of austere calm, differing in nothing from Virgil's Elysian fields, Dante is led on by his guide to the regions of punishment, and follows him through all the circles in which criminals of every grade work out their doom. At last they reach the lowest pit, in the centre of earth, where, rising out of the ice in which the spirits of murderers are immersed,

the giant form of Lucifer is seen, the king of those realms of horror. Down the body of the fallen Angel Virgil carries Dante, and at last, passing out on the Antipodes, they leave the abodes of gloom "and issue thence to see the stars once more."

The ordinary reader, whose knowledge of Dante is confined to a few gloomy passages of the "Inferno," can have no true conception of the poet whose highest genius rejoices in the calm regions of Purgatory, and exults in the ineffable glories of Paradise.

The locality of the Purgatory is a towering mountain, situated on the antipodes of Jerusalem, on the steep sides of which, on the seven separate cornices, the spirits are purified from the taint of the seven cardinal sins. I know nothing more exquisite in poetry than Dante's description of his delight on leaving Hell's circles, and being restored once more to the light of Heaven:—

"The dulcet hues of orient sapphire melt,
And gathered all into serenest light
Of the pure air unto the farthest belt,
So that my eyes returned to new delight,
Soon as I issued from the lethal air,
Which had oppressed my breast and dimmed
my sight."

"Purgatory," Canto I., lines 13—18.

With dew gathered from the reeds on the ocean's verge
Virgil washes from Dante's face all trace of Hell;—

"With both his hands from off the scattered grass
My master tenderly the moisture takes;
Whence I, who of his wish perceptive was,
Extended towards him my all-tearful cheeks,
And then discovered, on my face once more,
The hue of life that Hell had shrouded, breaks."

"Purgatory," Canto I., lines 124—129.

They then proceed towards the mountain on the lowest slopes of which are detained in the Ante-Purgatory the spirits who delayed in life repentance for their sins. Through this, and through the seven cornices, on each of which the spirits are purified from each of the capital sins, the poets proceed

together. While the spirit of this portion of the poem is essentially autobiographical Dante tells us how little he feared the punishment allotted to envy, of which sin he felt himself comparatively free, while his shoulders were already wrung with the burden which he knew he should have to carry to purge away his besetting sin of pride. The punishments under which the spirits purify their sins of life are not in general such as to necessitate their being shared by the poets who are privileged to behold them, but both Dante and Virgil pass through the smoke which purifies the sin of anger, and being afterwards joined by Statius all three poets pass through the molten flame in which those who have been guilty of incontinence are cleared from its taint.

This is the last cornice of purifying punishment, and, after mounting the last stair, Virgil declares that his guidance is over, and that henceforth Dante may wander at his own will without further prompting. They have reached the earthly Paradise, the Eden which our first parents lost, after a brief residence of seven hours. Here Beatrice, Dante's lifelong love, descends from Heaven, and as with throbbing heart he feels her presence, and turns to Virgil to express his weakness, he finds that his faithful guide is gone:—

“ Although my eyes no recognition told,
 Through hidden virtue which from her there ran
 Of olden love I felt the mighty hold.
 Soon as upon my sight there smote again
 Another's virtue, which had smote me quite
 Ere I had issued out of childhood's reign:
 Unto my left I turned me for respite,
 Just as the infant runneth to his dame
 Whene'er afflicted or whene'er in fright,
 To say to Virgil, 'Rests within my frame
 No dram of blood that doth not tremble now;
 I know the symptoms of the olden flame.'
 But Virgil had bereaved us of him, woe!
 Virgil, the sweetest father one could grieve,
 Virgil, to whom entrusted, life I owe:
 Nor all she lost, our olden mother Eve,
 Avail'd, upon my cheeks erst washed with dew,
 But that the tears their soiling trace should leave.”

“Purgatory,” Canto XXX., lines 37—54.

These tears, changed into tears of penitence at Beatrice's keen rebukes for his sins, are the last that Dante sheds, when, having drunk of the waters of Lethe and Eunoë, the river of life whose source is in Eden, he rises

“ From those most holy waves,
Created fresh, as plants made new once more,
Renewed through the birth of new green leaves,
Pure and prepared unto the stars to soar.”

“ Purgatory,” Canto XXIII., lines 142—145.

The last task left to the poet, one far more arduous than to describe the punishments of the damned and the purification of human sins, forms the subject matter of the “Paradise,” a description of the bliss God has prepared for them that love Him. No other poet has ever attempted such a theme, and if Dante has at all failed, it is only from his attempt to perform what is impossible. The material out of which he built his celestial spheres is the Ptolemaic system, which, taking the earth for its centre, spreads around it the revolving spheres in order: 1, the Moon; 2, Mercury; 3, Venus; 4, the Sun; 5, Mars; 6, Jupiter; 7, Saturn; 8, the Fixed Stars; 9, the Primum Mobile; and 10th and last, the Empyrean. These spheres, as they revolve in equal period round the earth, all take their motion from the Primum Mobile, the first source of motion, itself inspired with motion through its desire to join the Empyrean, the circle of the Deity and final habitation of every soul in bliss.

Dante follows also the system of Dionysius the Areopagite, who laid down nine orders of Celestial Powers, and allotted each separately to each sphere in order. These were—

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Angels allotted to the sphere of the Moon. | |
| 2. Archangels | Mercury. |
| 3. Principalities | Venus. |
| 4. Powers | Sun. |
| 5. Virtues | Mars. |
| 6. Dominations | Jupiter |
| 7. Thrones | Saturn. |
| 8. The Cherubim | the Fixed Stars. |
| 9. Seraphim | the Primum Mobile. |

Having once grasped this simple arrangement the reader will have no difficulty in following Dante in his flight with Beatrice through the ten spheres of Paradise. There is not a trace of anthropomorphism in Dante's conception of the Deity, in whose presence and in whose will the spirits of the Blest enjoy their full fruition. Though these spirits are allotted to different spheres, of different grades of glory, they equally feel the perfect bliss of carrying out God's purposes, and though placed in the different spheres, all will finally resume their own bodies and occupy their own thrones in the Empyrean, when God has completed the number of His elect. Having past through all the lower spheres, Dante is at last carried to the highest Heaven, and vouchsafed to share the glory of this beatific vision, and admitted finally to the presence of the Deity, which alone Dante acknowledges to be beyond his mortal powers :—

“ But such a flight was not for my poor plume :
 Did not across my mind a glory steal
 From out the splendour, whence its wish did come.
 To the high fancy here my power did fail,
 But turned my will already, as willed there
 (Moved on with equal motion like a wheel),
 The love which moves the sun and every star.”

“Paradise,” XXXIII., lines 139—45.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF DANTE TO VIRGIL.

DANTE was not acquainted with the literature of Greece, except so far as it had filtered through Latin authors, and it was by the study of the latter only that he perfected his art, and became that master of style which even those who depreciate his genius allow as his unrivalled possession. In his poem he distinctly declares that in style he had taken Virgil as his master, and from the study of his works acquired his own excellence. Throughout Dante's poem imitations from Virgil are frequent, and many of the most marked of these will be found pointed out in the Notes, derived chiefly from the industry of the early commentators. But Dante owes more than qualities of style and beauties of verbal expression to the Roman poet, who in these excellences is probably without a rival. The whole structure of the "Inferno" is, in fact, taken from Virgil's description, and in taking Virgil as his own guide through Hell Dante openly acknowledges his obligation: throughout the "Inferno" Dante follows Virgil as one who has thoroughly explored and knows the whole region, and whose familiarity with and power over the spirits of the place is enough to insure his protection from all its perils. Virgil is acquainted with the darkest secrets of Hell, and powerful over its malignant inhabitants: when he issues from the regions of gloom into the light of day, and climbs with Dante the antipodal mountain of Purgatory, he accompanies him as an affectionate companion, but is no more his guide. There, like Dante, he has to inquire the way from others, and to both poets the scene is alike strange. The idea of Purgatory is a Christian belief, unknown to the Roman, as a preparation

for eternal felicity in a celestial Paradise. The whole working out of the Purgatory is Dante's own invention; but the Christian Inferno differs nothing from the "domos Ditis vacuas, et inania regna" of the Latin poet, and it is wholly on the grand design laid out by Virgil that Dante has raised his own magnificent superstructure.

In the sixth book of the "Æneid" Virgil makes his hero descend into Hell, and whatever opinion may be formed of the epic powers of the Augustan poet, in that book, and in that description, it must be acknowledged that he has concentrated all the strength of his genius and produced one of the highest efforts of the human imagination. As Dante tells us that he had spent his days and nights in the study of his favourite master, we may be sure that his own spirit was saturated with the beauties of Virgil's masterpiece, which he reproduced in his own great work. Although this book of the "Æneid" has, of course, been frequently pointed out as one of the sources of Dante's own poem, the subject of Dante's obligations to Virgil has not yet been treated fully, and I believe that a comparison carried out in some detail may be of interest at least to classical readers.

The Hell of Virgil may be broadly divided into three principal divisions: "a neutral region for those who are unfortunate rather than blameworthy, a barred and bolted prison-house of torture for the bad, a heroic Valhalla for prowess, genius, and worth," divisions which the most cursory reader of Dante's poem will see that he has accepted. In the "Inferno" we have the vestibule, after passing through the gate, at which all who enter leave hope behind, and there are crowds so vast that the poet says:—

"io non avrei creduto
Che morte tanta n'avesse disfatta."

And those are described as the sad souls of those who lived without infamy and without praise. Then, after crossing Acheron, we come to Limbo, the first true circle of the Inferno, which answers to Virgil's Elysian fields. Here are no tortures, no punishment. The worthies of old time, who

from ignorance of the Christian dispensation could not share the Christian Paradise, are left in the serene enjoyment of their broad Elysium and the joyful fields: Dante is greeted by Homer and his brother poets as one worthy of their order, and with them he enters the company of the heroes of old:—

“Into a meadow green we entered all.
 People they were with slowly moving eyes,
 And great authority was in their port,
 Rarely they spake with sweet-voiced cadences.
 Then we withdrew into a further court,
 An open place, both lofty and serene,
 Where all could be beheld who there resort.
 And straightway there upon the enamelled green
 Were shown me the great souls who there arise—
 Well may I boast of all whom I have seen.”

“Hell,” Canto IV., lines 111—120.

In this first circle of Hell there is serenity, there is light, and the description, brief as it is, corresponds with Virgil's happy seats:—

“Largior hic campos æther, et lumine vestit
 Purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.”

Lines 640—1.

It is only when Dante proceeds from here on his dreadful journey that he enters on darkness and horror:—

“My chief conducts me by another way,
 Out of the stillness to the trembling air,
 And now I come where no more shines the day.”

“Hell,” Canto IV., lines 149—51.

Virgil does not make Æneas visit the Tartarus, the abodes of the damned: his guide, the Sibyl, pointing out two ways, tells him that the one they have to follow leads to Elysium, while

“Nulli fas casto sceleratum insistere limen.”

Æneas, shuddering at the gate, is told briefly, and in a summary, the various horrors that are going on within, and to this rapid sketch Dante has applied the whole ingenuity of his constructive genius, and worked out the details of his entire primitive Hell.

Dante is, of course, no mere imitator. In the same way as Virgil had taken the materials supplied by his predecessors and made them his own, so Dante appropriates Virgil's wealth, and sends it forth again as a new coinage, stamped with his own effigy. The jewels of the old master are not misplaced in Dante's work, but shine in their new surroundings with even enhanced lustre. It requires, however, only a careful comparison of this portion of Virgil's epic with the whole "Inferno" to perceive how thoroughly Dante had saturated his spirit in the work of him whom he expressly cites as his master.

In the personified woes and ills of mortality, which Virgil places in the vestibule, and the elm-tree on which dreams are clinging like bats under the leaves, I have been able to trace no counterpart in Dante, but after the entrance we come at once to the River Acheron and its ferryman Charon, whom Dante has introduced almost without variation :—

"Portitor has horrendus aquas et flumina servat
 Terribili squalore Charon, cui plurima mento
 Canities inculta jacet, stant lumina flammâ,
 Sordidus ex humeris nodo dependet amictus.
 Ipse ratem conto subigit, velisque ministrat,
 Et ferrugineâ subvectat corpora cymbâ,
 Jam senior, sed cruda Deo viridisque senectus."

Lines 298—304.

On first coming Charon is described by Dante :—

"When lo, upon a bark there towards us came
 A very old man, with age-whitened hair."

"Hell," III., lines 82, 83.

And when his opposition is controlled :—

"The hairy cheeks then very quiet grew
 Of that dread pilot of the livid lake,
 Around whose eyes the whirling lightning flew."

Lines 97—99.

And again :—

"The demon Charon, with his eyes ablaze."

Line 109.

Around the bank, and eager to be ferried over, press the countless shades.

“Huc omnis turba ad ripas effusa ruebat,
 Matres atque viri, defunctaque corpora vita
 Magnaninum heroum, pueri innuptæque puellæ,
 Impositique rogis juvenes ante ora parentum :
 Quam multa in silvis autumni frigore primo
 Lapsa cadunt folia, aut ad terram gurgite ab alto
 Quam multæ glomerantur aves, ubi frigidus annus
 Trans pontum fugat et terris immittit apricis.”

Lines 305—312.

So we have in Dante :—

“A crowd that throng the bank of a great stream,
 And said, ‘O master, unto me now mete
 To know what race are these, and why they seem
 So anxious to cross o’er to the other side,
 As I discover by this feeble beam.’”

“Hell,” III., lines 71—75.

And again :—

“Just as the withered leaves of autumn fall,
 The one upon the other, till the bough
 To earth yields all its garment, as a pall ;
 The evil seed of Adam downwards, so
 Throw themselves one by one from that sad shore,
 At signs, like bird that to the call doth go.”

“Hell,” III., lines 112—117.

Although the simile of the birds is changed, the new simile adopted by Dante was unquestionably suggested by the recollection of the birds coupled with the leaves in Virgil.

The desire of the shades to cross the river has of course a different reason in each poem : in Dante, where evil souls pass only for punishment :—

“So spurs them onwards, justice all divine,
 That to desire is changed their fear o’ the rod.”

Lines 125, 126.

In Virgil the shades of those whose bodies have not found a grave cannot pass, and hence follows the pathetic meeting of Æneas with the shade of Palinurus, drowned in his last voyage, who beseeches his leader to take him with him over the black river. But the Sibyl rejects his intercession, and tells him to abandon his useless prayer.

“Desine fata Deum flecti sperare precando”

—a line concerning which Dante demands explanation from Virgil in the sixth Canto of the “Purgatory,” as being in opposition to the cry of all the spirits there, for prayer to assist them in their purification, to the text of which Canto, lines 28 to 48, I refer the reader.

Both in the “Æneid” and in Dante Charon at first refuses to accept a living freight. In Virgil,

“Sic prior adgreditur dictis, atque increpat ultro:
 Quisquis es, armatus qui nostra ad flumina tendis,
 Fare age, quid venias, jam istinc, et comprime gressum.”
 Lines 387—389.

The last line is curiously recalled by Dante on another occasion, when in Canto XII. the Centaur stops him with almost the same formula:—

“Ditel costinci, se non l’arco tiro.”

He continues:—

“Umbrarum hic locus est, Somni Noctisque soporæ:
 Corpora viva nefas Stygia vectare carina.”
 Lines 390, 391.

As in Dante,

“But thou, O soul still living, stand aside;
 Depart from these, whom Death has made his own.”
 “Hell,” III., lines 88, 89.

In the “Inferno” Virgil silences Charon by the expression of the will of a higher power. In the “Æneid” the Sibyl overpowers him by the sight of the spell, the golden bough, “Tumida ex ira tum corda residunt;” or, as Dante more vividly expresses it,

“The hairy cheeks then very quiet grew
 Of that dread pilot of the living lake,”

As Æneas enter the bark.

“Gemuit sub pondere cymba
 Sutilis, et multam accepit rimosa paludem.”
 Lines 413, 414.

Dante falls as it were in slumbering swoon at the bank of the river, and does not know how he crosses it. In the next Canto we find him on the other bank. But the touch of the spirit bark sinking under mortal weight is not forgotten:

we have it on a later occasion. When they cross to the City of Dis, over the lake, in Phlegyas' boat:—

“ My leader then descended in the bark,
 And made me enter at his side; the strain
 Only, when I was in, it seemed to mark.
 Soon as my guide and I our seats had ta'en,
 Cutting the water goes the ancient prow,
 More than its wont, when others cross that main.”
“ Hell,” VIII., lines 25—30.

After crossing Acheron, Æneas finds Cerberus lying in a cave opposite, whom the Sibyl drugs with a medicated cake, and they pass on.

“ Cerberus hæc ingens latratu regna trifauci
 Personat, adverso recubans immanis in antro.
 Cui vates, horrere videns jam colla colubris,
 Melle soporatum et medicatis frugibus offam
 Objectit. Ille fame rabida tria guttura pandens
 Corripit objectam, atque immania terga resolvit
 Fusus humi totoque ingens extenditur antro.
 Occupat Æneas aditum custode sepulto,
 Evaditque celer ripam inremeabilis undæ.”

Lines 417—425.

Dante places Cerberus as the guardian of the third circle, where gluttony is punished, himself its personification.

“ Wild Cerberus, of twofold nature rare,
 With three throats hurleth out the doglike bark
 Upon the people that are cowering there.
 His eyes are red, his greasy beard is dark,
 His belly large and fingers armed with nails;
 He tears, and flays, and rends the spirits stark.

* * * *

My leader stretches out his hand and draws
 A clod of earth, the which with forceful blow
 He drove right into his voracious maws.
 Like to a dog, that barking but to show
 His longing, eats up food with quiet mien,
 And only fought to fill his hunger, so
 Were quieted at once the jaws obscene
 Of the demon Cerberus, who so dins the souls
 That they would very gladly deaf have been.”

“ Hell,” Canto VI., lines 13—33.

In the first place Æneas hears the weeping cries of infants.

“Quos dulcis vitæ exortis et ab ubere raptos
Abstulit atra dies et funere mersit acerbo.”

Lines 428, 429.

Those Dante also places in his Limbo, and at the close of the “Paradise” reaffirms that for all who die before baptism Limbo must be their bourn.

Next to the infants come those who have suffered by unjust doom of death on earth, who have the sentence revised.

“Quæsitur Minos urnam movet; ille silentum
Conciliumque vocat vitasque et crimina discit.”

Lines 432, 433.

Dante advances Minos to be the universal judge of the spirits doomed to Hell, and as such places him at the entrance of the second circle,

“There standeth Minos, horrible, and grins;
At the entrance he examineth betimes,
And folding each around doth judge their sins.
I say, that when those souls, born in ill times,
Come before him, they straightway all things tell.”

“Hell,” V., lines 4—8.

In the vicinity of Virgil’s Minos are the suicides—

“Quam vellent æthere in alto
Nunc et pauperiem et duros perferre labores!”

Lines 436—7.

Dante has of course a separate circle in Hell, the second division of the seventh, for the punishment of those whom he finds in the ghastly wood, on whose branches sit the Harpies, “che cacciar delle Strofade i Trojani.”—Canto XIII., line 11. The trees of the wood are themselves the spirits, as Dante learns by breaking off a twig, when the voice of the injured shade comes out with the oozing juice. The whole incident is Virgilian, being taken from the story of Æneas plucking a wand at the tomb of Polydorus, when he is horrified by what follows:—

“Eloquar, an sileam? gemitus lacrimabilis imo
Auditur tumulo, et vox reddita fertur ad auris:
Quid miserum, Ænea laceras? jam parce sepulto;
Parce pias sclerare manus.”

Lib. III., lines 39—42.

Beyond the suicides stretch out the *lugentes campi*, where the unfortunate in love wander concealed in the glens and myrtle groves, "*curæ non ipsâ in morte relinquunt.*" Here Æneas meets again with the wretched Dido, and after accounting for his heartless abandonment of her by the fact that he did so under Divine constraint, adds that he did not think she would feel it so keenly. The hero succeeded in forcing up his own tears, but justly fails even to provoke an answer from the injured queen. In the second circle of Hell Dante places those "*ch' amor di nostra vita dipartille,*" and the frigid sketch of the Roman poet becomes the most perfectly finished portion of the modern poem, and the passionate Italian in the story of Francesca pours out the whole strength of his genius and his pity. In the fourth book of the "*Æneid*" Virgil has shown his own power to depict the master passion, but I know nothing in the whole range of ancient or modern art that can fairly be placed beside Dante's fifth Canto for pathetic tenderness and exquisite perfection of rhythm and style.

Æneas, after leaving Dido, passes from the mourning fields to the last division of that boundary of the Inferno, broad spaces in which throng those who have died in battle. The shadows of the Trojan warriors press around, those of the Greeks shrink from the living hero, though some of the latter attempt to raise their war cry with their shrill spirit voice:—

"Atque hic Priamidem laniatum corpore toto
Deiphobum vidit, lacerum crudeliter ora,
Ora manusque ambas, populataque tempora raptis
Auribus, et truncas inhoneste vulnere naris.
Vix adeo adgnovit pavitantem et dira tegentem
Supplicia."

Lines 494—99.

No one can doubt that Dante had this terrible description in his mind when he concocted the rival horrors in his 28th Canto. There, in the ninth ward of the eighth circle, we find the inventors of schisms slashed by a fiend with the most fearful wounds. One rivals Deiphobus:—

“Another, unto whom the throat was pierced;
The nose sheared closely off between the eyes,
And in an ear who also was amerced.”

Canto XXVIII., lines 64—6.

And another:—

“Then one, from whom both hands had been offsmote,
Raising his maimed arms in the dusky air,
So that the dripping blood his face did blot.”

Lines 103—5.

The picture of poor Deiphobus shrinking back and endeavouring to hide his disfigurements is more affecting than that of Dante's spirits exhibiting their wounds with a sort of ghastly pride; but each is suitable, the one feeling to that of the wretched murdered prince in the shades, but not condemned, the other to doomed criminals in Hell. I cannot but trace in the striking picture of the shade preserving in after life the fearful wounds with which its body was mangled on earth the seed of Dante's conception of the punishments inflicted on the creators of schism, the description of which arouses his pity when pity had long been dead:—

“The various wounds and people crowded deep,
As if with drunkenness my eyes did bear,
That they were anxious but to rest and weep.”

Canto XXIX., lines 1—3.

The colloquy between Æneas and Deiphobus is interrupted by the Sibyl, who warns the hero that the time allotted for his stay amongst the shades is short—

(“And little of our granted time doth bide.”

Canto XXIX., line 11.)

that here the road divides, leading on one side, which they must follow, to the Elysian fields, on the other to Tartarus and the punishments of the accursed. Here, in fact, the neutral region ceases; it is worked out by Virgil with great minuteness, and forms no inconsiderable portion of the whole region of the dead, while Dante passes it by with little description, placing it indeed within the gates of Hell, but on the hither side of Acheron. He has, however, as we have seen, transferred all Virgil's descriptions to other portions of

his "Inferno," not servilely following his master, but, like a great artist, reproducing his beauties where they would best fit into his own work.

Æneas does not enter Tartarus.

"Respicit Æneas subito, et sub rupe sinistra
 Mœnia lata videt, triplici circumdata muro,
 Quæ rapidus flammis ambit torrentibus amnis,
 Tartareus Phlegethon, torquetque sonantia saxa.
 Porta adversa, ingens, solidoque adamante columnæ,
 Vis ut nulla virum, non ipsi excindere bello
 Cœlicolæ valeant; stat ferrea turris ad auras,
 Tisiphoneque sedens palla succincta cruenta,
 Vestibulum exsomnis servat noctesque diesque.
 Hinc exaudiri gemitus, et sæva sonare
 Verbera; tum stridor ferri, tractæque catenæ."

Lines 548—58.

This magnificent passage sounds like the keynote to the whole of Dante's "Inferno," but special imitations of almost every line can be traced. On the borders of the lake, formed by the waters of Styx, Dante places his City of Dis, the approach to which is thus described:—

"'Even now its minarets, master!' I exclaim,
 'I see above the valley rising higher,
 Vermeil, as though they issued out of flame.'
 And he explained to me: 'The eternal fire
 That glows within makes them look ruddy here,
 As in this deep of hell thou seest each spire.'
 Meanwhile within the deep-cut moat we steer
 That trenches round that land disconsolate.
 As if of iron wrought the walls appear."
 "Hell," Canto VIII., lines 70—8.

Here the demons refuse all admittance, and even Virgil cannot control their resistance, which is only overcome by an angel messenger of the Divine Power. The tower is guarded, not by Tisiphone, but by all the Furies:—

"Because I wholly had withdrawn my eyes
 Towards the high turret, with its crest aglow,
 When all at once I saw erect arise
 The three infernal Furies, tinged with blood."
 Canto IX., lines 35—8.

The awful effect produced in Virgil's closing lines by the sounds of the unseen horrors is keenly felt by Dante, and frequently reproduced. An example can be taken from his descent on Gerion into the eighth circle :—

“ Because both flames I see and screams I hear,
 At which all trembling in my seat I cower.
 Till then unheard there strike upon my ear,
 As through great pains we sank and circled on,
 Cries that on every side approached us near.”

Canto XVII., lines 122—126.

The Sibyl gives Æneas a brief description of the events of the prison-house. Rhadamanthus judges the spirits as they come before him :—

“ Castigatque auditque dolos, subigitque fateri,
 Quæ quis apud superos, furto lætatus inani,
 Distulit in seram commissa piacula mortem.”

Lines 567—9.

Dante allots the task to Minos alone, and in words which I have already quoted gives the same idea of extorted confession and instant punishment. The guilty souls are handed over to Tisiphone :—

“ Tum demum horrisono stridentes cardine sacræ
 Panduntur portæ.”

Lines 573, 4.

Strangely enough, Dante transfers this description, imitated also by Milton in his well-known lines :—

“ On a sudden open fly,
 With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
 The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
 Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
 Of Erebus.”

“ Paradise Lost,” Book II., line 879 foll.

Dante, I remark, transfers the description to the gate of Purgatory :—

“ And when there swung upon its hinges there
 The portals of that entrance consecrate,
 Which were of sounding metal, strong and clear,
 Creakt not so loud the famed Tarpeian Gate.”

“ Purgatory,” Canto IX., line 133 foll.

When the gates are opened you see the Fury on the threshold, Hydra yet fiercer within, and beyond the black depths of Tartarus, stretching twice as far to the centre as from earth to the light of Heaven.

Of the doomed within the Sibyl mentions by name only a few of the Titan race, whom Dante places as the guardians of his lowest circle. Having described briefly two out of the many punishments, she dismisses in a rapid summary the classes of criminals who suffer :—

“ Hic quibus invisī fratres, dum vita manebat,
Pulsatusve parens, et fraus innexa clienti,
Aut qui divitiis soli incubuere repertis,
Nec partem posuere suis, quæ maxuma turba est ;
Quique ob adulterium cæsi, quique arma secuti
Impia, nec veriti dominorum fallere dextras,
Inclusi pœnam expectant.”

Lines 608—14.

As Mr. Conington points out, we have here seven classes of criminals—(1) those who have violated duty to their brothers, (2) to their parents, (3) to their clients, (4) to their kindred generally, through avarice, (5) to their married fellow-citizens, (6) to their country, and (7) to their masters.

It will not be doubted that in Dante's elaborate classification of criminals all these find a place. Caina, the first of the four divisions into which the lowest circle is divided, takes its name from Cain, who slew his brother, and here are punished those, quibus invisī fratres, pulsatusve parens. The third class, the evil counsellors, are punished in the eighth pit of Malebolge, with Ulysses and Diomed. (See Canto XXVI.) The fourth class, the avaricious, together with the prodigal, hold their grotesque jousts in the fourth circle :—

“ Since all the gold beneath the moon possess,
Or ever owned by those worn souls of yore,
Could not make one of them one moment rest.”

Canto VII., lines 64—6.

The fifth class are tossed on the wind in the second circle, quique ob adulterium cæsi :—

“Thousands more
 Shadows he showed me, and their names he told
 Whom Love had hurried from our mortal shore.”

Canto V., lines 67—9.

The sixth class, *quique arma secuti Impia*, are found in the second division of the lowest circle; and the last class, *ne veriti dominorum fallere dextras*, are sunk in the last division of all, where Judas, Cassius, and Brutus are mangled in the jaws of Lucifer, as the type of all who have betrayed their masters—in the eyes of Dante the worst and deadliest crime.

The Sibyl tells *Æneas* not to inquire too curiously into the nature of their punishments. She alludes to the tortures of *Sisyphus*, *Ixion*, and *Theseus*, and adds—

“Phlegyasque miserrimus omnis
 Admonet, et magna testatur voce per umbras :
 ‘Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere Divos.’”

Lines 618—20.

Dante places *Phlegyas*, the violator of the Temple of *Apollo*, as boatman on the *Styx*, himself the type of *Wrath*, over the spirits of wrath punished in the muddy lake :—

“Saw muddy people standing in the mire
 All naked, and with looks where anger glowed.
 Striking themselves, so did their rage transpire,
 Not hands alone they used, but head and feet,
 Biting themselves to pieces in their ire.
 My gentle master said, ‘O son, now greet
 The souls of those whom anger overcame.’”

“Hell,” Canto VII., lines 110—16.

In the lines of the Sibyl that follow *Virgil* is generally supposed to allude to *Curio*, who, bought over by *Cæsar* from *Pompey’s* party, was the first to overcome his master’s scruples, and is introduced into *Lucan’s* “*Pharsalia*” prompting the passage of the *Rubicon* with the words “*Tolle moras : nocuit semper differre paratis.*”

*Vendidit hic auro patriam, dominumque potentem
 Imposuit ; fixit leges pretio atque refixit.*”

Lines 621, 622.

Dante places *Curio* with the creators of schism, where his tongue has been cut out by the *Demon’s* sword :—

“ ‘Tis he ; he cannot speak to you.
 This banished man, removed from Cæsar, loath,
 All doubt, affirming that when well prepared,
 Any delay to injury ever groweth.’
 Ah ! how bewildered he to me appeared,
 There with his tongue shorn closely in his throat,
 Curio, who erst in speaking had so dared.”

“ Hell,” Canto XXVIII., lines 96—102.

With a rapid summary the Sibyl closes her account :—

“ Ausi omnes immane nefas, ausoque potiti.
 Non mihi si linguæ centum sint oraque centum,
 Ferrea vox, omnis scelerum comprehendere formas,
 Omnia pænarum percurrere nomina possim.”

Lines 624—7.

Æneas then lays down his golden bough before the Halls of Pluto, and advances to the fields of Elysium. It is seen that in Virgil's brief sketch of Tartarus there is hardly an allusion which Dante has not made his own and worked up in his elaborate structure.

It is not necessary to follow so minutely the account which follows of the Elysian fields. I have shown that Dante takes it as described by Virgil, with but slight modification, and places it as one part of what he calls Limbo, in the first circle of the Inferno. But here also there are specific imitations. When Æneas meets his father's shade he attempts to embrace it :—

“ Ter conatus ibi collo dare bracchia circum,
 Ter frustra compressa manus effugit imago,
 Par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno.”

Lines 700—2.

So when the soul of Statius first learns that it is the great Virgil whom he has met in Purgatory he wishes to fall down and embrace his feet, himself a shade forgetting the nothingness of both :—

“ Already he bent down to embrace the feet
 Of my dear teacher : but he said, ‘ Forbear,
 O brother : thou a shade, a shade dost greet.’
 And he arising : ‘ Now thou art aware
 Of the great love, which towards thee me doth warm,
 When I forget we are but empty air,
 Treating a shadow like a solid form.’ ”

“ Purgatory,” Canto XXI., lines 130—6.

The doctrine of metempsychosis, which Virgil makes use of as a poetical device to enable Æneas to see amongst the shades the future heroes of Roman history, is alien to the true spirit of his Elysian fields as a place of happy repose, but the artifice introduces to us a foreshadowing of Purgatory, where the spirit goes through a course of purifying punishment to get rid of the ingrained stains of its former life before it enters on Elysium or is allowed to quaff Lethe, the water of oblivion, so as forgetful of the past to enter on life again.

The remarkable passage in which Anchises explains these mysteries to his son was strongly impressed on Dante's mind, and bore fruit in his poem. In the following lines he explains how the stains of mortality blunt the divine essence of the spirit both before and after death :—

“ Igneus est ollis vigor et cœlestis origo
 Seminibus, quantum non noxia corpora tardant
 Terrenique hebetant artus moribundaque membra.
 Hinc metuunt cupiuntque, dolent gaudentque, neque auras
 Dispiciunt clausæ tenebris et carcere cæco.
 Quin et supremo cum lumine vita relinquit,
 Non tamen omne malum miseris nec funditus omnes
 Corporeæ excedunt pestes, penitusque necesse est,
 Multa diu concreta modis inolescere miris.”

Lines 730—8.

In the “Purgatory,” where the spirits in the sixth cornice are purified, through leanness, of the sin of gluttony, Dante is puzzled to know how spirits who require no nourishment can grow lean; and to solve his doubts Statius explains to him the mystery of humanity from its generation to death, and shows how then the spirit is clothed with air, on which it stamps the seal of its mortal appearance and the characteristics of its mortal being :—

“ So the surrounding air hath here selected
 That form which in effect the soul doth claim
 With its own seal, which is on it reflected.
 And as the fire aye follows on the flame,
 There, where is shifted now the spirit's site,
 Follows upon that spirit the new frame.

Thence afterwards it gains appearance, hight
 A shadow, and its organs, hence the while
 Each one attaineth, even to the sight.
 Hence is it that we speak, and hence we smile:
 Hence is it that we break to tears and sighs,
 Which on the mountain thou hast seen erewhile.
 According as the spirit's yearnings rise,
 And its affections, so is shaped the shade."

"Purgatory," Canto XXV., lines 94—107.

A thorough comprehension of the passage in Virgil removes all difficulty from Dante's conception. In the former it is the earthly limbs and vesture of decay that dim the spiritual essence, and even in life cause the passions and desires, while in after life the same are wonderfully ingrained in the spirit, and become a part of it. In Dante the very appearance and character of the mortal being are stamped upon his shade, and endow it with mortal attributes, and even mortal affections.

It is this mortal taint in the spirit that requires purification even in Virgil's happy fields:—

"Ergo exercentur pœnis, veterumque malorum
 Supplicia expendant: aliæ panduntur inanis
 Suspensæ ad ventos; aliis sub gurgite vasto
 Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni:
 Quisque suos patimur Manis; exinde per amplum
 Mittimur Elysium, et pauci læta arva tenemus:
 Donec longa dies, perfecto temporis orbe,
 Concretam exemit labem, purumque reliquit
 Ætherium sensum atque aurai simplicis ignem.
 Has omnis, ubi mille rotam volvere per annos,
 Lethæum ad fluvium deus evocat agmine magno,
 Scilicet immemores supera ut convexa revisant."

Lines 789—50.

There is here unquestionably the whole theory of Purgatory, but of the three special modes of purification indicated in Virgil Dante introduces one only in the seven cornices of his mountain, when on the highest cornice the spirits of the lustful are purified in fire. It is a singular fact that Dante and his guide pass through all the other cornices without sharing the pains of the purifying spirits. But it is not so in this instance:—

f

“ There, where God’s Angel glad before us stood.
 Beyond the flame he stood, above the way,
 And sang: ‘ Beati mundo corde,’ clear
 In voice, beyond the reach of human lay:
 Then, ‘ Holy souls, ye cannot further steer
 Until the flame has bit ye; enter brave,
 And be not deaf unto the song ye’ll hear.’ ”

“ Purgatory,” Canto XXVII., lines 6—12.

Even the shade of Virgil passes through the flame, fiercer than molten glass, although he only accompanies Dante as far as the Terrestrial Paradise, to leave him there under other guidance and return to Limbo.

Dante, following Virgil, places the river of Lethe as the boundary stream, drinking which the spirit shall obtain the boon of forgetfulness after completing his purification. Upon his description of the Terrestrial Paradise and its waters of oblivion Dante has poured out all the wealth of his genius, while Virgil only gives the faintest sketch. Still the germ of Dante’s Terrestrial Paradise is here:—

“ Interea vidit Æneas in valle reducta
 Seclusum nemus et virgulta sonantia silvis,
 Lethæumque, domos placidas qui prænatat, amnem.”

Lines 703—5.

Let the reader refer to the 28th Canto of the “ Purgatory,” and read the description of the divine forest, with its murmur of leaves, and the dark but crystal clear river gliding beneath the perpetual shade, and he will see how Virgil’s faint outline is filled up into a perfect picture.

It is with no thought of depreciating Dante that I have instituted this inquiry into his avowed imitations of his predecessor. His deep study of Virgil is his boast, and to it he himself attributes his own success in his art:—

“ ‘ Art thou indeed that Virgil, and that fount
 From which sprang forth of song so large a stream?’
 Answered I to him with a shame-struck front,
 ‘ O, of all other poets, pride and beam,
 Avail me the great love, and study long,
 Which made me ever ponder o’er thy theme.
 Thou art my Master, I to thee belong:
 Thou only art the one from whom I’ve ta’en
 The polished style, that’s brought me fame in song.’ ”

“ Hell,” Canto I., lines 79—87.

It has been the fashion of late years to depreciate Virgil, but when we allow his inferiority to Shakespeare, Homer, Dante himself, and perhaps Milton, it is impossible to find any other poet of ancient or modern times who can fairly be placed in the same rank with the pride of the Augustan era. As a master of style he is unequalled except by his own follower, Dante, though the style of the latter is distinctly his own, and, except in expressions palpably imitated, is in no way founded upon Virgil's. Virgil's is copious and ornate, Dante's terse to conciseness. Both indulge in rhetorical commonplaces of description, evidently copied by Dante from his master, and which to the student produce the like charm of association, like the fragrance of a familar vintage :—

“Tithoni croceum linquens Aurora cubile—
Nox ruit oceano—auræ vela vocant—
Vocat jam carbasus auras—
Cingor fulgentibus armis—”

are Virgilian commonplaces which give pleasure through the very iteration. Dante has caught the trick from his master, and works it in his own way. When he wishes to particularise the hour it is :—

“The eternal mistress of Tithonus old,
Already whitened in the eastern height,
Quitting the dear arms that around her fold.”
“Purgatory,” IX., lines 1—3.

“Now in the hour, when the diurnal heat
Can warm no more the coldness of the night,
Conquered by chill of earth, or Saturn's seat.”
“Purgatory,” XIX., lines 1—3.

“Now without pause 'twas time to mount the height
Since the meridian circle of the day
Filled Taurus' star, the Scorpion's that of night.”
“Purgatory,” XXV., lines 1—3.

“So that his earliest rays were trembling o'er
The land in which his Maker shed his blood,
And Libra stood on high on Ebro's shore,
And Ganges' wave with midday glory glowed,
The sun was stationed, so that sank the day.”
“Purgatory,” XXVII., lines 1—5.

“But onwards now: already seeks the main,
With boundary of both hemispheres in view,
Beyond Seville, the faggot-bearing Cain;
And yestreen to its full the round moon grew.”
“Hell,” Canto XX., lines 124—27.

Doubtless Dante had in view, by thus calling up geographical details in mid-Hell, or on the cornices of his mountain of Purgatory, to give the effect of reality to his vision, but the constant repetition of the artifice, like Virgil's studied iterations, yields to the accustomed ear the charm of familiarity: to the lover of either poet the trick is pleasant because it is his own.

The one pre-eminent excellence both in Virgil and Dante, and in which neither is surpassed in the whole range of literature, is graphic vigour, although their mode of workmanship and the effect produced is quite distinct. If illustration be taken from rival arts Virgil's is cognate with that of the painter, Dante's with that of the sculptor; but the works of both are absolutely endued with life, the pictured forms have all the glow and action of reality, the sculptures breathe. As a narrative poet I think that Virgil is absolutely unrivalled; in his elaborate descriptions, such as of the chariot-race in the "Georgics"—of all the games, but more especially the boat-race in the "Æneid"—of Æneas' search for Creusa through the streets of burning Troy—of the deaths of Priam, Dido, and Turnus—his intensely dramatic spirit brings the whole scene in each case before the reader, with all its realistic details: the reader can say with Dante, looking at the paintings on the floor of the first cornice of Purgatory:—

"Alive the living, dead the dead appear;

Who saw the facts beheld not more than I."

"Purgatory," XII., lines 67, 68.

This intensity and vigour of conception are qualities of which no modern depreciation can deprive the great poet of Imperial Rome; it cannot deprive him of the honour which the enthusiastic admiration of such a man as Dante would bestow on any writer; it cannot deprive him of the glory of having in an episode of his uncompleted epic laid the foundations on which has been constructed what is, perhaps, taken all in all, the noblest poem which the world will ever see.

HELL.

CANTO I.

Dante having wandered in the middle of his life into a dark forest, which represents the maze of human passions, attempts to climb the mountain of Virtue, and is repulsed by three beasts, the leopard, the lion, and the wolf, representing the lust of Pleasure, Pride, and Avarice. He is rescued from these by the shade of Virgil, who promises to conduct him through Hell and Purgatory, whilst another worthier spirit shall finally lead him to Paradise.

UPON the journey of my life midway,
I found myself within a darkling wood,
Where from the straight path I had gone astray :
Ah, to describe it is a labour rude,
So wild the wood, and rough, and thick, and wide, 5
That at the thought the terror is renewed.
So bitter is it, 'tis to death allied :
But of the good to treat, which there I drew,
The lofty things I'll tell, I there descried.
How I had entered there I hardly knew, 10
So deep was I in slumber at the part
When I had wandered from the pathway true.
But when the mountain's slope began to start,
There, where there ceased that valley of the night,
Which with its terror had so pierced my heart, 15
I looked aloft, and saw its shoulders bright
Already mantled with that planet's rays,
Which wanderers in all pathways leads aright.
That sight the terror of my heart allays,
Which in its depths till then no respite gave, 20
That night I past in such a sore amaze.

Line 1. "Upon the journey of my life midway." Dante gives the date of his vision at the close of his thirty-fifth year, the half of the threescore years and ten allotted by the Psalmist. This was A.D. 1300, and events that occurred at a later period are thus introduced as prophecy.

Line 17. "Already mantled with that planet's rays." The Sun, the rays of Truth, which guide the wanderer from the maze of error, and light up the summit of the mountain of Virtue.

B

And as one breathless from a watery grave,
 When he has reached the shore from out the sea,
 Turns and looks back upon the perilous wave :
 So did my soul, which even yet would flee, 25
 Turn backwards to behold the past again
 From which with life none ever issued free.
 After my weary frame some rest had ta'en,
 The lower foot set firmly at each stride,
 Upwards I went through that deserted plain. 30
 When lo ! at the first ascent of that hillside,
 A panther, lithe, most agile of its race,
 And covered over with a spotted hide.
 It never turned aside from 'fore my face,
 And so blocked up my pathway, ne'er withdrawn, 35
 That oft I turned my footsteps to retrace.
 The time was then the hour of early dawn,
 And the sun rose, with those same stars beside,
 Which were with him when first their light was drawn
 By Love divine in beauteousness to glide. 40
 So I had every reason to essay
 The conquest of that beast with beauteous hide,
 In that fair season and the hour of day ;
 Yet none the less a panic in me woke,
 The sight, which showed a lion in the way. 45
 He seemed as if 'gainst me in charge he broke,
 With head aloft and maddening hunger's ire,
 The very air appeared to fear his stroke.
 Then came a she-wolf, who of all desire
 Appeared incarnate in her leanness grim, 50
 Through whom vast crowds in wretchedness transpire.
 This with such leaden weight struck every limb
 From terror rising at her sight of dread,
 That I lost every hope the height to climb.

Line 27. "From which with life none ever issued free." Hyperbolically descriptive of the few who escape from the entanglement of human passions.

Line 38. "And the sun rose, with those same stars beside,
 Which were with him when first their light was drawn
 By Love divine in beauteousness to glide."

The sun was in the constellation of Aries, the time of spring, at which season Dante supposes the Creation to have taken place.

Line 41. "So I had every reason to essay." The translation in the text is the interpretation of this difficult passage given by Venturi. The Italian annotators explain the difficulty by saying that the season of the day and year gave the Poet heart to hope to win the panther's gay coat in sign of his victory. Cary makes the beauty of the panther a cause for gaiety, which must be wrong.

And such is he who masseth wealth with greed, 55
 Till comes the time all things from him to wrest,
 And in each thought to wail, is all his meed.
 So haunted me that beast that cannot rest,
 Who foot by foot, before me, slowly reared,
 And where the sun was silent, downwards prest. 60
 While to the deep abysses thus I neared,
 A vision then arose before my face,
 Whose voice, through lengthened silence, faint appeared.
 When I beheld him in that desert place,
 "Ah, miserere!" did I loudly cry, 65
 "Art thou a shadow, or of human race?"
 He answered me: "No man: a man was I
 In former times, and of the Mantuan state
 Were both my parents, in fair Lombardy.
Sub Julio born, though that came somewhat late, 70
 And I, 'neath good Augustus, lived at Rome,
 In time of the false gods, of idle prate.
 I was a poet, and I sang his doom,
 Anchises' honest son, who came from Troy,
 After proud Iliion was a burning tomb. 75
 But wherefore turn'st thou back to such annoy?
 Wherefore not climb up this delicious mount,
 The cause and the commencement of all joy?"
 "Art thou indeed that Virgil, and that fount
 From which sprang forth of song so large a stream?" 80
 Answered I to him with a shame-struck front.
 "O, of all other poets, pride and beam,
 Avail me the great love, and study long,
 Which made me ever ponder o'er thy theme.
 Thou art my Master, I to thee belong: 85
 Thou only art the one from whom I've ta'en
 The polished style, that brought me fame in song.

Line 60. "And where the sun was silent, downwards prest." The metaphor seems forced to modern ears: *dove 'l sol tace*. It is in imitation of the "Luna silens" or moonless night of the classics. Probably Virgil's "*per amica silentia Lunæ*" is more directly imitated.

Line 63. "Whose voice, through lengthened silence, faint appeared." The faint voice of the spirit in the upper world is imitated from the "*vox exigua*" in the *Æneid*, attributed to the shades.

Line 70. "*Sub Julio* born, though that came somewhat late."
 "*Nacqui sub Julio, ancorchè fosse tardi.*"

Virgil was born twenty-five years before Julius assumed the dictatorship. Venturi explains the above line, "I may say I was born under Julius Cæsar, though he made himself Dictator somewhat late as respects the date of my birth."

Behold the beast which turns me back again :
 O famous wise one, give me now thy aid,
 She makes me tremble in each pulse and vein." 90
 "Some other road by thee must be essayed,"
 He answered, when he saw me weeping stay,
 "If yonder wilderness thou wouldst evade.
 That beast, at which thou criest, by this way
 Permits not one to pass, for evermore, 95
 But bars the passage so, that she will slay.
 Of wickedness her nature has such store
 That her keen craving ne'er is satisfied,
 But after food she's hungrier than before.
 To many animals is she allied, 100
 And will be so to more, until the hound
 Shall come, who'll make her die of grief's sharp gride.
 This one will not be fed on pelf, or ground,
 But upon Wisdom, Love, and Virtue's store.
 His nation 'twixt two Feltros guarded round. 105
 Safety he'll bring to meek Italia's shore,
 For whom Camilla, the pure virgin, died,
 Eurialus and Turnus wounded sore.
 Through every town he'll chase the she-wolf's pride
 Until in Hell he drive her to the place 110
 Whence Envy first allowed her here to bide.
 Now for thy profit in my thoughts I trace
 How thou mayst follow, I will guide thee fair,
 From here I'll lead thee through eternal space,
 Where thou shalt hear the shriekings of despair, 115
 Shalt see the ancient spirits grief-possesst,
 Who each the second death invokes with prayer.
 There others thou shalt see contented rest
 In fire, because they hope at length to be,
 Whate'er the time, amidst the people blest : 120

Line 100. "To many animals is she allied." Avarice, symbolised in the wolf, has its worst excesses when joined to other crimes; alone, it injures chiefly the possessor.

Line 101.

"Until the hound

Shall come, who'll make her die of grief's sharp gride."

This is generally allowed to be intended for Can Grande della Scala, whose country of Verona is situated between Feltro, a town, and Monte Feltro. The prophecy of the regeneration of Italy, assigned by Dante to his chief Protector, has at last been fulfilled.

Line 117. "Who each the second death invokes with prayer." The second death is that death of the soul for which the condemned will in vain pray, as a close to torment.

Line 118. "There others thou shalt see contented rest
 In fire."

This alludes to the spirits in Purgatory, where Virgil is also to guide

Whom afterwards, if thou wouldst wish to see,
 For that a worthier soul than mine will come,
 With her I'll leave thee when I part from thee.
 For the great Ruler, who has there his home,
 Because I was rebellious to his reign, 125
 Wills not that in his city I should roam.
 In every part he rules, but there in main,
 There is his citadel, and lofty seat.
 O happy he, there chosen to remain !"
 Then I : " O bard, my prayer I now repeat, 130
 By that same God, whom erst thou didst not know,
 So that I fly this ill, and greater yet,
 Guide me through all things which thou telledst now,
 So that I see the blessed Peter's gate,
 And those whom thou so mournful dost avow." 135
 Then he moved on, and I behind him wait.

Dante, after which a worthier soul, Beatrice, will lead him through the spheres of Paradise.

Line 134. " So that I see the blessed Peter's gate." The gate of Purgatory, not Paradise. For the latter there is no gate, but the spirits purified in Purgatory ascend to the Heavenly spheres. Dante accepts Virgil's invitation to guide him through Hell and Purgatory, and so the first canto closes, which must be considered as an opening to the whole poem, and not as the first canto merely of the part devoted to Hell. The poem will then be found to consist of this introductory canto, which is written in the allegorical form, and three parts, each consisting of thirty-three cantos, devoted to the three subjects of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise.

CANTO II.

Dante having followed Virgil along the mountain until nightfall, is oppressed with fears on account of the greatness of his undertaking, and his own unfitness for such a task. Virgil reproves his cowardice, and inspires him with confidence by the account of the manner in which he was called by Beatrice from Heaven, to speed to his assistance.

THE day wore on, and past, the darkling air
 Released the animals upon the earth
 From their fatigues, while I alone prepare
 Still the long warfare to sustain with worth
 Both of the weary road and pity's dread, 5
 Which now my mind will trace, that never err'th.
 O Muse, O lofty genius, grant your aid,
 O mind that writest what I then descried,
 Here thy nobility should be displayed.
 Thus I began : " My Poet and my guide, 10
 Look if my virtue have the temper true
 Ere thou wouldst trust me to this deed of pride.

Thou say'st that Silvius' father once withdrew
 Whilst still in body all corruptible ;
 He living the immortal Ages knew. 15
 But if the Enemy of every ill
 Was so propitious, thinking of the higher
 Result to follow, and what race would swell
 From him, such seems to human reason nigher,
 Since he was of high Rome, and of its sway 20
 In the Empirean chosen for the Sire.
 Which place, and rule, to tell the truth alway,
 Were thus established, for the holy place
 Where sits great Peter's heritor to-day.
 By that descent, whence thou does vaunt his grace, 25
 Secrets he understood, which were the cause
 Of his success, and of the Papal race.
 There wandered afterwards Election's vase,
 To bring back comfort from them for the Creed
 Which of salvation opened first the laws. 30
 But why should I come there? or who concede?
 Neither Eneas nor Saint Paul am I ;
 Nor I, nor others, think me worth such meed.
 Therefore to such a venture should I hie,
 I fear the act as madness must be viewed. 35
 Thou'rt wise my unspoken reason to descry."
 Like unto one who wills not that he would,
 And shifts his purpose with thought's changing tide,
 So that he dare not make commencement good,
 Thus acted I on that hill's darkened side ; 40
 In idle thought I wasted the emprise,
 To which so swiftly I at first had hied.

Line 18. "Silvius' father." Eneas.

Line 16. "The Enemy of every ill." God.

Line 25. "By that descent, whence thou dost vaunt his grace,
 Secrets he understood, which were the cause
 Of his success, and of the Papal race."

The favourite idea in Dante's mind, and the theory by which he looked for the renovation of the world, was the separation of all mundane and spiritual authority: the former to be wielded by one who should resuscitate the Roman Empire, the latter by the Papal Church purified from all admixture of worldly authority. Considering Eneas as the founder of the Roman Empire, and of Rome where the Church was to sit enthroned, he accounts for the marked favour shown to him in permitting his descent into Hell to learn secrets by which his mission was to be accomplished.

Line 28. "There wandered afterwards Election's vase." *There* refers to the Immortal Ages, not Hell in this instance, but Paradise, where Paul, the "chosen vessel," was carried in vision.

"If thy words' meaning clearly I devise,"
 Answered the shadow of that noble bard,
 "Thy spirit of its vileness feels the poise,
 45
 Which many a time and oft will man retard,
 So that the honoured enterprise they leave,
 As beasts in darkness falsely things regard.
 That to this terror thou mayst give reprove,
 I'll tell thee why I came, and what I heard,
 50
 At the first moment I for thee did grieve.
 I was 'mongst those the mid-suspended herd,
 The while a lady called me, blest and fair,
 Such that I prayed her to vouchsafe her word.
 Her eyes shone clearer than the morning star,
 55
 And she began to address me, slow and sweet,
 That of an angel speaking I was 'ware.
 'O courteous Mantuan spirit, whom I greet,
 Whose fame yet lasteth in the world below,
 And will last on while Earth retains its seat,
 60
 My friend, but not of Fortune, now in woe,
 Within a desert wild is held at bay,
 That terror makes him the true path forego:
 I fear already he has lost his way,
 And to his succour I am come too late,
 65
 From what, in Heaven, of him I heard them say.
 Now go to him, and with thy speech ornate,
 And with whate'er can save him in his need,
 Help him, that I be not disconsolate.
 70
 'Tis Beatrice who now claims thy deed;
 To seek the place I've left I now am fain.
 Love moved my steps, and Love now makes me plead.
 When I return before my Lord again
 I'll speak thy praises often at his throne.'
 75
 Then she was silent, and I thus began:

Line 52. "I was 'mongst those the mid-suspended herd." Virgil, with the other great men of the Pagan world, was suspended in Limbo, which, though within the gate of Hell, is neither in Hell nor Heaven. It is described in the fourth Canto.

Line 61. "My friend, but not of Fortune."
 "L'amico mio, e non della ventura."

I have preferred the simple translation, the meaning of which is clear. Although Dante is my friend, he was never Fortune's. The commentators explain the phrase, Dante loved me, but not what he could gain through me, which appears to me forced, and to convey idle praise.

Line 70. "'Tis Beatrice who now claims thy deed." In this poem Beatrice allegorically represents the spirit of Religion. She was Dante's first and last love on earth, and in most parts of the poem, though not in all, Dante's passionate adoration shows that his thoughts were with the breathing woman whose name he immortalised.

'O lady of all virtue, who alone
 Raisest the human race beyond compare,
 O'er all that 'neath the Lunar skies are known,
 Such pleasure have I thy command to share,
 That were it done, obedience would be low; 80
 There was but need thy purpose to lay bare.
 But tell to me the reason, why below
 Thou dost not hesitate thy steps to guide
 From that broad region where thou yearn'st to go.'
 'Since thou wouldst know so deeply,' she replied, 85
 'I'll tell thee briefly why with holy cheer
 To come even here I am not terrified.
 Those things alone one ever ought to fear
 That have the power to wreak on others ill;
 Nought else can ever cause of dread appear. 90
 I am so fashioned by God's grace and will
 That me, even here, your misery cannot move,
 Nor flames of all this burning work me ill.
 A gentle lady in the skies above 95
 So mourneth o'er this case I've told to thee,
 That there stern judgment is o'ercome by love.
 This one called Lucia to her bidding—' He,
 Thy faithful one, is now in sorest need
 Of thee, and him I recommend to thee.'
 Lucia, the foe of every cruel deed, 100
 Started at once, and in the place appeared
 Where I with Rachel have my seat decreed,
 And said, 'O Beatrix, God's praise averred!
 Why dost not succour him, who loved thee so,
 That for thy sake he left the vulgar herd? 105

Line 78. "O'er all that 'neath the Lunar skies are known." Dante's astronomy is the Pythagorean system. It will be described afterwards in detail. The earth is the centre, surrounded by the nine revolving spheres, of which the moon is the lowest. The phrase means, therefore, that Beatrice excels all the beings on the earth.

Line 93. "Nor flames of all this burning work me ill." The flames and burning are used metaphorically for the yearning of those in Limbo for the Paradise they cannot obtain. In Limbo the poet describes no real flames, the sole punishment there being the loss of happiness.

Line 94. "A gentle lady in the skies above." Supposed to be allegorical of the Divine clemency.

Line 100. "Lucia." Allegorical of illuminating grace, as she is found afterwards amongst the blessed enumerated in Paradise; a real person is also probably intended.

Dost thou not hear the anguish of his woe?
 Seest thou not Death, against him armed in fight,
 O'er the river, stormier than the wild sea's flow?
 There never yet were persons swift in flight
 To gain their 'vantage, or their loss to fly, 110
 As after listening to those words of might
 I came here from my happy seat on high,
 Confiding in thy honourable word,
 That thee, and those who've heard, doth glorify.'
 After she'd spoken thus, as thou hast heard, 115
 Her beaming eyes in tears she turned away,
 For which to greater haste I was bestirred,
 And as she willed it, came to thee straightway:
 Aloft I raised thee from that savage beast
 Which from the pleasant mountain barred thy way: 120
 'Then what is this? and wherefore dost thou rest?
 Wherefore such vileness nourish in thy heart?
 Why hast not daring, and frank hope exprest,
 Since three such blessed ladies take thy part
 Within the Palace of Heaven's Infinite, 125
 And such fair promise doth my speech impart?'
 Like unto flowrets with the chill of night
 Bent down, and closed, when o'er them shines the sun
 Raise up their stems, and open in his light,
 Such goodly ardour to my heart there ran, 130
 So did my weary virtue renovate,
 That like one of free heart I thus began:
 'Oh pitiful was she, who helped my Fate,
 And courteous thou, who wert so prompt to obey
 The words of truth she did to thee relate. 135
 With such desire the venture to repay
 Thou hast inspired my heart with all thy speech,
 I turn me to our first resolve, straightway.
 Onwards, with us there's but one will for each,
 My leader thou, my lord, and master mild! 140
 So spake I, and behind his steps I reach,
 And entered on the pathway steep and wild.'"

Line 108. "O'er the river, stormier than the wild sea's flow." Realistic commentators suppose from this that there was a river by the hillside not before mentioned by the poet. The river probably means the whirl of human passions—in truth, stormier than the ocean.

CANTO III.

Dante, following Virgil, arrives at the gates of Hell, and reads the inscription written thereon. Immediately within the precincts he finds the vast crowd of human beings who on earth have done neither good nor evil, and who are punished there, together with the Angels who were neither on the side of God nor Lucifer when the latter rebelled, and who are hence excluded from Heaven and from the circles of Hell itself. From there they reach the bank of the River Acheron, where the Demon Charon ferries over the spirits of the condemned into Hell, and there Dante falls into a sudden swoon.

"THROUGH me ye pass into the city of woe,
 Through me into eternal pain ye rove ;
 Through me amidst the people lost ye go.
 My high Creator justice first did move ;
 Me Power Divine created, and designed, 5
 The highest wisdom and the primal love.
 Previous to me was no created kind,
 Save the Eternal ; I eternal last.
 Ye who here enter, leave all hope behind."
 Such were the words of cruel scope I traced, 10
 Above the summit of a gateway writ.
 " Master, for me stern sentence here is past."
 And he to me, like one of prudent wit,
 " Here it behoves to lay aside each doubt ;
 All cowardice, as dead, one here must quit. 15
 We've come unto the place I spake about,
 Where thou the grieving people shalt behold,
 Who the intellectual blessing live without."
 And then he clasped my hand within his hold, 20
 With joyous face from whence I comfort keep,
 And placed me there, within the secret fold.
 There sighings, and complaints, and wailings deep,
 Resounded ever in the starless air,
 So that at first I could not help but weep.
 Different tongues, speech horrible to hear, 25
 Accents of anger and the words of pain,
 Voices both high and low, hand-clappings there,

Lines 5 and 6. The persons of the Trinity are here described ; the high Creator, whom Justice moved to make Hell.

Line 8. " Save the Eternal." The angels and other eternal things, Hell being in existence before the creation of man and the world.

Line 18. " Who the intellectual blessing live without." The intellectual blessing is God, to know whom is only life.

Made up a tumult which aye whirls amain
 Through the thick air, eternally obscure,
 Like sand storm-driven o'er the desert plain. 30
 I, compast round with horror, insecure,
 Said, "O my master, what is this I hear?
 And who are these whom grief doth so immure?"
 And he to me: "After this fashion drear 35
 These wretched souls their after-life pursue
 Who both from infamy and praise lived clear.
 Mingled they are with that contemptible crew
 Of angels who would not rebellion dare,
 Not faithful Godwards, to themselves but true. 40
 Heaven drove them out, lest it might be less fair,
 Neither received them deepest Hell's domain,
 That from them evil should no glory share."
 And I: "O master, what so grievous pain
 Is theirs which makes them with such force lament?" 45
 He answered: "Very briefly I'll explain.
 To these no distant hope of death is lent,
 And their blind life is so supremely low,
 That any change of fate would give content.
 Report of them the world can never know, 50
 Mercy and justice only can despise.
 Speak not about them: look, and onwards go."
 And I, who looked, beheld a banner rise,
 That with such swiftness whirling, rushed amain,
 That every thought of respite it denies; 55
 And after it there came so long a train
 Of people, that I would not have surmised
 That Death such multitudes could e'er have slain.
 After that I some few had recognised,
 I looked, and there his shadow met my view,
 Who made the great refusal, fear-advised. 60
 Straightway I understood, and surely knew
 That this was that most miserable band,
 Hateful to God, and to His enemies too.
 Those wretched ones who life had never scanned,
 Were naked stark and cruelly stung o'er 65
 By flies and wasps that ever round them fanned.
 In lines these streaked their faces with their gore,
 Which mixed with tears flowed down, and at their feet
 Was feasted on by dainty worms galore.

Line 60. "Who made the great refusal, fear-advised." Saint Celestine is here intended, who renounced the Papacy during Dante's lifetime, and whom, therefore, he was able to recognise amongst the ignominious crew. Celestine's abdication is, however, generally ascribed, not to base fear, but to the highest motives of self-abnegation.

When I had cast my eyes beyond, I weet 70
 A crowd that throng the bank of a great stream,
 And said, "O master, unto me now mete
 To know what race are these, and why they seem
 So anxious to cross o'er to the other side,
 As I discover by this feeble beam." 75
 And he to me: "These things will be descried
 What time we rest our footsteps at the brink
 Of Acheron's most melancholy tide."
 Then struck with shame, my eyes I downward sink,
 In fear lest what I said were worthy blame, 80
 And till the stream from further parley shrink.
 When lo! upon a bark there towards us came
 A very old man, with age-whitened hair,
 Crying aloud, "Ah, woe, ye souls of shame!
 Hope not again to see the sky so fair. 85
 I come to take ye to the other side,
 To shades eterne of heat and freezing there.
 But thou, O soul still living, stand aside;
 Depart from these, whom Death has made his own." 90
 But when he saw me still amongst them bide,
 He cried, "By other ways and barks alone,
 Not this way canst thou reach the other shore;
 A lighter boat can only bear thee on."
 My leader to him: "Charon, be not sore; 95
 So is it willed above, where will can do
 That which it pleases; do not question more."
 The hairy cheeks then very quiet grew
 Of that dread pilot of the livid lake,
 Around whose eyes the whirling lightnings flew. 100
 But all those souls that worn and naked quake,
 Changed colour, and their teeth shook loud in rage,
 Soon as they heard the cruel words he spake.
 They cursed at God and at their parentage,
 The human race, the place, the time, the seed 105
 Of their begetting, and their earliest age.
 Then all of them together on proceed,
 Wailing aloud, to the evil bank that stays
 For every one of God who takes no heed.

Line 93. "A lighter boat can only bear thee on." It is generally supposed by the commentators that this alludes to the bark by which the spirits are taken to Purgatory, and which will be described hereafter. The words of Charon appear, however, to have reference to the impossibility of a living body like Dante's crossing the stream of Acheron in his boat, which can only carry spirits. Indeed, we are not told how Dante crosses the river, for at the close of this Canto he swoons on this side, and in the next he finds himself on the other, unaware how he has past.

The demon Charon, with his eyes ablaze,
 Directing them by signs, collects them all, 110
 And with his oar strikes each one that delays.
 Just as the withered leaves of autumn fall,
 The one upon the other, till the bough
 To earth yields all its garment, as a pall ;
 The evil seed of Adam downwards, so 115
 Throw themselves one by one from that sad shore,
 At signs, like bird that to the call doth go.
 So by the turbid wave they hurry o'er,
 And ere on the other side they leave the boat,
 Collects on this side a new-gathered store. 120
 " My son," explained my courteous leader, " note
 All those who perish in the wrath of God,
 From every land are here together brought ;
 They're ready o'er the river to be rowed,
 So spurs them onwards, justice all divine, 125
 That to desire is changed their fear o' the rod.
 This way there never passeth soul benign ;
 And if of thee old Charon would complain,
 His meaning henceforth thou must well divine." 130
 Scarce had he finished ere the darkened plain
 Trembled so terribly, that with the dread
 In thought alone I'm bathed in sweat again.
 Over that tearful earth a blast was sped,
 Which lightening shot a vermeil glow around,
 So that my senses conquered, wholly fled, 135
 And like one seized by sleep, I fell to the ground.

CANTO IV.

Dante on recovering from his swoon finds himself on the other side of the River Acheron. He follows Virgil into the "blind world," and enters Limbo, which is the outer circle of Hell. Here he finds all those souls who, from the want of baptism, have lost salvation, but who have done nothing to deserve actual punishment.

LOUD thunder roused me from my slumber deep,
 So that, I sudden started from my swoond,
 Like one by force awakened from his sleep.
 And then my rested eyes I moved around,
 When I was risen, if their gaze avail 5
 To recognise the place where I was found.
 True is it that above the dolorous vale
 Of the abyss, I stood upon the shore,
 Where thunder gathers from the infinite wail ;

Obscure, profound it was, and clouded o'er, 10
 That though into its depths my gaze inclined,
 I could discern with clearness nothing more.
 "Now we descend into the regions blind,"
 Began the poet, very wan and pale,
 "I will be first, and thou shalt be behind." 15
 And I, who had remarked his colour fail,
 Exclaimed, "How can I come, if thou hast dread
 Who only 'gainst my doubtings canst prevail?"
 And he to me: "The anguish of the dead 20
 Who are below has painted on my face
 That pity which thou takest to be dread.
 But onwards, for the way is long to trace."
 So he advanced and made me enter there,
 In the first circle which girds round Hell's space. 25
 Here, in as far as hearing is aware,
 Was no loud weeping, but a sound of sighs,
 Which ever trembled in the eternal air,
 And these from sorrow without torments rise,
 Sorrow that holds the crowds both many and great, 30
 Men, women, children, of all age and size.
 Turned my good master to me: "Dost thou wait
 To ask what souls are these thou seest here?
 I will that thou shouldst know at once their state.
 These have not sinned, and if their acts were fair,
 'Twas not sufficient, since they baptism lacked, 35
 The gateway of the Faith which thou dost share.
 And if they lived ere Christ's law was a fact,
 They did not in fit fashion God adore;
 And I myself amongst these last am wreckt. 40
 For such deficiencies, and nothing more,
 Our penalty is fixed, the lost among,
 To yearn for ever on this hopeless shore."

Line 28. "And these from sorrow without torments rise." Seeing that Dante's creed compelled him to exclude from Paradise all who had not been baptised in modern times, or circumcised under the Jewish dispensation, the sensitive reader will be grateful to him for having made one circle of Hell free from pain. There is indeed no difference between the doom of those in Limbo and the blessed in Paradise, the joy of the latter consisting solely in the presence and love of God.

Line 38. "They did not in fit fashion God adore." Previous to Christianity the only persons who could be saved were the Jews, who worshipped God lawfully according to their dispensation. In the Paradise Dante makes the numbers of the saved equal of the two dispensations, and in line 52 and what follows Virgil describes how Christ triumphant entered Hell, and bore away with Him the spirits of those who under the old law had looked for His coming.

On hearing that great grief my heartstrings wrung,
 To think that people of such worth should be,
 As those I knew, within that Limbo hung. 45
 "Tell, O my master and my lord, to me,"
 Began I, with the wish to solve all doubt
 About that faith, from every error free,
 "Have none by their own merit issued out,
 Or through another, who were after blest?" 50
 And he, who understood my speech of doubt,
 Answered: "I was but recent in this rest,
 When I beheld a power our haunt invade,
 Triumphant with the victor's crown confest.
 He drew from 'mongst us our first parent's shade, 55
 Abel, his son, and Noah following;
 Moses the lawgiver, who aye obeyed;
 The patriarch Abraham, and David, king;
 Israel with his sons and with his sire,
 And Rachel, who on him such toil did bring, 60
 And many others who in bliss respire;
 And thou must know that previously to these
 No human spirits had been saved from ire."
 Whilst thus he spake our progress did not cease,
 But ever upwards through the wood we drew, 65
 I call a wood those souls' thick companies.
 As yet the way we did not far pursue
 Beyond the boundary, when I saw a light
 That in the hemisphere of darkness grew.
 We still were somewhat distant from its site, 70
 But not so far but that I saw in part
 For honoured people was the place bedight.
 "O thou who honourest every liberal art,
 What men are these possessed of so much fame,
 That from the others makes them thus apart?" 75
 And he to me: "The honourable name
 That in thy upper life to these is paid,
 In Heaven to advance them doth like favour claim."
 In the meanwhile I heard a voice that said,
 "Unto the chiefest poet honour due! 80
 But late departed, now returns his shade."
 After the voice was hushed all silent grew,
 And towards us came four lofty shadows grave,
 With faces neither sad nor gay to view.
 Then there began to speak my master suave, 85
 "Behold the one who leadeth all the rest,
 Their father, in whose hand is held the glaive.

'Tis Homer, sovran poet of the past ;
 Then cometh Horace, satirist of fame,
 Ovid the third, and Lucian is the last. 90
 Since each as much as I can fairly claim
 That title, which their voice, like one, did bear,
 They show their worth in giving me the fame."
 So did I see approach the troop so fair
 Of that old master of divinest song, 95
 Who like an eagle soars o'er all in air.
 When they had briefly spoke themselves among,
 They turned to me with salutation kind,
 And on my master's face the sweet smile sprung ;
 Yet greater honour they to me assigned, 100
 Since they elected me amongst their band,
 That I was sixth amidst such noble kind.
 So towards the light we all together woned,
 Speaking of things best kept in silence here,
 Just as was best their utterance in that land. 105
 Unto a noble castle we drew near,
 Seven times encircled by a lofty wall,
 And round defended by a river clear.
 O'er this as on firm earth our footsteps fall,
 And through the seven gates passing, with those wise, 110
 Into a meadow green we entered all.
 People they were with slowly moving eyes,
 And great authority was in their port,
 Rarely they spake with sweet-voiced cadences.
 Then we withdrew into a further court, 115
 An open place, both lofty and serene,
 Where all could be beheld who there resort.
 And straightway there upon the enamelled green
 Were shown me the great souls who there arise—
 Well may I boast of all whom I have seen. 120
 I saw Electra 'midst large companies,
 'Mongst whom I Hector and Eneas knew,
 And armèd Cæsar with the falcon eyes ;
 Camilla, Penthesilea, past my view
 On the other side, and the Latin king embraced 125
 Sate with his daughter there, Lavinia true.
 Brutus I saw, the one who Tarquin chased,
 Lucretia, Julia, and Cornelia wise,
 And Saladin, in lonely grandeur placed.
 Then when I raised a little more my eyes, 130
 I saw the master of all those who know,
 Seated with those who seek philosophies.

Line 131. "I saw the master of all those who know." Aristotle.

All gaze on him, and all their reverence show.
 There Socrates and Plato I beheld,
 Who o'er all others nearest to him go. 135
 Democritus, our earth as chance who held,
 Diogenes and Anaxagora,
 Zeno and many more his followers swelled.
 I saw the searcher into every trait,
 Dioscorides I mean ; Orpheus I saw, 140
 Tully and Linus, moral Seneca ;
 Euclid, the soul of geometric law,
 With Avicenna and Hippocrates,
 And he who the great Commentary did draw. 145
 I cannot recapitulate all these,
 Since the long theme compels me to despair,
 As speech must oft fall short of truth's degrees.
 Our company of six divideth there ;
 My chief conducts me by another way,
 Out of the stillness to the trembling air, 150
 And now I come where no more shines the day.

Line 139. " I saw the searcher into every trait,
 Dioscorides I mean."

Literally, "The good searcher of the how," or qualities of things.

Line 144. "And he who the great Commentary did draw." Averroes, the great Arabian physician, who translated and commented on the works of Aristotle. With Avicenna and Saladin he is the only modern mentioned by Dante amongst the great men in Limbo. A list of names like the above is easily translated into blank verse, but the exigencies of the terza rima have here driven me to sore straits, and forced me to omit one or two names introduced by Dante.

CANTO V.

Dante enters the second circle of Hell, where he finds Minos, the judge, who endeavours to stop his progress. Virgil having taken him within, he sees there the punishment of carnal sinners, who are for ever tost about by furious winds. Amongst the condemned he sees and converses with Francesca of Rimini and her lover, and falls fainting to the ground with pity at their fate.

So I descended from the outer vale
 Down to the second, which less space confines,
 And pain as much the more as causeth wail.
 There standeth Minos, horrible, and grins ;
 At the entrance he examineth betimes, 5
 And folding each around doth judge their sins.

Line 6. "And folding each around doth judge their sins." Minos, as explained in the following lines, pronounces to which grade of Hell sinners are doomed by encircling them so many times with his tail. The idea is a ludicrous one, but the marvel is that at the age in which Dante wrote he did not commit more errors of taste of this nature.

C

I say, that when those souls, born in ill times,
 Come before him, they straightway all things tell,
 And he, that learned connoisseur in crimes,
 Fitteth for each its proper place in Hell. 10
 So many times he girds them with his tail
 To show the grade in which each soul must dwell.
 The crowds that stand before him never fail ;
 They go, each one by turns, to the judgment room ;
 They speak, and hear, and vanish in the vale. 15
 " O thou that comest to this house of gloom,"
 Said Minos to me when he saw me nigh,
 Leaving awhile his ministry of doom,
 " Look how thou enterest, and in none rely ;
 Be not deceived because so wide the door." 20
 Then said my master to him, " Why this cry ?
 Bar not his fated entrance on this shore ;
 So is it willed above where will can do
 That which it pleases : do not question more." 25
 Now there begin the cries of anguish true
 To be heard plainly : straightway I alight
 Where strikes the roar of much lament anew.
 I came into a place deprived of light,
 That bellowed like a stormy sea repress,
 And struggling with the adverse wild winds' might. 30
 The infernal whirlwind that can never rest
 Hurries along the spirits in its whirl,
 And soaring strikes them onwards at its 'hest.
 Before the ruin as they wildly swirl,
 There they shriek out, and there lament and 'plain, 35
 And 'gainst Heaven's virtue all their curses hurl.
 Then did I understand that this was pain
 Reserved for those who sin in carnal things,
 And over reason their desires maintain.
 And, like the summer starlings, stretch their wings 40
 In the cold time, in large and ample train,
 So that wild wind those evil spirits swings
 Hither and thither, up and down again ;
 No hope can comfort them of far repose
 For evermore, nor even of lesser pain. 45

Line 34. " Before the ruin as they wildly swirl."

" Quando giungon davanti alla ruina."

Cary has accepted Vellutello's explanation of the word "ruina," that it here means the whirlwind. But this whirlwind drives them onward without cessation, and the ruin appears to be better explained by the broken entrance into Hell, through which the fallen angels were precipitated there from Heaven, at sight of which the condemned spirits break into despairing curses. The difficulty must remain a disputed question.

And like a band of cranes that singing goes,
 Extending in the air its lengthened train,
 So did I see them wailing as they rose
 Those shadows borne there by the stormy bane.
 At last I said, "O master, who are these 50
 On whom the black air metes such cruel pain?"
 "The first amongst them of whose histories
 Thou fain wouldst know," he said unto me then,
 "Was Queen o'er many-languaged Emperies.
 She was so wedded unto luxury's den, 55
 That pleasure to be lawful she decreed,
 To take away the blame she earned from men.
 She is Semiramis, of whom we read
 That she succeeded Ninus, was his wife,
 And ruled the nation which the Soldans lead. 60
 That one is she who amorous gave her life,
 And broke her faith unto Sichæus' tomb:
 Behind is Egypt's Queen, with luxury rife."
 Then saw I Helen, on account of whom 65
 Fell evil times, Achilles great in war,
 Who at the last from Love received his doom.
 Then saw I Paris, Tristan, thousands more
 Shadows he showed me, and their names he told
 Whom Love had hurried from our mortal shore.
 When I had heard my Teacher thus unfold 70
 Names of so many an ancient dame and knight,
 My senses almost fled at Pity's hold
 Upon me. I began, "Bard, with delight
 I would address those two who move together,
 And tossing on the wind appear so light." 75
 And he to me: "Wait only to see whether
 They near us, then beseech them by the love
 Which brought them here, and they will turn them hither."
 Soon as the wind had bowed them from above
 I raised my voice: "O spirits, anguish torn, 80
 Come speak to us, if nothing else remove."
 As doves to the sweet nest for which they yearn,
 With open wings, and motionless, from high,
 Slide through the air by their volition borne,
 So sallied they from Dido's company, 85
 Approaching uswards through the air malign,
 So powerful o'er them was my loving cry:

Line 61. "That one is she who amorous gave her life,
 And broke her faith unto Sichæus' tomb."

Dido. Petrarch has not accepted Virgil's version of her story, and in the
 "Triumph of Chastity" has boldly placed Dido amongst his examples.

"O living being, gracious and benign,
 That through the air obscure comest visiting
 Us, whose blood made the earth incarnadine. 90
 Were we the friends of the Almighty King,
 We would beseech him for thy own dear peace,
 Since to our evil thou dost pity bring.
 Of what to hear and speak to thee may please
 We will both hear, and speak to thee in turn, 95
 The whiles the wind, as now, gives silent ease.
 The land is seated wherein I was born
 Upon the seashore where the Po descends
 To rest with all its followers in their bourne. 100
 Love, to which gentle heart so quickly tends
 Made captive this one of my form so fair,
 Snatcht from me in a way that still offends.
 Love that each loved one makes the passion share
 For him inspired me a delight so sweet,
 That, as thou seest, he has not left me here. 105
 Love led us both unto one death; the seat
 Of Caina waits for him who laid us low."
 Such were the words with which they us did greet.
 When I had heard those spirits injured so,
 For such a length of time I bowed my face, 110
 That the bard said to me, "What thinkest thou?"
 When I began and answered him, "Alas!
 How many sweet thoughts and what yearning fears
 Have led both these unto this dolorous pass!" 115
 Then turned I, speaking to those listening ears,
 "Francesca, at thy martyrdom my eyes
 In sadness and in pity melt to tears.
 But tell me, in that time of sweetest sighs,
 Through what Love led thee howsoever lief,
 Thy doubtful longings clear to recognise?" 120

Line 97. "The land is seated wherein I was born
 Upon the seashore."

Ravenna. The hapless story of Francesca of Rimini and her passion for her brother-in-law are too well known to require explanation. Upon this episode Dante has poured out all the treasures of his tenderness, and in reading the fate of the lovers, who can never again be separated, we forget that we are in the circles of Hell. It is the last touch of pity which Dante permits himself to show, and henceforth all is stern exultation and horror until we enter the milder regions of Purgatory.

Line 106. "The seat
 Of Caina waits for him who laid us low."

Caina is the region of Hell to which murderers are doomed, and will be described in the 32nd Canto.

And she to me: "There is no greater grief
 Than to remember us of happy time
 In misery, and that thy bard's belief.
 But since of all our love to know the prime
 And early root thou hast such yearning strong, 125
 I will tell all, though weeping all the time.
 We read one day for pleasure, in the song
 Of Launcelot, how Love him captive made;
 We were alone without one thought of wrong.
 Many and many a time our eyes delayed 130
 The reading, and our faces paled apart;
 One point alone it was that us betrayed.
 In reading of that worshipt smile o' the heart,
 Kissed by such lover on her lips' red core,
 This one, who never more from me must part, 135
 Kissed me upon the mouth, trembling all o'er:
 For us our Galeotto was that book;
 That day we did not read it any more."
 And all the while that thus one spirit spoke,
 The other wailed so that in pity's thralls 140
 My senses failed as one whom death had strook,
 And I fell down as a dead body falls.

Line 127. "We read one day for pleasure, in the song
 Of Launcelot."

The "Romance of the Round Table" where the loves of Launcelot and Queen Guinevere are described. The same scene is alluded to by Dante in Canto 16 of the "Paradise."

Line 137. "For us our Galeotto was that book." Galeotto was the go-between in the loves of Launcelot and the Queen. In the Middle Ages the name appears to have been generally applied to persons of that profession, in the same way as our word pander is derived from the officious uncle of Cressida. "If ever you prove false one to another, since I have taken such pains to bring you together, let all pitiful goers-between be called to the world's end after my name; call them all Pandars; let all constant men be Troiluses, all false women Cressids, and all brokers-between Pandars! say amen."—Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida," Act III., sc. 2.

CANTO VI.

On returning to his senses Dante finds himself in the third circle, that of rain, in which gluttons are punished, under the guardianship of Cerberus. Amongst the condemned he finds a Florentine, nicknamed Hog, and converses with him on the dissensions of their town.

AFTER my senses were restored, which closed
 With pity for that pair so near allied,
 That with the sorrow I was all confused,

New torments and new sufferers are descried
 Around me, wheresoe'er my sight I strain, 5
 Where'er I move or turn, on every side.
 I stand in the third circle, that of rain,
 Eternal cursèd cold and grievous sore ;
 In force and volume one unvarying strain.
 Great hailstones, turbid rain, and snowy frore 10
 Is ever poured out in the darkened air,
 Stinketh the land it falls on evermore.
 Wild Cerberus, of twofold nature rare,
 With three throats hurleth out the doglike bark
 Upon the people that are cowering there. 15
 His eyes are red, his greasy beard is dark,
 His belly large and fingers armed with nails ;
 He tears, and flays, and rends the spirits stark.
 They howl like hounds beneath the blinding hail,
 Striving to make one side the other guard, 20
 The Godless wretches ever turning wail.
 When Cerberus, the great worm, did us regard,
 His tusks he showed us as he oped his jaws ;
 He had no limb that was not working stark.
 My leader stretches out his hand and draws 25
 A clod of earth, the which with forceful blow
 He drove right into his voracious maws.
 Like to a dog, that barking but to show
 His longing, eats up food with quiet mien,
 And only fought to fill his hunger, so 30
 Were quieted at once the jaws obscene
 Of the demon Cerberus, who so dins the souls
 That they would very gladly deaf have been.
 We past on o'er the shadows, o'er whom rolls 35
 The grievous rainstorm, and we placed our feet
 Over the nothingness of form-like souls.
 Upon the earth they lay in mass complete,
 Save one, who when he saw us drawing nigh
 Rose to the sitting posture very fleet.
 "O thou that through this Hell art passing by," 40
 He said, "remember if thou me dost know,
 For thou wast born before that I did die."
 And I to him: "Thy anguish here below
 Perchance withdraws thy memory from my mind,
 So that it seems I've seen thee not till now. 45
 But tell me who thou art who art thus confined
 In such a grievous place, and to such pain,
 If worse, none can be of more hateful kind."

And he to me : "Thy city reeks amain
 With envy, so that overflows the bag. 50
 My life serene I past in that domain.
 You citizens were wont to call me Hog.
 For the pernicious sin of gluttonhead,
 Here, as thou seest, I sicken in this quag.
 And I, sad soul, am not alone bested, 55
 But all of these like punishment endure
 For a like fault," and no more word he said.
 I answered him : "O Hog, thy misery sure,
 Inviting me to weeping, weighs me down ;
 But tell me, if thou know'st, what end will lure 60
 The citizens of our divided town ?
 Is any just man there ? and wherefore rife
 Discord has aye disturbed its peaceful crown ?"
 And he to me : "After a lengthened strife
 They'll come to blood, and first the forest side 65
 Will chase the other with much wrong to life.
 That faction soon will topple from its pride,
 Within three years, and the other rise again,
 By help of him who now waits for the tide.
 These for long time their 'vantage will maintain, 70
 Keeping the other 'neath a grievous load,
 So that they feel their shame, and deeply plain.
 Two there are just, and are not understood ;
 Pride, envy, avarice, in hateful round,
 Are sparks that every heart have flamed for good." 75
 Here to a close he brought the tearful sound.
 And I to him : "Instruct me is my prayer,
 And as a boon let further speech abound.

Line 52. "You citizens were wont to call me Hog." In Italian *Ciacco*. The real name of the unfortunate glutton has not been preserved.

Line 65. "And first the forest side
 Will chase the other."

The city of Florence was then divided into the factions of the *Bianchi* and *Neri*. "The forest side" is the former, to which Dante belonged, so called because its chief at that time was a new noble, *Vieri de' Cerchi*, who had lately come from the woody country of the *Val de' Nievole*. The history of these factions is frequently alluded to throughout the poem.

Line 69. "By help of him who now waits for the tide." Charles of Valois, the brother of Philip the Handsome, is here meant. The meaning of the Italian words, "*chi testà piaggia*," is disputed. Some consider them to mean, "who is now flattering the people ;" but the most probable explanation is that taken in the text, "who is now waiting on the shore for the favourable tide." He was called in by the *Neri*, when banished from the city, to their assistance.

Line 73. "Two there are just, and are not understood." It is not known who were the two just men thus enigmatically expressed. Some suppose Dante and his friend, *Guido Cavalcanti*, to be intended.

Tegghiaio, Farinata, worthy pair,
 Jacopo Rusticucci and his crew, 80
 Arrigo, Mosca, who all strove so fair,
 Tell me where are they, that I know them too,
 Since my great longing is to learn of all.
 Drink they Hell's poison, or Heaven's honey dew?"
 And he: "Amongst the blacker souls they fall, 85
 Crimes diverse drive them downwards to worse pain.
 If thou descend'st so far thou'lt see them all.
 But when thou'lt be on earth's most sweet domain,
 I pray thee bring me to their memories there;
 I cannot speak or answer thee again." 90
 He turned askance his eyes' straightforward stare,
 Watched me a little, and then bowed his head;
 With that he fell with the other blind ones there.
 "He will not wake again," my leader said,
 "From this time till there sounds the trump of doom, 95
 When will descend their hostile power in dread;
 Each one will seek again his wretched tomb,
 Will take again his former flesh and face,
 Will hear His words eternally reboom." 100
 So we past on above that mixture base
 Of shadows and of rain with footsteps slow,
 Reasoning on future life a little space.
 Wherefore I said: "O master, I would know
 Whether these torments after the great day 105
 Will lessen, keep as now, or fiercer grow?"
 And he to me: "Thy science here essay,
 Which wills that more a thing is perfect nursed,
 The more it feels both good and evil sway.
 And though in truth this people, all accursed, 110
 With true perfection never can be dight,
 Then, more than now, it looks to feel the worst."

Line 79. "Tegghiaio, Farinata, worthy pair,
 Jacopo Rusticucci and his crew,
 Arrigo, Mosca, who all strove so fair."

All these, except Arrigo, will be met with in lower circles of the Inferno. Tegghiaio appears in Canto XVI.; Farinata, the great Ghibeline leader, in Canto X., in one of the finest portions of the whole poem; Jacopo Rusticucci, in company with Tegghiaio and Mosca, in Canto XXVIII., with the blood from his handless arms dropping on his face. The last advised the murder which began the Florentine factions.

Line 106. "Thy science here essay." Virgil here refers to a sentence in Aristotle, whom Dante everywhere advances as his master in philosophic knowledge.

We went along the roadway's outer site,
 Speaking much further than I here can show.
 We reached the point at which declines the height,
 There we discovered Pluto, our great foe. 115

CANTO VII.

Dante is confronted by Pluto at the entrance of the fourth circle. Conducted by Virgil he obtains a safe passage, and sees within the avaricious and the prodigal, condemned to a like punishment, rolling great weights against each other. Passing onwards to the fifth circle they come to the Stygian lake, in which the souls of the wrathful are immersed. Skirting the lake they reach at last the foot of a tower.

"Ah, marvel, Satan! marvel, King of Hell!"
 Pluto began with his hoarse strident shout.
 And that kind wise one, who knew all things well,
 Said for my comfort, "Do not let thy doubt
 Grieve thee, for all the power which he can wage 5
 From this descent can never shut thee out."
 Then to that swollen lip turned round the sage,
 And shouted, "Be thou silent, wolf accurst!
 Consume within thyself thy hellish rage.
 Not without reason he thy deeps has durst; 10
 'Tis willed on high, where o'er the boastful mind
 Of rebel angels Michael's vengeance burst."
 As when the inflated sails before the wind
 Fall in a heap when topples down the mast,
 So fell to earth that beast of cruellest kind. 15
 So to that fourth descent we downwards past,
 Descending further in that grieving shore,
 Where all the evil of the world is cast.

Line 1. "Ah, marvel, Satan! marvel, King of Hell!"
 "Pape, Satan! pape, Satan aleppe!"

The words pape and aleppe are neither of them Italian. Pape is supposed to be the Latin exclamation of surprise Pape, and aleppe to be Ah! or Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Line 11. "Where o'er the boastful mind
 Of rebel angels Michael's vengeance burst."
 "Là dive Michele
 Fe la vendetta del superbo strupo."

The ordinary meaning of strupo is adultery, and Cary has so translated it here, although he notices the rendering which I have preferred, where "strupo" is taken for a troop, and the "superbo strupo" becomes the troop of rebel angels.

Justice of God! who heapeth up such store
 Of novel toils and pains which I have seen! 20
 And why doth sin in such profusion pour?
 As o'er Charybdis' rocks the waves careen,
 Which breaking one against the other churn,
 So heré the people are compelled to spin. 25
 Here greater crowds than elsewhere I discern,
 From this side and from that with shoutings thick,
 Revolving weights by pressure of the stern;
 I' the midst they clashed against each other, quick
 Each one turned round and shouted out uproarious,
 "Why dost thou grasp?" and "Wherefore dost thou 30
 trick?"
 So in that gloomy ring they turned laborious,
 From every point unto the opposite side,
 Shouting out yet again this shameful chorus.
 Then each one turned again when he had plied 35
 Up to the centre for another joust.
 And I, whose heart was touched with pity, cried,
 "O master mine, now show me what this host
 Of people are; were all these clerical too;
 Those shaven pates, who throng the left-hand coast?" 40
 And he to me: "They had such squinting view,
 In mental constitution, in their lives,
 In their expense no proper mean they knew.
 Clearly enough from that their speech derives,
 When they have reached that portion of the ring, 45
 Where each against the opposite error drives.
 Churchmen were those whose hairy covering
 Is shorn, both Popes and Church lords of degrees,
 O'er whom fell avarice its sway did swing."
 And I: "O master, amongst such as these, 50
 I surely ought to recognise a few
 Who were afflicted with such maladies."
 And he to me: "A vain thought, dost thou mew
 The undistinguishing life which made them foul,
 From every recognition bars them too.

Line 27. "Revolving weights by pressure of the stern."
 "Voltando pesi, per forza di poppa."

Poppa is a woman's breast or the stern of a ship. In opposition to the usual rendering I have here taken it in the latter acceptation. The ludicrous nature of the punishment, the sinners pushing weights backwards at each other, does not militate against the correctness of my view, as many of the punishments in the Hell are ludicrous. If the jousters met face to face there would be no need for them to turn round to address each other when they clashed in the midst.

For ever to this tourney they will bowl ; 55
 Those from the sepulchre will rise again
 With clenched fist, those with shorn heads 'neath the cowl.
 Our fair world vilely spent, and vilely ta'en,
 Has prisoned these and placed them in this fray.
 I use no words its horror to explain ; 60
 Now thou canst see, O son, the short-lived day
 Of good, committed unto Fortune's 'hest,
 For which the human race so strives alway.
 Since all the gold beneath the moon possess,
 Or ever owned by those worn souls of yore, 65
 Could not make one of them one moment rest."
 "Master," said I to him, "now tell me more ;
 This Fortune, about whom thou speak'st to me,
 What is it that thus grasps all earthly store?"
 And he to me : "O creatures dull to see, 70
 What ignorance is this that here offends !
 I would that thou shouldst ponder my decree.
 He whose high knowledge everything transcends,
 The heavens created once, and gave their guide,
 So that in all parts he their splendour tends, 75
 Distributing the light on every side ;
 In like way for magnificence mundane
 He chose a general ministrant and guide,
 Who should transpose at times its prizes vain
 From one to other, and from race to race, 80
 Beyond what human wit could let or gain ;
 Therefore some rise to empire, some debase,
 According to the judgment of her pleasure,
 Who lieth hidden, like a snake in grass.
 Your knowledge to her wish can place no measure, 85
 She sees beforehand, judges and pursues
 Her empire like the other powers at leisure.
 Her permutations never know a truce,
 Necessity compels her to such speed,
 Such numerous claims her shifting laws produce. 90
 This one is she, who is so crucified,
 Even by those who ought her praise to rear,
 With wrongful blame and ill words vilified.
 But this in happiness she cannot hear,
 With all the other primal creatures gay, 95
 She gladdens in her joy and turns her sphere.
 Henceforth to greater pity wends our way ;
 Now every star is fallen that arose
 When I went forth, forbidding more delay."

We cut across the circle, where there rose 100
 A fountain that boils up and poureth down
 Into a rivulet that from it flows.
 The water was thick gray and almost brown,
 And we, in company with the turbid wave,
 By a wild pathway there descended down. 105
 A marsh, to which the name of Styx they gave,
 This wretched streamlet makes, when overflowed
 It sinketh at the foot of that drear grave.
 I, who with purpose of beholding stood,
 Saw muddy people standing in the mire, 110
 All naked, and with looks where anger glowed.
 Striking themselves, so did their rage transpire,
 Not hands alone they used, but head and feet,
 Biting themselves to pieces in their ire.
 My gentle master said, "O son, now greet 115
 The souls of those whom anger overcame ;
 And more, I would for certain thou shouldst weet
 That underneath the wave are men the same,
 Who breathing make the water bubbling stir,
 The sight, where'er it turns, thy eye can claim. 120
 Fixed in the mud, they say, ' Wretched we were
 In the sweet air, which by the sun rejoices,
 Bearing within ourselves the angry slur ;
 Now we are wretched in these miry places.'
 This hymn within the throat they gurgling chime, 125
 Since they can speak it not with perfect voices."
 So we past on, skirting that filthy slime,
 A segment 'twixt the dry bank and the deep,
 With eyes still turned to those that gorge the grime,
 And finally we reached a turret keep. 130

CANTO VIII.

Phlegyas, the ferryman of Styx, summoned by a signal from the tower, bears Virgil and Dante across the lake. On the way they are attacked by Filippo Argenti, whose punishment is described. They then arrive at the city of Dis, where the fallen angels prevent their entrance, closing the gate at Virgil's approach.

CONTINUING, I say, as soon as we
 Of that high turret fort had reached the bourne,
 Up to its summit glanced our eyes to see

Line 1. "Continuing, I say, as soon as we." Boccaccio states that the first seven Cantos were written by Dante before his banishment, and being found and sent to him by a friend who urged the completion of the Poem, he, then in banishment, commenced the 8th Canto with this line. It is at least

Two little signal flames hung out to burn,
 And one that seemed to answer from afar, 5
 So distant that the eye could scarce discern.
 I, turning to that sea of knowledge fair,
 Asked, "What does this explain? and what replies
 The other flame? and who have raised them there?"
 And he to me; "O'er the foul waves doth rise 10
 That which awaits us; thou mightst see it now,
 Did not the marsh's vapour dim thy eyes."
 Arrow was never yet shot from a bow
 That ran so swiftly through the nimble air
 As I beheld a little pinnacle row 15
 That came towards us ere we were aware,
 Beneath the guidance of one galley slave,
 Who shouted out, "O wicked soul art there?"
 "Nay, Phlegyas, Phlegyas, thou dost idly rave
 Only for this one time," my master cried, 20
 "Thou'lt have us but to pass us o'er the wave."
 As one who some tremendous trick has spied
 Practised upon him, with vexed brow glooms dark,
 So acted Phlegyas in his angry pride.
 My leader then descended in the bark, 25
 And made me enter at his side; the strain
 Only, when I was in, it seemed to mark.
 Soon as my guide and I our seats had ta'en,
 Cutting the water goes the ancient prow,
 More than its wont, when others cross that main. 30
 While we thus hurried o'er the stagnant slough,
 Before me rose a figure mired with clay,
 And cried, "Thus coming ere thy time, who art thou?"
 And I: "Although I come I do not stay;
 But who art thou who'st made thyself so foul?" 35
 He answered, "I am one who mourns for aye."
 And I to him: "Go on to fight and howl,
 Accursèd spirit, here thou must abide;
 I know thee well, although thou be'st so foul."
 Then with both hands our boat to grasp he tried, 40
 But him my watchful master backwards threw,
 Crying, "With the other whelp hounds stand aside."

worthy of remark that all traces of pity for the condemned, previously indulged in, cease from this time.

Line 19. "Nay, Phlegyas, Phlegyas, thou dost idly rave." Phlegyas having burnt Apollo's temple, in revenge for the god's violation of his daughter, was condemned by him to Tartarus. The guardians of Dante's Christian Hell are almost all taken from Pagan mythology. In the Middle Ages Christianity had not destroyed the belief in the Pagan Deities, but transformed them to Spirits of Evil.

Then round my neck his loving arms he drew,
 Kissed me upon my face, and said, "Be blest,
 Indignant soul, the one who bore thee true! 45
 This was on earth a man of proudest 'hest,
 No kindly trait his memory adorns;
 So here his furious shade can never rest.
 Many great kings who now lift up their horns
 Will wallow here like swine in filthy swill, 50
 Leaving their memories to most horrible scorns."
 And I: "O master, it would please me well
 Could I but see him in this hog's wash dive,
 Before we issue from this lake of ill."
 And he to me: "Before we can arrive 55
 At the farther shore thou shalt be satisfied,
 From such desire thou sure shouldst joy derive."
 Soon after such a torture I descried,
 When all the miry people on him fall,
 I give God thanks for that wish gratified. 60
 "Philip Argenti on ye," shouted all.
 The spirit of that Florentine of hate
 Turned on himself his teeth at that fell call.
 We left him there, and I no more relate;
 But in my ears there rang an anguish cry, 65
 On which intent I gaze before me straight.
 My gentle master said, "O son, hard by
 Neareth the dreary city, Dis by name,
 With woeworn townsmen in great company."
 "Even now its minarets, master!" I exclaim, 70
 "I see above the valley rising higher,
 Vermeil, as though they issued out of flame."
 And he explained to me: "The eternal fire
 That glows within makes them look ruddy here,
 As in this deep of hell thou seest each spire." 75
 Meanwhile within the deep-cut moat we steer
 That trenches round that land disconsolate.
 As if of iron wrought the walls appear.
 Not without traversing a circuit great
 We reached a region where our helmsman strong 80
 Cried to us, "Get ye out, for here's the gate."
 I saw above a thousand o'er it throng,
 Rained from the sky of old, who fiercely said,
 "Who's this, who does not unto death belong,

Line 46. "This was on earth a man of proudest 'hest." Philip Argenti, we are told by Boccaccio, was a Florentine of extraordinary personal strength and despotic temper. Such a combination is, fortunately for the human race, not common.

Yet wanders through the kingdom of the dead ?” 85
 And my wise leader made to them a sign
 That he would speak to them in secret stead.
 Then seemed their anger somewhat to decline ;
 They cried, “ Come thou alone, and he depart,
 Who entered on this realm with rash design. 90
 On his mad pathway lonely let him start,
 And prove his knowledge since thou here wilt bide,
 Who through this gloomy region wast his chart.”
 Think, Reader, if I was not terrified 95
 At sound of words accursèd at the core,
 Thinking that all return would be denied.
 “ O my dear leader, who, seven times and more,
 Hast given me safety, and escape hast won
 From fearful peril that beset me sore,
 Do not abandon me, thus all undone, 100
 And if my further passage be denied,
 Back as we came let us together run.”
 That leader, who so far had been my guide,
 Said to me, “ Fear not, since to reach our bourne
 No one can bar, with such are we allied. 105
 But here await me, and thy spirit worn
 Comfort, and feed on hope of goodly cheer ;
 I will not leave thee in this world forlorn.”
 So he departeth, and he leaves me here,
 My father kind, and I in doubt remain, 110
 The no and yes within me so career.
 I could not hear the language they maintain ;
 But not for long time they in conference wait,
 Ere each one racing turns within again.
 Those enemies of ours had closed the gate 115
 Before my leader’s breast, who stayed without,
 And back returned to me with pensive gait.
 His eyes were cast to earth, his brows with doubt
 Had lost all boldness, and he said with sighs,
 “ Who from the abodes of woe has shut me out ?” 120
 To me he said, “ Though in me anger rise,
 Do not despond, I’ll conquer in this fray
 Whatever opposition they devise.
 This insolence is nothing new to-day ;
 At a less secret entrance it was tried, 125
 Which now without a bolt is found for aye.

Line 124, “This insolence is nothing new to-day.” Supposed to allude to the vain resistance attempted by the Spirits of Evil when Christ entered Hell in triumph to save the Saints in Limbo.

O'er it fell Death's inscription we desried ;
 And ere now, on this side descendeth here,
 Passing through every circle without guide,
 One before whom this realm will open clear."

130

CANTO IX.

Virgil pauses, waiting for heavenly assistance. In the meantime the three Furies rise upon the walls of Dis and threaten Dante with the sight of Medusa's head. The Angel then arrives across the Styx, and the friends retiring, the gates of the city are opened. Dante following Virgil finds the heretics of all denominations punished in tombs of fire.

THE hue which fear had painted on my face,
 My leader back returning when I viewed,
 Sooner to his restored its gentle grace.
 Like one who listens he intently stood ;
 Since to the distance eye could never pierce,
 Through the blank air and clouds that thickly brewed. 5
 " Still I must conquer in this struggle fierce,"
 Began he ; " and if not—one offered aid.
 How slow his advent here to me appears !"
 Clearly I noticed how he overlaid 10
 The words with which he had begun with more,
 Which quite a different meaning had betrayed,
 But none the less his speech woke terror sore,
 Because I dragged that broken syllable,
 Perchance to meaning worse than that it bore. 15
 " Down to the bottom of this gloomy shell
 Descends there ever one from the first sphere,
 Whose only pain is helplessly to dwell ?"
 This question made I, and he answered, " Here
 Barely it happens that amongst us one 20
 Traceth the pathway by the which I steer.
 'Tis true that once before I wended down,
 Forced by Eryton's cruellest control,
 Who called the shadows back their frames to own.

Lines 1 to 3. Virgil recovers his composure the sooner to allay Dante's fears.

Lines 16 to 18. Dante appears to think that assistance is to be rendered by one of the sages in Limbo ; hence his question.

Line 23 " Forced by Eryton's cruellest control." A witch, who in Lucan's " Pharsalia" is introduced as drawing a soul from Hell by her incantations to prophesy the termination of the civil war. Eryton must have lived to a good old age if it was now possible for her to employ Virgil after his death on such an errand.

But newly I had stripped my fleshly stole, 25
 When o'er yon walls she forced me to procure
 From Judas' circle, by her spells, a soul.
 That is the lowest place, and most obscure,
 And furthest from the spheres' encircling sky,
 Well do I know the way, so rest secure. 30
 This marsh, that breathes out such a stench on high,
 Girdles around this residence of woe,
 Where, without wrath, we cannot henceforth hie."
 And more he said, which now I do not know, 35
 Because I wholly had withdrawn my eyes
 Towards the high turret, with its crest aglow,
 When all at once I saw erect arise
 The three infernal Furies, tinged with blood,
 Who looked like females in their limbs and guise,
 And were girt round with greenest Hydra's brood : 40
 Serpents and hornèd snakes they had for hair,
 Which their fell brows encircling, fierce outstood,
 And he, who knew them well, the slaves that bear
 The mandates of the Queen of lasting woe,
 "Behold !" he cried, "the fierce Erynnes there ! 45
 That is Megera on the left hand ; lo
 Aletto she, who wailèth on the right,
 I' the midst Tisiphone." He silent grew.
 With talons each one tore her breast in spite,
 Smote with her palms, and shrieked in such a tone, 50
 That to the bard I clung in my affright.
 "Medusa, come ! we'll turn him into stone !"
 Cried they, as all their looks towards me abase,
 "Theseus' assault unpunished we atone."
 "Turn thyself back, and cover up thy face, 55
 If Gorgon here be shown, and thou shouldst see,
 Nothing will ever move thee from this place."
 So spake my master, and he turned me, he
 Himself, and trusted not to hands of mine.
 But with his own he clasped my eyes for me. 60

Line 27. The circle of Judas Iscariot, called Guidecca, is the lowest pit in the tenth and last circle, and is described in the 34th Canto.

Line 54. "Theseus' assault unpunished we atone." The Furies lament that they allowed Theseus to depart from Hell in safety, through whose escape another living soul has now ventured within their kingdom, a mistake they will not repeat. This is one of those rare instances in which Cary's translation appears to me to be in error, though the Italian text will accept his interpretation :—

"Mal non vengiammo in Teseo l'assalto."

"E'en when by Theseus' might assailed, we took

No ill revenge."

I read with Venturi : "Mistakenly, we did not avenge Theseus' assault."

D

O you, whose intellects are clear, divine
 The doctrine which is ever found concealed
 Beneath the veiling of each strangest line.
 And now there came, o'er the dark waves revealed,
 The crashing of a sound replete with dread, 65
 At which the shores on each side, trembling, reeled.
 Not otherwise than like a wind makes head,
 Impetuous, sweeping through the heated air,
 That smites a wood, and irresistibly sped,
 Strikes off, and bears away the branches bare; 70
 Onwards it goeth in its dusty pride,
 Chasing the shepherds and the beasts from lair.
 My eyes he loosed, and said, "Now boldly guide
 Thy eyesight upwards o'er yon hoary scum,
 There, where the vapour densest is descried." 75
 Like frogs who see their foe the adder come
 Into the water, straightway from it flee,
 And on the earth lie heaped, all cowering, dumb,
 More than a thousand lost souls did I see 80
 Thus fly in front of one who, walking there
 With foot unwetted crost o'er Styx's sea.
 From 'fore his countenance the thickened air,
 With his left hand, he ever waved away,
 That was the only pain he seemed to share. 85
 Well did I know a messenger of Day,
 And to my master turned, who made a sign
 That I should bow in silence to his sway.
 Ah, how he seemed replete with scorn divine!
 He reached the gate, and smiting with his rod,
 Oped it in spite of every stay malign. 90
 "O chased from Heaven, race hateful to your God!"
 So o'er the horrible threshold he began,
 "Whence was there nursed this ultra-hardihood?
 Why do ye kick against the heavenly plan,
 Whose purposed end ye never could abate, 95
 And which has oft increased your suffering's span?"

Lines 61 to 63. Supposed to call the reader's attention to the mystic meaning of the present Canto, and not of Virgil's present action alone. That hidden sense is explained by Landino to be, that mere carnal sins, such as those previously punished, can be restrained by Reason, which is figured in the person of Virgil; but that the heinous crimes which are to follow can only be guarded against by a special grace of God, represented by the Angel. There is no doubt that Dante intended his whole Poem in an allegorical sense, and this is not the only place where he cautions the reader not to pass over his hidden meaning.

In what avails it you to joust with Fate?

Your Cerberus, ye may remember well,
With maw and throat all peeled, still feels the weight."

Then he turned back into that pathway fell, 100

And made no sign to us, but kept the guise

Of one, o'er whom some other care holds spell

Than his, who at the time before him lies.

We moved our footsteps then towards the land,

Safe in those holy words from all surprise. 105

Without more strife within the walls we stand,

And I, whose first desire was to behold

The state in which such fortress had been planned,

Soon as I entered, round my eyesight rolled,

And saw on each hand stretch a champaign large 110

All full of grief and torment manifold.

Just as at Arles, where stagnates Rhone's discharge,

And as at Pola, near Carnaro's waves,

Which boundeth Italy and bathes its marge.

The place is wholly studded o'er with graves, 115

So were they scattered here on every side,

Save that their fashion greater horror craves :

For 'twixt the tombstones flames were scattered wide,

By which they were enkindled to such glow

That iron forging never with it vied. 120

The covering stones to all were open low,

And from them issued forth laments so keen,

'Twas clear they came from wretched souls in woe.

And I: "O master, who may these have been,

That buried underneath each curvèd stone, 125

By sighs of anguish make their presence seen?"

And he to me: "Here heretics make moan

With their disciples of each sect, and more

Than thou wouldst credit, do these charnels own.

Lines 98 and 99.

"Your Cerberus, ye may remember well,

With maw and throat all peeled, still feels the weight."

Alluding to the story related by Ovid, of Hercules dragging Cerberus from Hell by an iron chain, on his attempted opposition to the hero.

Line 112. Arles, a city in Provence, and once the seat of the Roman provincial Government: the extent of Roman ruins in the place give to it the appearance of a city of tombs, and its recollection was clearly vivid in Dante's mind when he introduced it in this very striking simile, or rather illustration.

Line 113. Pola, a city of Istria, on the Gulph of Quarnaro. It is now in the possession of the Austrians, who have created there a first-class naval port.

Line 127.

"Here heretics make moan

With their disciples of each sect."

The acute and discriminating Father Venturi is led by his Catholic prejudices into an amusing anachronism in explaining this line. Amongst the

Here like with like is buried evermore,
 To each in due degree the heat is cast."
 So speaking to the right he went before,
 And 'twixt the turrets and the doomed we past.

130

heretics in the burning tombs he mildly places Luther and the Lutherans, probably in anticipation of the horrors of free thought which the great Reformer was to inflict upon the Christian world. Whether Dante would have placed him there, had he been gifted with prophecy, may at least be considered doubtful.

CANTO X.

Farinata degli Uberti, the Ghibeline leader, and Cavalcante Cavalcanti, the Guelph, rise from the same tomb and converse with Dante. The latter inquires about the welfare of his son Guido, Dante's great friend, and the former predicts Dante's exile. He explains to Dante that although able to see indistinctly future events, the spirits are entirely ignorant of what is at the time going on in the world, unless they are informed by spirits lately arrived from there.

Now by a narrow street we onwards wind,
 Between the region's walls and those in pain,
 My master and I following close behind.
 "O virtue chief, that through this fell domain
 Guidest me," said I, "as thou will'st to hie,
 Speak now and satisfy my wishes fain.
 The people who beneath these tombstones lie,
 Can they be seen? Already are revealed
 The open lids, and no one watcheth nigh."
 And he to me: "They all will then be sealed
 When from Jehoshaphat's dread vale of fame
 Each brings his body, now on earth concealed.
 Their burial-place on this side do they claim
 With Epicurus, all his followers weak,
 Who make the soul as mortal as the frame.
 But thou, in that demand which thou didst make,
 Within this place shalt soon be satisfied,
 And also in the wish thou didst not speak."
 And I: "Kind leader, I would never hide
 From thee my heart, except to be more brief,
 To which thy lesson was even now applied."
 "O Tuscan, through the abodes of fire and grief,
 Who living goest with the speech so fair,
 Please thee to rest thee here for short relief.

Line 18. "And also in the wish thou didst not speak." That of conversing with some of the heretics, amongst whom Farinata and his companion are placed amongst the Epicureans, since they did not believe in the immortality of the soul.

Thy words at once all manifest declare 25
 That thou wast born in that fair land of pride,
 To which I haply wrought too great despair."
 Suddenly issuing forth these words were cried
 From one of the arched graves, on which I drew 30
 In fear a little nearer to my guide.
 But he addressed me: "Turn, what dost thou do?"
 Lo, Farinata there erect has risen;
 From the waist upwards thou canst wholly view."
 Already on his face was fixed my vision, 35
 When slowly he upreared his brow and breast,
 As if he held all Hell in great derision.
 My leader's hands, cordial and ready, prest
 Me towards him, through the sepulchres malign,
 Saying, "Thy words must frankly be addrest."
 Soon as I stood before his grave's confine 40
 He looked at me awhile, then with disdain
 He asked me, "What was thy ancestral line?"
 My chief's advice to follow I was fain,
 So nothing I concealed, but all avowed,
 On which he somewhat raised his brows, and then 45
 Spake to me: "They were adversaries proud
 To me, my predecessors, and my side,
 Therefore to exile twice their heads I bowed."
 "If they were banished each time," I replied,
 "They came back to their homes from o'er the seas; 50
 Unto your friends that art has been denied."
 Then into view there rose up by degrees
 A shadow by his side, who showed his face,
 I think that he had risen on his knees.

Line 32. "Lo, Farinata there erect has risen." Farinata degli Uberti, the great Ghibeline leader, commanded in the battle of Monte Aperto, near the river Arbia, when the Florentines were routed with great slaughter. Although Dante, the Ghibeline poet, places the Ghibeline chief in his *Inferno*, in a few broad lines he draws for him the grandest character introduced into the poem. The pains of Hell have no effect upon his indomitable pride; he makes no allusion to his sufferings, he makes no boast of fortitude, but one feels that from that soul of adamant the petty tortures of this material Hell are as ineffectual in their object as those hurled by the savage Jove of the Pagan creed against the calm Prometheus. Farinata is the impersonation of the inflexible aristocrat of the Middle Ages.

Line 52. "Then into view there rose up by degrees
 A shadow by his side."

Cavalcante Cavalcanti, father of Guido, the bosom friend of Dante, whom the father therefore expects to see in his company. Guido was a celebrated poet of the time, with a reputation equal to Dante's own, until the publication of the "*Divina Commedia*." Guido, however, preferred philosophy to poetry, which is generally given as the explanation of Dante's answer that he might have disdained Virgil for his guide. The pride of the poor suffering father in his son and his intense affection are portrayed in the most touching manner in the following lines.

He looked around me anxiously through space, 85
 As though some other with me he would see;
 But when his hope had wholly given place,
 Weeping he said, "If through this prison free
 To wander thou through genius dost attain,
 Where is my son, and wherefore not with thee?" 60
 "Not of myself I come here," I explain,
 "He who awaits me there has been my guide;
 Perchance your Guido held him in disdain."
 His question and the punishment descried, 65
 Already this man's name had made me know;
 Therefore at once so fully I replied.
 Instant he rose erect and cried out, "How?
 Saidst thou he *held*? and does he live no more?
 Does not the sweet light smite his dear eyes now?" 70
 When he perceived that I made pause before
 Answering that question eagerly addrest,
 He fell down prone, and forth appeared no more.
 But the other mighty soul, at whose request
 I still remained, changed not his haughty mien,
 Nor bent his form, nor bowed his lofty crest. 75
 "And if," continuing his former strain,
 "They have," he said, "that art for evil learned,
 That gives me torment than this bed more keen.
 But not for fifty times there shall be burned,
 The torch of Hecatè, who ruleth here, 80
 Ere thou shalt know how dear that art is earned.
 So mayst thou rule upon the sweet earth's sphere,
 Say, 'gainst my friends its every law throughout,
 Say, wherefore is that people so severe?" 85
 Whence I to him: "The slaughter and the rout
 Which made the Arbia's wave run tinged with red,
 Within our temple made them raise such shout."
 Then slowly and with sighs he shook his head;
 "I was not there alone, and none supposed
 That without cause to such a length we sped. 90
 But *there* I was alone when 'twas proposed
 By every one to march on Florence straight:
 Alone in open council I opposed.

Line 82. "So mayst thou rule upon the sweet earth's sphere," &c. Farinata conjures Dante by all his hopes of success in life to explain why the Florentines always omitted his family, the Uberti, from every advantage granted to the other Ghibelines.

Line 91. "But *there* I was alone when 'twas proposed." Alluding to a council held at Empoli, when the Siennese general proposed to destroy Florence, which Farinata alone of the Florentine Ghibeline leaders opposed.

Ah, that repose at last your seed await!"
 Besought I him, "This difficulty clear, 95
 Which has perplex my judgment with its weight.
 It seems that you can see, if well I hear,
 Forward to that which Time will slow unfold,
 And of the present wholly blind appear."
 "Like those who have bad eyesight, we behold 100
 Things which are distant from us," he replied,
 "Such light Great God permits us still to hold.
 When they approach or are, in vain is tried
 Our knowledge, save what others here relate, 105
 We can know nothing of your human tide.
 But thou must know that dead to future fate
 Will be our prescient knowledge from that time
 When of the future will be closed the gate."
 Then I, as one compunctious for my crime,
 Said, "You must tell him then who fell down low, 110
 His son still liveth in our mortal clime.
 And if in answering I was mute just now,
 Explain it was because my thoughts did track
 That puzzling secret you have made me know."
 My master had already called me back, 115
 Therefore I prayed the spirit with more speed
 To tell me who were with him in the rack.
 "More than a thousand with me share this bed;
 My tomb's confines the second Frederic hold,
 The Cardinal, of the rest I take no heed." 120
 Then he was silent, and towards the old
 Poet I turned my steps, thinking again
 Of that unfriendly prophecy he told.

Line 108. "When of the future will be closed the gate." The final judgment, after which there will be no past nor future, but only an eternal present.

Line 109. "Then I, as one compunctious for my crime." Dante's conscience smites him for not having at once relieved the mind of Cavalcante concerning his son, who was alive at the date the poem is supposed to have taken place. The excuse Dante gives for his neglect is clearly an afterthought and a bad one, for it was not till after Cavalcante had fallen down in despair, under the mistaken belief in his son's death, that Farinata made to Dante the mysterious announcement of his future exile.

Line 119. "My tomb's confines the second Frederic hold,
 The Cardinal."

The Emperor Frederic II., nephew of Barbarossa, is included amongst the heretics for his opposition to the Church. The Cardinal is Ottavian Ubaldini, an open unbeliever and Ghibeline in spite of being a Church dignitary. He it was who said, "If there is such a thing as a soul I have lost mine for the Ghibelines."

The bard moved on, and as we went, "Explain,"
 He said, "the reason thou art thus bestirred." 135
 And I to answer his request was fain.
 "Guard in thy mind the speech which thou hast heard
 Against thyself," the prescient sage did say,
 "And listen now," with this his hand he reared,
 "When thou shalt be before the sweet light's ray 130
 Of her whose eye sees all things without veil,
 From her thou'lt learn of all thy life the way."
 Then to the left he turned; the outer pale
 We left, and inwards to the centre hie,
 Along a path which pierceth to a vale, 135
 And even so far exhaled its stench on high.

Line 131. "Of her whose eye sees all things without veil." Beatrice, who sees all things in the sight of God.

CANTO XI.

Resting on a rock that overhangs the seventh circle while they pause to accustom themselves to the fetid atmosphere, Virgil explains to Dante what crimes are punished in the three remaining circles, namely, violence, fraud, and treason. He shows how the crimes punished in the circles outside the city of Dis are of less culpability than those doomed within the walls, and how usury is particularly hateful to God.

ABOVE the extremity of a lofty chain
 Of broken rocks heaped roughly in a bank,
 We issued forth upon more cruel pain.
 And here, through the excess of odour rank
 Which from the depths profound the abysses threw, 5
 Against the lid of a great tomb we sank,
 Of which at once the inscription caught my view;
 "Pope Anastasius here behold," it said,
 "Whom erst Photinus from the straight path drew."
 "Now our descent must be some while delayed, 10
 So that the accustomed sense may somewhat bear
 The fetid odour, hence no more dismayed."
 My master thus, and I: "Some mode prepare
 Of compensation, that the time be past
 Not idly." He replied, "Thy thoughts I share. 15

Line 8. "Pope Anastasius here behold," it said." It is doubtful whether either of the Popes of this name was really led astray by the heresy of Photinus, a deacon of the Church of Thessalonica in the fifth century. It is certain, however, that Dante intended to place a Pope amongst his condemned heretics.

Onwards, my son, within these rocks are placed,"
 Began he then to tell me, "circles three,
 In steps decreasing, like the one thou'st traced.
 They all are full of cursèd souls, that free
 Thy sight alone full knowledge may create. 30
 Hear now the how and wherefore these things be.
 Of every malice that in Heaven wins hate
 The end is injury, and each such plan
 By force or fraud on some wrecks woful fate.
 Since fraud is ill peculiar unto man 35
 God it displeases more, and hence more low
 The fraudulent are doomed to greater pain.
 The violent fill the outer vale of woe,
 And since in three ways violence is shown,
 In three compartments 'tis divided so. 40
 To God, oneself, one's neighbour force is done,
 In their own persons and affairs, I say,
 As with developed reason will be known.
 Murder by violence and fierce affray,
 Attack one's neighbour's person, his estate, 45
 Destructions, burnings, carryings away.
 Whence homicides and all who wound in hate,
 Spoilers and plunderers, all tormented lie
 In this first ward, though doomed to diverse fate. 50
 Man on himself his violence can try,
 And on his goods, so in the second ward
 'Tis fit that they repent all needlessly,
 Whoever in your life quits life abhorred,
 Gambles, and wastes away his faculty, 45
 And waileth there where life should joy afford.
 Force can be shown against the Deity
 By cursing and denying with the heart,
 Outraging Nature and her bounty free.
 Therefore the smaller ward sealet apart 50
 Both Sodom and Caorsa with its seal,
 And whosoe'er denies God in his heart.

Line 45. "And waileth there where life should joy afford." A causeless melancholy, refusing to enjoy the gifts of God's bounty in life, is classed with suicide and gambling, and punished in a lower pit of Hell than murder and robbery by violence.

Line 50. "Both Sodom and Caorsa." Caorsa, a city of Guienne, infamous for usury. The sins of Caorsa and Sodom are classed together, as outraging God by violence, through Nature. Usury is ranked as the greater crime, as it was undoubtedly considered throughout the Middle Ages, and Dante, with all his genius, is essentially a man of his age.

Such fraud, for which all must compunction feel,
 Can man exert 'gainst him whose trust he shares,
 And him whose thoughts no confidence reveal. 55
 This latter fashion all unseemly tears
 The golden chain of love which Nature weaves.
 Whence gather in the second circle's lairs
 Hypocrisy, all flattery that deceives,
 Witchcraft, lies, thefts, the Simoniac blot, 60
 Panders, chicaners, and all similar thieves.
 By the other mode not only is forgot
 Nature's more general, but that special love
 By which the special trust was erst begot.
 Whence in the smaller circle, where above 65
 The centre of the world is Dis's throne,
 All who betray eternal torments prove."
 And I: "O master, very clear is shown
 Thy argument, and hence is clear descried
 Those prisons and the people which they own. 70
 But say, the dwellers in the sluggish tide,
 Whom the wind whirls and whom the rainstorms smite,
 And those who with sharp tongues so fiercely plied,
 Wherefore within this glowing city's site
 Are they not punished, if beneath God's ire? 75
 And if not so, why doomed to such despite?"
 And he to me: "What ravings now inspire
 Thy thoughts to strike on this unwonted chord?
 Or to what region does thy mind respire?
 Dost thou not then remember thee the word 80
 With which thy Aristotle's Ethics styled,
 The three bad dispositions Heaven abhorred?
 Incontinence, and malice, and the wild
 Bestiality? and how incontinence
 Offends God less and suffers blame more mild?
 If thou regardest well that saying's sense, 85
 And bringest to thy mind what men are these
 Who on the outside suffer punishment,
 Thou wouldst see clearly wherefore in degrees
 All separate from these wretches, with less spite
 They are afflicted by Heaven's just decrees." 90
 "O Sun, that healest every troubled sight,
 Thou so contentest me when thou mak'st clear
 Doubts, that no less than knowledge they delight,

Lines 70, 72. The wrathful, the lascivious, the gluttonous, the avaricious and prodigal, whose punishments have been described in the preceding Cantos.

Backwards again thy thoughts a little steer,
 There where thou saidst that usury offends 95
 Goodness Divine, and make the mystery clear."
 "Whoe'er," he said, "philosophy attends,
 Learneth therefrom not only in one part,
 How Nature duly her own course extends
 From Intellect Divine, and from its art. 100
 And if thou'lt carefully thy Physics scan,
 Thou wilt discover in the opening part
 That your Art follows Nature as it can,
 Like the disciple goes his lord behind ;
 So that God's grandchild is the art of man. 105
 From Art and Nature, if thou bring'st to mind
 The verse of Genesis, 'tis doomed alone
 That man should live and carry on his kind.
 And since to usurers other ways are known,
 Both Nature and her follower stand confest 110
 Outraged by those whose trust is elsewhere shown.
 Follow me now, enough has been our rest,
 And on the horizon now the Pisces shine,
 And all the Wain reclineth o'er the west,
 And further up the cliffs less steep decline." 115

Line 101. Virgil, as usual, is quoting from Aristotle.

Line 106. "From Art and Nature, if thou bring'st to mind
 The verse of Genesis."

The curious argument by which the crime of usury is proved is this : God has decreed that man shall live by the sweat of his face—i.e., by labour which cultivates some art, which last is the child of Nature. Usurers live neither by Nature nor by labour (or art) ; they, therefore, outrage Nature both in herself and her offspring, and are, therefore, worse even than Sodomites!

CANTO XII.

Descending the bank into the seventh circle, they find it guarded by the Minotaur. Having reached the bottom of the cliff, Dante sees a river of blood, in which are punished those who have committed violence against their neighbour, being prevented from rising out of the boiling stream by a band of Centaurs, who gallop with bows and arrows along its bank. Three of them advance to meet Virgil and Dante, and, at the former's request, one of them guides the poets along the bank, and finally carries Dante across the stream on his back.

THE place we stood on to descend the bank
 Precipitously fell, and there beside
 Was one from sight of whom all vision shrank.
 Like to that landslip, which with 'whelming slide
 Struck the Adige, above the town of Trent,
 Through earthquake moved, or action of the tide :

Which from the mountain's crest from whence it went
 Fell with such sheer incline into the plain
 That from above it offers no descent:
 So did that beetling cliff the valley gain: 10
 And o'er the broken hollow, on its brow,
 The Infamy of Crete was stretched amain
 Conceived within the fabricated cow:
 He bit himself when he beheld us near,
 As one in whom quick-rousèd angers glow. 15
 My wise one shouted towards him: "Haply here
 Thou think'st that Athens' Duke again is bent,
 Who of old slew thee in the upper sphere?
 Off with the beast! for this one is not sent
 Taught by thy sister how to make thee bleed, 20
 He cometh but to see thy punishment."
 Like to a bull the very moment freed
 He has received the mortal stroke, in air
 Bounds here and there, unable on to speed,
 The Minotaur thus maddened saw I there: 25
 My prudent guide cried out: "Run to the pass,
 During his furious fit, descend with care."
 So on we hurried through the scattered mass
 Of tumbled stones, that often moving slide
 Beneath the unwonted weight, as on I pass. 30
 In thought I went: "Thou musest," said my guide,
 "Perchance about this precipice, watched o'er
 By the bestial anger which I now defied.
 I would that thou shouldst know, that when before
 Down to Hell's lowest deeps I turned my feet, 35
 This rock had not yet toppled to the shore.
 But very shortly ere (if well I weet)
 His coming, who such booty bore from Hell,
 Those prisoners of the outer circle's seat,
 In every portion, this deep valley fell 40
 So trembled, that I thought the reeling sphere
 Had felt the Love, through which, there are who tell

Lines 12 and 13. The Minotaur, offspring of Pasiphae and her unnatural passion.

Line 17. "Thou think'st that Athens' Duke again is bent." Theseus, who, instructed by Ariadne, the sister of the Minotaur, was enabled to slay the monster.

Line 37. "But very shortly ere (if well I weet)
 His coming."

The triumphant entry of Christ, described in Canto IV.

Line 42. "Had felt the Love, through which, there are who tell
 That oft i' the world did Chaos reappear."

The idea that through Love the atoms of the Universe separate from the mass to join together like with like, and that in this manner Chaos has been

That oft i' the world did Chaos reappear :
 And in that moment this old rock from high
 Down to its basement toppled here and there. 45
 But gaze upon the valley : there draws nigh
 The river of red blood, where boil in fire
 All who with force do others injury."
 O blind cupidity, O foolish ire,
 Which spurs us on so in our life's short day, 50
 And soaks us till Eternity expire !
 I saw a broad stream bending far away,
 As though its wave did all the plain embrace,
 By the description which my guide did say ;
 And 'twixt it and the mountain's foot in race 55
 Galloped a band of Centaurs, armed with bows,
 As in the world they erst were wont to chase.
 When our descent they saw, each one stood close,
 And three amongst them sallied from the band
 With bows and darts, our passage to oppose ; 60
 And one from far cried out : " What pains demand
 Your sentence, that you thus descend the side ?
 I shoot unless you speak from where you stand."
 " Our answer," thus my master straight replied,
 " When we have reached his side, shall Chiron know 65
 Badly for thee thy will could never bide."
 He touched me then, and said : "'Tis Nessus, who
 Perished of old for Dejanira fair,
 And from himself made his own vengeance flow.
 He in the middle, with the musing air, 70
 Is the great Chiron, to Achilles bowed ;
 The other Folus, erst so ireful. There
 Along the stream in thousands do they crowd,
 Shooting whatever souls themselves upreared,
 Above the blood, more than their doom allowed." 75
 Onwards, towards those active beasts we neared ;
 And Chiron with an arrow's feathered head
 Behind his jaws drew back his massy beard.
 When his great mouth was thus laid bare, he said
 To his companions, wondering : " Do ye weet 80
 How this one moveth all things with his tread ?

repeated more than once, is said to have originated with Empedocles, but is probably taken by Dante from his favourite master Aristotle, who has introduced it in his "Physics."

Line 67.

" 'Tis Nessus, who."

Nessus being slain by Hercules, revenged himself by leaving his poisoned robe to Dejanira, making her believe that it was a love charm.

So are not wont to do the dead men's feet."
 My leader to his breast now opposite,
 There, where the horse and human nature meet,
 Answered, "He lives, and in this lonely plight, 85
 'Tis mine to show him all this dreary vale,
 Necessity compels us, not delight.
 She left her song, within Heaven's holy pale,
 Who trusted unto me this office new,
 No robber he, and I no spirit frail. 90
 But by the virtue, through the which I knew
 My footsteps through this pathway wild to guide,
 Give one of thine to be our convoy true,
 That he may show us where to cross the tide
 And carry this my comrade on his back, 95
 No spirit he, who through the air can glide."
 Great Chiron to the right then turned him back.
 "Turn thou, and guide them," he to Nessus cried,
 "And hinder any band that thwarts their track." 100
 Onwards we travelled with our trusty guide,
 Along the shore of the red boiling wave,
 Where shrieked aloud those boiled within its tide.
 Some to their brows I saw the liquid lave;
 The Centaur told me: "These were tyrants fierce
 Who in their lives but blood and rapine gave. 105
 Here they bewail their punishment with tears;
 See Alexander, Dionysius there,
 Who gave to Sicily such dolorous years.
 That forehead covered o'er with thick black hair
 Is Azzolino, that one by his side 110
 Obizzo d'Esti, with the locks all fair,
 On earth beneath his son's own hand he died."
 Then to the bard I turned, but he declared,
 "Not I, but this one here must be our guide."
 A little way beyond the Centaur neared 115
 Another troop, as far as to the throat
 Above the bubbling stream were these upreared.
 A shadow by itself he bade us note,
 Saying, "A heart, still cherished o'er the Thame,
 Within the lap of God this sinner smote." 120

Line 109. "That forehead covered o'er with thick black hair" is Azzolino, a ruler of Padua and the surrounding countries, infamous for his cruel tyrannies, who died in 1260. He murdered two of the numerous husbands of his sister Cunizza, introduced by Dante in the "Paradise" as inhabiting the sphere of Venus. Par., Canto IX.

Line 111. "Obizzo d'Esti, with the locks all fair." A Marquis of Ferrara, killed by his son for the sake of his wealth.

Line 119. "A heart, still cherished o'er the Thame,

Within the lap of God this sinner smote."

Guy de Montfort, in order to revenge the death of his father Simon,

Then saw I people who from out the stream
 Lifted their head, and even all the breast,
 And several of these I knew by name.
 Shallower, and shallower still, the blood decreased,
 Until at last it only bathed the feet, 125
 And there our passage o'er the stream we prest.
 "As in this portion thou didst now behold,
 The bubbling source has ever shallower grown,
 I would that thou shouldst know," the Centaur told,
 "That so it deepens, as it circles on, 130
 Until once more its circuit course it brings,
 There, where 'tis doomed that tyranny should groan.
 'Tis there that Heaven's high justice ever stings
 That Attila who was the scourge of earth,
 Pirrhus, and Sextus, and eternally wrings 135
 The tears, which by the boiling it draws forth
 From Pazzo and Corneto, both abhorred,
 Who in the highways made such constant dearth."
 Then he turned back, and crossed again the ford.

slew Henry, nephew of King Henry III. of England, during the celebration of the High Mass. The Italian chronicles relate that the heart of Henry was embalmed in a golden cup, and placed on a pillar over London Bridge, for a memorial to the English of the said outrage.

Line 137. "From Pazzo and Corneto, both abhorred." Two highway robbers of Italy, both of them of noble birth.

CANTO XIII.

Entering the second division of the seventh circle, Dante finds himself in a weird wood, the trees of which are the spirits of those who have committed violence against their own persons, and who are punished by being fed upon by Harpies. While Virgil converses with Pietro delle Vigne, the confidant and Chancellor of the Emperor Frederic II., two spirits rush through the forest, chased by black bitches, who tear them to pieces, such being the punishment of those who have committed violence against themselves in their estate.

Nessus had scarce departed from the place,
 Or ere we found ourselves within a wood,
 In which no sign of pathway marked its trace.
 No leaves of tender green, but brownly hued,
 No waving boughs, but gnarled and knotted growth, 5
 No fruit, but thorns with poisonous berries rude.
 In such a thick and savage undergrowth
 Roam not the wild beasts through Maremma's lair,
 Who all the cultivated regions loathe.

Their nests the Harpies foul constructed there, 10
 Who chased the Trojans from the Strofades,
 With gloomy augury of future fare.
 Broad wings with human necks and visages,
 Clawed feet are theirs, great bellies feathered o'er, 15
 They make their moan upon the eerie trees.
 And my good master: "Ere thou enterest more
 Know in the second circle dost thou stand,"
 So said he, "which extendeth on its shore
 Until thou comest to the horrible sand. 20
 But well observe, and things thou wilt behold,
 For which my word could ne'er thy faith demand."
 On every side the sound of wailing rolled,
 And not a soul I saw by whom 'twas wrought,
 So that astonied there my steps I hold.
 Meseemeth that he fancied that I thought 25
 Those voices came from 'twixt the branches sent
 By people who from us concealment sought.
 "But," said the master, "if by thee be rent
 Of any of these plants, some branch's end,
 The thoughts thou hast will straightway all be spent." 30
 On that my hand a little I extend,
 And gathered from a briar a little bough,
 When its trunk shrieked out, "Wherefore dost thou rend?"
 Then, when the brown blood had begun to flow,
 Again it shrieked out, "Wherefore dost thou tear? 35
 Does not thy spirit any pity know?
 Though now we're changed to shoots, yet men we were:
 Surely thy hand more clement should have been
 Had we been souls of serpents in despair."
 As when the one end of a firebrand green 40
 Is kindled, at the other end it groans
 And hisses with the hot air issuing keen,
 So from that broken branch there issued moans
 And blood together, whence I dropt the bough 45
 And stood like one whom sudden terror owns.
 "Had it been possible for him to know,"
 Answered my wise one, "O thou soul in pain,
 By words alone that which the sight could show,
 On thee his hand had ne'er such action ta'en. 50
 Only the incredible marvel of the place
 Forced me to prompt a deed which now I plain.

Line 11. "Who chased the Trojans from the Strofades." See "Æneid," book iii.

But tell him who thou wert, so that in grace
 For some amends, in the upper world thy fame
 May grow where he his steps again will trace."
 "So with thy sweet words me thou dost inflame" 55
 That I must speak, and let it not displease
 If to some little length I now declaim.
 I am the one who carried both the keys
 Of Frederic's heart, and tuned them with such sweet
 Motion, both locking and unlocking these, 60
 That for his secrets no one else was meet.
 With trust I exercised my high emprise,
 So that for it my pulses ceased to beat.
 Envy, the harlot whose bold, shameless eyes
 Were never absent yet from Cæsar's hall, 65
 Of courts the common ruin and the vice,
 Inflamed against me there the hearts of all,
 And they inflamed, Augustus so inspired,
 That my glad honours changed to strife's sad pall.
 My spirit, with disdainful passion fired, 70
 Thinking with death alone to 'scape from scorn,
 Unjustly 'gainst myself, though just, conspired.
 By the new roots beneath this tree forlorn
 I swear to ye my faith I never broke
 Against my lord, to honour duly born. 75
 And should ye either bear again earth's yoke
 O justify my memory, which lies
 Still wounded by the force of Envy's stroke."
 He paused awhile, and through the silences
 The poet whispered, "Lose not time in vain, 80
 But speak to him should further question please."
 Whence I to him: "Then question him again
 Of what thou thinkest will delight me best.
 I cannot speak myself for pity fain."
 Therefore he recommenced: "If thy behest 85
 This man should freely execute for thee,
 Imprisoned spirit, please thee for the rest
 To tell him how the spirit in the tree
 Is here allied, and if thou canst, explain
 If any from such frame can e'er be free." 90

Line 58. "I am the one who carried both the keys
 Of Frederic's heart."

Pietro delle Vigne, a man who from a mean condition raised himself by his talents to the post of Chancellor to the Emperor Frederic II., whom Dante has already placed amongst the condemned heretics. The disgraced servant speaks more honourably of his former master, "che fu d'onor si digno."

E

Then violently sighed the trunk, and then
 Its wind in breathing to such speech converts.
 "To you my answer will be brief and plain.
 When from the body the fierce soul departs, 95
 From which itself by its own deed has torn,
 At Minos' doom to the seventh pit it starts.
 Within this forest is it straightway borne,
 No chosen spot, but there where Fortune shoots,
 There does it burgeon like a grain of corn.
 The small branch sprouteth and the tree strikes roots, 100
 Make torment and an opening for despair,
 The Harpies feeding on the leaves and fruits.
 Like others we our cast-off frames will bear,
 But not one limb will be again arrayed.
 What man's self spent he cannot justly wear. 105
 Here we shall drag them, and in order laid
 Our forms will hang along this dreary wood,
 Each to the briar of its own hateful shade."
 Intently listening to the trunk we stood, 110
 Believing that it wished to tell us more,
 When we were startled by a clamour rude,
 And like to one who heareth a wild boar
 Break towards him, with the pack in eager chase,
 Who hears the branches rend and the beasts roar,
 When, lo! from the left corner of the place 115
 Two torn and naked forms, rushing with speed,
 So that each branch was broken in their race.
 The one in front: "O Death, come now at need!"
 When he, who somewhat lagged behind, appealed,
 Shouting out, "Lano this way did not speed 120
 Those limbs of thine at Toppo's battle-field."
 Then, when perchance his breath had failed him, he
 Fell in a bush and sought there for a shield.
 Behind them all the wood we swarming see 125
 With stark black bitches, hungering to tear,
 Racing like greyhounds from the slips let free,

Line 101. "Make torment and an opening for despair,
 The Harpies."

Through the wounds inflicted by the Harpies these spirit trees have a vent
 for their anguish, the blood and wailing issuing together.

Line 120. "Lano this way did not speed
 Those limbs of thine at Toppo's battle-field."

Lano was a Siennese, who having wasted all his fortune in riotous living,
 and finding life intolerable, threw himself into the thickest of the enemy
 when his countrymen were routed at Pieve del Toppo by the Aretines, and
 refusing to fly with the rest, found the death he sought for at their hands.

Their fangs they fixed on him who squatted there,
 And piece by piece, when he was wholly torn,
 On every side his quivering limbs they bear.
 My guide then took my hand, and onwards borne, 130
 He led me to that little bush that sighed,
 And through its bleeding fragments wailed forlorn.
 "O Jacopo da Sant' Andrea!" it cried,
 "In seeking help from me to thee what good?
 What crime had I in thy life's guilty pride?" 135
 My master said, when opposite he stood,
 "Who, then, wert thou who through so many a wound
 Breakest such dolorous parley with thy blood?"
 And he to us: "O spirits who are bound 140
 Hither to witness this most shameful deed
 That thus has stripped my foliage to the ground,
 Collect it at the foot of this sad weed.
 I was of Florence, which its early lord
 Changed for Baptista, whence has Mars decreed 145
 It should be wretched through his art abhorred;
 And were it not some remnant still remains
 Of the old sculpture upon Arno's ford,
 The men who, after Attila, were fain
 To raise up from the ruins the old walls 150
 Would but have lost their labour all in vain.
 I made a gibbet of my father's halls."

Line 133. Jacopo da Sant' Andrea was a Paduan spendthrift who finished his career by suicide.

Line 143. "I was of Florence, which its early lord
 Changed for Baptista."

Mars was the first patron of the city, changed in Christian times for the Saint Baptista. At the date of this poem a portion of the old statue of Mars was still preserved on the bridge over the Arno, and was considered the Palladium of the city.

Line 151. "I made a gibbet of my father's halls." This Florentine suicide is not named, though conjectures as to his personality have been made by the early commentators. In the closing line he evidently compares his own usage of his father's house with the conduct of the pious restorers of the city, who reconstructed the walls left in ruin by their forefathers after the destruction by Attila.

CANTO XIV.

The poets reach the boundary of the wood and see before them the third compartment of this circle, a plain of burning sand, where are punished in various ways those who have committed violence against God, Nature, and Art. Amongst the first they see Capanus, one of the seven before Thebes. They reach a rivulet of blood, the river of Phlegethon, which traverses the burning desert, and whose petrified margins afford Dante a passage across the sand.

LOVE of my country urged me with such force
 That I collected all the scattered leaves,
 And gave them back to him, already hoarse.
 We came then to the boundary where one leaves
 The second circle, entering on the third, 5
 Where Justice all its frightful skill conceives—
 To make quite manifest things yet unheard,
 I say, before a vast expanse we stood,
 Within whose bed no vegetation stirred. 10
 Its circling garland was the dolorous wood,
 As unto that the stream of misery ;
 Skirting the edge our way we here pursued.
 The space was filled with sand, minute and dry,
 Fashioned not other than that desert drear 15
 Erst trod by Cato when compelled to fly.
 O vengeance of great God ! with what a fear
 Thou shouldst be held by all who read in awe
 That which before my eyes was visibly clear !
 Of naked spirits many a troop I saw, 20
 Who all were wailing with most wretched sound,
 And seemed subjected unto diverse law.
 Some of them lay supinely on the ground ;
 Some of them sate up gathered in a heap,
 And others without pausing moved around. 25
 Most numerous were they who motion keep,
 And least in number who in torment lay,
 But these cried out with anguish far more deep.
 O'er the whole waste of sand in slow delay
 There raineth down enormous flakes of flame, 30
 Like snow in Alps upon a windless day.
 Such Alexander, when his army came
 To India's hottest regions, o'er his host
 Saw falling to the earth in living flame,
 The which he met by trampling in the dust 35
 By his trained bands, what time the vapours meet
 No other flame, and then are easiest crusht.
 So the eternal ardour here down beat,
 From which the sand, like tinder 'neath the steel,
 Kindled for greater pain to double heat.

Line 15. "Erst trod by Cato when compelled to fly." The Libyan desert, o'er which Cato, after his defeat with Pompey, led the remains of his army to join King Juba, as described by Lucan.

Line 35. "What time the vapours meet

No other flame, and then are easiest crusht."

In the night-time. This somewhat apocryphal story of Alexander's Indian campaign is supposed to be taken from a letter of Alexander to his teacher, Aristotle, according to Venturi.

Aye without respite was the dancing reel 40
 Of miserable hands, now here, now there,
 Shaking aside each flake they newly feel.
 "Master," I said, "who didst the victory bear
 'Gainst all things save the demons fixed in deed,
 Who at the city's gate did boldly dare ; 45
 Who is that lofty form that does not heed
 The burning, and lies there in grim disdain,
 As if this rain could ripen not such seed ?"
 And he himself, aware that I was fain 50
 Concerning him to ask my leader, cried,
 "Such as in life in death I so remain.
 If Jove should weary Vulcan as he plied,
 From whom in wrath he took the bolt so keen
 With which he smote me on the day I died,
 Or should he weary the Cyclopean train, 55
 Working by turns in Mongibello's forge,
 Crying, ' Good Vulcan, help, O help again !'
 Just as he did in Flegra's bloody gorge,
 And dart his bolts at me with all his might,
 His vengeance ne'er as triumph could he urge." 60
 Then cried my leader unto him outright,
 "O Capaneus in thy own despite,
 Thy untamed pride makes punishment the more ;
 No martyrdom except thy madness fell 65
 Could to thy fury pain's full measure pour."
 Then he returned to me with gentler spell,
 Telling me, " One of the seven kings was he
 Who Thebes besieged ; he held, and seems holds still,
 God in contempt, his worth of low degree ; 70
 But as I said to him, his own disdain
 Makes for his breast the fittest frippery.
 Now come behind me and with care maintain
 Thy feet from stepping on the burning sand,
 But closely to the wood thy path retain." 75
 In silence we continued till at hand
 From out the wood a streamlet bubbling rose,
 Whose redness makes my hair with horror stand.
 From Bulicame so the rivulet flows,
 Whose healing wave the harlots there divide— 80
 Thus downwards through the sand this gliding goes.

Line 56. "Mongibello's forge." Mount Etna.

Line 58. "Flegra's bloody gorge." The battle-field where in Thessaly the giants were finally destroyed by Jupiter.

Line 79. "From Bulicame so the rivulet flows." A medicinal spring near Viterbo, the waters of which are stated to have passed by a house of ill-fame.

Its bottom and the banks on either side
 With some slight margin had been changed to stone,
 From which I knew our path must there be tried.
 "Midst all the things that I to thee have shown 85
 Since we have entered through that hateful gate,
 Whose threshold has been ever locked to none,
 Nothing yet witnessed by thy eyes has weight
 Against this present river notable,
 O'er which the endless flames their heat abate." 90
 Such were the words that from my master fell ;
 On which I prayed him to complete the feast
 For which his speech had made me hunger well.
 "Far in mid ocean lies a desert waste," 95
 He told me then, "of which the name is Crete,
 Beneath whose king the world of old was chaste.
 There is a mountain which of old was sweet
 With water and with leafage, Ida hight.
 Now 'tis deserted like a worn-out seat. 100
 As a safe cradle Rhea chose the site
 For her young son, and to conceal his cries
 She filled the place with sounds of mad delight.
 Within the mount an old man's form doth rise
 Whose back is turned towards Damiaata old,
 And like a glass on Rome he keeps his eyes. 105
 His head is fashioned all of finest gold,
 Of purest silver are the arms and breast,
 Of copper to the fork descends the mould ;
 Thence down of choicest iron is the rest,
 Except the right foot, formed of potter's clay, 110
 And standing most on that his weight is prest.
 Each part except the gold is cracked away
 With a deep fissure from the which drop tears,
 At first collected, then they form a bay.

Line 95. Crete, the kingdom of Saturn, who ruled in the Golden Age of Earth.

Line 100. Rhea, the wife of Saturn, was obliged to conceal her children, Jupiter, Juno, &c., in Mount Ida, to save them from her husband, who had the unfortunate habit of devouring his offspring.

Line 103. The old man is Time, and the whole allegory is thus explained : The statue is placed in Crete, because there Time began with the Golden Age of Saturn's rule. Its back is turned to the east, and it gazes towards the west (Damiaata and Rome), symbolical of the Past and Future. The different metals of the statue, the same as those described in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, represent the different ages of the world, the foot of potter's clay being the present. Every portion except the head of gold—*i.e.*, all time except the Golden Age—is rent with vice, from which fissure descend the tears that form all the rivers in Hell.

Its course into this valley then it sheers, 115
 Acheron, Styx, and Phlegethon they make;
 Then downwards by this narrow pipe it steers
 Even to the bottom, where it forms a lake,
 Cocytus, and as that thou soon wilt see
 Of its appearance here I nothing speak." 120
 And I to him : " If this same streamlet be
 Derived in truth from our own world on high,
 Why on this margin is't first seen by me ?"
 And he : " This place is round thou dost descry,
 And though thou hast in truth a long way come, 125
 Descending ever leftwards as we hie,
 Thou hast not yet encircled all the dome.
 Wherefore should anything its newness claim
 The marvel need not in thy face find home."
 And I again : " O master, where these streams, 130
 Lethe and Phlegethon, thou spoked of one
 Thus formed, but thou the other didst not name ?"
 " Certes thy questions please me well, my son,"
 He answered, " but the boiling crimson wave
 Should well have solved one doubt that thou hast shown. 135
 Lethe thou'lt see, but not within this grave.
 There when repentance doth the sin remove
 The spirits go, their memories to lave."
 Then said he, " Now 'tis time from out this grove
 To issue ; follow on my steps intent. 140
 The unburnt margins make a way to move,
 And over them is every vapour spent."

Line 124, &c. Dante having expressed surprise that they had not before met with this river in their descent through the circles of Hell, Virgil explains that in their course, though they have by ever keeping to the left traversed a great portion of the circle, there is part yet to be gone over, through which the river might have descended so far as yet unseen by Dante.

Line 134. The boiling crimson wave before them is the river Phlegethon, about which Dante has inquired. Lethe is not in Hell, but on the other side of Purgatory, and therein the purified spirits wash away all memory of sin and sorrow.

CANTO XV.

Following the petrified margins of the stream through the circle, they meet a troop of tormented spirits who have committed violence against Nature. Amongst those Dante recognises his old preceptor, Ser Brunetto, who accompanies him for some distance, and predicts his coming exile.

WE travel now along the margins hard,
 And the stream's vapours o'er it raise a shade
 The water and the banks from fire to guard.

Such betwixt Ghent and Bruges the Flemings made,
 Fearing the flood-tides which above them beat, 5
 Their dykes, to save them, when the seas invade.
 And such the Paduans, on the Brenta's seat,
 From floods to save their towns and castles, rear,
 When Chiarentana feels the summer heat.
 In such a fashion were the dykes made here, 10
 Save that they were not quite so high and broad,
 Whoever may have been the engineer.
 Already we had travelled from the wood
 So far that I its place had not descried,
 Though to behold it I had turned and stood, 15
 When there a band of spirits towards us hied,
 Who came 'longside the bank, and each one nigh
 Regarded us, as in the eventide
 At new moon one his fellow must espy,
 Even so towards us their eyes they sharply peer, 20
 Like an old tailor in his needle's eye.
 Thus stared at by that family of fear,
 One recognised me, who my garment caught
 By the border, and cried out, "What marvel's here!"
 And I, when he towards me his hand had raught, 25
 Upon his Hell-burnt face so fixed my eyes
 That even those scorched-up features to my thought
 Brought back a memory I could recognise,
 And bending down my hand towards his face :
 "What, Ser Brunetto?" answered in surprise. 30
 And he : "O son of mine, grant it thy grace
 If old Brunetto turneth back with thee,
 And lets his troop move on some little space."
 I said to him, "That, all I can, I pray.
 And if ye will that I with you should rest 35
 I'll do it, if my friend and guide agree."
 "O son," he said, "if one of us should rest
 A moment, we a hundred years must bide
 Powerless one scathing fire-flake to arrest.

Line 9. "When Chiarentana feels the summer heat." That portion of the Alps where the Brenta rises, and which rises into floods when the summer melts the snow on the mountains.

Line 30. "What, Ser Brunetto?" answered in surprise." Brunetto Latini was the instructor of Dante in his youth, and although he places him in Hell for a crime evidently not uncommon in the Middle Ages, he treats him with marked respect. Brunetto was a most learned man, and the author of a poem called the "Tesoretto," and a philosophical treatise in French called the "Trésor." This work he recommends to Dante's care as his last wish on parting with him, with an author's natural predilection for the children of his brain.

But go thou on, I'll follow at thy side, 40
 And afterwards my company regain,
 Who go bewailing sin's eternal gride."
 I dared not to descend into the plain
 To walk beside him, but with head bent low
 I went like one with reverential strain. 45
 Then he began: "What destiny below
 Ere the last day thy footsteps thus doth guide?
 And who is this one who the path can show?"
 "Above, in life serene," I then replied, 50
 "Bewildered in a valley did I roam,
 Ere I completed life's allotted tide,
 But yester morning hence I thither come,
 When he appeared to me retreating there,
 And by this pathway leads me to my home." 55
 And he to me: "In following up thy star
 Thou canst not fail to reach a glorious goal,
 If well I augured in my life most fair,
 And had I longer 'scaped from Death's control,
 Seeing the Heavens to thee were so benign,
 To this emprise I would have cheered thy soul. 60
 But that ungrateful populace malign,
 Who, in old times, came down from Fiesolè,
 And still hold somewhat of their granite line,
 Will, for thy good, become thine enemy;
 And rightly so, the crabtree and its kind 65
 Can never bear the sweet fig on its tree.
 I' the world an old report has called them blind:
 A people avaricious, envious, proud;
 From all their habits keep unstained thy mind. 70
 To thee such honour has thy Fortune vowed,
 For thee both factions shall with hunger yearn,
 But to the grass the beak must not be bowed.
 Let beasts of Fiesolè their own selves turn
 To litter, but of Roman plants take heed,
 If on their dunghill any yet upturn 75
 In whom there lives again the holy seed
 Of those great Romans who remained there erst,
 When it was made the nest for hate to breed."

Line 62. "Who, in old times, came down from Fiesolè." The Florentine traditions suppose that this city was founded by some of the colony of Sylla's soldiers planted by him at Fiesolè, together with some of the natives of that town. This explains the allusion in lines 73 to 78.

Line 67. "I' the world an old report has called them blind." Villani states that the Florentines were nicknamed blind on account of being deceived by the Pisans, who sent them two false columns of porphyry, which trick was not discovered till the columns were raised.

"If all my prayer by Heaven had been endorsed,"
 I answered him, "you would not be as yet 80
 From human nature banished and accursed;
 It grieves me, what I never can forget,
 Your mild paternal image, good and dear,
 When in the world before me you would set 85
 How man can grow eternal in his sphere;
 And all my gratitude, while life remains,
 'Tis fit that in my language it appear.
 That which you tell me of my future pains
 With other texts I keep it, for a gloss 90
 By her whose knowledge everything attains.
 To you this fact alone I would engross,
 That since my conscience no rebuke has made,
 I am prepared for Fortune's gain or loss.
 Such earnest-money is not newly paid 95
 Unto my ears, let Fortune turn her sphere
 Just as she pleases, and the serf his spade."
 My master Virgil backwards turned him here
 On his right hand my countenance to seek,
 And said, "Who noteth well, he well doth hear."
 100
 But for such praise I did not cease to speak
 With Ser Brunetto and request to know
 Which of his comrades would most fame bespeak.
 And he to me: "Of some 'tis good to know,
 But silence is the fittest for the rest,
 Time would be short so great a list to show. 105
 But know in brief that each one is a priest,
 Or skilled in lettered lore, or of great fame,
 By one sin in the world all foul confest.
 Priscian goes thither with that crowd of shame,
 And Francis of Accorso thou might'st see 110
 (If thou hadst any wish to see such blame)
 Him whom the slave of slaves translated free
 From Arno's unto Bacchiglione's tide,
 Where all his rotten nerves he left in fee.
 I would say more, but cannot further bide, 115
 Nor hold more converse with thee, for I see
 A new cloud rising on the desert wide,

Line 109, *et sequitur*. It is a groundless slander to place Priscian in such a company. Francis of Accorso was a celebrated jurisconsult at Bologna. The third party mentioned is Andrea de Mozzi, a Bishop of Florence, who, to conceal his scandalous life, was translated by the Pope (the servant of servants) to the see of Vicenza, from the river of Arno to that of Bacchiglione, which runs through the latter province, where he died.

New people come, with whom I may not be :
 To my Tesoro only grant your care,
 In which I still survive: no more I pray." 120
 Then he turned back, and seemed like those who bear
 The green cloth at Verona, in the race,
 Along the champaign, and had all the air
 Of the victor, not the laggard, in the chase.

Line 122. "The green cloth at Verona, in the race." There was an old custom to have a footrace for a green cloth at Verona, on the first Sunday in Lent. Ser Brunetto ran so fast to rejoin his company that he appeared like the winner in that struggle.

CANTO XVI.

The poets having almost crossed the desert, where they can hear the falling of the torrent into the next circle, meet another troop punished for the same vice, amongst whom Dante converses with three distinguished Florentines. Having reached the precipice, Virgil throws a rope down the waterfall, upon which signal a monster rises.

We'd reached the place, where to the ear arrive
 Of falling waters the reverberate sound,
 Like to the busy murmur of a hive :
 When towards us shadows three together bound
 From out the crowd that past, beneath the rain 5
 Of the sharp torrent, on their ceaseless round.
 Towards us they came, and each one cried amain,
 " Arrest thee there, who by thy dress must be
 An habitant of our own land profane."
 Ah me! what wounds upon their limbs I see 10
 Both old and recent, by the flames burnt deep!
 Still but in memory, how it grieveth me!
 My master stood there as they wailing weep,
 And turned his face towards me: " Now beware
 To these," he said, " fit courtesy to keep. 15
 But for the fire that's darted everywhere
 By the nature of the place, I'd tell thee plain
 Far rather thou than these this haste should share."
 The whiles we stand in pause, their former strain
 Begins once more, and when by us they veer, 20
 Formed in a wheel, the three all turn amain.

Line 21. "Formed in a wheel, the three all turn amain." As stated by Ser Brunetto, these tormented spirits cannot rest for a moment, so the three Florentines wheel in a circle while they stop to converse with Dante.

As athletes stripped and oiled are wont to peer,
 Watching their 'vantage and their time to seize,
 Ere grappling for close combat they draw near ;
 So wheeling round, each one their face and eyes 25
 Fixed ever on me, while on the other hand
 Their feet go onwards in contrariwise.
 " Although the misery of this shifting sand
 Us and our prayers to contumely compel,"
 Thus one began, " and this bare wretched strand, 30
 Our fame thy spirit yet should bow, to tell
 Who then thou art, who thus with living feet
 Treadest securely in the paths of Hell.
 This one, whose step thou seest me repeat,
 Though naked, and with hair scorched off he be, 35
 Was of far higher grade than thou wouldst weest.
 The good Gualdrada's grandson dost thou see ;
 His name was Guidoguerra, and on earth
 With brain and sword, no little work did he.
 He, who behind me treads this sandy dearth, 40
 Was Aldobrandi, in the Council room
 His voice was ever held in highest worth :
 And I, condemned with these to the same doom,
 Was Rusticucci, more than all the rest
 A savage wife has caused my martyrdom." 45
 Had I been sheltered from the fire the least,
 Downwards, amongst them I had thrown me there,
 Nor would my leader have opposed his 'hest.
 But since I should have been all burnt to char,
 The terror overcame the wish so lief, 50
 Which made me greedy to embrace them fair.
 Then I began : " It was not scorn, but grief,
 Which your condition fixed within my mind,
 So deep it could not be removed in brief.

Line 37. Gualdrada was celebrated for her chastity. At a feast in Florence her father, Bellincione Berti (mentioned in the "Paradise" by Cacciaguada as one of the early Florentine worthies), offered the Emperor Otho IV., who was present, authority to give her a salute. The young lady told him not to be so liberal of his offers, as she would preserve such a privilege for one who might be her lawful husband. The Emperor married her on the spot to one of his barons, from which marriage sprang the family of the Conti Guidi. Gualdrada's grandson, Guidoguerra, was a celebrated captain, and at the head of four hundred Guelphs secured the victory for Charles of Anjou against Manfred of Naples, at Benevent, in 1265.

Line 41. Aldobrandi is the Tegghiajo inquired for by Dante from Ser Ciacco in the Sixth Canto, and the speaker Rusticucci was named at the same time amongst the Florentine worthies whom Dante would find in lower circles of Hell. The feeling way in which poor Dante alludes to Rusticucci's sufferings from a savage wife, with which misery he was himself well acquainted, is dwelt upon by Lord Byron, himself a like victim.

AS soon as this my leader had designed 55
 By words, through which at once I knew for sure
 That men were coming of thy lofty kind.
 Your country is my own, and evermore
 Your names all honoured, and the deeds ye show
 With tender love I dwell on and adore. 60
 I leave this gall, and for sweet fruits I go
 By my trustworthy leader promised me ;
 Though first I sink to the central deeps below."
 "That for a length of time thy soul may be
 Thy body's habitant," he answered then, 65
 "And that thy fame may lighten after thee,
 Of courtesy, and valour amongst men,
 Say if they dwell within our town, as erst,
 Or are they utterly cast out agen ?
 For Borsière since he entered first 70
 Amongst us lately, and who now goes there,
 With such discourse has made us more accurst."
 "Her people, and the sudden gains they share,
 Such pride and such excess in thee have bred,
 O Florence, now thou wail'st it in despair." 75
 So cried I loudly with uplifted head,
 And all the three received it for reply,
 And gazed like those who know that truth is said.
 "If other times, thy friends to satisfy
 Costs thee as little, happy who canst bear 80
 Such ready answer," did they all reply.
 "But if thou quitt'st this dark realm of despair,
 And turn'st again the fair stars to behold,
 When 'twill delight to say, 'I once was there,'
 Cause that our story 'mongst mankind be told." 85
 Then they broke up their wheel, and as they fled
 Their lithe limbs flying pinions seemed to unfold.
 An Amen could not possibly be said
 So rapidly as they had disappeared,
 On which again my master onwards sped. 90
 I followed him, and little had we stirred
 Or ere the sound of water drew so nigh
 That when we spake the voice was scarcely heard.
 Like to that stream, whose unmixed waters hie
 First from Mount Veso, towards the rising beam, 95
 From Apennine's left-hand declivity,

Line 70. Borsière is introduced with commendation by Boccaccio, in the eighth novel of the first day of his "Decameron."

Line 94. "Like to that stream, whose unmixed waters hie." The river Montone, which alone falls direct into the sea, all the other rivers rising in that part of the Apennines falling into the Po.

Called Acquacheta in its upland stream,
 Which tumbles headlong to its bed below
 At Forli, where it loses its first name
 And o'er Saint Benedict re-echoing flow 100
 Its waters from the Alps into the vale,
 Site chosen for a thousand soldiers; so
 Down from a bank precipitous, we hail
 Roaring reverberate that blood-tinged tide,
 'Gainst which the stunned ear could not long avail. 105
 I had a rope around my body tied,
 And with it I had some time thought to hold
 That panther with the variegated hide.
 When I had loosened from me every fold,
 My master's mandates ever prompt to keep, 110
 I gave it to him ready noosed and rolled.
 Then to his right he turned him from the deep,
 And to some little distance from the shore
 He hurled it downwards, in that rocky steep.
 Surely some novelty must be in store, 115
 I said within myself, to this new sign,
 Which with his eye my master seeks before.
 Ah me! how cautiously should men opine
 'Midst those who yet unseen the end can prove,
 And others' thoughts intuitive divine! 120
 He said to me: "There soon will come above
 That which I wait, and which thy fancy dreams,
 Soon to thy sight uncovered shall it move."
 Of that truth always, which like falsehood seems,
 Man should keep closed his eyes when'er he can, 125
 Since without fault of his it bringeth shames;
 But here I can but speak; and by the plan
 Of this my Comedy, I swear to thee,
 So may it long find favour amongst man!
 That through the thick and gloomy air I see 130
 An object swimming, upwards through it sweep,
 That would wake marvel in the heart most free:

Line 102. Boccaccio has given the explanation in the text to this line. It may also mean that the abbey of St. Benedict was large enough to contain a thousand monks.

Line 106. Dante is believed in youth to have entered the Franciscan order with the rope, worn by whose brothers, he had thought to conquer his carnal appetites, or take the panther, symbolical of pleasure, as allegorised in the opening Canto of the Poem. This rope Virgil throws over the precipice to lure up the monster, who is to bear them down to the next circle, and who we find afterwards described as the personification of Fraud, under the name of Gerion.

Like one returning who has dived down steep
 To clear away an anchor that has caught
 Some rock or obstacle in ocean deep, 135
 With feet stretched downwards, and who upwards raught.

CANTO XVII.

The form of the monster Gerion is described. Virgil and Dante descend a short distance to reach him, and then Dante returns alone to the extreme verge of the sandy desert, where he sees seated under the rain of fire those who have committed violence against art, or usurers. On returning to Virgil he finds him seated on the back of Gerion, and taking his place before him, the poets are carried down by the monster to the next circle.

“BEHOLD the wild beast with the sharpened tail,
 Behold the thing that makes the whole world stink,
 That passeth mountains, breaketh walls and mail.”
 Thus 'gan my leader his discourse to link,
 And pointed towards it as it came to shore, 5
 Close to that traversed river's stony brink;
 And that foul image of all fraudulent lore
 Came on and reared aloft his head and bust,
 But on the bank his tail he drew not o'er.
 The face was like a man's face, mild and just, 10
 So far benignant was its show outside,
 But like a serpent's trunk was all the rest.
 Arms hairy to the pit hung on each side,
 Its back and breast and both its flanks were rough
 With little knots and varied stains endyed. 15
 With brighter colour in the warp and woof
 Tartars and Turks their cloths have never wove,
 Nor did Arachne ever work such stuff.
 As sometimes on the banks the boats are hove,
 When part is in the water, part on land, 20
 As there amongst the greedy German drove,
 The beaver waiting for his prey will stand,
 So rested that wild beast detestable
 Upon the brink of stone that girds the sand.
 In empty air he jerked his quivering tail, 25
 Twisting right upwards the envenomed sting,
 Which, like a scorpion's, armed its point so fell.
 The leader said: “Our way we now must wring
 A little from its course, that we may reach
 Down to the wicked beast who there doth swing.” 30

So to the right hand do we downwards stretch,
 And to avoid the burning sand and flame
 We make ten paces on the furthest beach.
 And when beside it we descending came
 I see a little further on the sand 35
 Some people seated near the falling stream.
 The master here; "That thou mayst understand
 All that this circle holds for thee to see,
 Now go and see their state thus near at hand;
 Thy conversation with them brief must be. 40
 With this thing will I speak while thou dost go
 That it should yield us its strong shoulders free."
 Thus once again along the furthest row
 Of that seventh circle wend I all alone,
 To where together sate that race of woe. 45
 Gushed from their eyes the grief of every one;
 Now here, now there, with hands they strive to ease
 The vapours now, and now the heat alone.
 Not otherwise do dogs in summer days,
 Now with the snout and now with paws, when bit 50
 By gnats or by mosquitoes or by fleas.
 When on the face of some my eyes I set,
 On whom that grievous fire doth never flag,
 None could I recognise, but well I wit
 That from the neck of each there hung a bag 55
 Marked with some colour and heraldic sign,
 And thence it seemed their eyes could never wag.
 Then as I came inspecting all the line,
 I saw one bag upon a field of or
 That held an azure lion as design. 60
 Then carrying on my scrutiny before,
 Another on a field of gules I trow,
 A goose than butter whiter far that bore.
 Then one who of an azure pregnant sow
 Bore the impression on his satchel white, 65
 Said to me: "In this graveyard what dost thou?
 Now get thee on, and since a living wight,
 Know that my former neighbour, Vitalian,
 At my left hand beside me here will sit.
 Amidst these Florentines I'm Paduan, 70
 And oftentimes my dinned ears I would close
 When they cry out, "There comes the sovran man

Line 56. The armorial bearings afterwards described belong to various houses of Florence and Padua; all of whom are detailed by the early commentators, but their dry recapitulation would be of no interest to modern English readers.

The bag with three goats who will here expose."
 He twisted then his mouth and thrust his tongue
 Out like a bullock when he licks his nose. 75
 And I in fear lest further stay would wrong
 Him who my sojourn to be brief had told,
 Turned back again from 'midst that wearied throng.
 I found my leader had already hold
 All firmly seated on that wild beast's back, 80
 Who said to me, " Now be thou strong and bold.
 Now by such steps we must descend this track ;
 Mount thou before me, I will sit in aid,
 So that for thee the tail all mischief lack." 85
 Like one who waits the fever fit dismayed,
 With whitened nails already, trembling cold,
 Watching the fixed hour on the dial's shade,
 So was I smitten by the words he told,
 But his expected threats became the goad
 Which near good master makes the servant bold. 90
 I took my seat upon those shoulders broad,
 And wished to say, only no utterance came,
 Embrace me closely on this perilous road.
 But he whose help I ne'er in vain did claim
 Soon as I mounted clasped me firm and near, 95
 And with his arms my weakness overcame.
 He cried out : " Gerion, now right onwards steer,
 Make thy wheels large and gradual the descent,
 Think of the novel burden thou dost bear." 100
 As from its launching place the ship is sent
 Stern forwards, so his way he then address,
 And when he felt sufficient space was lent,
 He turned his tail to where had been his breast,
 And moved it stretched out lithely like an eel, 105
 And with his arms the air towards him prest.
 I do not think that greater fear could feel
 Phaeton himself when he had dropt the reins,
 At which, as still we see, the burnt Heavens reel.
 Nor Icarus when he perceived his reins,
 By the wax melting, from his wings let free, 110
 His father crying out in anguish strains,

Line 97. Gerion was King of Spain, and slain by Hercules. Being celebrated for his frauds, Dante has chosen him as the personification of Fraud itself, as in the previous circles we find Cerberus represent Gluttony, the Minotaur Violence, &c.

Line 108. In allusion to the Milky Way having been produced by the combustion of the Heavens when the sun went astray under Phaeton's guidance.

Than was my own when all around I see
 Nothing but air, and save that monstrous show,
 All other vision vanished quite for me.
 Onwards it goeth, swimming soft and slow, 115
 It wheels and sinks, but I of nought am 'ware,
 Save that the air strikes upwards from below.
 Already at the right the roar I hear
 Beneath me rising from the horrible shower,
 At which my straining eyes I downwards peer. 120
 Then did my fear increase with greater power,
 Because both flames I see and screams I hear,
 At which all trembling in my seat I cower.
 Till then unheard there strike upon my ear, 125
 As through great pains we sank and circled on,
 Cries that on every side approached us near.
 Like to a falcon that too long hath flown,
 That cannot see the lure or any prey
 Making the hawkers murmur, Tush! 'tis down!
 Weary descendeth whence in wheeling play 130
 It active sprung, and distant from its lord
 Settles disdainfully in angry bay;
 So Gerion placed us in that deep abhorred,
 Standing at base of rocks that steep uprising,
 And with our persons' weight no longer stored, 135
 It vanished like an arrow from the string.

CANTO XVIII.

A description of the eighth circle, which is divided into ten wards, in which are punished those who have committed frauds of ten different kinds. Virgil and Dante pass through the first two wards; in the first are punished those who have deceived women, who are naked and lashed by demons; in the second all flatterers, who are doomed to wallow in human excrement.

BROUGHT all of rock, with colouring of iron,
 A place called Malebolge is in Hell,
 So the steep cliffs which all its site environ.
 Right in the centre of the region fell
 A pit there sinketh, somewhat large and deep, 5
 Of which the arrangement its due place will tell.

Line 2. "Malebolge." Literally evil pits, the name of the eighth circle.
 Line 5. The pit in the centre is the ninth and last circle of Hell, which is described in the closing Cantos. The description of the eighth circle in plain prose is this: it is divided into ten valleys, separated by high ridges of rock, and an arched bridge crosses over each valley up to the last, where the ninth circle again sinks precipitously into the very centre of the world.

The site remaining then is round, and sweep
 The circles 'twixt the pit and high banks barred,
 And are divided in ten valleys steep.

Like as to fortify some castle ward, 10
 Circumvallations more and more they raise
 The precincts with security to guard.

In such a fashion were constructed these ;
 And as from gates of fortresses there jut
 Small bridges leading to the outer ways, 15

So from the bottom of the rock about
 Arches that cross the steeps and hollows black,
 Up to the pit by which they all are cut.

This was the place where shaken from the back
 Of Gerion did we find ourselves, the bard 20
 Turned to the left, I followed on his track.

To the right new cause for pity I regard,
 Torments all novel and flagellants new,
 With which was wholly filled the opening ward.

In the bottom were the naked sinners' crew, 25
 With faces towards us those on this side ran,
 Beyond they went with us but swifter flew.

Like as the Romans for the hosts that wonne
 Across their bridge upon the Jubilee year,
 To pass the people have devised a plan. 30

Who towards the Castle and St. Peter's steer
 Have one side wholly to themselves assigned,
 The other for those bound to the mount is clear.

As from each end o'er that black rock they wind, 35
 I saw the hornèd demons with a whip,
 Scourging them onwards cruelly behind.

Ah! how they made them lift their legs and skip
 At the first blows! amongst them certes none
 Ere waited to receive a second flip.

Whilst I walked onwards there my eyes with one 40
 Chanced to encounter, and at once I said,
 Surely this man ere this I must have known.

Wherefore my eyes on him I closely laid,
 And my kind leader with me there stood still,
 And to turn backwards his permission made. 45

Lines 26, 27. Those in the half of the circle near Dante were driven along in an opposite direction to that which Virgil was leading him; those in the other half of the circle were driven in the same direction as the poets were themselves going. The simile of the arrangement made by the Pope in the year of the Jubilee, A.D. 1200, to pass the vast crowds who came to the festival in safety over the bridge of Saint Angelo, aptly illustrates and makes clear the somewhat brief description of these two lines.

That whipt one thought his person to conceal,
 Lowering his face, but the attempt was vain.
 I told him, "Thou whose bent eyes earthwards steal,
 If only thy appearance speaketh plain,
 Art Venedico, as I know full well. 50
 But what has led thee to such biting pain?"
 And he to me: "Unwillingly I tell,
 But by thy speech so clear am I bested,
 Which of our ancient world brings back the spell.
 I erst was he who fair Ghisola led 55
 To satisfy the will of the Marchese,
 However now the shameful tale be said.
 Nor wail I only here, a Bolognese:
 Rather this place is crowded with that line,
 Unto so many tongues it is not easy 60
 To utter Sissa in that town of mine.
 If evidence thou wouldst that cannot fail,
 Recall to mind how we to greed incline."
 Whilst he was speaking with his leather flail
 A demon lashed him; "Get ye on," he cried. 65
 "Pandar! no prostitutes are here for sale."
 On this I turned and joined again my guide.
 Soon after that a few steps brought us where
 A ridge that jutted from the bank we spied,
 O'er which our forms we lightly climbing rear, 70
 And turning to the right upon the rock
 From those eternal boundaries on we bear.
 When we had reached the centre where the block
 Is arched beneath to let the scourged pass through,
 My leader said, "Wait here, and cast thy look 75
 Upon the faces of that ill-born crew,
 Of whom thou hast not yet beheld the face,
 Since they together with us onwards drew."
 Standing on that old bridge we watch the race
 That came towards us of that other band, 80
 Who by the whip are likewise driven in chase.

Line 56. Venedico Caccianimico, a gentleman of Bologna, who, as he here tells us, was bribed by Obizzo da Este, the Marchese of Ferrara, to deceive his sister Ghisola into yielding herself to his desires. The Marchese has already been introduced boiling in the river of blood.

Line 61. Sissa is the shibboleth of the Bolognese, being their fashion of pronouncing the affirmative *si*.

Line 78. "Since they together with us onwards drew"—i.e., were going in the same direction as the poets, before they mounted the bridge to cross the valley.

My gentle master without my demand
 Said to me, " See that lofty form who comes,
 And seems in spite of grief tears to command.
 Even yet how royally his aspect looms! 85
 'Tis Jason, who by intellect and heart
 Conquered the Golden Fleece from Colchian homes.
 Passing by Lemnos' isle he played his part,
 Soon after that those angered women bold 90
 Had put the males to death by hellish art.
 With gestures then and the skilled words he told
 Isiphile the maiden he deceived,
 Who all the others had deceived of old ;
 There pregnant he deserted her, bereaved, 95
 Him has that crime to such a torment borne ;
 Revenged is also now Medea grieved.
 With him there go who women left forlorn.
 Let this suffice thee of this vale to weet,
 And of all those beneath its tushes torn." 100
 Now we had reached to where the narrow street
 Reaches at length the second bank athwart,
 Where this and the further valley's bridges meet.
 There people we perceive who groan apart
 In the other ward and their own bodies strike 105
 With their own hands, and with their nostrils snort.
 The banks with mouldiness were crusted thick,
 By the breathing from below which clung thereto,
 Offensive to the eyes and nose alike.
 The bottom is so steep that for the view 110
 No place would answer save we climbed the steep
 Crown of the arch that o'er the abysses grew.
 We came there and from thence down in the deep
 Saw people smothered in a filthy smurch
 From human privies gathered in a heap.
 And whilst below my eyes commence their search • 115
 A head so smeared with excrement I rede,
 One knew not whether lay or of the Church.
 He shouted to me : " Why so great thy greed
 To stare at me alone in this foul sty ?"
 And I to him : " Because if well I heed, 120
 Thee have I seen ere now with hair more dry,
 And thou must be Alessio Intermenei ;
 For staring at thee this the reason why."

Line 93. Isiphile had deceived the other women by saving her father from the general slaughter of the males in the island.

Striking his pumpkin then he said to me,
 "The constant flatteries have submerged me here, 125
 From which of old my tongue was never free."
 On this my leader said to me, "Make steer
 Thy right a little forward in the grot,
 So that there strike upon thy vision clear 130
 The face of that dishevelled filthy slut
 Who scratches with her shotten nails her side,
 And now stands upright, and now down will squat ;
 The harlot's name is Thais, who replied,
 When questioned by her keeper, 'Have I great
 Favour with thee?' 'Most marvellous,' and lied. 135
 Let this suffice our sight to satiate."

Line 133. A character in a play of Terence, from which this not very extraordinary specimen of female flattery is quoted.

CANTO XIX.

Dante describes the third valley, in which Simonists are punished by being buried head downwards in round apertures of the rock, their legs from the knees downwards being alone visible, which they kick convulsively, while the soles of the feet burn with a lambent flame. Virgil bears Dante down the impassable bank into the bottom of the valley, where he converses with the soul of Pope Nicholas the Third, and bitterly rebukes him for his Simony and prostitution of his high office.

O SIMON MAGUS! O thy followers base,
 The things of God that aye with piety
 Should wedded be, rapacious ye disgrace
 With gold and silver in adultery!
 Now fits it that for you the trumpet blare, 5
 Since in this third division there ye be!
 Already in the sequent tomb we were
 Mounted above its high bridge in that part
 Which o'er the centre of pits it strikes sheer.
 O highest wisdom, how complete the art 10
 Thou shewest in the Heavens, and Earth, and Hell,
 And in thy virtue how most just thou art!
 Along the sides and in the bottom fell
 I saw the livid stones all full of holes,
 All of one size and rounded like a well. 15
 Not larger or more small appeared their boles
 Than those which in my own St. John's fair shrine
 Are made as places for baptising souls;

And one of which, not many years long syne,
 To save a child that drowned within I broke ; 20
 Let this avowal clear that deed of mine.
 Out of the aperture of each there stuck
 A sinner's foot and legs up to the knee,
 While all the rest was left within to choke.
 Both feet were lit of all that company, 25
 For which so strongly did they jerk and throe
 From bands and withes they had at once burst free.
 As oily things when burnt are wont to glow,
 With flame o'er all their surface wandering quick,
 So were those feet ablaze from heel to toe. 30
 " My master, who is that one that doth kick
 In torment more than all his comrades here ?"
 I asked, " and whom a redder flame doth lick ?"
 And he : " If thou art willing I will bear
 Thee downwards thither by yon sloping way. 35
 His person and his sin from him thou'lt hear."
 And I : " What pleaseth thee is welcome aye ;
 Thou art my lord and know'st that to thy will
 I cling, and knowest all I do not say."
 Then did we mount above o'er the fourth hill ; 40
 We turned and to the left descended soon
 Down to the hole-filled bottom straight and still.
 My gentle master did not place me down
 From off his hip till we had reached the hole
 Of him who with his legs made all his moan. 45
 " Whoever thou mayst be, O wretched soul
 Who there art fixed head downwards like a stake,
 Give audience," said I, " if in thy control."
 I stood there like a friar who doth take
 Confession from a murderer buried quick, 50
 Who calls to him some respite still to make.
 And he cried out : " Art thou arrived so quick,
 Already there art standing, Boniface ?
 Some years was out that prophecy oblique.

Line 21. Dante appears to have been accused of sacrilege for breaking up this baptistery, of which he here solemnly affirms his innocence.

Line 49. The old punishment for murderers in Florence was to bury them alive head downwards, and Dante aptly compares himself to a friar taking a confession from such a victim, who still calls out that he has something further to confess to delay his doom.

Line 53. The Pope in this hole mistakes Dante for his own successor in the Papacy, Boniface VIII., still living, and whom he did not expect to arrive so soon, owing to a prophecy he had read which promised him a longer life, and to which he alludes in the next line. The " lady fair " in line 56 is the Papacy.

Art thou so soon then wearied of the place 55
 For which such lady fair with cunning planned,
 Thou didst not fear to win and then disgrace ?”
 Like unto those who do not understand
 That which is answered to them did I bide
 As scorned, not knowing what to redemand. 60
 “Tell to him quickly,” then my Virgil cried,
 “Not he, not he am I whom thou dost weet.”
 And I, as was imposed on me, replied,
 On which the spirit wholly writhed his feet,
 Then deeply sighing and with voice of woe 65
 Said to me: “What wouldst have me then repeat ?
 If to know who I am concerns thee so
 That for such purpose thou this bank hast paced,
 That I have worn the Papal mantle know ; 70
 And of the Bear a worthy son, in haste
 Desirous to advance the little Bears,
 There riches, here myself in purse I placed.
 Beneath my head are all the other peers
 Who doing Simony preceded me,
 Within the hollowed stone concealed in layers. 75
 I shall sink downwards in my time when he
 Will come who I at first believed thou wert,
 That sudden question when I made to thee.
 But I already am far longer hurt
 With feet thus cooked, and turned thus upside down, 80
 Than he with red-flame feet will here revert.
 Since after him, with laidlier renown,
 Will come a lawless shepherd from the West,
 Such as befitteth him and me to crown.
 A second Jason will he prove at least, 85
 Like him in Maccabees to whom was pliant
 His king, as France will be to his behest.”
 I know not if I was not too defiant,
 And yet I answered him in such a metre.
 “Ah, tell me now what treasure of his client 90

Line 70. Pope Innocent III. was of the Orsi family of Rome; he therefore calls the younger branches of that family whom he advanced the Orsetti, or little Bears.

Line 72. “There riches, here myself in purse I placed.” On earth he put riches in his purse, by which he placed himself in the hole in Hell. The translation in the text is verbal.

Line 83. Bertrand, Archbishop of Bordeaux, who was elected Pope in 1305, and assumed the name of Clement V. To please his king, Philip the Fourth of France, he transferred the Holy See from Rome to Avignon, and Innocent III. prophesies that he will speedily relieve Boniface from the outer station in the hole.

Line 90. The following indignant burst against the errors of the Papacy is justly celebrated as amongst the finest parts of the poem.

Our Lord at first demanded from St. Peter,
 That in his charge the keys he should deliver?
 'Follow thou Me,' was His demand far meeter.
 Saint Peter and the rest from Matthew never
 Asked gold or silver when they chose him free 95
 In the place which lost one guilty soul for ever.
 Therefore stay there, thou'rt punished properly,
 And of thy money, ill acquired, take care,
 Which against Carlos caused thy surquedry.
 And were it not that still there makes me spare 100
 That reverence for the highest keys I have,
 Which thou possessedst in a happier air,
 I would make use of words by far more grave;
 Since the world saddens at thy avarice mean,
 Trampling the good and raising the deprave; 105
 Pastors like ye the Evangelist did mean,
 When she who sate above the waters borne,
 Committing whoredoms with the kings was seen.
 She with seven heads in beauty had been born,
 And her ten horns in comely pride did hold, 110
 The while to virtue was her husband sworn.
 Ye've made your God of silver and of gold,
 Ye from idolaters what line withdraws,
 Save they sin once, and ye a hundredfold?
 Ah, Constantine, of how much ill was cause, 115
 Not thy conversion but the fatal dower
 Which the first wealthy father from thee draws!"
 And all the while to him such notes I pour,
 Whether 'twas rage or conscience that him smote,
 With both his legs he jerked and struggled sore. 120
 It pleased my leader clearly as I note,
 With such contented countenance did he hear
 The sound of words that honest truth denote.
 Then within both his arms he clasped me near,
 And when he held me closely to his breast 125
 Mounted the path he had descended there.

Line 99. Carlos of Sicily, who excited Innocent's anger by refusing to give his daughter in marriage to one of the Pope's nephews.

Line 109. The harlot on the waters is here clearly the Papacy, who while her own lord, the Pope, remained virtuous, in the early times was adorned with the seven heads—the cardinal virtues, and the ten horns—the ten sacraments of the Romish ritual.

Line 115. This triplet has been thus translated by Milton:—

"Ah! Constantine, of how much ill was cause
 Not thy conversion, but those rich domains
 That the first wealthy Pope received of thee!"

Nor wearied he to hold me closely prest,
 But to the summit of the arch he strode
 Which from the fourth to the fifth ridge was drest. 130
 There tenderly he placed his darling load,
 Down on the rock precipitously high,
 That unto goats had been a difficult road,
 And there another valley I descry.

CANTO XX.

In the fourth ward of Malebolge Dante sees the doomed passing in slow procession. On closer inspection he finds that their heads are turned the face behind, and that they have consequently to walk backwards. These are necromancers who deceived themselves or others by attempting to look into the future. Amongst them is Manto, the sight of whom leads Virgil into a digression on the origin of his native city.

OF novel torture I must weave the verse,
 And to the twentieth Canto matter yield
 Of this first song, where Hell's dooms I rehearse.
 Already all my forces did I wield 5
 To gaze into the deeps o'er which I hung,
 There where the anguish tears for ever rilled :
 And through the circular vale I saw them throng,
 Coming in tears and silence at the pace,
 At which on earth the Litanies are sung. 10
 As downwards sank my vision to their place,
 Miraculously did they seem deformed,
 Each one between the upper chest and face.
 For from the reins the visage was transformed,
 And since they could not therefore forward look,
 Compulsively they ever backwards swarmed. 15
 Perchance by force of paralytic stroke
 One might be twisted thus in branch and root,
 I think not, nor on such did ever look.
 If God permit thee, reader, to take fruit 20
 From thy perusal, now bethink thee each,
 How could I keep my eyes dry, looking to 't,
 When our own image, almost in my reach,
 I saw so twisted, that their weeping eyes
 With tears, adown its fissure, bathed their breach. 25
 Surely I wept, supported on a rise
 Of that fire-hardened rock, so that my guide
 Said to me : "Thou too 'mongst the little wise?"

Here Pity lives alone, when it hath died.
 Who is a greater scelerate than he
 Who lets his passion 'gainst God's judgment bide? 30
 Lift up thy head erect, lift up and see
 Whom the earth swallowed in the Thebans' sight,
 On which they shouted all, 'Ah, where dost flee,
 Anfiarus? wherefore dost thou leave the fight?'
 But he from running downwards could not rest, 35
 Down, down to Minos, who each soul holds tight.
 See how his back has now become his breast;
 Because he wished to see too far before,
 Backwards he looks, with steps still backwards prest.
 Tiresias see, who changed his semblance more, 40
 When from a male a woman he became,
 Shifting each member with most wondrous lore:
 And after he was forced to smite the same
 Entwisted pair of serpents with his rod
 Ere his male nature he again could claim. 45
 Against his belly Aruns' back doth prod
 Who, upon Luni's mountains where there slave
 Carrara's peasants in their low abode,
 Possessed amidst the marbles white a cave
 For dwelling-place, whence, not as now confined, 50
 His vision swept the stars and ocean wave.
 And she, who covers o'er her breasts behind,
 Which thou seest not from here, with long thick hair,
 Which on the other side hangs unconfined,
 Was Manto, who through many a land did fare, 55
 And settled afterwards where I was born,
 Of which, 'twill please me, thou shouldst somewhat hear.
 After her father quitted life forlorn,
 And Bacchus' city Thebes became a slave,
 She, through the world, a long time wandered lorn. 60

Line 34. Anfiarus, one of the seven kings who besieged Thebes, and who, while fighting in his chariot, was swallowed up in the yawning earth. As a false prophet he is placed in this ward of Malebolge.

Line 40. Tiresias, a soothsayer of Thebes, who, according to Ovid's "Metamorphoses," book iii., changed himself into a woman by smiting two serpents, and could not recover his old form until, seven years afterwards, he met the same serpents, and again struck them with his rod.

Line 46. Aruns, a soothsayer of Tuscany.

Line 55. Manto, a sorceress, the daughter of the Theban soothsayer, Tiresias. In a solitary act of forgetfulness, Dante, in Canto XXII. of the "Purgatory," enumerates her among the celebrities in Limbo. She founded Mantua, concerning which Virgil indulges in a long digression, in which Dante, line 105, hints that he takes little interest.

In Upper Italy, deep waters lave
 The foot of the Alps, which gird Lamagna fair,
 Above the Tyrol, called Benaco's wave.
 A thousand springs, I fancy, feed it there,
 'Twixt Garda and the distant Apennine, 65
 With water which doth stagnate in that lair.
 There is a central spot, where the Trentine
 Bishop, the Brescian, and Verona's too,
 Each, that way travelling, might a blessing sign. 70
 Sitteth Peschiera, strong and fair to view,
 The Brescians and the Bergamots to pent,
 There, where first downwards slope the banks anew.
 There, all the surplus water down is sent,
 Which in Benaco's bosom cannot flow,
 And makes a river, through green pastures blent. 75
 Soon as the wave begins to glide below
 No more Benaco, Mincio is its name,
 Until Governo, where it meets the Po.
 A plain it finds, ere far hath gone its stream
 In which it stretches out its waters mild, 80
 A place unhealthy in hot summer's flame.
 Then passing on her way the virgin wild
 Beheld a central station in the fen
 Uncultured, nor by habitants defiled. 85
 There, to escape all intercourse with men,
 She settled with her slaves, her art pursued
 And died where she had been a denizen.
 Afterwards, scattered round that neighbourhood,
 Men gathered in that place, reputed strong 90
 Because the marsh on all sides barred inroad.
 They raised a city o'er her bones ere long,
 And after her, who first had chosen the site,
 They called it Mantua, without rite or song.
 Of old its people were of no mean might
 Till Casalodi's madness was deceived 95
 By Pinamonti's cunning of his right.

Line 61. The lake Benaco, here so minutely described, is now called the Lago di Guarda.

Line 67, &c. The three bishoprics mentioned meet in this spot.

Line 70. The garrison of Peschiera, to the south of the lake, where its surplus waters flow out and form the Mincio.

Line 95. Albert, Count of Casalodi, was induced by Pinamonti to drive all the nobles from the State, making him believe that this would make him omnipotent with the people. Pinamonti then placed himself at the head of the latter, drove out Casalodi, and usurped the sovereignty of the State.

But I must warn thee, be it ne'er believed,
 If some should otherwise originate
 My town, the truth should keep them undeceived."
 And I: "O master, all thou dost relate 100
 To me is certain, and so wins belief,
 That fuel spent for me were others' prate.
 But tell me of yon band, who wonne in grief,
 If thou seest any worthy of remark :
 For only about that my mind is lief." 105
 Then he continued : " He whose shoulders dark
 Are covered with his cheeks' thick-spreading beard,
 What time the males of Greece did all embark,
 So that the babes in cradles sole were spared, 110
 Was Augur, and with Calchas gave the sign,
 In Aulis for the cable to be sheared.
 Euripilus his name, and by design
 My epic names him in a certain place,
 Thou know'st it well who know'st its every line.
 That other who fills up a little space, 115
 Was Michel Scot, who veritably knew
 Of cheating magic every secret grace.
 Guido Bonatti see : Asdente view,
 Who now would wish he ne'er had left his thread
 And leather, but too late repentance grew. 120
 Behold the wretches who the needle fled
 And distaff, striving at prophetic strain,
 With herbs and shapes they worked their deeds of dread.
 But onwards now : already seeks the main,
 With boundary of both hemispheres in view, 125
 Beyond Seville, the faggot-bearing Cain :
 And yestreen to its full the round moon grew ;
 Thou shouldst remember well it did not darken
 In that deep underwood the whole night through."
 So spake he, and we walked on while I hearken. 130

Line 113. *Æneid*, book ii., line 114:—"Suspensi Eurypylum scitatum oracula Phœbi mittimus."

Line 118. Bonatti was an astrologer of Forli, and adviser of Monte Feltrò. Asdente, a shoemaker of Parma, who left his business to practise the sooth-sayer's art, in which he acquired a great local reputation.

Line 126. The faggot-bearing Cain is the moon, the spots on whose face were supposed, in the Middle Ages, to be Cain with a faggot of thorns. The superstition still lingers in the old phrase of the man in the moon.

CANTO XXI.

The poets pass into the fifth ward, and, looking down from the bridge, Dante discovers it to be a lake of boiling pitch. While gazing into its depths a demon alights on the bridge, bearing a sinner on his back, whom he throws into the lake. As the wretch rises to the surface a crowd of demons, hitherto concealed under the bridge, attack him with their hooks and force him to dive into the boiling pitch. Virgil issues forth to obtain a safe passage for Dante, and being told that the bridge over the sixth valley is in ruins they follow a band of demons, whom their chief has directed to guide the poets to another bridge over the next ward.

So on from bridge to bridge in parlance new,
 Of which my Comedy no record keeps,
 We past, and reaching to the summit, view,
 Resting, that other fissure in the deeps
 Of Malebolge and its wailings vain. 5
 Gazing, a marvellous darkness o'er it sweeps,
 As within Venice' Arsenal, amain
 In winter time the pitch tenacious burns
 Their unsound vessels there to caulk again,
 Since they can sail no longer, and by turns 10
 One builds a new ship, and one stops with tow
 The ribs of one that from far voyage returns;
 One builds anew the stern, and one the prow;
 Some make the cars, and some the rigging start,
 And some the foresail, and the mizen stow: 15
 So not by fire, but by Almighty art,
 Bubbled the lake of boiling pitch below
 That clinging slimed the bank in every part.
 I saw it, but therein nought else did know 20
 Except the bubbles which the boiling raised,
 And the whole swell and fall in changing flow.
 Whilst underneath I then intently gazed,
 My master shouting out, "Behold there, straight!"
 Drew me towards him from my place amazed, 25
 Then turned I, like a man, by whom too late
 Is seen some object which he fain would fly,
 Whose forces at the sudden fear abate,
 And he runs instantly it strikes his eye.
 I saw behind us both a devil dark,
 That running o'er the sharp-set rocks drew nigh. 30
 Ah me! how fearful was his aspect stark!
 And how in action cruelly he strode
 As his wide wings and active feet I mark!

Upon his shoulder towering high and broad,
 And on his hips a sinning wight he bore, 35
 While by the feet he firmly gripped his load.
 "O Malebranche," from our bridge's shore
 He cried, "behold Saint Zita's magistrate :
 Dip him below the while I turn for more
 In the same land, where many more await, 40
 Except Buonturo, each man there is cheat ;
 For lucre no to yes they alter straight."
 He cast him down, and o'er the steep rocks fleet
 He turned away, a mastiff loosed from hold
 Ne'er followed on a thief with greater heat. 45
 The sinner dived, and rose again uprolled,
 When 'neath the bridge concealed the demons cried,
 "This place the Holy Visage doth not hold :
 One swims not here as in the Serchio's tide ;
 But if our grappling-irons thou wouldst 'scape, 50
 Try not too much above the pitch to bide."
 Then with a hundred hooks they clawed his shape,
 And cried, "'Neath covert thou must gambol here,
 And see how much whilst hidden thou canst rape."
 Not otherwise the scullion troop appear 55
 When they within the boiling cauldron drown
 The meat with hooks that it may disappear.
 Then my good master : "That it be not known
 That thou art here," he said, "in some rock's shade
 That giveth present shelter sit thee down. 60
 And for no injury to me essayed
 Fear anything, since I these things have told,
 And seen ere now the devils at parade."
 Then did he pass beyond our bridge's hold,
 And of the sixth ridge, as he reached the side, 65
 Well had he need of all his calmness bold.
 With such a fury and such tempest tide
 As household dogs some beggar wretch surround,
 Who on the sudden begs where he is tied,

Line 37. "Malebranche"—evil hounds—is the generic name of these demons.

Line 38. "Saint Zita" was the guardian saint of Lucca, which the demon asserts to be so full of public cheats. Perhaps "jobber" is the nearest approximation to the Italian word *barattiere*, as here used by Dante. It need hardly be said that the exception in favour of Buonturo Dato is ironical, he being the greatest "jobber" of the batch.

Line 48. A picture of Christ's face, miraculously imprinted on a handkerchief with which he wiped off his sweat in the agony, and which was religiously preserved at Lucca. The Serchio is a river near the town.

So from beneath the bridge they sallied round 70
 And all their prongs towards him pointed: "Stay!"
 Cried he to them; "your evil will be bound.
 Before your hooks can rend me stand away,
 And one of you come forth my words to hear,
 And then consult to tear me, yea or nay." 75
 "Go, Malacoda," cried they all, and near
 Drew one, the whilst the other stood at fee,
 Saying, "In what will this avail him here?"
 "Thinkest thou, Malacoda, thou wouldst see
 Me venture here," replied the master mine, 80
 "From all your fiends' attacks so far 'scaped free
 Without propitious Fate and will Divine?
 Permit my passage through this way forlorn,
 Where I must guide my friend through Heaven's design." 85
 On that his toppling pride was straightway shorn,
 And he let drop his weapon to his feet,
 And said to the others, "He must not be torn."
 My leader then to me: "Thou from the seat
 Where, 'midst the rocks, thou dost in hiding keep
 In safety now abandon thy retreat." 90
 Then rising towards him quickly did I creep;
 And all the devils pressed so very near,
 I feared their promise they would never keep.
 So did I see of yore the soldiers fear
 Who issued from Caprona under pact, 95
 Seeing so many enemies appear.
 Close to my leader's form in trembling act
 I clung, but never did I turn my eyes
 From those fierce faces which all goodness lackt.
 They dropped their hooks, but one to the other cries, 100
 "Shall I just touch him up upon the breech?"
 Who answers, "Yes—give him a slight surprise."
 But that chief demon, who had held some speech
 With my dear leader, quickly turning, cried, 105
 "Scarmiglione, peace to all and each!"
 To us then: "Further passage by the side
 Of this rock is impossible, below
 The sixth arch shattered leaves all way denied.
 Still forwards if your wish is yet to go,
 You must walk upwards by yon rocky way, 110
 Near which another ridge will pathway show.

Line 95. The surrender of Caprona, a castle belonging to the Pisans, to the combined forces of Lucca and Florence, occurred in 1290. Dante is stated to have been present at the siege.

Just five hours later was it yesterday
 We count twelve hundred sixty and six years
 Since first this passage was all burst away.

I now am sending there a few compeers 115
 To see that no one tries to sally out,
 Go on with them; they need not raise your fears.
 Alichin, Calcabrina, step ye out,"
 Began he unto them, "and thou Cagnazzo
 And Barbariccia, thou shalt lead the rout. 120
 Come forward, Libicocco, Draghignazzo,
 Ciriatto with the tusks, and Graffiacan,
 And Farfarel, and Rubicante mad so.
 Go circle all around the boiling pan.
 These till the other rock must be left free, 125
 Which all unbroken doth the valley span."
 "Ah me! my master, what is this I see?
 If thou but know'st the way I ask not these:
 Ah! let us walk without their company.

If thou art prudent as thy nature is, 130
 Dost not thou see how these their fangs lay bare,
 And with their eyebrows threaten treacheries?"
 And he to me: "I would discourage fear;
 Let them grin on, as is their sense malign,
 They do it for the souls in torment there." 135
 By the left bank we find our road incline,
 But first their tongues, as far as they could reach,
 Each pointed to his leader as a sign,
 While he had made a trumpet of his breach.

Line 112. The demon alludes to the descent of Christ into Hell at the ninth hour of the day, which took place 1,276 years before the previous day; that day is fixed, therefore, as Good Friday, on which day, in reverent imitation, Dante fixed the epoch of his own descent.

Line 137. The elegant pantomime between the devils and their leader is intended to show their intense appreciation of the deceit which Malacoda has practised on the poets.

CANTO XXII.

The poets following the ten demons, they come suddenly upon a sinner, who before he can escape into the lake is speared by one of the fiends. With the permission of the leader, Virgil questions the sinner as to himself and his companions. The trickster then induces the demons to stand aside, under pretence that he will lure more of his comrades into their clutches, and takes the opportunity of plunging into the burning pitch; two of the demons chasing him are caught in the slimy lake, and while the rest are extricating them the poets continue their way.

G

ERE now I've witnessed knighthood move afield,
 Pass in review and rally in the fight,
 And prest at times for safety backwards yield ;
 Over your land I've seen the scouts in flight, 5
 O Aretines, and seen the squadrons swell
 For tourney and for jousting all bedight,
 And move to sound of trumpet, drum, and bell,
 With signals flung from castled towers afar,
 In native and in foreign modes as well ;
 But never with such curious pipe of war 10
 Have I seen men-at-arms and footmen throng,
 Nor ships at signal from the shore, or star.
 With those two demons did we move along.
 Ah, fearful company ! but to the Church 15
 Saints only and to taverns sots belong.
 Engrossed alone within that pitch I search,
 To witness all contained in its black grave,
 And all the people turning in their smurch.
 Like dolphins roll their backs upon the wave, 20
 And warn the watchful wanderers of the main,
 Their vessels from the coming storm to save,
 So striving to alleviate their pain,
 Some of those sinners' backs would upwards float,
 And quick as lightning disappear again. 25
 And as around the margin of a moat
 Stand frogs with heads alone that outwards peep,
 Their feet and bulk all hidden to the throat,
 Such order did those wretched sinners keep ;
 But soon as Barbariccia drew him near, 30
 So did they vanish in the boiling deep.
 I saw it and my heart still quakes with fear.
 One sinner waited there, as hath appeared
 When one frog stays while others disappear.
 And Grafiacan, who close to him had neared, 35
 Suddenly seized him by his pitchy hair,
 And dragged him upwards like an otter speared.
 Already of their names I was aware,
 Having remarked them when elect thereto,
 And heard them call each other here and there.
 " O Rubicante, do thou seize him too, 40
 Stick in the talons so that thou mayst flay,"
 Shouted together all that cursed crew.
 And I : " My master, if thou canst, essay
 To know what wretch is this such ills betide, 45
 Thus fallen in his foemen's hands a prey."

My leader then advanced him to his side,
 And asked him whence he was; "A Navarrese
 Was I by birth," the wretched soul replied.
 "My mother gave me a lord's liveries,
 Since she had borne me to a ribald thing 50
 That wrecked his holdings and himself with these.
 After I served the good Tibaldo, king;
 There I began to practise with chicane,
 For which in heat I pay the reckoning."
 Ciriatto, from whose mouth long tushes twain 55
 Issued on each side like a forest boar,
 Of a boar's goring made him feel the pain.
 The mouse had fallen among cats galore;
 But Barbariccia stayed him with his hand,
 And shouted, "Wait there till I haul him o'er." 60
 Then to my master turned his face. "Demand
 Again," said he, "if more thou wouldest know
 Of him before he's tortured by my band."
 My leader then: "'Mongst those bad souls below,
 Knowest thou any that were Latin born 65
 Beneath the pitch?" And he: "Awhile ago
 I had one for my neighbour there forlorn;
 Would I were now with him in covert laid!
 I would not then by hook and claw be torn."
 Then Libicocco: "We've too long delayed," 70
 He said, and seized his arm so with his hook
 That tearing it a ghastly strip he flayed.
 And Draghignazzo also downwards strook,
 To seize him by his legs; the devils' lord
 Turned round to quell them with a savage look; 75
 And when some quiet was again restored,
 To him who only gazed upon his sore
 My chief without delay addressed the word.
 "And who was he whom when thou cam'st to shore
 Thou quittedst, as thou say'st, in evil tide?" 80
 "Frate Gomita was the name he bore,
 He of Galliera, vase of fraud," replied
 That wretched one; "his master's enemies
 So did he treat that each his praises cried;

Line 47. The jobber who falls into the demon's clutches is one Ciampolo; he became a favourite of Tibault, King of Navarre, in whose court he found a field for his knaveries.

Line 81. Frate Gomita was a Sardinian who abused the confidence of his master, the Governor of Galliera, one of the four presidencies into which the island of Sardinia was divided.

He took their coin and loosed them ; in this wise 85
 Still doth he boast, and in all deeds before
 All others he was king of jobberies.
 So Michel Zanche, he of Logodore,
 Uses this gift, and of Sardinia there
 Their tongues in wagging weary nevermore. 90
 Ah ! see that other, how his fangs are bare ;
 I would say more, but tremble lest that fellow
 Be not preparing now to comb my hair."
 The devils' leader turned to Farfarello,
 Whose eyes were rolling in his thirst to tear, 95
 "Stand off, thou bird of evil !" did he bellow.
 "If you have any wish to see or hear,"
 Resumed he then, who stood in terror nigh,
 "Tuscans or Lombards, I will bring them here.
 But let the Malebranche stand them by, 100
 So that through fear they be not backwards driven.
 And in this very place remaining, I,
 Instead of my own self will bring you seven,
 If I but whistle, so to sally out
 Amongst us is the signal always given." 105
 Cagnazzo at the motion raised his snout,
 Shaking his head and cried, "The malice know
 Downwards to throw himself is all his thought."
 When he, whose snares were ever ready, slow
 Answered, "Malicious is indeed the spite 110
 Which for myself procureth greater woe."
 Alichin held no more and opposite
 To all the others cried : "If thou from there
 Cast thyself down I'll follow on thy flight
 Not running, o'er the pitch my wing will bear. 115
 Leave him the summit, from the bank stand clear,
 And see what he alone 'gainst us can dare."
 O thou who readest, novel sport shalt hear.
 Each one then turned his eyes the other way ;
 He first who most suspicious did appear. 120
 The Navarrese chose time for making play,
 Upon the bank his feet he firmly set,
 Then bounding from their purpose burst away.
 With that vexation each one sore beset,
 And chiefly him of all their loss the cause, 125
 Who chasing after cried, "I have you yet."

Line 88. Michel Zanche was Governor of Logodore, another of the four Sardinian presidencies. He was said to have been murdered by his son-in-law, of the powerful Genoese house of Doria, and his name will recur in Canto XXXIII., where his son-in-law is found.

Line 126. Alichin, who, opposed to all the rest, had induced them to yield to the trickster's suggestion.

But little 'vailed it, since his wings made pause
 By innate dread; one vanished underneath,
 The other rising o'er the gulf withdraws. 130
 Not otherwise the wild duck when he seeth
 The falcon near, dives downwards at its dart,
 And he returns all spent in wing and breath.
 Then Calcabrina, angered at his heart
 By such a trick, behind the other sheared,
 The victim 'scaped, to combat turned his part. 135
 And as the trickster then had disappeared
 On his companion his sharp talons drew,
 And grappling with him o'er the deep they reared.
 But the other also was a falcon true,
 And knew full well to strike, and both in rings 140
 Circling fell headlong in the boiling stew.
 There suddenly the heat its loosening brings,
 But they were powerless to rise up again,
 So thickly had their fall beslimed their wings.
 Then Barbariccia grieving with his train, 145
 Made four fly over to the other side,
 All with their prongs, and every one amain
 From here and there towards them downward glide,
 Stretching their hooks to those in slime immixt,
 Who were already cooked beneath the tide; 150
 And so we left them with their task perplex.

CANTO XXIII.

Dante expresses to Virgil his fear that they will be pursued by the revengeful demons, and as his alarm is fulfilled Virgil lifts him in his arms and carries him down the cliff into the next valley of Malebolge. There they find hypocrites punished by being clothed in long cloaks and weighty cowls of lead. Amongst these Dante converses with two Rejoicing Friars, who, under the cloak of impartiality, had inflicted grievous wrong on the Ghibeline party in Florence.

SILENT, alone, without all company,
 On went we, one before and one behind,
 In the way Franciscan friars are wont to hie.
 Upon old Esop's fable was inclined
 My cogitation by that strife below, 5
 That where the tale of the Frog and Rat we find:

Line 6. The fable where the frog offering to carry a rat across a stream with the intention of drowning him, both are carried off by a kite. The similitude is not so exact as Dante would make it appear.

For does not more resemble now and now
 Than one to the other action, if all clear
 The object and result of each we trow ;
 And as thoughts follow on each other near, 10
 So sprang from this another by degrees,
 Which woke with double force my former fear.
 Thus did I think. It was through us that these
 Have been befooled with loss and ridicule,
 Such as I think must surely them displease. 15
 If anger over evil passion rule
 They will pursue us hither crueller far
 Than greyhound at the moment it would pull
 The hare to pieces. Stood on end my hair
 With terror, and intent behind, I said, 20
 " O master, if thou dost not now take care
 Thee and myself at once to hide, I dread
 These Malebranche ; on our track they stir ;
 In thought already do I hear them tread." 25
 And he replied, " If I a mirror were,
 Thy outward form I should not clearer show
 Than do thy inward thoughts to me recur.
 Even now thy thoughts amidst my own did flow
 With similar action, and in similar wise, 30
 So that they both to single counsel grow.
 If now in truth this right declivity lies,
 So that to the other ward we may descend,
 We will escape the chase thou didst surmise."
 He had not brought his counsel to an end 35
 Before I saw them with their wings outtraught,
 Stretching for flight, as not far off they wend.
 Me then my leader suddenly upcaught,
 Like to a mother roused up by the roar,
 Who sees the burning flames all near her brought, 40
 And takes her child and flies, nor waits for more,
 Having of him than of herself more care,
 Dressed in the only garment which she wore.
 So from the summit of that hard rock there
 He slid adown the hanging mountain side,
 Which to the other ward descendeth sheer. 45
 Faster did water ne'er through channel glide
 To turn the wheels of some far inland mill,
 When nearest to the whirling blades it hied,
 Than did my master down that hanging hill,
 Bearing me up in safety on his breast, 50
 More like a son than comrade of his will.

But scarcely were his feet securely prest
 Against the bottom, ere they joined above
 The summit, but no longer could molest ;
 Since the high Providence which made them rove 55
 Of that fifth ditch the ministers devised,
 Deprived them of all power from thence to move.
 Below we found a people all disguised,
 Who wandered ever round with footsteps slow,
 Wailing, with semblance wearied, and despised. 60
 Long cloaks they wore, with hooded cowls sunk low
 Before their eyes, and fashioned in the mould
 Which in Cologne the monks are wont to show.
 They glittered outwardly, all bright with gold,
 But inwardly were lead, and of such weight 65
 Mere straw by those were cloaks by Frederic rolled.
 O weary garb to wear for endless Fate!
 With these together to the left we strayed
 Once more intent upon their dolorous state.
 But wearied by the poise upon them laid, 70
 That people came so slowly, we found new
 Companions at each onward stride we made.
 Whence to my leader I: "Find for my view
 One known by deed or name amidst the throng."
 And walking on my eyes around I threw. 75
 Then one who understood the Tuscan tongue
 Behind us cried aloud: "Your footsteps stay,
 Who through this dark air speed so fast along:
 Perchance thou'lt find in me what thou dost pray."
 My leader then turned round and told me: "Wait, 80
 And afterwards to his thy pace delay."
 I stayed and saw a couple show their great
 Mental desire to join me in their face,
 But stayed them still the crowded path, and weight.
 With envious eye, when they had reached the place, 85
 They gazed upon me, but they spake no word,
 Then 'mid themselves they talked a little space.
 "He seems alive, by his throat with breathing stirred,
 And if they're dead, by what peculiar knowledge
 To escape this heavy garb are they preferred?" 90
 Then said they to me, "Tuscan, to the college
 Of wretched hypocrites, who thus are led,
 Be not too proud thy person to acknowledge."

Line 63. The monks in Cologne appear to have worn cowls larger than ordinary.

Line 66. Frederic II. was said to have punished those guilty of high treason by wrapping them in lead and then casting them into the fire.

And I to them : " I was both born and bred
 In the great town above fair Arno's wave, 95
 And bear the body which I always had.
 But who are ye whose cheeks so sadly lave
 The tears of anguish which so great I view,
 And what, that thus bursts forth, thy pain so grave?"
 And one replied, " The cloaks of orange hue 100
 Are made of lead so heavy, that to groan
 Beneath their weight is forced the balance too.
 Rejoicing Friars were we from Bologne,
 I Catalan and he Loderingo hight, 105
 Both chosen by thy country as on one
 From faction free the choice is wont to light,
 Peace to preserve, and what we were, the blaze
 Around Gardingo bringeth still to sight."
 " O friars!" I began, " your evil ways——"
 But said no more, because one crucified 110
 With three stakes fixed to earth drew all my gaze.
 When he beheld me all his form he writhed,
 Breathing within his beard a heavy sigh,
 And Friar Catalan, who this descried,
 Told me : " The man impaled, whom thou dost eye, 115
 Counselled the Pharisees that it was meet
 That one man for the populace should die.
 Impaled and stark he lies across the street,
 As thou dost see, and his the doom, to rede
 Of every one that passeth o'er, the weight. 120
 So stretched out is his father-in-law decreed,
 Within this ditch, and of the council each,
 Who for the Jews were such an evil seed."
 Then saw I Virgil marvel at that speech 125
 O'er him upon the crucifix impaled,
 So vilely exiled on the eternal beach.
 The friar then with such request he hailed ;
 " Displease ye not, if lawful, now to say,
 If the right hand will any passage yield,

Line 103. Some gentlemen of Lombardy were permitted by Pope Urban IV. to found an order of knighthood with the title of " Brothers of St. Mary," but as the members were chiefly amongst the rich, and led a life of splendour, they obtained the nickname of Rejoicing Friars.

Line 104. The Rejoicing Friars, Catalan and Loderingo—one Guelph, the other Ghibeline—were chosen as joint judges to heal the factions of the city. Bought over by the Guelphs they soon chased the Ghibelines from their homes, and, amongst other actions, burnt the street named Gardingo, in which the Uberti, a leading Ghibeline family, resided.

Line 116. Caiaphas, with his father-in-law Annas, mentioned afterwards.

By which we both may issue on our way,
 And those black angels manage to avoid,
 Who came but now to drive us from their bay."
 "Far nearer than thou hopest," he replied,
 "Exists a ridge that from the outer round
 Stretches and crosseth all these valleys wide. 135
 Though here the broken bridge is not all sound,
 Still climbing o'er its ruin ye can go,
 Which riseth upwards, sloping from the ground."
 My leader stood a space, with head bent low,
 Then said, "He taught us badly our emprise 140
 To carry out, who hooks those sinners so."
 The friar: "In Bologna they apprise
 Of the devil many faults, 'mongst them I've heard
 A tattler he and father of all lies."
 My leader swift departed at that word, 145
 And in his face some anger did appear,
 Whence I too from those laden spirits stirred,
 Behind the footsteps of those feet so dear.

CANTO XXIV.

Dante, with great difficulty, under Virgil's guidance climbs the broken bridge to the ridge that looks down into the seventh valley. Descending into it, he finds robbers punished there, surrounded by multitudes of pestiferous serpents. Amongst them the soul of Gianni Fucci, who had robbed the sacristy in Pistoia, predicts to him the evils that will shortly ensue to his own city and the Florentines.

WHEN in the season of the youthful year
 The sun beneath Aquarius dims his rays,
 And equal to the day the nights draw near;
 When o'er the landscape the hoar frost displays
 An image of the snow, its sister white, 5
 But very briefly its soft plumage stays.
 The peasant whose apparel is but slight,
 Rises and looks and sees the wide champaign
 Whiten, on which his person he doth smite,
 Returneth to his hut and doth complain, 10
 Like to the wretch who knows not what to do:
 Then turneth back and taketh hope again,
 Seeing the world hath changed its face to view
 In such a little time, and takes his wand
 And to their pastures drives his flocks anew; 15

So did my master make me all despond,
 When I beheld him with such troubled brow,
 And so to the evil was the salve at hand.
 For as we reached the ruined bridge below
 My leader turned to me with that sweet air 20
 Which at the mountain's foot I first did know.
 His arms he opened after thought of care
 Within himself, and comprehensive view
 Over the ruin, he embraced me there.
 And like a man who works and thinketh too, 25
 Who for the future seemeth aye to care,
 So o'er a jutting summit me he drew,
 While of a rock still higher he was 'ware,
 Saying, "To that thou afterwards must hold,
 But test it first if fit thy weight to bear." 30
 It was no path for those in long cloaks rolled,
 Since scarcely we, he light and I upborne,
 Were able to climb up from hold to hold.
 And were it not that of that precinct lorn
 More than the other side this hill was short, 35
 Of him I know not, I had been outworn.
 But since the Malebolge towards the port
 Of that down-sunken lake inclineth all,
 The site of every valley is so wrought,
 One side below the other aye doth fall. 40
 At length, however, to that point we came
 Where the last fragment topples from the wall.
 The breath within my lungs so spent became,
 When there I reached my strength no further goeth,
 So down I sat on the first stone that came. 45
 "Henceforth 'tis fitting thou shouldst shake off sloth,"
 The master cried, "since idly lapt in down
 'Neath coverlets, for him Fame never groweth.
 Who so his life consumes without renown,
 Leaves such a vestige of himself on earth, 50
 As it were froth on air or water blown.
 Therefore arise, thy weakness stem with worth
 Of soul, that of all battles wins the prime,
 Unless 'tis borne down by the body's dearth.
 Far longer stairs than these thou'lt have to climb, 55
 From these 'twill not suffice thee to depart;
 Make now my counsel with thy action chime."
 Then I arose, exhibiting with art
 More force of breath than I in truth possess,
 And said, "Go on, I'm strong and bold of heart." 60

Line 55. The stairs ascending the hill of Purgatory.

Up o'er the precipice our way we prest,
 A rocky, narrow, and most hard ascent,
 And even steeper yet than all the rest.
 Not to seem weak still speaking on I went,
 On which from the other moat there did transpire 65
 A voice that shouted words of shameless bent.
 I know not what it said though standing higher,
 Over the spanning bridge I now arrive,
 But he who spake appeared as moved with ire.
 I gazed intent below, but eyes alive 70
 Could not pierce downwards through that gloomy hall.
 "Master," I therefore said, "let us arrive
 From the other circle and descend the wall,
 For as I hear from hence nor comprehend,
 So gazing down I cannot see at all." 75
 "No other answer," said he, "do I tend
 Save action, for in silence with the deed
 'Tis fit to carry out a fair demand."
 We then descended by the bridge's head,
 Where with the eighth ridge joineth on its road, 80
 And there the pit before me clear I rede:
 There I beheld within a terrible brood
 Of serpents, and of species so diverse,
 That recollection still makes creep my blood.
 Libya with all its deserts boasts no worse, 85
 Though there of snakes amphibious, snakes on trees,
 Snakes spotted, with two heads, it knows the curse.
 Not ever plagues so great nor fell as these
 Were seen through Ethiop's land of dread alarm,
 Nor in the realm which o'er the Red Sea lies. 90
 Amidst this cruel, miserable swarm
 Ran people naked all and terrified,
 No hope of refuge nor of counter-charm.
 Their hands behind them were with serpents tied;
 These in their loins fixed firm their tail and head, 95
 While in the front their bodies twist and glide.
 And lo! one wretch that to our side had sped
 A serpent singled out and pierced him through,
 There where the shoulders and the neck are wed.
 One could not write so quickly I or O 100
 As this one kindled and burnt up amain,
 And in a mass of ashes fell below.
 Then when he lay on earth destroyed, not slain,
 The ashes re-collect and upwards rear,
 Suddenly changed to his own form again. 105

So from the learned of old times we hear
 The phoenix dies and then is born once more
 When it completeth its five-hundredth year.
 Nor grass nor corn it tasteth evermore ;
 Only with tears of incense and of myrrh, 110
 Of balm and nard its funeral pile doth store.
 And like to him who falls nor knoweth where,
 By force demoniac when on earth he lies,
 Or epileptic stroke, and cannot stir,
 Gazes around when he once more doth rise, 115
 All 'wildered by the agony he knows
 That he has suffered, and round gazing sighs ;
 Such was that sinner after he arose.
 Justice of God ! indeed it is severe,
 That for His vengeance poureth down such blows. 120
 My leader asked him who he was to clear,
 On which he said, " From Tuscany I fell,
 'Tis not long since, into this gulf of fear.
 A bestial life, not human, pleased me well, 125
 As suited to a bastard ; Fucci, I,
 Beast, in Pistoia found fit covert fell."

I to my leader : " Tell him not to fly,
 And ask what crime has thrust him down so low ;
 A man of blood and anger I descry."
 The sinner heard, nor sought to disavow, 130
 But towards me raised his soul and visage plain,
 Covered all o'er with wretched shame's red glow.
 " It grieves me more," he said, " that in this pain
 Thou hast discovered me where thou dost see,
 Than when from the other life I first was ta'en. 135
 Deny I cannot what thou askest me ;
 So low I now am placed because of old
 I robbed the hangings of our sacristy ;
 And falsely 'gainst another was it told. 140
 But that thou mayst not glory in this view,
 If ever thou shouldst leave this gloomy hold,
 Open thy ears to my announcement true :
 Though in Pistoia first the Neri fail,
 And Florence taketh men and customs new,

Line 125. Vanni Fucci was a bastard son of a member of the Lazzeri family in Pistoja: he robbed the sacristy of the church of St. James, and caused the crime to be attributed to Vanni della Nona, who was thereupon executed. Dante, knowing the violence of his nature, is surprised at finding him amongst the fraudulent, instead of in the preceding circle.

Line 143. The Bianchi of Pistoja, assisted by the same party in Florence, drove the Negri out of the former city in 1301. The Bianchi (Dante's party,

Mars draws a vapour forth in Magra's vale,
 With turbid clouds of vengeance circled round ;
 And with impetuous tempest will assail,
 Selecting for his field Piceno's ground,
 Where suddenly thy faction will be torn,
 And every white will there receive a wound ;
 And I have told thee now to make thee mourn."

Fucci being of the Negri faction) were shortly after chased from Florence and the Negri became dominant; the vapour in Magra's vale is the Marquis Male-spina, lord of that country, who as head of the Negri gave battle to the Bianchi and defeated them on the field of Piceno. These events are here related as prophecy, most unpalatable to Dante.

CANTO XXV.

While Fucci vents his rage in blasphemy he is attacked by the serpents, and flees away, pursued by Cacus in the shape of a centaur, whose croup is covered with adders, while a fiery dragon is seated on his crest. A party of Florentines then advance under the bank where the poets are standing, and four of them go through the most extraordinary transformations.

WHEN he had closed his speech the robber there
 Raised his clenched fingers with the thumb thrust through,
 Shouting: "God take him, him to thee I bare."
 Then did the serpents prove my guardians true,
 For one entwined himself around his neck,
 As though it said, Thou shalt not speak anew.
 Another seized his arms and bound him back,
 Clutching him there so firmly in his sway
 That bound by these he could not make a beck.
 Pistoja! ah, Pistoja! why dost stay
 To burn thyself away to ashes all,
 Since in ill-doing thou advancest aye?
 In all the circles 'neath Hell's gloomy pall
 I saw no soul towards God display such pride,
 Not he who fell adown from Thebes's wall.
 He spake no further word, but off he hied.
 A centaur saw I come in angry storm,
 "Where is this fierce fell spirit? where?" he cried.
 I do not think Maremma has such swarm
 Of adders as he had upon his back,
 Up to the point where springs the human form.

Line 2. "Le mani alzo con ambidue le fiche." Gave the fig with his hands, an insulting gesture in the Middle Ages, made by thrusting the thumb through the clenched fingers.

Line 15. Capaneus, described in Canto XIV.

Above his shoulders, perched upon his neck
 With open wings outstretcht a dragon lay,
 That kindles every one that nears its track.

"This one is Cacus," did my master say,

"Who 'neath Mount Aventine his rocky lair
 With blood has very often made a bay.
 He does not wander with his brethren there,
 Because the theft was fraudulent which he made
 Of that great herd of cattle which was near.
 On which his squinting deeds at once were stayed
 Beneath the club of Hercules, the last
 Nine-tenths he felt not of the blows on-laid."
 Whilst thus he spake to me the centaur past,
 And then beneath our bank three spirits drew,
 On whom my chief and I no heed had cast,
 Until they cried out to us, "Who are you?"
 On which our conversation we arrest,
 And then on these we wholly turn our view.
 I did not know them, but the one addrest
 Another, as would happen in the case
 When one would name a comrade 'mid the rest,
 Remarking, "Cianfa, dost thou bide a space?"
 On which to make my leader stand intent
 I on my chin and lip my finger place.
 If now, O reader, thou shouldst scarce be bent
 To trust my speech no marvel it will be,
 Since I who saw it scarcely can consent.
 As on them I kept fixed my eyes to see,
 Behold a serpent with six feet forth launch
 In front of one and seize him suddenly.
 With its middle feet he closely gript his paunch,
 And with its upper ones his arms it caught,
 Then biting both its cheeks its teeth did crunch.
 Its hinder feet around his thighs he raught,
 And through between them both it thrust its tail,
 Which back around his loins it twining brought.
 Ivy close rooted never did assail
 A tree so closely as the beast did ring
 Around the other's limbs its writhing mail.

Line 25. Dante has taken upon himself to make Cacus a centaur. In old mythology he was merely a robber whom Hercules destroyed for stealing his herd of cattle. See Virgil, *Æn.*, Lib. VIII. 193.

Line 43. Cianfa and the other spirits named afterwards are known merely as Florentines of good family. Cianfa had suddenly changed into a six-footed serpent, who appears immediately on the scene, and had thus disappeared to his companions.

Then as if made of molten wax they cling
 Together, and together mix their hues,
 And either seemed no more the previous thing.
 As placed before the flame there doth transfuse
 O'er the papyrus a dull brownish shade, 65
 Not black yet, though its whiteness it doth lose.
 The other two looked on and cried dismayed,
 "Ah, Agnolo, how thou dost change and swoon!
 Behold, nor two nor one thou now art made." 70
 Already the two heads had merged in one,
 In which there then appeared in mingled mien
 Two faces in one face where both were gone.
 Grew the two arms into four stripes, I ween,
 The thighs and legs, the belly and the chest,
 Changed into limbs that never yet were seen. 75
 All primal aspect there was wholly chased;
 Two and not one appeared that shape unmeet,
 And such slow crawling from the scene it paced.
 Just as a lizard 'neath the scourging heat
 Of dog-days, when it shifts its hedgy bourne, 80
 Appears like lightning crossing o'er the street;
 So seemed as towards the bellies crept in turn
 Of the other pair a serpent all ablaze,
 Livid and sable like a peppercorn.
 The navel, whence throughout prænatal days 85
 Man draweth nourishment, to one it broke,
 Then fell beneath him, stretcht at length to gaze.
 The pierced one looked at it but nothing spoke,
 He only gaped erect upon his feet, 90
 As smit by sudden sleep or fever stroke.
 The serpent gazed on him and he on it;
 One through the wound, the other from its mouth,
 Emitted vapour which betwixt did meet.
 Henceforth be silent, Lucan, when he showeth 95
 The sad Sabellus' and Nasidius' fate,
 And hear what now my song in haste avoweth.
 Of Arethusa let not Ovid prate,
 Nor Cadmus, changed to serpent and to fount,
 I envy not the tale he doth relate.
 For two whole natures never, front to front, 100
 Were so transmuted that each figure donned
 The other's, changing from its former wont.

Line 68. Agnolo Brunelleschi according to the earliest commentators.

Line 95. Lucan's "Pharsalia," Book II., where he describes the fate of the two soldiers, Sabellus and Nasidius, bitten by serpents.

Line 97. Ovid's "Metam.," Books IV. and V.

Yet changing thus these mutually respond,
 For while the serpent cleft its tail in two
 Then were the pierced one's feet together joined. 105
 Upwards the legs and thighs together grew,
 So closely knitted that ere long the cleft
 Made no appearance, all effaced from view.
 The tail divided took the shape which left
 The other's limbs, and supple grew the skin, 110
 While crusted o'er the man the scaly weft.
 I saw his arms the armpits close within,
 The while the beast's two feet that had been short
 Lengthened as much as those had shortened in. 115
 After its hinder feet together wrought
 Became the member which mankind conceals,
 While the poor wretches changed to a double sort.
 Meanwhile the vapour one and the other veils
 With a new colour and createth hair
 Upon the one and from the other peels. 120
 The one rose up, the other fell down sheer,
 Only preserving still their impious eyes,
 Beneath the which exchanged each visage rare.
 In him erect towards the temples flies
 The stuff superfluous, which to shape then grew, 125
 That on erst vacant cheeks the ears arise.
 The flesh that still remained nor backwards drew
 With what was over formed into a nose,
 And the lips thickened as was fitting too. 130
 In him that lay the visage forwards grows,
 And-closing in the head retire the ears,
 As in its shell a snail its horns doth close.
 The united tongue erst fit for parlance sheers
 In two, the while the other's forkt tongue pieced
 Together, and the vapour disappears. 135
 The spirit that was changed into a beast
 Away across the valley hissing flew,
 The other one behind him foaming chased.
 Then turning towards the last his shoulders new,
 He cried to him, "I would that Buoso flee 140
 As I did, on his belly, Hell's ways through."
 Thus those within that seventh pit did I see
 Change and exchange, and be my tongue excused
 When flowers it fleeth in such novelty. 145
 And though in sooth my eyes had been confused
 No little, and my 'wildered soul surprised,
 Unto their flight concealment was refused,

Puccio Sciancato clear I recognised;
 And of these three companions he alone
 Who came remained unchanged and undisguised; 150
 The other was he whom thou, Gaville, dost moan.

Line 148. The three original spirits were Agnolo, Busso, and Puccio; the six-footed serpent, Cianfa; the black adder, Francesco Cavalcante, killed in the town of Gaville, for which his relations took a terrible revenge on its inhabitants, alluded to in the last line. They were all nobles in Florence, and it is not known for what acts Dante has placed them with the robbers in his seventh pit.

CANTO XXVI.

Dante ironically compliments Florence on its renown in the Infernal Regions, and prophesies its approaching misfortunes. He passes with Virgil into the eighth pit, over which he sees hovering flames, like will-o'-the-wisps. These he finds to be the souls of fraudulent counsellors. Virgil converses with a flame with two horns, in which are the spirits of Ulysses and Diomed, and the former relates the final voyage which he and his old companions ventured into the unknown regions of the West, beyond the gates of Hercules.

FLORENCE rejoice! since thou so high dost swell,
 That o'er the sea and earth thy pinion rears,
 And thy renown has travelled even to Hell.
 Amongst the robbers found I five such peers, 5
 Thy citizens, from whence to me comes shame,
 Nor much of honour unto thee appears.
 But if when morn approaches truth we dream,
 Within a little time thou wilt deplore
 What Prato and the rest for thee would claim; 10
 It would not be too soon if it were o'er:
 Would it were o'er, since surely it must be;
 As I grow older it will grieve me more.
 We sallied forth, and upwards by the way
 Which first descending there our foot-tracks showed,
 My leader clambered on and guided me. 15
 And following on that solitary road
 Amid the boulders and rocks' splintered grain,
 Unaided by the hand the foot ne'er strode.
 Then did I grieve, and still I grieve again 20
 When I direct my thoughts to what I saw,
 And more than erst my intellect restrain:

Line 9. Prato is either a neighbouring territory to Florence, or else the Cardinal Nicolo di Prato, very hostile to the Republic. The evils it will soon deplore are said to have been the fall of a wooden bridge over the Arno, by which many lives were lost; a conflagration that destroyed 1,700 buildings; and the civil discords which broke out between the Bianchi and Neri, all within the year 1304.

Line 21. The sight of the punishments in the eighth pit of men who had

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Never to hie where virtue doth not draw ;
 So that if star benign or higher 'hest
 Has given that good to use it still with awe. 25
 As when the peasant on a hill takes rest
 In the season when the earth's great lightener showeth
 His visage from our gaze concealed the least,
 What time the gnat, replacing flies, forth goeth,
 Beholds the fireflies o'er the valley shine,
 Where he perchance the vintage works, and plougheth ; 30
 With flames so many was the eighth confine
 Resplendent all, as I was made aware
 On reaching where its pit first met my eyne.
 And like the prophet, erst revenged by a bear,
 Beheld the chariot of Elias rise, 35
 What time the heavenly horses sprang in air,
 Who could not so pursue them with his eyes
 Aught to distinguish, save the flame alone,
 Just like a little cloud ascend the skies ;
 So o'er the entrance of that pit moved on 40
 Each flame, and none the soul within displayed,
 Though every one was round a sinner thrown.
 Gazing, above the precipice I swayed,
 So that unless I'd seized a rock at hand,
 Downwards I'd follow though no push were made. 45
 My chief, who saw me so intently stand,
 Told me : " Within the flames the spirits bide ;
 Each one is swathed in his consuming band."
 " My master, when I hear thee," I replied,
 " More sure I am, but I already guessed 50
 That it was so, and wished to ask my guide,
 Who is within the flame that forks its crest,
 Which seems to rise from Eteocles' pyre,
 Whose spirit with his brother's could not rest."
 He answered : " There consume within yon fire 55
 Ulysses, Diomed, together so
 They wonne to punishment as erst to ire :
 There do they groan within the flame I trow
 The horse's ambush, through the city led,
 From whence the Roman's noble seed we owe. 60

perverted their intellect to evil purposes by seducing others with evil counsels struck home to Dante, who felt that in intellect this class of the condemned were his peers.

Line 56. The hatred of the brothers Eteocles and Polinices was so great that when both their bodies were burnt on one funeral pyre their flames refused to mingle, but fled the one from the other.

Within they mourn the art, through which even dead
 Still lost Achilles Deidamia doth grieve ;
 They suffer there the rapt Palladium dread."
 " If they within the flames are granted leave
 To speak," I said, " O master, I beseech,
 And prayer a thousand times reiterate weave,
 Give me not now denial of their speech,
 When once the biforked flame hath travelled here :
 See how with longing I towards them reach."
 And he to me replied, " I own thy prayer
 Is worthy of all praise, and it I grant ;
 But let thy tongue all utterance forbear.
 Leave speech to me. I know what thou dost want
 To ask them ; haply if thy speech they hear,
 Those Greeks would yield thee but attention scant."
 After the moving flame had reached to where
 It seemed unto my leader time and place,
 In this shape of his parley was I 'ware.
 " O you, who double in one flame embrace,
 If, while I lived, I merited from you,
 If I have merited from you some grace
 When in this world, the lofty verse I drew,
 Move ye not on ; but one of ye relate
 Where, self-destroyed, to perish he withdrew."
 The greater horn of the old flame thereat
 Began to wave and bow with murmuring chime,
 Like to a flame on which the wind doth beat.
 Thence moving here and there its crest in time,
 As though it were a tongue that uttered speech,
 It cast a voice abroad and said, " What time
 Circe I left, who lured me in her reach
 Near to Gaëta, upwards of a year,
 Before Eneas had thus named the beach ;
 Not my son's sweetness, nor compassionate fear
 For my old father, nor the lawful love
 That should have cheered Penelope so dear,
 Could from my mind the ardent wish remove
 Of the wide world experience to attain,
 And human vices and man's worth to prove.
 Once more I launched upon the open main
 With one sole bark and those companions true,
 The few who did not even desert me then.

Line 84. The highly poetical idea of this last voyage of Ulysses into the unknown ocean appears to have been invented by Dante, as no such story has come down from classical times.

As far as Spain both shores I past in view,
 Morocco, and Sardinia's seagirt bourne,
 And the other islands which those waters strew. 105
 I and my comrades were grown old and worn
 When we had reached unto the narrow bar
 Where Hercules his motto placed to warn
 Mankind no farther o'er the waves to dare.
 On the right hand I left Seville behind, 110
 On the other Ceuta was already far.
 'O brothers!' then I said, 'who here have joined
 Through many thousand perils to the West,
 To this so brief a vigil of the mind,
 And high perception, that to ye doth rest, 115
 Ye will not all experience refuse,
 Following the sun, of the world without a guest.
 Over your noble birthright ye should muse;
 To live like senseless brutes ye were not made,
 But knowledge to pursue and virtue use.' 120
 With this concise oration which I said
 I made my comrades for the voyage so fain,
 That afterwards I scarcely them had stayed.
 Our stern still turned towards the morn, again
 With oars, we made our wings for the mad design, 125
 Aye to the larboard steering o'er the main.
 Now, of the other Pole, the stars that shine,
 The night beheld, and ours did scarcely rise,
 So far adown they sank, above the brine.
 Five times there filled and vanished to our eyes 130
 The light that streameth from the moon's low rim,
 Since we had entered on our high emprise,
 When there appeared to us a mountain dim
 In the far distance, which to me appears
 Higher than other mountain e'er could climb. 135
 Then we rejoiced, but soon all changed to tears;
 For from that land new-found a storm arose,
 And on its quarter our frail bark it sheers;
 Three times it turned it round with whirling throes,
 At the fourth time the stern uprose in air, 140
 And as to one it pleased the prow down goes
 Until the sea had closed upon us there."

Line 107. The Straits of Gibraltar.

Line 117. In the Middle Ages it was believed that any lands that might exist in the Antipodes were, and must be, uninhabited.

Line 133. The mountain of Purgatory, which Dante places in mid-ocean, the antipodes to Jerusalem, which he considers the meridian of our own inhabited hemisphere.

CANTO XXVII.

The flame which contained Ulysses and Diomed having departed, another comes near the poets and addresses them finally in Tuscan. On being questioned by Dante he states that he was Count Guido da Montefeltro, and relates why he was condemned to such a punishment.

ALREADY was the flame erect and still,
 To speak no more, and from us went away
 With licence granted at the sweet bard's will.
 Another then which came behind did stay,
 And drew our eyes towards its crest, at first 5
 By sound confused that from it found its way.
 Like Phalaris's bull (which bellowed first
 With cries of him [in this most just it was]
 Who first had wrought it with his file accurst),
 Roared with the sound of torture, that its mass 10
 Seemed to be wholly overcome with pain,
 Although it was but fashioned out of brass ;
 So from the absence of all passage plain
 From the fire's summit in its own mute song
 There issued forth the lamentable strain. 15
 But after it had found its way along
 The fire's point, which it quivered as it past,
 As words in passing would have done the tongue,
 We heard it say, " O thou to whom I cast 20
 My voice, who spake now in the Lombard speech,
 Saying, Now go, from thee no more is askt,
 Though somewhat late perchance to thee I reach,
 Be not fatigued with me in speech to stand,
 It irks me not although in flames I bleach.
 If thou in sooth art now to this blind land 25
 Fallen from that Latin region sweet and far,
 To which I wholly owe the crime I planned,
 Say if the Romans now have peace or war ;
 For near Urbino I was mountaineer,
 And where the Tiber cleaves the rocky scaur."
 I was still bending down intent to hear, 30
 Until my leader touched me on the side,
 Saying, " Speak thou, a Latin soul is here."

Line 7. The instrument of torture invented for Phalaris of Sicily by Perillus, who was chosen by the tyrant for its first victim.

Line 29. The town of Montefeltro, situated between Urbino and the part of the Apennines in which the Tiber rises, of which Guido was a native.

And I, who had my answer prompt, replied,
 And thus began to speak without delay : 35
 " O spirit, who below thyself dost hide,
 Romagna thine is not and was not aye
 Without some war within its tyrant's heart ;
 But open war I left not in my day.
 As in past years Ravenna holds its part, 40
 The eagle of Polenta broodeth there,
 So that o'er Cervia sweeps its wings athwart.
 The land that such a lengthened proof did bear,
 And of the Frenchmen made a bloody heap,
 'Neath the green branches doth again repair. 45
 The mastiffs who possess Verrucchio's keep,
 And through Montagna won such ill renown,
 Where they were wont their teeth still sharpened keep.
 Lamone's city and Santerno's town
 The argent-shielded lion's whelp doth bow, 50
 Who changeth sides as springs and winters wonne.
 The town by which the Savio's waters flow,
 So as she lies betwixt the hill and plain,
 Lives now 'neath tyranny, in freedom now. 55
 Now who thou art I pray thee to explain,
 Not harder be it to thee than to the rest
 To tell, on earth thy memory to maintain."
 After the fire a little time had hissed,
 In its own fashion, waved its pointed blade
 Hither and thither, then this speech addrest : 60
 " If I believed that my reply were made
 To one who ever in the world could dwell,
 This flame without all motion would have stayed.
 But since there never from this deep of Hell
 Turned back again one soul, if truth I hear, 65
 Fearless of infamy my tale I tell.

Line 41. Count Guido da Polenta, who bore an eagle for his coat of arms. Cervia was a small maritime town near Ravenna, over which Count Guido extended his rule. He was one of Dante's most munificent patrons during his exile.

Line 43. The territory of Forli, over which Montefeltro had ruled, and where he had defeated the French after a lengthy siege. The green branches were the coat of arms of Odelaïff, then ruler of the country.

Line 46. The mastiffs were Malatesta and his son Malatestino, lords of Rimini, who amongst other notorious acts of blood murdered Montagna, the head of the Ghibeline party in Rimini.

Line 49. The towns of Faenza and Imola, situated on the above rivers, ruled by Machinarado Pagano, whose arms were a lion's whelp on a silver shield. He was called from his treacheries the Demon, and is alluded to under that name in the "Purgatory," Canto XIV.

Line 52. Cesena, situated between a mountain and the river Savio.

I was a man-at-arms and then a friar,
 Believing thus rope-girt the past to mend,
 And sure that trust had been fulfilled entire,
 Had not the High Priest (whom all ill attend!) 70
 Led me again into my early sin ;
 And how and wherefore thou shalt comprehend.
 Whilst made of bone and flesh that form was mine
 The which my mother gave me, every deed 75
 Of mine was fox-like and not leonine.
 The wary wiles and hidden ways at need
 I studied all and practised so the art
 That to the earth's confines the fame did speed,
 When I beheld that I had reached that part 80
 Of human life when every one should strike
 His sails and his worn rigging set apart ;
 That which had pleased me erst then caused dislike,
 And penitent confession did I use,
 Ah, weary wretch! and had been saved belike. 85
 The leader of the modern Pharisees,
 Being at war within the Lateran,
 And neither with the Saracens nor Jews,
 For of his foes each was a Christian man,
 And none had been with those who conquered Acre,
 Trafficking in the realm of the Soldan, 90
 Nor his high place nor life vowed to his Maker,
 Restrained him, nor did me that girdle hold
 Which wont to make those girt with it far meeker.
 But just as Constantine Silvester called
 Within Soratte leprosy to heal, 95
 So this one called me as a master bold
 To cure the fever high which he did feel ;
 Asking my counsel and I silent stayed,
 Because his words delirium did reveal ;
 And then he said : ' Be not thy heart afraid ; 100
 Now I absolve thee, teach me what to do,
 So that on earth be Palestrina laid.
 The heavens I can lock and open too,
 As thou dost know the worth of these two keys
 Although my predecessor little knew.' 105

Line 67. A Franciscan, which Guido de Montefeltro became in his old age.

Line 70. Pope Boniface VIII., whose enmity to the Colonna family made him destroy their houses in the Lateran. He consulted Montefeltro on the way by which he could get their other place, Palestrina, into his power, who advised him not to use force, but deceive them by promises which he would not keep.

Line 89. An allusion to the renegade Christians who had assisted the Soldan in reconquering Acre, the last Christian possession in the East.

Line 105. Pope Celestine V., who made the great refusal. See Canto III.

Then weighty arguments my mind did seize,
 There where my silence would be worst advice,
 And I said, 'Father, since thou wilt release
 Me from the sin which I must exercise,
 Scant execution of a promise strong, 110
 In thy high seat to triumph will suffice.
 When I was dead St. Francis came along
 For me, but one of the fell cherubs black
 Said to him, 'Take him not nor do me wrong,
 Amidst my wretched ones he down must track, 115
 Because that fraudulent advice he gave,
 Since when my grip on him doth never slack;
 The impenitent can no absolving save,
 Nor penitence and evil will befall
 Together, since they contradiction have.' 120
 O wretched me, how did I tremble all
 The while he seized me, saying, 'Thou perchance
 Didst not suppose I was so logical.'
 To Minos did he bear me who did lance
 His tail eight times around his body hard, 125
 And then he bit himself in raging trance,
 Saying, 'He's of the wicked, fire-embarred.'
 Whence as thou seest me here am I forlorn,
 And wandering vested thus my grief I guard."
 When thus unto an end his speech had borne, 130
 The flame departed on its way with grief,
 Twisting and waving wide its sharpened horn.
 Onwards we travelled then, I and my chief,
 Up o'er the rocks unto the bridge that rolls
 Above the pit in which they pay their feof, 135
 Who sowing discord burden thus their souls.

Line 119. There can be no such thing as true repentance where the will to do evil continues, and without true repentance there can be no efficiency in absolution. This is probably the correct doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, though not asserted in bad times, or in any times by bad men. Such was clearly Dante's belief, and with it even Luther would hardly have been inclined to quarrel.

Line 135. The bridge over the ninth pit described in the next Canto, in which the founders of schisms and discords are punished.

CANTO XXVIII.

The poets reach the ninth valley, in which the promoters of schisms are punished, being hewed by a fiend with a sword in frightful wounds. Amongst these Dante converses with Mahomet, Pier da Medicina, Mosca de' Uberti, and Bertram dal Bornio.

WHOM'ER with words, untrammelled even by rhyme,
 The blood and fearful wounds could wholly tell
 Which now I saw, narrating many a time?
 Each tongue would certes in the venture fail,
 Through weakness of our speech and mind that could ⁵
 Scarce comprehend the whole of such a tale.
 If there were heaped together all the crowd
 Already on Apulia's fertile soil,
 Whose wretched blood has e'er in torrents flowed
 Through Trojans, or throughout that lengthened broil, ¹⁰
 Described by Livy, who aye painteth true,
 Which of the rings made such a lofty spoil;
 With those, whom with his fearful blows o'erthrew
 Robert Guiscardo, whom they dared oppose,
 And the rest, whose bones are still heaped up in view ¹⁵
 Near Ceperan, where each Apulian rose
 A traitor, or where less to arms than him,
 The old Alardo, Charles his victory owes;
 And if each maimed and lacerated limb
 Were shown, it could not rival in its scene ²⁰
 Of that ninth prison-house the fashion grim.
 A barrel by the loss of stave between
 Was never yet so pierced as one I saw
 Cleft from the anus upwards to the chin.
 Betwixt his legs hung down his entrails raw;
 The milt appeared, and the ugly sack where glide, ²⁵
 Changed into dung, things swallowed by the maw.
 Whilst wholly gazing on him me he eyed,
 And with his hands his breast he widely bared,
 Saying, "Now see how I myself divide. ³⁰
 Behold how Mahomet is maimed and sheared;
 Before me Ali goes with wailing drear,
 Cleft in the face, from the topknot to the beard;
 And all the rest, whom thou beholdest here,
 The sowers erst of schism, and of scandal, ³⁵
 Were when alive; hence thus are cleft ashear.

Line 10. The war of Hannibal in Italy, described by Livy, who states that after the battle of Cannæ three bushels and a half of rings were sent to Carthage, taken from the fingers of the dead Roman knights.

Line 14. Brother of the Duke of Normandy, a founder of a Neapolitan race of Norman kings.

Line 15. The army of Manfredi, who by the treachery of the Apulian troops was utterly routed near Ceperano by Charles of Anjou.

Line 18. The victory of Tagliacozzo, gained for the same Charles by the generalship of the Sieur de Valeri, the Alardo in the text.

Line 32. Ali, the disciple and successor of Mahomet.

Behind them is a devil, who doth handle
 Most cruelly us upon his sharp-edged sword,
 Again submitting to its stroke this band all,
 When we have turned around this road abhorred; 40
 Because the wounds are closed again, before,
 In front of him, we are again restored.
 But who art thou who o'er the rock dost pore,
 Haply delaying to thy pain to wend,
 Unto thy sins already judged in store? 45
 "Nor death hath reached him yet, nor sin doth send
 Him unto torment," then my chief replied,
 "But full experience unto him to lend,
 'Tis fit that I, long dead, should him now guide 50
 Through all the circles of deep Hell's domain;
 'Tis true as that I speaking with thee bide."
 More than a hundred, when they heard that strain,
 Stopped in the pit to gaze upon me there,
 Forgetting in the marvel even their pain.
 "Tell then my brother Dolcin to prepare, 55
 Thou who perchance wilt shortly see the sun,
 Unless he wishes here my fate to share,
 Sufficient provender ere snows come on,
 The victory to the Navarrese to yield,
 Which otherwise would not be lightly won." 60
 In act of starting one foot he upheld,
 Mahomet the while that parlance he rehearsed,
 Then set it down, and moved again afield.
 Another, unto whom the throat was pierced;
 The nose sheared closely off between the eyes, 65
 And in an ear who also was amerced,
 Who had remained to watch me with surprise,
 Amongst the rest, his weasand opened then,
 Streaked on the outside all with crimson dyes,
 And said, "O thou whom crime doth not condemn, 70
 And whom in Latin realms I erst did see,
 Unless thy likeness mocks me, as the same,
 Of Pier of Medicin remember thee
 If e'er thou seest once more that happy plain 75
 Which falleth from Verello to the sea.

Line 55. Fra Dolcin was the founder of a dissolute sect in the time of Clement V. He preached the community of goods and women, and, with some two thousand followers of both sexes, lived in the mountains of Novara according to the principles he avowed. The depth of the snows in a severe winter depriving them of provisions, he gave himself up, and was burnt, with his mistress Margarita, in the town of Novara.

Line 74. The plain of Lombardy.

In Fano's town unto the noblest twain
 To Messer Guido and Angiolet make known,
 That if prophetic sight is here not vain,
 They from their ship will overboard be thrown,
 And near Cattolica be drowned by wiles 80
 And treason of a ruthless tyrannous one.
 'Twixt Cyprus' and Majorca's distant isles,
 So great a crime did Neptune never see,
 By pirates or in Argolic defiles.
 That traitor who sees only with one eye, 85
 And holds the land (the which that he had ne'er
 Seen is the wish of one that's here with me),
 For conference with him will call them fair,
 And then will act that 'gainst Focara's gale
 They never more will need or vow or prayer." 90
 And I to him: "Now tell me, if thy tale
 Thou wouldst that I should upwards carry, who
 Is he who rues that sight as bitter bale?"
 Then seizing with his hands his jaws he drew
 One of his comrades, and forced wide his mouth, 95
 Crying, "'Tis he; he cannot speak to you.
 This banished man, removed from Cæsar, loath,
 All doubt, affirming that when well prepared,
 Any delay to injury ever groweth."
 Ah! how bewildered he to me appeared, 100
 There with his tongue shorn closely in the throat,
 Curion, who erst in speaking had so dared!
 Then one, from whom both hands had been offsmote,
 Raising his maimed arms in the dusky air,
 So that the dripping blood his face did blot, 105
 Cried, "Mosca also in thy memory bear,
 Who said, alas! a deed is crowned, when done,
 Which to the Tuscan race caused evil fare."

Line 77. Guido del Cassero and Angioletto du Cagnano were invited by Malatestino da Rimini (the one-eyed traitor) to a conference on some important business, and were drowned near Cattolica, between Fano and Rimini, on his orders.

Line 89. Focara, a mountain on that coast, from which blows a wind very dangerous to the navigators there.

Line 97. Dante, struck by Pier da Medicin's allusion to a spirit who would wish that he had never seen the land of Rimini, asks who he may be, and learns that it is Curion, whose speech determined Julius Cæsar to proceed across the Rubicon—a river betwixt Ravenna and Rimini—in the words of Lucan, "Tolle moras; nocuit semper differre paratis."

Line 106. The murder of Buondelmonte, the origin of the Black and White factions in Florence, was urged by Mosca Uberti. Buondelmonte being engaged to one of the Amadei, fell desperately in love with one of the Donati,

To which I 'joined: "And death unto thy own."
 Whence he, with grief on grief accumulate, 110
 Departed like a wretch whose wits are gone.
 But on the crowd to gaze I still did wait,
 And saw a thing, which without further proof,
 I would have fear thus single to relate,
 Were't not that conscience doth not keep aloof 115
 That company so fair, which makes man free,
 When pure at heart, as if in armour proof.
 Certes I saw, and still meseems I see,
 A bust without a head walk onwards there
 As walked the rest of that sad company. 120
 The trunkless head it carried by the hair
 In's hand, just like a lantern dangling low,
 And it cried woe! as on us it did stare.
 Himself he made the light by which to go,
 And they were one in two and two in one: 125
 How it could be He knows who rules it so.
 When to the bridge's foot he straight had drawn,
 With all the head, he raised his hand on high
 In order that his words might nearer wonne,
 Which were: "Now see the dreadful penalty 130
 Thou who goest breathing to behold the dead;
 Any so great as this canst thou descry?
 And that of me the story may be sped,
 Bertram of Bornio am I, know me well,
 Who to King John such evil comfort shed. 135
 I made the son against the sire rebel;
 Achitophel no worse to Absalom
 And David did, with instigations fell.
 Since I divided men so joined, I roam,
 Bearing my brain thus severed from the nerve 140
 Of life, whose essence in this trunk has home.
 The law of retribution here observe."

whom he married in spite of his given word to the other family. When the Amadei were consulting on what revenge they should take for the insult, Mosca quoted the proverb, "Cosa fatta ha capo." In the strife that followed the Uberti family were chief sufferers.

Line 124. Bertram, Viscomte de Hautefort in Guienne, who incited John to rebel against his father, King Henry II. of England.

CANTO XXIX.

Dante still lingers, gazing on the maimed spirits in the ninth valley, in anticipation of seeing there a relation who had been murdered, and whose death his family had not avenged. He then follows Virgil over the ridge which crowns the last ward of Malebolge, in which are punished falsifiers of various descriptions. Descending into the valley, he finds them afflicted with fearful diseases, and discourses with two alchemists, Grifolino of Arezzo and Capocchio of Siena.

THE various wounds and people crowded deep,
 As if with drunkenness my eyes did bear,
 That they were anxious but to rest and weep.
 But Virgil said to me: "At what dost peer?
 Wherefore thy vision does it still so strain 5
 Downwards amongst those shadows, maimed and drear?
 In the other valleys thou wast not so fain.
 Think, if thou wouldst their number calculate,
 Twenty-two miles encircleth this domain.
 The moon already is beneath our feet, 10
 And little of our granted time doth bide,
 And there is more to see than thou dost weet."
 "If thou hadst only," straightway I replied,
 "Perceived the reason why that gaze was bent,
 Perchance to tarry thou hadst not denied." 15
 He moved in part, and I behind him went.
 My leader having given his reply,
 I added yet: "Within that cavern pent,
 On which I kept my eyes so fixedly,
 I think a spirit of my blood doth wail 20
 The crime which costs below such misery."
 Then said my master: "Let not grief assail
 Thy thoughts concerning him from henceforth more.
 Think of the rest; let him remain in bale.
 For I beheld him stand our bridge before, 25
 With threatening finger point thee to the host.
 Geri del Bello was the name he bore.
 Thou wert entirely at that time engrost
 On him who Altaforte's keep did hold,
 So that thou look'dst not there till he was lost." 30

Line 27. Geri del Bello was a kinsman of the poet's, and assassinated by one of the Sacchetti family. It is clear that Dante considered the reproach of the spirit that his death had not been avenged by any of them who shared the shame of it to be a just one.

Line 29. Bertram, Viscomte of Hautefort.

"O leader mine, the violent death and bold,
 Which has not been avenged as yet," I said,
 "By any who with him this shame doth hold,
 Made him disdainful, hence away he sped,
 Without addressing me, as now I think 35
 More pity towards him hence in me is bred."
 Thus did we speak until we reached the brink,
 Which from the rock the other vale would show,
 Did not the light from its abysses shrink.
 When we were on that cloister, the last woe 40
 Of Malebolge, so that to our sight
 All its lay brothers might be seen below,
 Various lamentings on me darting smite,
 Whose arrows were so barbed with misery
 That with my hands my ears I closed outright. 45
 Such dolor as would be, if 'twixt July
 And drear September, from each hospital
 Of Valdichiana and Maremma nigh,
 The sick within one pit were gathered all ;
 Such was there here, and rose such odour rank 50
 As wont to rise from limbs that rot and crawl.
 Then downwards we descended the last bank
 Of the long bridge, and leftwards still we slant,
 And then my vision with more clearness sank
 Down to the bottom, where the ministrant 55
 Of the Most High, Justice infallible,
 The falsifiers punish in that haunt.
 I think not that a sadder sight befell
 When in Egina all the people sickened,
 What time the air was full of plagues so fell 60
 That even on the beasts death's harvest thickened,
 Down to the worm, and the human race revives
 From seed of ants miraculously quickened,
 According as the poet world believes,
 Than 'twas to witness in that valley black 65
 The spirits languish in their various sheaves.
 This on his belly, that upon his back,
 One on the other lay, one on all four
 Shifted his place along that wretched track.

Line 48. The valley through which runs the river Chiana was in those times as unhealthy in autumn as the pestilential swamps of the Maremma on the coast of Tuscany.

Line 59. All the inhabitants of Egina having died of plague, the king obtained from Jupiter that a large ants' nest should be changed into men to repeople his island. Ovid's "Metam.," book vii.

Without a word we slowly journeyed o'er, 70
 Listening and ever gazing on the sick,
 Who could not raise their bodies from the floor.
 Two saw I 'gainst each other placed oblique,
 As in the kitchen pan 'gainst pan is laid,
 From head to foot with dry scabs spotted thick. 75
 I never saw a currycomb so frayed
 By stable lad beneath his master's eye,
 Or when unwillingly from sleep delayed,
 As each one aye his nails' keen bite did ply
 Upon himself, through madness that assails 80
 From the wild itching without remedy.
 And so there downwards peeled the scabs, their nails,
 As doth a knife the coat of a sardine
 Or other fish furnished with larger scales.
 "Thou with thy fingers who thy mail dost skin," 85
 Began my leader unto one of these,
 "And often turn'st them into pincers keen,
 Tell me if any 'mid these companies
 Is Latin, so I pray thy nail may last
 In this its task through the eternities." 90
 "We are Italian, whom thou seest aghast,
 Both of us here," the one with wails replied ;
 "But who art thou who from us this hast askt ?"
 "I'm one who here descends," my leader cried,
 "With this a living man from round to round 95
 I purpose Hell to show him as his guide."
 Then was their mutual support unbound,
 And each one turned to me in trembling fear,
 With all the rest, who'd heard at the rebound.
 My gentle master unto me drew near, 100
 Saying: "Whate'er thou wishest to them speak,"
 And I at once obeyed his dictate clear.
 "So that your memory may not grow weak
 In human minds upon the primal earth,
 But that for many years it life may take, 105
 Tell me now who ye are, and of what birth.
 Let not your weary pain, undignified,
 Deter ye from your story setting forth."
 "I was D'Arezzo," one of them replied.
 "Albero of Siena sent me to the flame, 110
 But here I am not doomed for what I died.

Line 109. Grifolino d'Arezzo was burnt at the stake by a bishop of Siena as a necromancer on the instigation of a nephew of the latter, Albero, for the simple reason given in the text.

'Tis true that, jesting with him, I did claim
 That I the power to fly in air had won,
 And he, whose wish was great, nor sense the same,
 Asked me that art to show him, and alone, 115
 Because no Dædalus I made him, made
 Me burn through one, who held him as a son.
 I in the last of the ten pits am laid
 Because on earth I practised alchemy,
 By Minos' doom, whose judgment never strayed." 120
 Then said I to the bard, "Where could we see
 A race so prodigal as these Sanese?
 Sure not the French, though bad enough they be."
 On which the other leper, who did seize
 My meaning, added, "Stricca we must shrive, 125
 Whom temperate expense alone could please.
 And Niccolò, the man who first did hive
 Cloves in his roasted pheasants, a rich mode,
 Sown in an orchard where such seed would thrive.
 We must except the band, on whom bestowed 130
 Caccia d'Asciañ his vineyards and his groves,
 And his good sense the Abbagliato showed.
 But now, that thou mayst know who thus improves
 Thy speech 'gainst the Sanese, close looking, try
 My features to recall, as it behoves, 135
 And thou wilt see Capocchio's shade am I,
 With alchemy who changed each metal's shape,
 And thou shouldst know, if thee I right descry,
 How I of Nature was an excellent ape."

Line 125. Stricca, Niccolò, Caccia d'Asciañ, and Abbagliato, alluded to in the following lines, were members of a brotherhood called the "Brigata Godereccia," who spent all they possessed in riotous living, and whose extravagance was a proverb of that place and time. The orchard in which such seed would thrive is Siena.

Line 136. Capocchio of Siena is stated to have been a fellow-student in natural philosophy of Dante, and hence they were well known to each other.

CANTO XXX.

Two wild spirits rush by, tearing and haling the other plague-smitten victims. These are they who in life falsified their own persons. On their departure Dante listens to an altercation between Master Adam of Brescia, a coiner, and Simon of Troy. He is rebuked by Virgil for taking an interest in so base a dispute.

IN former times when Juno was enraged
 Through Semele against the Theban blood,
 As more than once her jealous war she waged,

King Atamas with such a madness glowed
 That when he saw his wife with infants twain 5
 Bearing on either arm the darling load,
 He cried, " We've stretcht the nets and o'er the plain
 I seize the lioness and both whelps too,"
 And then his talons fell he raught amain,
 And down the infant named Learchus threw, 10
 And dashed to pieces, breaking on a stone,
 And she then drowned herself and infants too :
 Or what time later Fortune hurled adown
 The Trojan grandeur all in flaming fear,
 So that the old king perished with his crown, 15
 Hecuba, captive miserably drear,
 After she saw her Polisena dead,
 And grieving found her Polidorus' bier,
 Stretcht on the shore beside the deep sea bed,
 Like to a dog she barked in her despair ; 20
 So far had grief her mind from reason led.
 But neither Thebans wild nor Trojans e'er
 Were seen in any way so fierce to fly,
 Not only beasts but human limbs to tear,
 As I two pale and naked shades descry, 25
 Who in such fashion rushed about to bite
 As doth the boar-pig when escaped from sty.
 One seized Capocchio and with tusks did smite
 His neck upon the nape and dragging frayed
 His belly 'gainst the bottom of the pit. 30
 And then the Aretine who trembling stayed,
 Said to me : " Gianni Schicchi is the fiend
 Who rabid runs the others thus to aid."
 " Oh," said I, " that the other may not send
 Her teeth into thee, be it no fatigue 35
 To tell me who she be or ere she wend."
 And he : " That ancient spirit with intrigue,
 Mirra the scelerate, for her father nursed
 A passion not with lawful love in league.
 With him to sin she gained her end accurst 40
 When in another's form she false appeared ;
 Just as the other who there wonneth durst

Line 4. Atamas, King of Thebes, married to Ino, sister to Semele.

Line 32. A Florentine of the Cavalcanti family, who possessed a wonderful power of imitation. It is said that when Buoso Donati was dead, this man counterfeited his person, and, lying in his bed as if in his last sickness, dictated a will by which he left all the property of the dead Buoso to his distant relative Simon Donati, for which piece of acting he received from the latter a celebrated mare, called in line 43 the lady of the herd.

To gain as prize the lady of the herd,
 Buoso Donati, with his form to feign,
 Devising all his goods with forms averred." 45
 After had passed away the rabid twain
 On whom till now my vision I had held,
 On the other born to ill I turned again.
 One fashioned like a lute I there beheld, 50
 Had he been only lopt off at the groin,
 The which o'er his shrunk legs so hugely swelled.
 The dropsy, which the frame doth so disjoin,
 Through humour unabsorbed that the same face
 To the same belly no one would assign, 55
 Forced him his lips to open wide in space,
 As a consumptive man who through his thirst
 One upwards and one o'er his chin doth brace.
 "O ye who each one, free from sickness, stirr'st
 (Wherefore I know not) in this world of woe," 60
 Said he to us, "now wait and see the worst
 Wretchedness Master Adam here doth show;
 In life I had enough for all my wills,
 Now I desire one drop of water, woe!
 The rivulets that from the verdant hills 65
 Of Casentine descend to Arno's plain,
 Making all cool and moist their little rills,
 Are ever here before me, not in vain,
 Since the clear image makes for me more drought
 Than the disease through which my face is lean.
 The rigid justice which my doom hath wrought, 70
 From the place in which I sinned, a reason plied
 To make my sighs with greater frequency fraught.
 Romena's here, there where I falsified
 The money stamped with San Baptista's sign,
 For which with body burnt on earth I died, 75
 Here could I only see the soul malign
 Of Guido or his brethren, either one,
 For Branda's fount that sight I'd not resign.
 And one of them doth here already wonne,
 If the wild shades who wander round speak true. 80
 But what avails it me whose limbs are gone?

Line 61. Master Adam of Brescia was induced by Guido and his two brothers, Counts of Romena, a land in the Casentine, to coin false florins, for which crime he was burnt. The Florentine florin was stamped on one side with an effigy of the Baptist, and the other a lily.

Line 78. A fountain of clearest water in Siena.

If I in sooth were only light eno'
 To walk an inch within a hundred years,
 I had set out upon my path ere now,
 To seek him out amongst his filthy peers, 85
 Though for eleven long miles around they lie,
 Nor less than half a mile athwart one steers.
 Through them am I 'mid such a family ;
 'Twas they induced me florins false to coin,
 That had in them three carats of alloy." 90
 And I to him : " What wretched pair recline
 Smoking like hand immersed in water cold,
 Stretcht out so closely at thy right confine ?"
 " They've moved not since I first did them behold,"
 He answered, " when within this pool I fell,
 Nor do I think they'd move through ages old. 95
 The one 'gainst Joseph the false tale did tell,
 The other is false Simon, Greek of Troy ;
 Through their high fever they cast out such smell."
 And one of them to whom it caused annoy, 100
 Perchance the being called by name so mean,
 Against his belly hard his fist let fly ;
 It sounded as it were a tambourine,
 And Master Adam struck him on the face
 With 's arm, which did not seem less hard I ween, 105
 Saying to him : " Although the power to pace
 Be taken from my limbs, of grievous weight,
 Free for such work an arm I still possess."
 Whence he replied : " When to thy fiery fate
 Thou walkedst, thou hadst not thy arm so quick, 110
 But when thou coinedst it was quicker yet."
 The dropsical : " In this thou truth dost speak :
 But thou gav'st not such truthful testimony,
 There, when from thee the Trojans truth did seek."
 " If I spoke false, and thou didst coin false money," 115
 Said Simon, " I but for one fault am here,
 But thou for more than other demon any."
 " Bring back to mind the horse, thou perjurer,"
 Answered the other, " with his paunch accurst,
 Known unto all the world, be thine the slur." 120
 " The guilt be thine of thirsting, whence doth burst
 Thy tongue," cried out the Greek, " and water foul
 Which 'fore thy eyes that belly pile has nursed."
 Thereat the coiner : " Still may gape and roll
 Thy mouth in speaking evil, as 'tis wont ; 125
 If I have thirst, and humour puffs me full,

Line 97. Potiphar's wife.

Thou hast a burning and an aching front,
 And but to lick Narcissus' mirror bright
 Thou wouldst not many invitations want." 130
 In listening to them I was centered quite,
 When said my master to me, "Now behold,
 Little remains to make me vexed outright."
 When I had heard his words in anger told,
 With such deep shame towards him did I turn,
 That still in memory is o'er me rolled. 135
 And like one dreaming who doth loss discern,
 Who dreaming, hopeth that he doth but dream,
 And hopes it may not be what seems so stern,
 Unable e'en to speak, so did I seem,
 Who longed for pardon, and the pardon won, 140
 Which all the while I did not dare to claim.
 "Less shame a greater error would atone
 Than this of thine has been," my master cried,
 "Now from all sadness clear thy heart, my son.
 And think that I am always by thy side, 145
 Should Fortune e'er again conduct thee nigher,
 Where people in a like contention bide,
 Since wishing such to hear is low desire."

CANTO XXXI.

The poets, turning from the last valley of Malebolge, advance towards the ninth circle of Hell, the lowest and central pit. Around that pit, standing within it, but rising above it from their middle upwards, stand vast giants. Of these Dante sees Nimrod, Fialte, and Antæus. The last places the poets in safety at the bottom of the pit.

At first it stung me that rebuke so keen,
 So that the blush on either cheek I feel,
 And after cured me the same medicine.
 So have I heard Achilles' lance of steel
 Left to him by his father had the gift 5
 At first to wound, and afterwards to heal.
 We turned our back upon that wretched rife,
 Up by the bank with which it is embraced,
 O'er which without another word we drift.
 Less than or night or day a light was cast, 10
 So that my sight but little way could press;
 But there I heard resound a horn's shrill blast
 So loud that thunder would have sounded less,
 Which 'gainst itself, following its passage, drew
 My eyesight forward wholly to one place; 15

After the dolorous rout which overthrew
 Of Charlemagne the sacred enterprise,
 Not half so terribly Orlando blew.
 A little upwards, when I raised my eyes,
 It seemed that many lofty towers I saw; 20
 Whence I: "O master, say what land is this?"
 And he to me: "Since thou too far dost draw
 Thy eyesight through the shadows, it may be
 That after what thou deem'st may prove a flaw. 25
 If thou dost thither reach, thou clear wilt see
 How much the senses are deceived afar;
 Therefore bestir thyself more speedily."
 Then did he take my hand with tender care
 And said to me, "Before we further reach, 30
 In order that the fact less strange appear,
 Know that these are not towers, but giants, stretch
 Their forms around the pit's circumference here,
 Hid from the navel downwards, all and each."
 As when a cloud doth dissipate and clear, 35
 Little by little doth the sight perceive
 What erst was hid by vapour, dimmed by air;
 So, as that dark and thickened air we cleave,
 More and more near approaching towards the shore,
 Awaketh fear, as my mistake I leave;
 For as around its circular yard there tower 40
 Turrets round Montereccion's keep encrowned,
 So round the brink which o'er the pit doth lower
 With half their persons, turreted around
 The horrible giants, whom Jove's threats yet chase,
 When from the heavens there peals the thunder sound. 45
 Already I perceived of one the face,
 Shoulders, and breast, and of his belly part,
 And both his arms adown his sides I trace.
 Nature most surely when she left the art
 Of making animals like that did well, 50
 From Mars such executioners to part;
 And if of elephants, and whales as well,
 She yet repents not, who would keen reflect
 More just and more discreet will hold her still.

Line 16. "When Charlemagne with all his peerage fell
 At Fontarabia."

On this occasion Orlando, surrounded by the Paynim, blew so loud a blast upon his miraculous horn that it was heard by the king at the distance of eight leagues, who, with all his ardour, could not return in time to the rescue of his favourite knight.

Line 41. Montereccion, a castle between Siena and Florence.

For where the assistance of the intellect 55
 Is added unto evil will and power,
 'Gainst it no refuge could mankind erect.
 More long and big his face did seem to lower
 Than is St. Peter's bronzen pine at Rome ;
 While the other bones in due proportion tower ; 60
 So that the bank which, covering him, did come
 Up to his middle, quite enough displayed
 Above, that if three lofty Swiss had clomb,
 His hair they'd reach not, one on the other laid ; 65
 For of his length I saw thirty great palms
 Down from the place where the cloak's clasp is made.
Rafel, mai amech, zabi alms,
 Shouting, that savage mouth began to roll,
 For which were never suited sweeter psalms.
 And towards him spake my leader : " Foolish soul, 70
 Stick to thy horn ; in that pour out thy wrong,
 When ire or other passions thee control.
 Seek at thy neck and thou wilt find the thong
 That ties it to thee, O thou soul confused,
 And see, it lies thy brawny breast along." 75
 Then said to me : " He has himself accused :
 This one is Nimrod who did Babel rear,
 Whence in the world one language is not used.
 Leave him alone, nor speak to empty air ;
 For such to him doth every language sound 80
 As his to others, he has none we're 'ware."
 A little farther then our way we wound,
 And towards the left, at a balestra's throw,
 Another greater and more fierce we found.
 Who may have been the master who could so 85
 Bind him I cannot say, but he had bound
 One arm before, the right behind I know
 Within a chain that him did so surround
 From the neck downwards, in the part we spy 90
 It twisted round him up to the fifth round.
 " This is the proud one who desired to try
 His power against the might of highest Jove,
 Whence he has this desert," my chief did cry :

Line 59. The bronzen cone which once crowned the arch of Adrian, and was afterwards placed above St. Peter's, from whence it was thrown down by lightning.

Line 67. Gibberish, written as in the original, except the final termination, being altered to suit the English rhyme. It is meant to represent the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel.

"His name is Fialte, he great deeds did prove,
 When to the gods the giants gave alarm : 95
 The arms which then he swung no more can move."
 And I to him : "If huge Briareus' arm
 To look on now were possible for me,
 Experience of such sight my eyes would charm."
 He answered then : "Antæus thou shalt see, 100
 Who speaketh and is loose, not far from here,
 And who within the pit will place us free.
 He whom thou wouldst behold is not so near,
 And he is bound, and like to this is made,
 Save that his face more savage doth appear." 105
 Never was yet by terrible earthquake swayed,
 Or rocked a turret its wild shock beneath,
 As Fialte then to shake himself essayed.
 Then did I fear, far more than ever, Death,
 And never had I greater cause for dread 110
 Had I not seen the bands still round him wreath.
 A little farther onwards then we sped,
 And to Antæus came, five ells in height
 He issued from the pit, besides his head.
 "O thou who in the fortunate vale, where bright 115
 With glory Scipio won the victor's bay,
 When Hannibal retreated from the fight,
 A thousand lions seizedst for thy prey,
 And hadst thou only at the great war been
 Amongst thy brethren, still there are who say, 120
 The sons of earth had victors there been seen :
 Bear us below (let this no slur be thought),
 There, where Cocitus' stream the cold doth chain.
 To Tizio, or to Tifo, send us not ;
 But bow thee down, nor twist thy mouth with shame : 125
 This one can give thee that which here is sought ;
 Still in the world can he procure thee fame.
 For he doth live, and long life hath in store,
 Unless before the time grace him should claim."
 So spake my guide : Antæus stretched before 130
 His hand in haste, and on my leader laid,
 Whence Hercules erst felt the pressure sore.
 When Virgil felt himself ta'en up he said
 To me, "Now manage that I thee may hold,"
 Then of himself and me one link he made. 135

Line 115. The territory of Utica, on the coast of Tunis.

As when the Carisenda we behold
 From 'neath its leaning tower what time a cloud
 Thwarts it, the tower itself appears unrolled,
 So seemed Antæus to me as he bowed
 While I was gazing, and caused such effray 140
 That I had gladly chosen another road ;
 But lightly to the pit which holds its prey
 Judas and Lucifer, he us did bear.
 Nor so bent downwards did he make delay,
 But like a ship's tall mast arose in air. 145

Line 136. The Carisenda is the name of the falling tower at Pisa.

CANTO XXXII.

Dante finds himself in the bottomless pit, in which is the frozen lake of Cocytus. In the outer circle are frozen the first class of traitors, their heads alone being raised above the ice. This circle is called Caina, after the first murderer. Camiccione de' Pazzi names to Dante several of those punished in this circle. The poets then advance to the second circle, called Antenora, after Antenor, the betrayer of Troy, where are punished in like manner traitors to their country. Bocca degli Abbati names to Dante several of his companions in suffering. Finally Dante sees two forms frozen, the head of one overlapping the other, and devouring the lower skull with fierce hatred.

If I possessed the rhymes so rough and hoarse
 As would be suited to the dreary hole
 Whither the rocks of Hell all point their course,
 Of my conceit I could express the whole
 Sap more completely, but these not possess, 5
 I venture not all free from fear's control,
 For 'tis no enterprise to take in jest
 To paint the depths of all the universe,
 Nor with a tongue that childish words address.
 But let those ladies now assist my verse 10
 Who helped Amphion Thebes's wall to rear,
 So that my speech from fact be not diverse.
 O people more than all create for fear,
 Who stand within the place to paint so hard,
 Better had ye been sheep or goats when here. 15
 When we were sunk within the gloomy ward
 Beneath the giant's feet, and even more low,
 The while the lofty wall I still regard,
 I heard one say : " Take care how thou dost go.
 Endeavour not to trample with thy feet 20
 The wretched brothers' heads, all worn with woe."

Line 21. The wretched brothers, as we are told afterwards, are Alessandro and Napoleone, sons of Alberto Alberti, who killed each other.

On which I turned, and saw beneath my feet,
 And stretcht before, a lake, which through the cold
 Appeared not water, but a glassy sheet.
 In winter time the Danube never rolled 25
 Over its course a veil of ice so thick,
 Nor 'neath its frozen sky the Tanais old,
 As there was here, for if Mount Tabernich
 Had fallen upon it, or Mount Pietrapane,
 It had not from its border sounded crick. 30
 And as a frog that croaks doth but remain
 With nose above the water, when there dream
 Oftenest the peasant girls of gleaning grain,
 So livid to their faces, showing shame,
 The grieving souls are buried in the ice, 35
 Their teeth, like storks' notes, chattering in their frame.
 Each one held down his face, and from their eyes
 Of their sad heart, and from their mouth of cold,
 Amongst them all the evidence doth rise.
 When I had somewhat round my vision rolled 40
 I turned down to my feet, and there saw two
 So close their hair was mixt in mingling fold,
 "Say to me, ye whose breasts so closely glue,"
 I said, "who are ye?" and their necks they bent, 45
 And when they'd raised their faces me to view,
 Their eyes, whose moisture was not inwards pent,
 Flowed over through the lids, and as they flow
 The tears are frozen ere they make descent.
 Two bits of wood were never dovetailed so 50
 As were their eyelids, whence like he-goats there
 They butted, so o'ercome by anger's glow.
 Then one, to whom had perished either ear
 By the sharp cold, with face still bent down low,
 Said, "Wherefore upon us dost thou so stare?" 55
 If who this couple were thou wouldest know,
 I' the valley where Bisenzio's stream doth fall
 Their father Albert and themselves did grow.
 One body bore them both; and Caina all
 Thou mayst search o'er and will not find a shade 60
 More fitly fixed within this gelid caul.

Line 28. Mount Tabernich, in Slavonia, and Pietrapana, a mountain in the territory of Modena.

Line 33. The spirits are immersed in the ice up to the throat, like frogs in water in the summer season, when the gleaners follow the harvest.

Line 56. The Bisenzio falls into the Arno shortly below Florence.

Not he whose shadow was all open laid
 At a single blow by royal Arthur's hand,
 Focaccia, no ; nor he who with his head
 My sight obstructing doth before me stand,
 And Sassol Mascheroni was his name ; 65
 If Tuscan, who he was thou'lt understand,
 And that more words from me thou mayst not claim,
 Know Camicioñ de' Pazzi erst was I.
 Carlin I wait, who's lessened so my blame." 70
 A thousand dog-like faces I descry,
 Grinning with cold, which make me shudder o'er,
 Crossing that frozen ford in memory.
 And whilst we wended towards the central shore,
 Where, gravitating on, all things advance,
 And I was trembling in the eternal frore, 75
 Whether 'twas will, or destiny, or chance,
 I know not, but in passing 'twixt each head
 Against a face my foot did heavily glance.
 Wailing, he shrieked out : " Why on me dost tread ?
 Unless thou comest to increase my pain 80
 For Mont' Aperti, why dost work me dread ?"
 And I : " My master, here awhile remain
 So that through this one I remove a doubt,
 Then quickly as thou wilt I'll onwards strain."
 The leader pausing, I to him spake out, 85
 Who with his horrible cursing still did strive,
 " What man art thou who thus doth others flout ?"
 " Who, then, art thou who thus thy feet dost drive
 'Gainst others' cheeks, through Antenora here ?
 Too hard 'twould be if thou wert still alive." 90
 " I am alive ; to thee it might be dear,"
 Was my reply, " if thou demandest fame,
 That I 'mid well-known names thy own should rear."

Line 61. Mordred, the infamous son of Arthur, who, while lying in wait for his father, was cloven through by the latter with his spear, so that the sun past through his shadow !

Line 63. Focaccia, a noble of Pistoja, who murdered his uncle. Mascheroni, the speaker Camiccione, and Carlino de' Pazzi were all Florentines, and the first two also murdered their kinsman, while the last betrayed a castle to the Florentines in which the Bianchi faction had held out against them for several days.

Line 81. The speaker is Bocca degli Abbati, a Guelph, who, bought over by the Ghibelines in the height of the battle of Mont' Aperti, cut off the hand of the chief Guelph banner-bearer, at the fall of whose banner the Guelphs gave way, and were utterly routed. See the note on the great Ghibeline Farinata in Canto X.

And he to me : " The contrary I claim.
 Be off from here, nor further torture shape. 96
 Thou flatterest idly in this vale of shame."
 Then did I seize the hair upon his nape,
 And said, " 'Tis fit that thou thy name declare,
 Or not a hair upon thy head shall 'scape."
 Whence he to me : " Why dost thou rend my hair ? 100
 I will not tell thee who I am, nor show,
 Though thou a thousand times my head shouldst tear."
 His hair already round my hands I draw,
 And tufts far more than one I'd stript away,
 He barking, with his eyes still fixt below. 106
 " What hast thou, Bocca ?" cried another fay.
 " Is't not sufficient with thy jaws to creak
 But thou must bark ? What devil rips thee ? say."
 " Henceforth," I said, " I want thee not to speak, 110
 Thou wicked traitor, of thy shameful state
 Authentic tidings to the world I'll take."
 " Off !" he replied. " Whate'er thou will'st relate.
 But be not silent, wouldst thou 'scape from here,
 Of him whose tongue was now so prompt to prate.
 The silver of the French he wailleth here. 116
 I saw Du Duera, thou henceforth canst say
 There, where the sinners all so cool appear.
 Hadst thou but asked of the others in this bay,
 Thou seest Di Becchièra at thy side,
 Whose head in Florence was cut off one day. 120
 Gianni del Soldanier I think doth bide
 Beyond with Gano and Tribaldello there,
 Who oped Faenza steeped in slumber's tide."
 From him already we were parted far
 When I beheld two frozen in one hole, 125
 So that one head was hood to the other's hair.
 As bread in famine time is swallowed whole,
 So the one above i' the other crunched his jaw
 Where the spine's marrow to the brain doth roll.
 Not otherwise did Tideus foully gnaw 130
 The head of Menalippus with disdain
 As he the other's skull did ravening claw.
 " O thou who by such bestial sign show'st plain
 Thy hate of this one, whom thou dost devour,
 Say why," I said, " and I for this am fain 135

Line 116. Du Duera sold a Ghibeline position in the Parmegiano to the French leader Guy de Montfort. Di Becchièra, del Soldanier, and Tribaldello were all Italians. Gano was the traitor in the time of Charlemagne through whom befell the rout at Fontarabia.

If thou with reason against him doth glower,
 Knowing his sin and who ye are, full soon
 In the upper world to right thee. I have power
 If what I offer doth not importune."

CANTO XXXIII.

Count Ugolin relates to Dante the fearful end of himself and his sons, left to die of hunger in the Tower of Famine. The poets then pass onwards to the third division of the last circle, called Idomea, in which are punished those who have betrayed their benefactors. The friar Alberigo explains to Dante that when men have committed the height of perfidy their spirits are at once sent to torment, a fiend taking possession of the body which appears to be still alive on earth.

His mouth he lifted from that savage food,
 That sinner, as he wiped away with hair,
 Torn from behind the skull, the gouts of blood.
 Then he began : "Thou wouldst that I should bear
 That desperate grief again, at which doth break
 My heart, already thinking only, ere
 I speak ; but if my words prove seed to wreak
 Shame on the traitor whom I'm gnawing here,
 At the same time thou'lt see me weep, yet speak.
 I know not who thou art, nor to this sphere
 In what way thou art come, but Florentine
 Thou seemest truly when thy speech I hear.
 Thou then must know I was Count Ugolin,
 And this is the Archbishop Ruggieri :
 Now I will tell thee why so close we join.
 That by the effect of his suggestions eerie,
 Trusting in him, I pined a captive long,
 Then died, with telling thee I need not weary.
 But what thou hast not heard amongst the throng—
 Namely, how cruel was the death I died,
 Thou'lt hear, and know if he has done me wrong.
 A small hole in the tower where the eagles bide,
 Which men through me the Tower of Famine call,
 And where yet further victims will be tried,

Line 13. Count Ugolin was a Guelph leader who at first, in concert with the Archbishop Ruggieri, became the despotic master of his native town of Pisa. His conduct finally was most extravagant, and, amongst other acts, he killed with his own hands the nephew of the archbishop. The latter then joined the faction of opposing nobles, and almost without resistance Count Ugolin was taken and imprisoned with his sons and grandsons. His story is the subject of one of Rosini's historical romances down to the point where the tale is told by Dante.

Had shown unto me through its opening small 25
 Now many moons ere that bad dream I made
 Which tore away for me the future's pall.
 This one appeared to me the chief and head,
 Chasing the wolf and whelps unto the hill,
 Which from the Pisans Lucca's sight doth shade. 30
 With ravening bitches, lean, and known for ill,
 Those of Sismondi, and Lanfranchi born,
 The whom he'd placed in front to work his will.
 After a little course they seemed outworn,
 The father and the sons, with fangs sharp fed, 35
 I seemed to see their flanks in pieces torn.
 When I awoke, before the night had fled,
 I heard my sons bewailing in their sleep,
 Who were with me, and asking me for bread.
 Cruel thou art indeed, should grief not steep 40
 Thy thoughts at what that presaged to my heart;
 If thou weep'st not, at what art wont to weep?
 As now the hour approached, from sleep they start,
 When food had hitherto been brought us, stirred
 A doubt in each one, through his dream apart. 45
 The locking of the gate below I heard
 At the horrible tower, on which I looked upon
 The faces of my sons, nor spake a word.
 I sobbed not, so within I grew to stone;
 But they sobbed all, and Anselmuccio said, 50
 'Father, thou look'st so, what hast thou, my own?'
 But I, I neither wept nor answer made
 For that whole day, nor for the following night,
 Until another sun moved overhead.
 As there was cast a little ray of light 55
 Into our dolorous prison, I beheld
 In those four faces my own aspect white.
 I bit my joined hands then, by grief impelled,
 And they, who thought from that that I did crave
 For food, rose sudden and to me appealed, 60

Line 28. The archbishop appeared hounding on the other nobles and the people in chase of Count Ugolin and his sons (the wolf and whelps) towards Mount St. Julian, half-way between Pisa and Lucca, to which the count had endeavoured to retreat.

Line 39. The sons also are afflicted with their own dreams of evil (see line 45), and presage in their sleep the horrors that were to come.

Line 59, *et seq.*, thus translated by Chaucer in his "Monkes Tale":—

"His children wenden, that for hunger it was
 That he his armes gnowe, and not for wo,
 And sayden : fader, do not so, alas!
 But rather etc the flesh upon us two,
 Our flesh thou yaf us, take our flesh us fro."

"The Canterbury Tales," line 14,757.

Saying, 'O father, it would far less grieve
 Wouldst thou eat us, for thou didst make us wear
 This wretched flesh, which from us thou canst reave.'
 Then I grew still to make them not more drear: 65
 That day, and all the next we silent stayed:
 Ah earth so hard, why didst not open there?
 When to the fourth day we had still delayed,
 My Gaddo at my feet his form did throw,
 Saying, 'My father, canst not give me aid?' 70
 He died there, and as thou dost see me now,
 I saw them, one by one, fall down, all three,
 Betwixt the fifth and sixth day; blinded now,
 Groping o'er each of them, henceforth I lay,
 And three days called them after they were dead.
 Then, more than grief could do, did hunger slay." 75
 When he had spoken thus, with eyes of dread
 Seized on the wretched skull, his teeth apace,
 Which, like a dog's, were strong to cranch the head.
 Ah, Pisa! thou dishonour of the race 80
 Of the fair country, where they murmur Si,
 Since to revenge thy neighbours do not race,
 Capraja and Gorgona from the sea
 Should move and make a dam to Arno's wave,
 So as to drown each habitant in thee. 85
 For if Count Ugolin thou didst believe
 That he for thee thy castle had betrayed,
 Thou shouldst not doom his sons to such a grave.
 Their youthful age them innocent had made,
 Uguccion and Brigata: Thebes once more!
 And the other two, whose names the song displayed. 90
 We travelled onwards then, there where the frore
 On other people cruelly doth steep,
 Not downwards bent, but backwards tumbled o'er.
 Their very weeping would not let them weep,
 The grief, which o'er their eyes found obstacle, 95
 Turned inwards to increase their anguish deep.
 Froze in a heap the tears that earliest fell,
 And like a visor made of crystal glass,
 Beneath their eyes had wholly filled the well.
 Now by the biting cold it came to pass 100
 That from my face all feeling did appear
 To lose possession, so like horn it was.

Line 82. Capraja and Gorgona are small islands in the mouth of the Arno.

And now meseemed a certain wind to hear,
 Whence I: "My master, who then stirreth this?
 Is not all vapour's motion stilled down here?" 105
 Whence he to me: "Full sure thou wilt not miss
 To have an answer made thee by thy sight,
 Seeing the cause that agitates the abyss."
 One of the wretches in that frozen plight
 Then cried to us: "O souls so cruelly fell, 110
 That ye are bound unto the lowest pit,
 Remove from off my face this hardened veil,
 So that I vent the grief that fills my heart
 A little ere the tears again congeal."
 Whence I to him: "First tell me who thou wert, 115
 If thou want'st aid, and if I help thee not,
 To the bottom of the ice may I depart."
 "I am the Friar Alberigo, brought
 From a bad orchard, I'm a fruit," he said,
 "To take back dates for figs is here my lot." 120
 "Oh!" said I to him, "art already dead?"
 And he to me: "I've not the least idea
 Whether my body on the earth doth tread.
 Such an advantage hath this Ptolomea 125
 That many times ere Atropos should slay
 The spirit is hurled downwards to this layer.
 That thou more willingly may clear away
 The tears fast frozen to my visage, know
 That at the time the spirit doth betray,
 As I did, in its body straight doth go 130
 A demon, by the which 'tis henceforth swayed
 Until its life unto completion grow.
 The spirit in a well like this is laid,
 And still perchance his form appears above,
 Who here behind me winters in his shade. 135
 Thou ought'st to know, if thou dost lately rove
 Hither, he's Branca Doria, many a year
 Has passed since he was pent within this drove."

Line 118. Alberigo de' Manfredi a Rejoicing Friar, who, having quarrelled with some others of the order, invited them to a banquet under the pretence of a pacification, and on his ordering the fruit to be removed, his assassins appeared at the arranged signal and murdered all his guests.

Line 124. Ptolomea, the name of the third circle, probably after Ptolemy, the betrayer of Pompey the Great.

Line 137. The Dorias were a leading Genoese family, and Branca is said to have murdered his father-in-law Michel Zanche, the Sardinian ruler alluded to already in Canto XXII. The neighbour alluded to in line 146 as sharer in Branca Doria's villainies is stated to have been his cousin.

"I think," said I, "thou dost deceive me here,
 For Branca Doria is by no means dead, 140
 But eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and clothes doth wear."
 "In Malebranche's higher pit," he said,
 "There, where the pitch tenacious boils apace,
 Already Michel Zanche had not sped
 Ere this one left the Devil in his place, 145
 Within his body, and his neighbour's, he
 Who always ran with him his cheating race.
 But stretch forth now thy hand my eyes to free."
 Leaving his eyes still closed I onwards went,
 For rudeness unto such is courtesy. 150
 Ah, Genovese! ye men in every bent
 So diverse, and so full of every shame,
 Why from the world are ye not wholly sent?
 For with the worst soul Italy can claim
 Such one of ye I found, who by his worth 155
 Bathes now in spirit in Cocitus' stream,
 And yet in body seems alive on earth.

Line 154. The worst soul in Italy is the Friar Alberigo.

CANTO XXXIV.

The poets advance into the fourth quarter of the last circle, called Judecca; there the damned are wholly submerged beneath the frozen lake of Cocitus. Advancing towards the icy blast that meets them, Virgil shows Dante the gigantic form of Lucifer piercing through the lake. Virgil then takes up Dante, and descends along the body of the fallen archangel into the centre of the earth. From thence he ascends on the other side, and, after a weary climb through a deep cavern, the poets at length issue on the Antipodes.

"Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni,
 Towards us, therefore, forwards cast thy gaze,"
 My master said, "if thou wouldst see them there nigh."
 As when there breathes around a misty haze, 5
 Or when the night draws o'er our hemisphere,
 Appears from far a mill i' the wind that plays,
 Such building then before me seemed to rear:
 Then to escape the wind, behind I drew
 My chief, no other refuge being near.

Line 1. The banners of the infernal king advance. The Latin line is a parody of the opening of a hymn sung by the Church in honour of the Cross. According to the principles of translation which I have imposed on myself I have never felt justified in translating into English the Latin lines introduced by Dante into his poem. Such lines, generally quotations from the Vulgate, are very common in the "Purgatory" and "Paradise."

(With fear I frame the verse) we'd reached unto 10
 There, where the shades with ice were covered quite,
 And like to motes in glass were visible through.
 Some were laid out at length, some stood upright,
 Some on their heads, and others on their feet,
 Others like bows, with head to foot drawn tight. 15
 When we had gone as far as seemèd meet
 Unto my master, to me to display,
 The creature who had erst the face so sweet,
 He moved from front of me, and bade me stay,
 Saying, "Lo Lucifer! and lo the place 20
 Where thou must arm thy courage for the fray."
 How frozen I became, and weak of grace,
 From writing, reader, let me now be shrived,
 For every speech were weak such state to trace. 25
 I did not die, and yet no longer lived;
 Think for thyself, if thou hast Fancy's bloom,
 What I became, of death and life deprived.
 The emperor of that all-dolorous home,
 From mid-chest issued upwards from the ice;
 And to a giant's height I nearer loom, 30
 Then would two giants for his arms suffice;
 How great the whole must be, consider now,
 To answer to such part in fit device.
 If he was once as fair as hideous now,
 And 'gainst his Maker raised his impious eyes, 35
 Full well from him would all contention flow.
 O how his image filled me with surprise
 When I beheld three faces to his head!
 The one before hued with vermilion dyes:
 The other two, which unto this were wed, 40
 Were o'er the centre of each shoulder broad,
 And at the crest together filleted.
 The right with hue 'twixt white and yellow glowed,
 The left had such a colour, as they bear
 Who come from where the Nile has overflowed. 45

Line 38. The three faces of Lucifer are thought by Lombardi to represent the three then known quarters of the world, the red representing Europe, the yellow Asia, and the black Africa. Judas Iscariot, however, fills the place of victim to the red face, and the two chief Roman conspirators against Julius Cæsar occupy the other two. The selection of the latter two victims is characteristic of Dante's fundamental idea, the necessity of an empire for the world like that which Cæsar raised, and of one Supreme Church distinct entirely from secular rule. Treason against either of these separate empires was almost equally criminal, and Judas, Brutus, and Cassius are chosen as the three most severely punished in Hell on this account; perhaps more as types than realities.

Beneath each face two vasty wings did rear
 Of size that suited such a bird of prey :
 Sails of such size at sea I've witnessed ne'er.
 They were not feathered, but in bat-like way
 Were fashioned, and for ever round they sweep, 50
 So that three winds spring upwards at their play.
 Cocitus thence was frozen to its deep ;
 With six eyes wept he, and the falling tears
 With bloody slaver o'er three chins did drip.
 With the teeth of every mouth he cranching tears 55
 A sinner, as within a mashing mill,
 So that to three such punishment he shares.
 To the one in front the biting was as nil
 Beside the clawing, since at times his back
 Was wholly flayed beneath that gripe of ill. 60
 " The spirit held below in fiercest rack,
 Judas Iscariot see," my master said,
 " Whose head's inside, the while his legs hang slack.
 Of the other two, who outwards have their head,
 Brutus is he who hangs from the black face grim ; 65
 See how he writhes, yet speaks no word of dread :
 The other's Cassius, he so large of limb.
 But the night rises, and 'tis time to go,
 Since we have seen the whole." As pleased to him,
 Around his neck my clinging arms I throw, 70
 And he a moment for his time did bide,
 And when the sweeping wings an opening show,
 Threw himself closely to that hairy side,
 And then from hair to hair descended low,
 Beneath the thick skin and the frozen tide. 75
 When we had reached unto the part where grow
 The broadened hips, above the thighs outspread,
 My leader with fatigue, and travail slow,
 Where erst his legs had been, turned round his head,
 And clung unto the hair like one who climbs, 80
 So that I thought that back to Hell we sped.
 " By stairs like these, acknowledge thou betimes,"
 My master panting like one wearied spake,
 " We fitly issue from such scene of crimes." 85
 Then out he sallied, through a rocky brake,
 And seating me upon the brink with care,
 Beside me courteously his place did take.
 I raised my eyes, and thought to witness there
 Lucifer, just as I beheld him last,
 And I beheld his legs upraised in air. 90

If I then grew bewildered and aghast,
 The ignorant may think, who do not see
 What was the point which I had just now past.
 "Rise on thy feet," the master said to me,
 "The way is long, the travel will be hard,
 Half through the third hour now the sun must be." 95
 It was no passage from a palace yard,
 There where we were, but Nature's prison this,
 With wretched flooring, and of light debarred.
 "Before I take my way from this abyss, 100
 My master," said I, when erect I stood,
 "To clear my error will not prove amiss.
 Where is the ice? and how is this one glued
 Thus upside down? and how in hours so few
 Has the sun from eve to morn his path pursued?" 105
 And he: "Thou'rt still according to thy view
 On that side of the centre where I late
 Seized the ill worm the world that pierceth through.
 Thou wert on that side while I went down straight,
 But when I turned, the centre thou didst clear, 110
 To which, from all parts, bodies gravitate:
 And now thou'st reached beneath the hemisphere
 Which is opposed to that which the dry earth
 Covers, on whose meridian they did spear
 The man who lived without sin from his birth. 115
 Thou hast thy feet above the little pit
 Which lieth opposite Giudecca's girth.
 'Tis morning here when there the sun doth set:
 And this one, of whose hair we made our stairs,
 Just as he was at first is fastened yet. 120
 In this place did he fall down from the spheres;
 And the dry land, not visible, 'neath the sea,
 Seeking a veil, with terror disappears,

Line 96. The time is here described according to the Hebrew manner, and it means an hour and a half before noon. The reader will remember that in line 68 Virgil had told Dante the night was rising. This is necessary to comprehend all the doubts to which Dante in the next few lines gives utterance, he imagining that when Virgil turned and commenced ascending they were returning into Hell and not-issuing on the Antipodes.

Line 111. "Al qual si traggon d'ogni parte i pesi." A clear statement, made at the commencement of the fourteenth century, that the centre of the earth was the point to which all things gravitate. It was a decided prevision of a part of Newton's great discovery.

Line 112. It was believed in Dante's time that the hemisphere known to mankind was alone habitable, and that the Antipodes was all ocean. The meridian of the known hemisphere was considered to be Jerusalem, where Christ's sacrifice was consummated.

And came unto our hemisphere : maybe
 To fly from him, it left this empty space, 125
 And formed a mount above, as there thou'lt see."
 From Beelzebub remote, there is a place
 Which to such deeps below its grave extendeth,
 That not by sight, but by the sound we trace, 130
 Made by a rivulet which there descendeth
 Through a rock's fissure, the rock worn away
 By its current, with it gently sloping wendeth.
 My chief and I by that mysterious way
 Entered, the world of light again to find : 135
 Nor with the thought of rest did we delay,
 But clambered up, he first, and I behind,
 Until I witnessed through that rounded bore
 The things so fair athwart the heavens that shined,
 And issued thence to see the stars once more.

Line 126. The mountain of Purgatory, placed by Dante in mid-ocean, in the Antipodes.

Heaven seems to revel in their flaming cars ; 25
 O widowed North, how is thy glory sheared
 Since that sweet vision Nature from thee bars !
 As from their gaze my eyes at length I veered
 Towards the other Pole a little thrown,
 There, where the Wain ere now had disappeared, 30
 I saw beside me there an old man lone,
 Worthy of every reverence in his air,
 More than a father claimeth from a son.
 His beard was long, and mixed with whitened hair,
 Like to the hoary locks that graced his head, 35
 And on his breast in double folds fell fair.
 The rays of those four stars so holy shed
 Their glory on his face, and so adorn,
 That him I saw as 'twere the sun o'erhead.
 " Who then are ye who 'gainst yon river lorn 40
 From the eternal prison take your flight ?"
 Speaking there moved his beard with honour worn :
 " Who here has guided ye ? or who was light ?
 Issuing outwards from the night profound, 45
 Which ever maketh black the infernal pit.
 Are thus the laws of the abyss unbound ?
 Or doth new counsel now in Heaven arise
 That souls condemned should wander to my ground ?"
 My leader me with tender hands did seize,
 And with his words, and hands, and signs the same, 50
 In reverent posture bent my limbs and eyes ;
 Then answered : " Of myself I never came.
 A lady wended from the sky, whose prayer
 For him my company in aid did claim.
 But since 'tis thy desire that I declare 55
 More fully our condition, truly dight,
 My will to oppose thine own would never dare.
 This one has not yet seen his latest night,
 But by his madness death was near effected,
 And very little time was left for flight. 60
 As I have said, for this I was directed
 To save him, and there was no other way
 Than this one which I took, and him protected.
 To him the impious race I did display,
 And now intend to show those spirits here, 65
 Who purge themselves of sin beneath thy sway.

of his mountain of Purgatory, from whence the first parents saw these stars, since unseen by man, in the other hemisphere. The constellation of the Southern Cross must have appeared to the first voyagers in the Southern Ocean, the same stars which Dante saw in vision.

How I have led him it were long to clear ;
 From high came virtue which such help did leud
 To lead him to behold thee and to hear.
 His advent here now please thee to befriend ; 70
 He seeketh liberty, acknowledged dear
 By one who for its sake his life did end.
 Thou know'st it ; since for it Death had no fear
 In Utica for thee where thou hast left
 The garb which on the great day will shine clear. 75
 For us the eternal edicts are not cleft ;
 Since this one lives, nor Minos bindeth me ;
 But I am of the circle where bereft
 Thy Marzia's chaste eyes still are praying thee,
 O holy breast ! to hold her for thine own ! 80
 By her love then unto our prayer agree.
 Through thy seven kingdoms grant us leave to wonne
 The grace obtained from thee, to her I'll bear,
 If to be named there thou dost not disown."
 "In Marzia did my eyes such pleasure share 85
 Whilst thitherwards I lingered," then he said,
 "That she obtained from me her every prayer.
 Now that she dwells beyond that river dread,
 She cannot move me more by that decree
 Ordained what time that I from hence was led. 90
 But if a lady from the sky rules thee,
 As thou dost say, of flattery is no need,
 Suffice it for her sake to urge thy plea.
 Go onwards then, and with a slender reed 95
 See that thou gird this man, and lave his face
 So that all stain of foulness hence be freed ;
 Since 'twould be most unfitting, with the trace
 Of any cloud to appear before the Prime
 Guardian, who comes of Paradisal race.
 This islet all around to its lowest rim 100
 Down thither, where the ocean beats its shore,
 Produceth reeds upon its moistened slime.

Line 73. Dante appears to have held Cato in peculiar veneration, but there is no satisfactory reason to be found for his having chosen a Pagan as the guardian of his Christian Purgatory. He and Virgil are the only spirits, not Christians, whom he has permitted to pass beyond the bounds of Limbo.

Line 82. The seven rounds into which it will be found that the Purgatory is divided, in each of which is purged away one capital sin.

Line 94. The reed with which Dante is directed to be girt is supposed to be typical of humility, and the washing with dew is clearly so of spiritual purification.

No other plant that leaflet ever bore,
 Or that grew hard, were able there to grow :
 This yieldeth to the ocean's smiting roar. 105
 By this way afterwards return not : lo !
 The sun will show thy road, which soon will rise
 Where easiest slopes the mountain upwards go."

He disappeared, and then I did arise
 Without a word, and to my leader drew 110
 Entirely, and towards him raised my eyes.
 Then he began : " O son, my steps pursue ;
 Back will we turn, for on that side declines
 The plain towards its slope, as we can view." 115
 Above the dawn the hour of morn now shines,
 Which fled before it, so, as far I strain,
 I recognised the seashore's trembling lines.
 We walked across the solitary plain
 As one who from a lost road turns anew,
 Whose wanderings until then had seemed in vain. 120
 When we had reached the region where the dew
 Fights with the sun, and in attempt to pass
 Towards the shade, its folded cloud breaks through ;
 With both his hands from off the scattered grass
 My master tenderly the moisture takes ; 125
 Whence I, who of his wish perceptive was,
 Extended towards him my all-tearful cheeks,
 And there discovered, on my face once more,
 The hue of life that Hell had shrouded, breaks. 130
 When we had come on that deserted shore,
 Which never yet saw navigate its main,
 The man who to return possessed the lore,
 As to that other pleased he girt me then ;
 O marvel ! for the instant that he chose
 The humble plant, as erst 'twas born again, 135
 And where he plucked it suddenly upgrows.

Line 131. Across this ocean the spirits are carried to Purgatory in the spirit bark described in the next Canto. Ulysses and his companions were the only mortals who had attempted the voyage, and their fate is described in the 26th Canto of Hell.

136. From Virgil. " Uno avulso non deficit alter."—Æn., book vi.

CANTO II.

A light rises on the distant ocean, which, advancing with marvellous speed, is seen to be the bark in which the spirits are brought to Purgatory by an angel. When the troop land upon the shore, Dante vainly endeavours to embrace one of the spirits, whom he recognises for his friend Casella. The latter, to please Dante, sings one of his canzoni, to which while all are rapt in attention Cato rebukes them for dallying on their way, and all hurry towards the mountain.

THE sun already to the horizon's rim
 Had travelled, whose meridian circle lieth
 In apogee above Jerusalem :
 And opposite to him the night that fieth,
 Issued from out the Ganges, with the scales 5
 That from his hands fall when too late she hieth :
 So that the white and vermeil hue that veils
 The fair Aurora's cheeks, as rose the day
 By waning time grows orange-hued, and pales. 10
 Alongside of the seashore still we stay
 Like people who are thinking of their road,
 Who go in heart, and yet with limbs delay.
 And lo ! as towards the morning, red like blood
 Through heavy vapours Mars is wont to flame,
 Down in the West, above the ocean flood : 15
 So there appeared, still can I see the same,
 Across the sea a light so swiftly sweep,
 No flight of bird with that can semblance claim :
 On which, when I a moment failed to keep
 My eye, to ask my leader to explain, 20
 Brighter I saw it then, and grown in shape.
 Then o'er the whole of it there seemed to gain
 I know not what of white, and underneath
 There issued by degrees its semblance twain. 25
 As yet my master not a word essayeth,
 Till what was white at first as wings he sees,
 Then when the Pilot he distinctly seeth,
 He cried aloud : " Now bend, now bend thy knees :
 Behold God's angel, towards him bow thy hands ;
 Henceforth thou'lt see such ministers as these. 30

Line 1. Dante supposes himself to be now antipodal to Jerusalem, the centre of the inhabited hemisphere, to whose horizon the sun was now on the point of setting, and therefore rising to him. At the same time night would be rising on the Ganges, or the far East, with the constellation Libra.

Line 6. A fanciful idea, expressing that when the nights grow longer than the days, the sun has passed out of Libra into another constellation.

See in no need of human means he stands :
 So that he wants not oars, nor other sail
 Except his pinions, from such distant strands.
 See how he rears them towards the Heavenly pale,
 Drawing the breezes with the eternal plumes, 35
 That like our mortal hair ne'er change nor fail."

Then, as towards us nearer still he looms,
 The bird divine more brilliant clear appeared,
 So that the eye shrank back as near he comes. 40

I bent mine down : and he the landing neared,
 With his small bark, so rapid and so light
 That as it went the wave it scarcely sheared.
 Stood on the stern Heaven's pilot, clothed in light,
 Amongst the blest inscribed, did he appear ; 45
 Within the bark a hundred spirits sit :

In exitu Israël, from Egypt's fear,
 They all together in one voice did sing,
 With all that follows when that Psalm we hear.

When he had signed the holy cross, they fling 50
 Themselves, together all, upon the plain,
 And as he came, he vanished, swift of wing.

Gazing around, the crowd that there remain
 In utter ignorance of the place did seem,
 Like one who striveth strange things to attain. 55

On every side there darted down its beam
 The sun, who from the centre of the sky
 Had routed Capricorn with arrowy flame.

When the new people raised their foreheads high
 Towards us, saying to us : " If ye know,
 Show us the path, towards the mount to hie." 60

And Virgil said : " Ye think that we can show,
 Perchance experienced in this place, the way,
 But like yourselves, we here are pilgrims too.

Shortly before ye did we hither stray 65
 By another path, that was so wild and rude,
 That any climbing henceforth will be play."

The spirits, who in me the breathing viewed,
 Perceived from that that I was still alive,
 And marvelling became all marble hued. 70

As when one bears an olive branch, arrive
 The people all around the news to hear,
 And each one to approach doth press and strive ;

So gazing on my face they centered here,
 Those happy spirits all, forgetting even
 To travel onwards, to become more fair. 75

Line 46. When Israel came out of Egypt. Psalm cxiv.

One of them saw I pierce their ranks close riven
 Me to embrace, with such a loving haste,
 That I to do the same was also driven.
 O empty shadows with but semblance graced !
 Three times around his form my arms I threw, 80
 And each time drew them idly to my breast.
 With wonder I believe I changed my hue ;
 Because the shadow smiled, and past away
 And pressing onwards I his steps pursue.
 He asked me tenderly that I should stay : 85
 Then knew I who he was, and him besought
 For par lance with me somewhat to delay.
 He answered me : " As I thy love have sought
 In mortal body, so I love thee freed ;
 Therefore I pause ; but how hast thou been brought ?" 90
 " Casella mine, I made this voyage decreed,
 Back to return to earth, where I belong,
 But why so long has been debarred thy meed ?"
 And he to me : " No one hath done me wrong,
 But he who when and whom he pleases takes, 95
 This longed-for passage has denied me long :
 Since of God's justest will his own he makes,
 But truly for three months past he has ta'en,
 In perfect peace, whoe'er an entrance seeks.
 Whence I, who dwelt but now, towards the main 100
 Where mixes with the brine the Tiber's wave,
 Benignantly was gathered in his train.
 Back to that shore with outstretched wing he clave,
 Because at all times he collecteth there,
 Whoe'er descend not into Acheron's grave." 105
 And I : " If new laws do not from thee bear
 The memory or use of amorous song,
 Which erst was wont to quiet all my care,
 Please thee with that to pour thy balm along
 My wearied soul, that with its body joined, 110
 In coming hither has been grieved so long."
 " *Love that now parleys with me in my mind,*"
 So sweetly then did he begin the strain,
 That lingers yet the dulcet sound behind.

Line 91. A celebrated Florentine musician, and friend of Dante.

Line 93. Casella having been dead for some years, Dante asks him how he has been so long delayed in his voyage to Purgatory.

Line 98. At that period the jubilee was held at Rome, since which time all spirits not condemned to Hell were allowed free passage to Purgatory through the prayers of the Pope. It will be noticed that from Rome only Dante gives the place of departure for all spirits to the realms of purification.

Line 112. The first verse of one of Dante's canzoni, " *Amor che nella mente mi ragiona,*" introduced in the " *Convito*" of our author.

My master, and myself, and all the train 115
 That were with him, such exquisite pleasure show,
 Forgetting all things else, in rapture fain.
 We thus were all engrossed with the sweet flow
 Of the notes, when lo! the honoured guardian old
 Came crying: "What is this, ye spirits slow? 120
 What negligence is this, and dallying bold?
 To cast aside your shell, to the mountain speed,
 So that God manifest ye may behold."
 As when upgathering wheat, or darnel weed 125
 The doves collecting, to the pastures steer,
 Nor show the accustomed shyness of their breed.
 If anything appears which wakes their fear,
 Leave on a sudden the delicious bait,
 Because assailed by stronger impulse there; 130
 So did I see that troop arrived so late,
 Their song abandoned, towards the mountain start,
 Like one who goes, nor knows his future fate:
 And no less rapidly do we depart.

CANTO III.

As the poets advance towards the hill, Dante is alarmed at seeing only his own shadow cast by the sun behind them, and thinks that Virgil has deserted him. Cleared from his error they reach the foot of the mountain, and while in perplexity as to their ascent, meet a troop of spirits, who show them the way. Amongst them Manfred, King of Naples, urges Dante to tell his daughter of his fate, as by her prayers she can shorten the time of his wanderings in the Ante-Purgatory.

AFTER their sudden flight had scattered these
 Over the champaign wide, towards the hill
 Where draws them onwards Reason's high decrees;
 I clung unto my faithful comrade still;
 How without him should I have there arrived? 5
 Who else had drawn me upwards to the hill?
 The appearance of remorse in him survived:
 O conscience honourably pure, to thee
 How is a little fault most bitterly shrived!
 When ceased his feet so rapidly to flee, 10
 Which dignity doth lessen to the best,
 My mind till then absorbed, became more free,
 Aye curious to behold, to do its 'hest,
 And towards the hill I forwards raised my sight,
 That to the sky reared up its lofty crest. 15

The sun, which flamed behind us, redly bright,
 Was broken up before my figure, where
 Was stopped the passage of its rays of light.
 Then to one side I turned in sudden fear
 That I was all abandoned, when I spied, 20
 In front of me alone, the shade appear.
 "Why art thou thus distrustful?" to me cried
 My comforter, towards me wholly turned,
 "Dost thou not think me with thee, me thy guide?
 'Tis eve already there, where is inurned 25
 The frame with which I once a shadow made,
 Naples now keeps it, from Brundusium earned.
 When thou dost henceforth see me cast no shade,
 Wonder no more, than that two rays of Heaven 30
 Can cross each other, nor the light invade.
 To suffer torments, heat, and cold, is given
 To bodies like to this, by high decree,
 The how 'tis done by man cannot be riven.
 He's mad who thinks our human reason free 35
 Along the infinite career to run,
 Of God, the substance one in Persons three.
 Be ye content, O man, the Why unknown:
 Had ye been able to behold the whole,
 No need had Mary to bring forth her son.
 Yet such thou'st seen, who centered all the soul 40
 Without result, such longed-for lore to seek,
 To whom eternally 'tis given for dole.
 Of Aristotle, Plato, do I speak,
 And many more:" and here he bent his brow,
 And said no more, and stayed with troubled cheek. 45
 We'd reached the bottom of the mountain now,
 And there we found the cliff so steeply sheer,
 That all in vain were lithest limbs I trow.
 'Twixt Lerici and Turbia, the most drear,
 The most deserted way, that cliff beside, 50
 Were but an easily ascended stair.
 "Who knows now on which hand the steep doth glide
 Easiest?" said my master, pausing still,
 "So that without wings one could climb its side."
 And while he downwards kept his glance, with skill 55
 Examining the secret of the way,
 And I was looking upwards round the hill,

Line 27. Virgil died at Brundusium, and his body was buried at Naples.

Line 49. Lerici and Turbia, mountainous tracts, at that time the extremities of Genoa.

At our left hand, onwards was seen to stray
 A troop of spirits, who towards us hied,
 Yet seemed not moving, such their slow delay. 60
 "Lift up thy eyes," I to my master cried,
 "Lo! these from whom thou counsel canst attain,
 If in thy own thou canst not here confide."
 He gazed upon me then with countenance fain,
 And answered, "We'll go there, since they're so slow, 65
 And thou, sweet son, thy confidence maintain."
 Still was that people distant from us, so,
 When we had made a thousand steps I say,
 As a good thrower with his hand could throw,
 When to the hard rock clung they all straightway, 70
 On the steep bank, and stood all still and close,
 As one who goes in doubt to gaze will stay.
 "O well accomplished spirits, whom God chose,"
 Virgil did thus begin, "by that dear peace,
 Which I believe that none of ye will lose, 75
 Tell us where easiest slopes the precipice,
 So that we there our upward path may hold:
 Him who knows most time lost doth most displease."
 As issue out a flock of sheep from fold,
 By one, and two, and three, and the others stand, 80
 And timidly their eyes and face down hold,
 And what the first does do at second hand,
 Collecting at his back if he stops short,
 All simple, nor the wherefore understand,
 So saw I move the chiefs from that escort, 85
 Towards us then from out that blessed flock,
 Modest in face, of honourable port.
 As they in front of me beheld all broke
 The light upon the earth, at my right side,
 So that my shadow reached unto the rock, 90
 They stayed, then somewhat drew themselves aside,
 And all the rest who came behind them near,
 Knowing not wherefore, in like manner bide.
 "Without your question, I confess it here,
 This is a human frame that you behold, 95
 Through which on earth the sunlight is cut sheer.
 Marvel ye not at that: but rather hold
 Only by virtue, sent at Heaven's command,
 This mountain side to climb he seeketh bold."
 My master thus, and that all worthy band 100
 Said, "Turn ye then, our onward progress share,"
 And signed us to advance with beckoning hand.

And one of them did thus begin : " Whoe'er
 Thou beest who wanderest thus, now turn thy face,
 And think if thou hast ever seen me there." 106
 I turned me towards him, and I gazed a space ;
 Fair was he, tall, of gentle look serene,
 Upon one eyebrow a deep scar I trace.
 When I had told him with an humble mien
 That I had never seen him, " Look," he said, 110
 And pointed out a wound his breast between.
 Then said he with a smile : " I am Manfred,
 The grandson of the Empress Constance old,
 Whence I beseech thee, when thou hence art led,
 Go to my daughter, mother of the bold 115
 Honour of Arragon and Sicily,
 And say the truth, if now aught else be told.
 With these two mortal punctures fatally
 When I was smitten, I returned in time,
 Weeping to him who pardons willingly. 120
 Most horrible indeed had been my crime :
 But Goodness Infinite has arms so large,
 They can embrace, whoe'er returns to him.
 Cosenza's bishop, when on Clement's charge,
 He chased my dust in anger, had he read 125
 This text of Mercy in God's Bible's marge
 My scattered bones above the bridge's head
 Would still be lying, near to Benevent,
 Safe in the keeping of its storm-built bed.
 Now washes them the wave, and at its bent 130
 Drives them the wind along the Verde's shore,
 Where they were carried out, with tapers spent.

Line 112. Manfred, King of Naples, and the natural son of the Emperor Frederic II. Constance was taken out of a convent at the mature age of fifty, and married to the Emperor Henry VI., and to the astonishment of the then political world gave birth to a son, the father of Manfred. Constance is introduced in the lowest sphere of the Paradise, being debarred from higher glory through her having broken her vow of chastity in the above manner.

Line 115. Manfred's daughter Constance was Queen of Peter III. of Arragon, and mother of Frederic, King of Sicily, and James, King of Arragon. In Canto VII. of the Purgatory these princes are represented as not inheriting the virtues of their father.

Line 118. Manfred was slain in a battle fought with Charles of Anjou, in 1265, allusion to which has been made in the opening of Canto XXVIII. of Hell, and was buried at the bridge near Benevento, each of the army throwing a stone on his grave. Having died excommunicated, he was disinterred by the Bishop of Cosenza, on the orders of Pope Clement IV., and his remains buried by the side of the River Verde.

The Papal curse condemns not evermore,
 But still Eternal Love has power to save,
 As long as hope preserves its verdant flower. 135
 True, whoso dies in contumacy grave
 With Holy Church, though he repents his sin,
 Is doomed upon this bank without to crave,
 Thirty times longer than he erst had been
 In his presumption, if to such decree 140
 Reprieve the prayers of good men do not win.
 How thou canst make me joyful henceforth see,
 Revealing to my own good Constance, clear,
 How thou hast seen me, and this ban on me :
 Since those on earth can much advance us here." 145

CANTO IV.

Guided by the spirits, the poets turn into a narrow fissure cleft in the hill-side, and continue their ascent. Pausing on the top of a ledge for rest, Dante marvels at seeing the sun travelling in the northern portion of the sky, instead of in the southern, as in the other hemisphere. They then become aware of the presence of another troop of spirits, among whom Dante recognises one Belacqua, who informs him that they are condemned to wander in the Ante-Purgatory for as many years as they delayed repentance in life.

WHEN on the passion of delight or woe,
 Such as our quality can comprehend,
 The mind is turned, on this 'tis gathered so
 That to no other power its force can bend ;
 And this disproves his error, who believes 5
 That more than one soul in ourselves can blend.
 And therefore, when a thing, to which there cleaves
 The spirit strongly drawn, is heard or seen,
 The time goes onwards, nor the man perceives.
 The hearing is one faculty I ween, 10
 Another that which holds the soul enrapt,
 The last is bound, the first no chains confine.
 Of this had I experience, true and apt,
 Admiring as I heard that spirit fair :
 Fifty degrees at least the sun had capt 15

Line 5. Alluding to the opinion that there were three souls, the vegetative, the sensitive, and the intellective, which he disproves by the fact that the complete occupation of one set of powers, as sight or hearing, cannot be simultaneous with the action of a different set of powers.

Line 15. Three hours and twenty minutes, as while in the equinox the sun mounts fifteen degrees in the hour.

The Heavens, while I was wholly unaware,
 When to a place we came, where every soul
 Cried out to us, "The ascent ye seek is there."
 With a small bunch of thorns, a greater hole
 Is often filled up by a villager, 20
 When on the grapes the ripening colours roll,
 Than was that pathway, up the which we steer,
 My leader, and beside him I alone,
 As from our side the troop departed here.
 One climbs San Leo, Noli one goes down, 25
 One mounteth Bismantova's farthest height
 Upon one's feet; but here I must have flown,
 With active wings I say, and plumage dight
 Of great desire, to follow the dear guide,
 Who only gave me hope, and made my light. 30
 Within the broken rock we climbing glide,
 And on each side the cliff's edge hemmed us close,
 While hands and feet alike in clambering plied.
 When we had reached the highest brink that rose
 On the steep bank above the far-stretcht plain, 35
 "My master," said I, "now what way to choose?"
 And he to me: "With care thy step maintain:
 Behind me still climb up the mountain height,
 Till some experienced guide at length we gain."
 The lofty summit quite o'ertopt the sight, 40
 And upwards the incline so steeply ran,
 It measured with its angle, half a right.
 I was quite weary, when I thus began:
 "O my sweet father, turn thee, and behold,
 Unless thou stay'st, alone I must remain." 45
 "My son," he said, "to yonder spot uphold,"
 And pointed out a ledge some way above.
 "From that side all anew the cliff is rolled."
 So spurred me onwards then his words of love,
 I forced myself, and creeping followed near, 50
 So that at length above the cliff I move.
 We both of us sate down to rest us here,
 Turned to the east, from whence our path had past,
 Gazing on labours done with wonted cheer.
 O'er the low country first my eyes I cast, 55
 Then raised them to the sun, and wondering saw
 How on our left his smiling beams he cast.

Line 25. San Leo and Noli are in the Genoese territory, Bismantova in Lombardy.

The poet clear avised how I with awe
 Remained astonished at the car of light,
 Which 'twixt us and the north did onwards draw. 60
 Whence he to me: "If with that mirror bright
 Castor and Pollux were in company,
 Which up and down the sun leads with his light,
 The Zodiac's ruddy portion thou wouldst see
 Whirling around yet closer to the Bear, 65
 If in its olden path it yet may be.
 The cause of this, if thou wouldst think with care,
 Imagine Sion, giving all thy mind,
 That on its under earth this mount doth bear,
 So that they both with one horizon bind 70
 Their different hemispheres: hence lies the way,
 Which Phaeton had not the skill to find.
 Thou'lt see how on this side the solar ray
 Must take a different course to the other sphere,
 If thou but givest thy intellect fair play." 75
 "Certes, my master," said I, "I have ne'er
 Seen aught so clearly as I now discern,
 There where my intellect appeared least clear,
 That the mid circle of the heavenly urn,
 Called the Equator in the starry lore, 80
 Which 'twixt the sun and winter doth sojourn,
 By the reason now explained, here moveth o'er
 Towards the north, what time the Hebrews see
 The sun strike hottest on their opposite shore.
 But I would gladly know, if it pleases thee, 85
 How far we've still to go, the hill doth rise
 Far higher than my eyes have power to flee."
 And he: "This mountain is in such a wise,
 That always at the first 'tis most severe,
 And wearies less the more one upwards hies. 90
 But when to thee all gentle it appear,
 That thou as easily couldst mount anew
 As travel in a bark in the lower sphere,

Line 61. The meaning of Virgil's not very lucid explanation is as follows:—"If the sun were now in the constellation of Gemini, and not in Aries, you would see the portion of the Zodiac which his rays made red rise nearer the north than it now is. For you must remember we are exactly antipodal to Sion, the meridian of the other hemisphere."

Line 71. The way Phaeton could not keep is the Ecliptic.

Line 79. The Equator, which is between the part where the sun causes summer and where his absence causes winter, recedes from this mountain to the north, at the time when the Jews at Mount Sion see him receding to the south. *So Lombardi.*

Then will the pathway's ending be in view ;
 Till then put off thy longing for repose ; 95
 No more I answer, this I know is true."
 When he had brought his parlance to a close,
 There sounded near to us a voice : " Perchance
 Ere then to rest thee thou wilt not refuse."
 On hearing him we each turned back askance, 100
 And to the left we saw a mossy stone
 Which had not till that moment met our glance.
 Then we moved on, and found three persons thrown
 Idly behind the shadow of the rock,
 As one through indolence might throw him down. 105
 And one of them, who seemed outworn in look,
 Was seated, and with hands embraced his knees,
 And downwards 'twixt them did his visage lock.
 " O my sweet master," said I, " only gaze
 On him who shows himself more negligent 110
 Than if his sister's self were Idleness."
 Then turned he towards us with a roused intent,
 Raising his visage upwards o'er his thigh,
 And said, " Mount thou, of such a valiant bent."
 Then did I know him, and the agony, 115
 Which still my breathing somewhat quickly sped,
 Did not prevent my going to him : he,
 When I had reached him, scarcely raised his head.
 " Thou seest, then, how the sun, beyond belief,
 From the left shoulder has his chariot led ?" 120
 His lazy actions, and his words so brief,
 My lips excited somewhat to a smile :
 Then I began : " No more thou'lt cause me grief,
 Belacqua : but explain why all this while
 Art seated hither ? dost thou escort wait ? 125
 Or hast thou ta'en again thy olden style ?"
 " Oh, brother, how would climbing help my fate ?
 Since to my pain he will not let me wend,
 God's angel, who is seated at the gate.
 First it behoves that Heaven that gate defend 130
 From me as long as I in life delayed,
 Since I postponed repentance to the end,
 Unless before that time a prayer can aid,
 Rising from heart that lives in Grace's store :
 What use aught else that cannot Heaven invade ?" 135

Line 124. The industry of the early commentators has not informed us who this person was—a solitary exception throughout this long poem.

The bard already onwards went before,
 And told me : " Now come on : this moment lo !
 The sun has reached to noon, and on the shore
 Night covers with her foot Morocco now."

CANTO V.

The poets meet with others, who, having deferred their repentance until death, suffered violent ends, but had time to repent, and obtain pardon at the last. Amongst these, Giacopo del Cassero, Buonconte da Montefeltro, and Pia, a Siennese lady, describe their deaths, and urge Dante to obtain on earth prayers in their behalf.

ALREADY from those shadows had I gone,
 And followed in the footsteps of my guide,
 When from behind, with finger pointing on,
 " See how there does not seem to shine," one cried,
 " The sunray from the left of him beneath, 5
 He seems alive who follows thus his guide!"
 I turned my eyes at sound of what he sayeth,
 And saw him gaze on me with marvelling fear,
 At me, and at the light my body frayeth.
 " Why doth thy spirit so much interfere 10
 With these?" my master said, " to slack thy walk;
 What is't to thee that they should murmur here?
 Follow thou me, and let the people talk :
 Stand like a solid tower, that doth not bow 15
 Its crest at any time, though wild winds stalk.
 Always the man in whom new thought doth roam
 On previous thought, from his true course doth roam,
 Because the one doth flag the other's glow."
 What could I say to him, except, I come?
 I said so, whilst such hue my cheeks immerse 20
 As often wins man pardon from his doom.
 In the meanwhile, across the hill traverse,
 A little to our front some people came,
 Singing their *Miserere*, verse by verse.
 When they perceived that through my bodily frame 25
 There was no passage for the rays to pierce,
 They changed their song into a hoarse acclaim,
 And two of them, in form of messengers,
 Ran out to meet us, and requesting stood,
 " Pray ye to tell us your condition, sirs." 30

My master then : "Ye can resume your road,
 And take back unto those who made ye plead,
 That this man's body is true flesh and blood.
 If they remained because they saw his shade,
 As I believe, enough such answer given ; 35
 Yield him due honour, he can grant them aid."
 I never saw the falling stars at even,
 Nor sunset lightning through an August cloud,
 Cleave with such swiftness the serene of Heaven,
 As these returned above unto the crowd, 40
 And joined there with the rest, turned towards us soon,
 Like to a troop beneath no bridle bowed.
 "This multitude, who towards us presses on,
 Come to make prayers to thee," the poet cried,
 "But onwards go, and hear as thou dost wonne." 45
 "O soul, who unto joyousness dost glide,
 With limbs with which thou erst wast born, to-day,"
 Crying they came, "Thy step a little bide.
 Behold, if one of us thou aye didst see,
 So that of him thou hence the news mayst bear ; 50
 Ah, why dost go ? Ah, wherefore dost not stay ?
 All of us killed by force of old we were,
 And sinners all unto the latest hour,
 When of the light of Heaven we grew aware,
 So, through repentance and forgiveness' power, 55
 From life we issued, Godwards pacified,
 Who doth the heart with hope to see him dower."
 "Howe'er I gaze upon ye," I replied,
 "None do I recognise ; but if the grace
 Ye seek is in my power, souls Heaven allied, 60
 Speak ye, and I will do it by the peace,
 Which, following such a guide through good and ill,
 From world to world to seek, I onwards press."
 And one began : "Each one will trust right well
 Without an oath in this thy offered boon, 65
 For goodwill fathoms not the impossible.
 Whence I, who ere the rest now speak alone,
 Pray thee, if e'er that region thou dost see
 Betwixt Romagna and King Carlo's throne,
 That with thy prayers thou mayst so courteous be 70
 In Fano's town, that vows for me be paid,
 So that from weight of sin I be purged free.

Line 69. The Marco d'Ancona, between Romagna and Apulia, the kingdom which Charles of Anjou conquered from Manfred.

Thence came I: but the passages deep laid,
 Whence flowed the blood, in which in life I sate,
 In the lap of the Antenori were they made, 75
 There where I thought myself most safe from hate:
 The lord of Este caused them, anger bred
 Revenge in him beyond what law could sate.
 But towards La Mira had I only fled,
 At Oriaco when o'erta'en that time, 80
 Still in the breathing world I life had led.
 Unto the marsh I ran, the reeds and slime
 So tangled me, I fell, and saw down drop
 My blood, that flowing formed a lake of crime." 85
 Then said another: " Ah that this thy hope
 May be fulfilled, which draws thee to the mount,
 To help my wish give tender pity scope.
 I was Buonconte, Montefeltro's count,
 Giovanna, or the rest have me forgot,
 Since thus I go mid these, with humbled front." 90
 And I to him: " What force or chanceful lot
 Hurried thee so beyond the Campaldine,
 That of thy burial-place man knoweth not?"
 " O," answered he, " at the foot of the Casentine
 Crosses a streamlet called the Archian, 95
 Born o'er the Desert, in the Apennine.
 There where its proper name is changed again
 Did I arrive, deep wounded in the throat,
 Flying on foot, incarnading the plain.
 I lost my speech and vision in that spot, 100
 And died in Mary's name, 'twas there I fell,
 And there remained my body all remote.
 The truth I'll say which thou again wilt tell:
 God's Angel took me: ' O thou son of Heaven
 Why dost thou 'prive me?' cried the born of Hell, 105

Line 73. The speaker is Jacopo del Cassero, a citizen of Fano, who having spoken ill of Azzoni III. of Este, Marquis of Ferrara, whilst he was Podesta of Bologna, was assassinated by the orders of Azzoni near Oriaco, as he was endeavouring to escape from the effects of his anger.

Line 74. According to the opinion, that the blood is the seat of the soul.

Line 75. In the Paduan territory, the founder of whose city was Antenor, the betrayer of Troy, after whom one of the lowest circles of hell is named.

Line 88. Buonconte was the son of Count Guido da Montefeltro, who has been introduced in Canto XXVII. of Hell. Giovanna was the wife of the former. He was slain in a battle between the Guelphs and Ghibelines on the plain of the Casentine, and it appears his body was never discovered.

Line 97. The Archian loses its own name on joining the Arno.

Line 103. In comparing this with a similar contention for the soul of the father, one cannot but consider the objection raised by the fiend to be not groundless.

'Of him thou bear'st away the Eternal leaven
 For one small tear, which he from me did take :
 To me the rest for other fate is given.'
 Thou know'st how in the air collecteth black
 The humid vapour, which returns in rain, 110
 When risen where the cold doth melt its rack.
 Conceived the evil will that aye seeks bane,
 With intellect, and moved the cloud and wind
 By power, his nature gave him o'er their train.
 The valley thence, as the blank day declined, 115
 From Pratomagno to the gorge, with cloud
 Was covered, and the sky grew black behind,
 So that the pregnant air with water bowed ;
 The rain fell down, and to the ditches came
 All that the earth's drenched surface overflowed : 120
 And as all centred towards the largest stream,
 Towards the royal river, with such speed
 It hurried headlong, nothing could reclaim.
 My frozen body lying in its bed,
 The rushing Archian found, and bore away 125
 To Arno, and across my breast undid
 The arms I crossed there, 'neath death's conquering sway ;
 Along its banks and down its deep it swirled,
 Then bound and shrouded me with all its prey."
 " Ah, when thou art returned unto the world, 130
 And from thy travels restest in idea,"
 After the second spirit said a third,
 " Remember also me, who am La Pia ;
 The life that Siena gave, Maremma fell
 Rathely destroyed, as he who erst made me a 135
 Bride with his ring espousing, knoweth well."

Line 133. This lady's story has become immortal through these four lines. She was married to one Nello della Pietra, a powerful noble in Siena, who, after his marriage, removed her to one of his possessions in Maremma, where he alone was aware of the nature of her death. It is doubtful whether he killed her or whether she died from the pestilential nature of the place, to which he trusted for the attainment of his end.

CANTO VI.

The poet continues amongst the same troop, of whom he names several more. At last, freed from their importunities, he advances with Virgil till they meet another solitary shade, who proves to be the Mantuan Sordello. On seeing his affectionate greeting with his countryman, Dante bursts into an invective against the whole of Italy divided by party feuds, where, especially in Florence, such a spirit was entirely lost.

WHEN there breaks up at last a gambling bout,
 The one who loses, vext remains behind,
 Repeating his lost throws in gloomy doubt,
 With him who wins go all the servile kind,
 One goes before, and one behind him nears,
 One at his side his presence calls to mind,
 He does not stay, but this and that one hears,
 He who has shared his coin, takes no more heed,
 So, through the pressure, by his gifts he steers.
 Just so was I in that thick crowd of greed,
 Turning towards them here and there my face,
 The while with promises my way I find.
 Here was the Aretine, who from the base
 Strong arms of Ghin di Tacco death received,
 And he who drowned, while urging on the chase.
 Here with his outstretcht arms beseechings weaved
 Frederic Novello, and here Pisa's son
 Who proved the worth of his good sire bereaved.
 I saw Count Orso, and that spirit won
 From out his frame, by spite and envy rare,
 As it was said, and not for ill deeds done.
 Pierre de la Broche I say; and here beware
 That lady of Brabant, while still alive
 Lest a worse company she some day share.
 When I had freed myself from all that hive
 Of shadows, who' for others' prayers did vie,
 To advance the moment their poor souls to shrive,

Line 8. "A cui porge la man, più non fa pressa."—This has hitherto been translated, "He, against whom he has thrust his hand, stands aside," but I think it will fairly bear the meaning given in the text, and which makes the comparison so far more suitable to Dante's position amongst the spirits, none of whom does he thrust aside. Cary alludes to a scene in one of Cervantes' novels, from which it appears, as he says, that it was usual for money to be given to bystanders at play, by winners, and thus bearing out my interpretation.

Line 13. The Aretine is Benincasa, judge in Siena, who was murdered openly in his hall by Ghino di Tacco, because he had sentenced to death the brother of the latter for a robbery. Ghino di Tacco was a celebrated marauder of those days, and is the hero of one of Boccaccio's novels. The 2nd of the 10th day of the "Decameron."

Line 15. Ciacco Tarlati, who was drowned while swimming his horse across the Arno, in pursuit of his enemies the Bostoli.

Line 17. Frederic Novello, slain by one of the above family of the Bostoli. Pisa's son was Farinata, son of Marzucco, who, having entered the order of Frati Minori, pardoned the slayer of his son, kissed his hand, and at the funeral exhorted his relatives to reconciliation.

Line 22. Pierre de la Broche was secretary of Philip the Fair of France, and was slain, according to Italian commentators, on account of a false charge brought against him by Queen Mary of Brabant, of having attempted her person.

I thus began: "It seems thou dost deny,
 O light of mine, expressly in one text,
 That prayer can alter aught decreed on high: 30
 And yet for that those prayers are all annext:
 Will then this hope of theirs be all in vain?
 Or that thy saying is it not perplext?"
 And he to me: "That verse of mine is plain,
 Nor will these in the hope they nourish fail, 35
 If one views clearly with perception sane:
 The Top of Judgment cannot seek the vale,
 Because the fire of love at once would do
 That which would satisfy these souls in bale.
 And there, where I laid down my saying true, 40
 The lack could not amended be by prayer,
 Because such prayer God was not joined unto.
 But truly in such lofty doubt, beware
 Of certainty, till she the secret break,
 Of truth and intellect the glory rare. 45
 Thou mayst not know, of *Beatrix* I speak,
 Thou wilt behold her with a happy smile,
 Upon this mountain, on its highest peak."
 And I: "Good leader, let us haste erewhile,
 I am not now so wearied as before; 50
 And see now towards us casts its shade the hill."
 "With what remaineth of the daylight's store
 We'll go as far," he answered, "as we may,
 But differs from thy thought the truth galore.
 Before thou gain'st the height, return thou'lt see 55
 The sun now covered by the mountain side,
 So that no longer thou dost break his ray.
 But see a spirit there, who stands aside,
 And towards us all alone his gaze doth throw,
 To us the shortest passage he will guide." 60
 We came to him: O Lombard spirit how
 Thou standest there, with high and haughty crest,
 Moving thy eyes with gesture proud and slow!
 He not a syllable to us address;
 But let us near approach, the while he eyed 65
 Just like a lion when he takes his rest.

Line 30. Referring to the line, Book VI., "*Æneid*":—

"*Desine fata Deum flecti sperare precando.*"

Line 37. The Top of Judgment—*cima di giudicio*—an expression also applied to the Deity by Shakspeare in "*Measure for Measure*":—

"How would you be,

If He, which is the Top of Judgment, should
 But judge you as you are?"

I believe this extraordinary parallel passage was first noticed by Mr. Douce.

Virgil drew near him then, and praying, cried,
 That he the best ascent to us would show :
 To that request no answer he replied,
 But of our country and our life to know 70
 He asked us ; and my leader sweet began,
 " Mantua," the shadow in a trembling glow
 From the place where he had stood towards him ran,
 Saying, " O Mantuan, of thy land am I,
 Sordello," and they kissed each other fain. 75
 Household of grief, ah, slavish Italy !
 Ship without pilot in the tempest fear,
 No landed lady, but a harlot's sty :
 That gentle spirit was so ready there,
 But at the sweet sound of his natal land, 80
 To give a citizen such festal cheer,
 And now in thee thy living sons ne'er stand
 Except at strife, and one the other gores,
 Men whom one moat and rampart comprehend. 85
 Seek, seek, O wretched one around the shores
 Of thy seaboard, and then gaze in thy breast,
 If any part of thee but peace ignores.
 What boots it that Justinian had redrest
 Thy bridle, if thy saddle now is free ?
 The bridle makes thy shame stand more confest. 90
 Woe on thy people, who devout shouldst be,
 And leave thy Cæsar seated in the selle,
 If thou knew'st well what God commandeth thee.
 See how the beast has grown unruly, fell,
 Because it has not felt the chiding spur, 95
 The instant on the reins the fingers dwell.
 O German Albert, who abandoned her
 Now savage and unconquerable grown,
 Whose saddle-bows thou shouldst have strided sure :
 May from the stars just judgment fall adown 100
 Upon thy blood, and that it cause the dread
 Of thy successor, be it new and known :
 Thou and thy father, how have ye been led
 Chained by your lustings after Germany,
 The garden of the Empire to have fled. 105

Line 75. Sordello, a Provençal poet of the thirteenth century.

Line 97. Albert I., who became emperor in 1298, and was murdered ten years later. He and his father Rodolph both neglected Italy for their German possessions. His successor is Henry VII. of Luxembourg, from whom Dante vainly expected the regeneration of his country under firm imperial rule.

- Come, the Montecchi, Cappelletti, see,
 Monaldi and Phillipeschi, man of sloth,
 Oppressed already, or about to be.
- Come, cruel one, O come and see, though loath,
 The pressure of thy friends, and cure each ill, 110
 And see how Santafor securely groweth.
- Come and behold thy Rome, who waileth still,
 Widowed and lone, she calls thee night and day
 My Cæsar, wherefore art not with me still ?
- Come see the people, how they love alway,
 And if, for us, no pity thee can move, 115
 Come to be shamed of thy glory's bay.
- And if 'tis lawful to me, O great Jove,
 Who erst on earth for us wast crucified,
 Are thy just eyes withdrawn from us above ? 120
- Or lofty preparation dost thou hide
 Within thy counsel's deeps, to work us good,
 Whose secret to our ken is all denied ?
- The lands of Italy now swarm with the brood
 Of tyrants, and a new Marcellus grows 125
 Each peasant who takes up some party feud.
- My Florence, thou shouldst be content, God knows,
 With this digression noways touching thee,
 Thanks to thy people who so learned grows.
- Many in heart have justice, but delay 130
 To shoot till they have taken counsel rare ;
 Thy people have it on their lips alway.
- Many refuse the common load to bear ;
 Thy people eagerly the charge endueth,
 And crieth yet uncalled, " The yoke I'll share." 135
- Now be thou glad, for thou hast cause in sooth ;
 Thou who art wealthy, dowered with peace and brain,
 The effects cannot be hid if I speak truth.
- Athens and Sparta, who composed the train
 Of ancient laws, and were so civilised, 140
 Comparison with thee can ne'er maintain
- In comely life, since thou hast so prevised
 Thy subtle schemings, that till mid-November
 Lasts not the web October saw devised.
- How many times, in days thou dost remember, 145
 Thy money, habits, offices, and laws,
 Hast thou remodelled, and renewed each member ?

Line 106. The Montagues and Capulets of Shakspeare.

Line 111. Santa Fiora, a castle in Siena ; its security is clearly alluded to ironically, but to what the poet alludes particularly is unknown.

If clearly thou beholdest thy own flaws,
 Like a sick woman thou wilt see thee 'plain,
 Who on her pillow cannot find repose, 150
 And seeks with constant turns to ease her pain.

CANTO VII.

The poets learn from Sordello that it is impossible to ascend the mountain during the night, and he guides them to a retired valley, where they see those who, from being engrossed with affairs of State, deferred their repentance to the last, and are detained in the Ante-Purgatory. Amongst these are named the Emperor Rodolph, Ottocar, King of Bohemia, Philip III. of France, Henry of Navarre, Peter III. of Arragon, Charles of Anjou, Henry III. of England, and William, Marquis of Montferrat.

AFTER these comely greetings, glad and free,
 Three and four times were given and returned,
 Drew back Sordello, saying, "Who are ye?"
 "Before that to this mount had ever turned
 The spirits worthy Godwards to arise, 5
 My body by Octavius was inurned.
 Virgil am I; and I have lost the skies,
 From lacking faith, and not for sin in me."
 Thus unto him my leader then replies:
 Like unto one who suddenly doth see 10
 Something before him, which creates surprise,
 Who trusts, yet doubts, It is—It cannot be—
 So did he seem: and then he bowed his eyes,
 And turned towards him with respectful mien,
 And close embraced him humbly round the knees. 15
 "O Latin glory, by the whom is seen,"
 He thus addressed him, "all our tongue can do;
 O, of my native place, the eternal sheen;
 What worth, or grace, to me thy form doth show?
 Say, if I'm worthy thy sweet speech to hear, 20
 Comest thou from Hell, and from what vale below?"
 "Through all the circles of that dolorous sphere,"
 To him he answered, "have I hence arrived;
 "Heaven's virtue helped me to conduct him here.
 For what I failed to do, am I deprived 25
 Of the sight o' the sun, which thou desirest to gain,
 Whose knowledge unto me too late arrived.

Line 4. Virgil having died before the descent of Christ into Hell, the purifying mountain of Purgatory was not then open.

There is a place below, not sad with pain,
 But only doomed to darkness, where laments
 Sound not like wailings, but are sighings fain. 30
 There do I stay with little innocents
 Bit by the teeth of Death, before that they
 From sin original were made exempts.
 There do I stay with those who failed to essay 35
 The sacred virtues three, though without sin
 They knew the rest, and followed them alway.
 But if thou know'st, and mayst, point out some sign
 Whence we can sooner climb this mountain side,
 And entrance into Purgatory win." 40
 "There is no certain entrance," he replied,
 "I am allowed to walk round these confines ;
 And far as I may go, I'll be thy guide.
 But see already how the day declines,
 It is not possible to climb by night, 45
 'Twere well to choose some resting-place betimes.
 Spirits there are some distance to our right :
 If thou consent'st, I'll take thee unto these,
 And thou wilt know them, not without delight."
 "How's this !" was answered. "If a man should please 50
 To climb by night, would other influence let ?
 Or is't impossible by high decrees ?"
 Sordello on the earth his finger set,
 Saying, "See only where I draw this line,
 Thou couldst not pass it when the sun is set. 55
 Not that would hinder thee aught else malign,
 Save the night's gloom, from going up above ;
 That binds in impotence the firm design.
 Downwards with him thou possibly might'st rove,
 And traverse all the hill, while wandering round, 60
 Until the day above the horizon move."
 My leader then, as if in marvel wound,
 "Lead us then," said he, "there, where thou didst say,
 To solace us the while thus travel-bound."
 From there we'd wandered but a little way, 65
 When I perceived the mountain side descend,
 As on our earth the valleys slope away.

Line 28. In this beautiful description of Limbo Dante has the charity to place unbaptised infants at least in a painless doom. A somewhat celebrated Calvinist preacher was less merciful, when, holding out a bony hand, he used to tell his hearers, "My brethren, there are children not a span long in Hell!"

Line 35. The sacred virtues three are Faith, Hope, and Charity, the rest alone known to the pagan world being Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance.

"There," said the shadow, "we our course must wend,
 Where forms a hollow in the mountain side,
 And there the new day's coming we'll attend." 70
 Along the cliff a zigzag path did glide
 That sideways led into the valley's site,
 Where the descent with gentlest slope did slide.
 Gold and fair silver, cochineal and white,
 The Indian wood all shining and serene,
 Fresh emerald, in the hour 'tis splintered bright, 75
 Beside the grass and flowers in that demesne,
 Had they been placed, had been o'ercome in hue,
 As fades the lesser by the brighter sheen.
 Not only Nature there such colours drew,
 But by the sweetness of its odorous showers 80
 Was made a whole confused, in beauty new.
Salve Regina on the grass and flowers
 I saw the spirits and I heard them sing,
 Unseen beyond the vale which them embowers.
 "The whilst the sun its latest rays doth fling," 85
 The Mantuan, who towards us turned, began,
 "Ye would not that mid these I ye should bring.
 Raised on this cliff far better will ye scan
 Of all yon group, the acts and visages,
 Than if amongst them in the vale ye wonne. 90
 He who is seated highest, with the guise
 Of one who failed in what he should have done,
 Whose lips are silent mid the songs that rise,
 Was Rodolph, Emperor, who had power alone, 95
 To heal the wounds that Italy hath slain,
 So that he cannot to their cheer be won.
 He who to comfort him appears so fain,
 Ruled o'er the land, from which the water floweth
 Which Elbe and Moldau carry to the main.
 His name was Ottocar, and in his youth 100
 Far better he than Venceslaus his son,
 Who, bearded, sank in luxury and sloth.
 He with the little nose, who seemeth one
 In council with his friend of aspect blest,
 Who died in flight, his lily all undone, 105

Line 82. *Salve Regina*, the commencement of a hymn to the Virgin.

Line 94. The Emperor Rodolph, alluded to in the last canto.

Line 98. Bohemia. Ottocar was killed in a battle fought with Rodolph, of whom he was the son-in-law. The luxury of his son Venceslaus II. is alluded to in the 19th Canto of the "Paradise."

Line 103. Philip III. of France, who died at Perpignan, after the defeat of his fleet by the forces of the King of Arragon.

Behold him there, how he doth beat his breast :
 And look upon the other, who has lain,
 Sighing, his cheek upon his palm to rest ;
 Father and father-in-law of France's bane ;
 They know his life so vicious, and begrimed, 110
 Hence comes the grief, they cannot now restrain.
 The one so large of limb, whose song is chimed
 In melody with his of the aquiline nose,
 With every virtue bore his nature primed :
 And if the youth who sits behind him close 115
 Had only lived his father's realm to sway,
 Worth had descended then from vase to vase.
 That of his other heirs we cannot say :
 Though James and Frederic now his kingdom own :
 His better heritage does no one sway. 120
 But rarely in the branch again is grown
 Our human excellence, so willeth He
 Who gives it, that the boon be called his own.
 To him with the aquiline nose my words agree 125
 Even as to Peter, who with him doth chaunt ;
 Whence Provence and Apulia mourn to-day.
 So far superior to the seed, the plant,
 As more than Beatrix and Margaret,
 Constantia of her husband's worth can vaunt. 130
 Behold the King, of life so simply fit,
 Henry of England, seated there alone,
 He in his branches has less cause to fret.
 He who the lowest on the earth is thrown,
 Gazing above, is William the Marchese, 135
 Through whom did Alexandria cause to moan
 In war, Montferrat, and the Canavese."

Line 107. Henry of Navarre, father of Jane, wife of Philip le Bel, "France's bane."

Line 112. Peter III. of Arragon, the father of four sons, Alonzo, Frederic, James, and Peter. Alonzo, and after his death James, succeeded their father in the kingdom of Arragon and Frederic in that of Sicily, so that the youth who sits close to his father is probably Peter, the only one who did not become a king.

Line 124. Charles of Anjou, the brother of Saint Louis, who was as far superior to his successor, Charles II., as Peter to his sons.

Line 128. Constance, widow of Peter III. of Arragon, whence from the context Beatrice and Margaret ought to be the wives of the above-mentioned Frederic and James. Such, however, is not the case, and the daughters of Berenger, Count of Provence, are supposed to be intended, who married the two brothers Saint Louis and Charles of Anjou.

Line 132. An allusion to Edward I., the great Plantagenet.

Line 134. William of Montferrat was taken prisoner by the Alexandrians, and died in confinement ; his people of Montferrat and the Canavese in consequence entered into a long war with Alexandria.

CANTO VIII.

At evening fall one of the spirits sings the hymn of the Church, "*Te lucis ante terminum*," and on its close two angels, with flaming swords broken off at the points, descend to guard the vale. The poets then enter it, and Dante meets with joy his friend Nino, the Judge of Gallura. A serpent creeps into the valley, but flees at once on the advance of the angels; and Dante converses with Conrad Malaspina, who predicts to him his own exile.

'Twas now the hour when longings rise anew
 To voyagers, and the heart grown tender sighs,
 The day they've said to well-loved friends adieu.
 When the new pilgrim thrills with love's soft ties,
 If from afar he hear the vesper bell, 5
 That seems to mourn above the day that dies.
 When I began to shake aside the spell
 Of listening, and to gaze upon a soul,
 Who with his hand an audience claimed as well.
 He joined both palms together, and the whole 10
 Lifted on high, his eyes fixed towards the east,
 As though he said to God, "I trust thee sole."
Te lucis ante with such holy zest
 Fell from his mouth, and with such cadence sweet,
 That on it bore me from my mind released. 15
 The others sweetly then with fervent heat
 Accompanied his voice throughout the hymn,
 Fixing their eyes upon the starry seat.
 Here to the truth sharpen thy eyesight dim,
 O reader, for so subtle is the veil, 20
 Thou well might'st pass it by, nor see within.
 I saw that gentle army in the vale
 Gazing in silence afterwards above,
 As if in expectation, humbly pale,
 And I saw cleave the height, and downwards move 25
 Two angels, holding each a flaming sword,
 The points of which were broken off above.

Line 1. These opening lines have been thus beautifully paraphrased by Byron:—

"Soft hour! which wakes the wish, and melts the heart,
 Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
 When they from their sweet friends are torn apart,
 Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
 As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
 Seeming to weep the dying day's decay."

"Don Juan," Canto III.

Green as young shoots just sprouted in the sward
 Their garments were, and by the rapid flight
 Of their green pinions were they blown abroad. 30
 The one, not far above us, did alight,
 The other to the farther shore did fare,
 So that i' the midst they held the troop in sight.
 One clearly could perceive their golden hair,
 But from the eye their faces did escape, 35
 As fail the senses, rapt on aught too rare.
 "They both of them have come from Mary's lap,
 This valley to defend," Sordello cried,
 "From the serpent that will swiftly come, mayhap."
 Whence I, who knew not from which path 'twould glide, 40
 Turned me around, and very closely drew,
 All frozen, unto Virgil's faithful side.
 Sordello still, "Let us go downwards now
 Mid the great shadows, and with them we'll speak ;
 To see ye will delight them well I trow." 45
 Three footsteps scarcely downwards did I take,
 To join them, when a spirit I remark
 Gazing, as recognition he would seek.
 Already by this time it had grown dark,
 But not so much but that his eyes and mine 50
 Could that distinguish which the rest did mark.
 He drew to me, and I towards him incline :
 My gentle Nino, what a joy it gave
 To see thou wast not doomed with the malign !
 There lacked to us no salutation brave, 55
 And then he asked : "How long is't since ye came
 Unto this mountain, o'er the distant wave ?"
 "O," said I to him, "from the bourns of shame
 This morn I came, and still my life I own,
 Though wandering, immortality I claim." 60
 As soon as that my answer had been known,
 He and Sordello drew themselves away,
 As people in a sudden marvel thrown.
 To Virgil one, the other turned to me,
 Crying to one, "Currado, leave thy place, 65
 A marvel of God's favour come to see."
 Then turned to me : "By that peculiar grace
 Thou owest unto him who so doth hide
 His primal self that none to it can pass,

Line 53. Nino, Judge of Gallura, of the family of the Visconti of Pisa, and nephew of Count Ugolino.

When thou shalt be beyond that ocean wide, 70
 Tell my Giovanna, that for me she pray,
 There where the innocent are not denied.
 Her mother cannot love me more I say,
 Since she has changed her widow's garb of woe,
 Which still the wretched one must yearn for aye. 75
 From her example we can easily know
 How long in woman fires of love endure,
 If sight or touch do not keep up the glow.
 She will not gain so fair a sepulture
 From the Milani, who the viper claim, 80
 As would have given the cock that marks Gallure."

Thus did he speak, indignant with the flame,
 Stamp't on his face, of that straightforward zeal,
 Which in his heart with measure did he tame.
 My greedy eyes towards the sky did steal, 85
 There, where the stars revolving circle slow,
 As near the axle slowest turns the wheel.
 My leader: "Son, at what art gazing so?"
 And I to him: "At those three torches bright
 Whence yonder Pole above, is all aglow." 90
 And he to me: "The four clear stars of light
 Thou saw'st this morn, are not yet risen anew,
 These are already mounted in their site."

The while he spake Sordello him withdrew,
 Saying, "Behold our enemy is there," 95
 And pointed with his finger where to view.
 On that side where the little vale was bare
 Of all defence there was an adder seen,
 Perchance that gave to Eve such bitter fare.
 Slid 'twixt the grass and flowers the evil sheen, 100
 Turning at times its head to lick its back,
 As any animal its hide doth preen.
 I saw not, and to tell must therefore lack,
 How the celestial falcons rallied there,
 But well I saw them both upon its track. 105
 Hearing their green wings sweeping cleave the air
 The serpent fled, and back the angels flew
 With equal flight unto their fixed repair.

Line 71. Giovanna is Nino's daughter, whose widow, Beatrice, Marchioness of Este, made a second marriage with Galeazzo dei Visconti of Milan. The viper alluded to in the 80th verse was the arms of the visconti, adopted as the standard of the Milanese, while the cock was the standard of Nino's province of Gallura.

Line 89. The three theological virtues are here intended.

The shadow who erewhile to Nino drew
 When he was called by him, throughout the fight 110
 One moment from me had not turned his view.
 "So may the lamp which leads thee to the height
 Find in thy free will oil enough to wait
 Until thou reachest to the Infinite,"
 Thus he began: "If thou wilt but relate 115
 All that thou know'st of Valdimagra famed,
 And the surrounding parts where I was great.
 Currado Malaspina was I named:
 Not the elder, though from him descent I own;
 The love I bore my people here is tamed." 120
 "O," said I to him, "though I ne'er have gone
 Within your country, wheresoe'er one dwells
 Throughout all Europe, is it not well known?
 The fame, which of your house the honour swells,
 Alike the nobles and the country cry, 125
 That, though by him unwitnessed, each one tells.
 I swear to ye, so may I reach on high,
 Your honoured race has fallen not away
 In prise of arms and liberality. 130
 So are they privileged by habit's sway,
 That though the world may squint its evil head,
 Straight on they go, and spurn the evil way."
 And he: "Now go: the sun within that bed
 Will not be laid seven times on which the Ram 135
 With its four feet o'ercovering doth tread,
 Ere this opinion which thou dost proclaim
 Will be close riveted within thy head
 With better clamps than by this general fame,
 Unless the course of judgment can be stayed."

Line 109. Currado Malaspina, father of the Marchese Marcello Malaspina, by whom Dante was liberally received in his exile, as is alluded to in prophecy by Currado at the close of the Canto. The marquisate of Valdimagra is now called the Lunigiana, from the city of Luni, at the mouth of the River Magra.

Line 133. The sun will not revisit the constellation of Aries seven times—that is, seven years will not pass.

CANTO IX.

Dante dreams that he is carried by an eagle to the sphere of fire. On waking he finds himself alone with Virgil, who tells him that in his sleep he was borne up by Lucia to that spot, which is close to the gate of Purgatory. Reaching the portal, they are admitted by the Angel who stands in ward over it, as the vicar of Saint Peter.

THE eternal mistress of Tithonus old,
 Already whitened in the eastern height,
 Quitting the dear arms that around her fold.
 With jewels was her forehead shining bright,
 Arranged in shape of that cold-blooded beast 5
 That with its poisonous tail doth piercing smite.
 And of the footsteps with the which she paced,
 Night had made two already where we were,
 And with droopt wings the third now downwards past.
 When I, who Adam's body with me bear, 10
 Conquered by slumber on the grass repose,
 Where five in number we were seated there.
 What time commences with sad fall and close
 The swallow's song, the hour before the morn,
 Perchance in memory of her early woes, 15
 And when this mind of ours is chiefly borne
 Out of the flesh, and least o'ercome by thought,
 Grows in its visions half divinely born,
 Meseemèd in a dream I saw upcaught, 20
 With golden plumes, an eagle in the sky,
 Prepared to swoop adown, with wings outtraught.
 Meseemèd on that olden mount to lie
 Where Ganymede his comrades erst did quit,
 When he was carried to the conclave high. 25
 I thought perchance this bird of prey doth smite
 By habit here, and in aught other place
 Disdains to bear aloft his prey in flight.
 Meseemèd then it wheeled with swifter pace,
 And terrible as lightning downwards came, 30
 And dragged me upwards to the blazing space.
 Meseemèd there we both were burnt in the flame,
 And so the imagined burning singed me keen,
 That sleep itself was broken by the dream.
 Achilles roused himself with such a mien, 35
 Gazing around with eyes just wakenèd,
 And knowing not the place where he had been,
 What time his mother had from Chiron fled
 To Scyros, he asleep upon her arm,
 There, whence in after times the Greeks him led.

Line 7. These footsteps are supposed to mean the four watches into which the night is divided, the third of which being just closed, it is three hours before sunrise. At this hour Dante places the first rising of the dawn, as described in the first *terzina*.

Line 15. Alluding to the story of Progne in Ovid's "*Metamorphoses*," b. vi.

Line 30. To the sphere of fire, supposed to be under the moon's concave.

So did I shake myself as slumber's charm 40
 Fled from me, and I grew as white as stone,
 Like to a man who freezes in alarm.
 Beside me was my comforter alone,
 Two hours already was the sun on high,
 And towards the seashore was my vision thrown. 45
 "Fear thou no more," I heard my master cry,
 "Make thyself sure, for our emprise has thrived;
 Loose not, but tighten now thy panoply.
 To Purgatory now hast thou arrived,
 Behold the cliff that girdeth its sojourn, 50
 See thou the entrance, where it seemeth rived.
 Before the dawning that precedes the morn,
 The while thy spirit in that slumber lay,
 Upon the flowers which yonder vale adorn,
 A lady came. 'I'm Lucia,' did she say, 55
 'Let me take up your friend in slumber chained,
 So will I help him onwards on his way.'
 Sordello and the other souls remained;
 She carried thee, and as the day grew clear,
 I following on her steps, this height we gained. 60
 She pointed out, the while she placed thee here,
 Yon open entrance, with her heaven-clear eyes,
 Then, as sleep left thee, did she disappear."
 Like to a man his doubts who certifies,
 And changes into comfort his affright, 65
 When the discovered truth before him lies,
 So did I rally; and when free and light
 My leader saw me, upwards by the steep
 He moved, and I behind him towards the height.
 Reader, thou seest to what height doth creep 70
 My matter, therefore marvel not, with art
 Yet more, if I sustain its purpose deep.
 We had drawn nearer, and had reached the part,
 That there, what formerly had seemed a break,
 As 'twere a fissure which a wall doth part, 75
 As a gate I saw, 'neath which three steps did make
 The ascent to reach it, each of different hue,
 Guarded by one, who yet had nothing spake;
 And as more open to the sight it grew,
 I saw him seated on the topmost stand, 80
 Such in the face I could not bear the view.
 A naked sword he held within his hand,
 Whose dazzling rays were so reflected there,
 That oft in vain my sight towards it wonned.

"What is your pleasure? speak from where ye are," 85
 Began he then to say. "Where is your guide?
 Look that your coming up no damage bear."
 "A lady of the sky, in these things tried,"
 Answered my master to him, "even now
 Told us, go on, the gate's on yonder side." 90
 "Well will she help you on your path I trow,"
 The courteous porter thus commenced again:
 "Before our steps ye may come forward now."
 There did we come, and the first step I gain
 White marble was, so polished and so bright, 95
 That in it all myself was mirrored plain.
 Darker than sable was the second pight,
 Made of a rugged and fire-scathed stone
 Cracked on its surface, and athwart its site.
 The third, whose mass above them both was thrown, 100
 Seemed to me made of flaming porphyry,
 Like blood that from a vein is bubbling on.
 O'er this both feet he planted royally
 God's Angel, who was seated on the sill,
 Which made of diamond appeared to me. 105
 By the three steps above, with cheering will
 My leader drew me, saying, "Seek with meet
 Humility, that he thy wish fulfil."
 I sank devoutly at the sacred feet,
 And first three times upon my breast I smote, 110
 Then prayed to him to ope for pity sweet.
 Seven P's upon my forehead then he wrote
 With his sword's point, and "See that thou dost lave
 These wounds," he said, "when thou within hast got."
 Ashes on earth dug drily from a cave 115
 Would be the colour of his vestment's fold,
 From under which he drew two keys that save.
 The one was silver, and the other gold,
 First with the white, then with the golden key,
 He touched the gate, that I my longing hold. 120
 "Whenever either key doth fail to agree,
 So that it will not travel in the wards,"
 He said to me, "this passage is not free."

Line 95. The three steps of white marble, rough stone, and porphyry are allegorical of confession, the contrition attending on it, and the fervent charity thereby attained.

Line 112. "The seven P's" denote the seven capital sins, Peccata, of which he is to be cleared in his passage through Purgatory.

Line 118. The golden key is the authority vested in the Church to absolve sinners, the silver one the doctrinal learning needful to the priest for the performance of that office.

More precious one, the other one accords
 Only with wit and knowledge in its use, 125
 Because by that we turn the secret wards.
 From Peter do I hold it, its abuse,
 He told, to those sunk humbly at my feet,
 Be more in opening than in keeping close." 130
 He thrust the portal of the sacred gate,
 Bidding us "Enter, but be well aware,
 Who looketh back is cast outside by Fate."
 And when there swung upon its hinges there
 The portals of that entrance consecrate, 135
 Which were of sounding metal, strong and clear,
 Creakt not so loud the famed Tarpeian Gate
 When good Metellus there was overthrown,
 And with rapt treasury 'twas desolate.
 Wrapt in attention, after the first tone,
Te Deum Laudamus on my ear did steal, 140
 With voices mingled in sweet undertone.
 Such an effect exactly did reveal
 That which I heard, as in a church's dome
 When singing mingles with the organ's peal:
 And now the words are heard, and now o'ercome. 145

Line 136. The Tarpeian Gate, in which was the Roman treasury, which the tribune Metellus in vain attempted to guard against the followers of Cæsar. Lucan's "Pharsalia," book iii.

CANTO X.

The poets issue from the gate through a spiral staircase upon the first cornice on the mountain of Purgatory. On the wall which bars the further ascent of the mountain they see carved bas-reliefs representing various examples of humility. Finally they advance slowly towards these spirits, who, bowed under vast weights, are purged of the sin of Pride.

WHEN we had crossed the threshold of the gate
 So little used by man on evil fain,
 Which makes the crooked way appear the straight,
 Sounding with clash I heard it close again ; 5
 And if on this my glance had backwards flown,
 What fit excuse had been for such a stain ?
 We mounted by a cloven stair of stone
 That upwards spirally wound on its way,
 Like to a wave that flies, and then comes on.
 " 'Tis needful here a little art to essay," 10
 Began my leader, "and to keep us near
 To either corner as it turns away."

By this our steps so slowly did we steer,
 That first the circle of the sinking moon,
 Reaching its western bed, did disappear 15
 Ere from that needle's eye we had outgone.
 But when at length freed clear, we issued out,
 There, where the mountain side is backward thrown,
 Quite wearied I, and both of us in doubt
 About our path, we rested on a plain 20
 More lonely than the roads through desert's drought.
 From the far edge, which binds the airy main,
 To the foot of the high bank which upwards springs,
 The human form thrice measured would attain. 25
 And far as could my eyesight stretch its wings,
 Now on the left, and now on the right side,
 The ledge with equal breadth the mountain rings.
 Above no sooner had our footsteps hied,
 Ere of the bank which bound the ledge I learned,
 By which all upward passage was denied, 30
 That it was marble pure, and so adorned
 With carvings, that not merely Polyclete,
 But Nature's self beside it had been scorned.
 The Angel, who came down the earth to greet
 With news of peace, bewept for many a year, 35
 Which opened, from its olden ban, Heaven's seat,
 Before us did so truthfully appear,
 In loving attitude there sculpturèd,
 No silent image it resembled here.
 One would have sworn his lips the *Ave* said : 40
 For she was also sculptured, at whose 'hest
 Was Love unlocked on high, and earthwards led.
 In her whole gesture were the words imprest,
Ecce Ancilla Dei, clearly shown
 As the impression upon wax is prest. 45
 "Fix not thy mind upon one place alone,"
 Said my sweet master, standing at my side,
 On that at which the beating heart is known ;
 On which I forward turned my glance and spied 50
 Behind Maria, on the wall, where he
 Was stationed, who aye led me as my guide,
 Carved in the rock another history ;
 On which I crossed by Virgil, and drew near,
 That straight before my eyes the scene might be.
 There was engraven in the marble sheer 55
 The car and bullocks, with the holy ark,
 Which to profane with service none may dare.

In front appeared the people as they park
 Divided in seven choirs, who to the sight
 Appear to sing, though hearing cannot mark ; 60
 So did the smoke of incense, rising white,
 As it was imaged there, from nose and eyes,
 Demand an evidence discordant quite.
 Before the blessed vessel did uprise
 The humble Psalmist, dancing lustily, 65
 And more and less than monarch in such guise.
 Imaged within a window that was by,
 From a great palace Michol downwards gazed,
 A scornful lady, and all sad to see.
 I moved my feet from where till then I'd gazed, 70
 Nearer to see another history,
 Which beyond Michol in white marble blazed.
 Was storied here on stone the glory high
 Of that good Roman prince, whose virtue's dower 75
 Urged Gregory to his great victory :
 Of Trajan do I speak, the Emperour :
 There was a widow at his bridle rein,
 Tears in her geste and steep in sorrow's power.
 Around him did appear the trampling train
 Of horsemen, and above him in the breeze 80
 Fluttered the gold enwoven banners plain.
 The wretched woman in the midst of these
 Appeared to say, " My sovran, vengeance wreak
 For my son's death, which grieves my aged days." 85
 And he to answer her : " Now patience seek
 Till I return." And she : " O lord, my own,"
 Like one whose grief demandeth solace quick,
 " If thou shouldst not return ?" " He on my throne
 Will do it for thee." " What will 't merit thee
 If thou neglect'dst thy own, his duty done?" 90
 " Now take thee comfort, for 'tis fit," said he,
 " That ere I move I should my duty do :
 Justice demands, and pity urgeth me."
 He who has ne'er seen what to Him was new,
 Rendered through gestures this most visible speech, 95
 Novel to us, the like who never knew.

Line 75. The legend is that St. Gregory was so moved with admiration at the anecdote of Trajan which forms the subject of the succeeding bas-relief—viz., that on the prayer of a widow he left his army when starting on an expedition and returned to Rome to revenge her murdered son—that by his prayers he obtained his transference from Limbo to Paradise. Dante again introduces this legend in the "Paradise," Canto XX.

Line 94. God.

The whilst I took delight to gaze on each
 Of those examples of humility,
 Charming to dwell on, by their skill so rich;
 "Lo yonder, though they very slowly hie," 100
 Murmured the poet, "many people go,
 These will instruct us how to climb on high."
 My eyes that ever were intent to know
 And gaze on novelties for which they yearn,
 In turning round towards him were not slow. 105
 I would not, reader, thou shouldst 'wilder'd turn
 From thy fair purpose in despair, to hear
 How God wills that the proud forgiveness earn.
 Linger not o'er the form of penance here :
 Think of what follows, think whate'er their pain, 110
 Beyond the judgment cannot last the fear.
 "That which I see, my master," I began,
 "Seems not like persons who towards us come ;
 Yet what I know not, so my sight is vain."
 And he to me : "The heavy-laden doom 115
 Which makes their torment, bows them to the ground,
 So that my eyes at first in doubt did roam.
 But look intently, and make out unbound
 Each huddled mass that 'neath yon stones creeps on,
 Now thou canst see how each himself doth wound." 120
 Proud Christians, wretched, weary, and undone !
 Who of your mental sight are so bereaved
 That ye have faith in backward paths alone :
 That we are worms have ye not yet perceived, 125
 Born but to form the Angelic butterfly
 That soareth up to judgment unreprieved ?
 Of what your spirit doth it vaunt so high ?
 Since ye are unformed insects at the best,
 Worms as it were unfinished utterly.
 As roof or ceiling for support doth rest 130
 Upon a bracket, which in shape is seen
 A figure with his knees against his breast,
 Which through mere fiction causeth anguish keen,
 And true in him who looks on it ; so made 135
 Those did I see, when I had pierced their mien.
 True, they, as more or less was on them laid,
 Bowed in proportion to the weights they bore,
 And who most patience in his gestures had,
 Weeping, appeared to say, "I can no more."

CANTO XI.

After the spirits have recited the Lord's Prayer, Virgil demands of them the way up the mountain. One of them directs them to accompany them along the ledge, and declares himself to be Omberto, who was murdered at Campagnatico. Dante then recognises in another Oderisi the Illuminator, who discourses on the vanity of worldly fame, and points out to him Provenzana Salvani, a chief in Siena.

"OUR Father who dost dwell in Heaven above,
 Not circumscribed, but that Thou there dost place
 Upon Thy primal effluence, higher love,
 For ever hallowed be Thy Name and grace, 5
 By each created thing, as is most right
 In rendering thanks Thy savour to embrace.
 The peace of Thy own kingdom on us light,
 Which of ourselves we never could attain,
 Unless it come through striving with all might. 10
 As, by their own desire, Thy angels fain
 Singing Hosanna, sacrifice to Thee,
 So may Thy will be done on earth by man.
 Provide us with our daily manna free,
 Without the which, this desert road along, 15
 He would go back, who striveth most to flee.
 And as we pardon unto each the wrong
 Which we have suffered, be our pardoner,
 Nor weigh the merits which to us belong.
 Our virtue, which so easily doth err, 20
 Do not thou test it with the ancient foe,
 Deliver us from him that so doth spur.
 This last petition, O dear Lord, we owe
 Not for ourselves, for whom is no more need,
 Rather for those we've left behind below." 25
 So for their voyage, and for ours, good speed,
 Those shadows praying, 'neath their burden hied,
 Like to the nightmare, which bad dreams oft breed:
 Each in their separate proportion tried,
 Along that first ledge pass they on outworn, 30
 Purging the foggists of their earthly pride.
 Since ever there to us goodwill is borne,
 For them on earth, what can they do or say,
 Who with the good root dowered, to grace are born?
 Well should they help their sins to wash away,
 Which hence they carried, so that pure and light 35
 They may ascend unto the starry ray.

" Ah that both clemency and justice right
 May soon unburden ye, your wings to rear,
 According to your will to rise in flight!
 Show us the shortest way towards the stair; 40
 And if there's more than one appointed road,
 Point out the one which riseth up least sheer,
 Since he who cometh with me, by the load
 Of Adam's flesh with which he still is drest,
 Is slow in climbing, though goodwill be showed." 45
 The words, which they in answer then address,
 To those he spake, the whom I followed, quite
 From whom they issued were not manifest.
 They said: " Along the bank towards the right
 Come ye with us, a passage will be shown 50
 Which can be mounted by a living wight.
 And were I not impeded by the stone,
 Which thus my proud neck doth weigh down and tame,
 Whence I am forced to keep my face bent down,
 This one who liveth still, nor tells his name, 55
 I'd gaze on, if perchance to me he's known,
 His pity also for this load to claim.
 Latin was I, of a great Tuscan son,
 Guglielm' Aldobrandescho was my sire,
 I know not if his name to you has flown. 60
 The ancient blood, and deeds of grace and fire
 Done by my ancestors, made me so proud,
 Not thinking of our common mother, mire,
 Each man I held in such contempt avowed,
 That hence I died, as the Sanesi know, 65
 And knows in Campagnatico the crowd.
 Omberto I: nor me alone I trow
 Has Pride thus ruined, all who with me fare
 Has she drawn with her to this grievous woe.
 And here 'tis doomed that I this burden bear 70
 For her, until I satisfy my God,
 In which I living failed, 'midst dead men here."
 Listening the words, my face I downwards bowed,
 And one amongst them (not the one who spake)
 Twisted himself beneath his cumbering load, 75

Line 58. Omberto, Count of Santa Fiora, whose arrogance became so hateful to the inhabitants of Siena that they murdered him in Campagnatico. It was, perhaps, in allusion to this murder that in Canto VI. Dante called on the Emperor Albert to see "how Santa Fior securely groweth." "E vedra, Santa Fior com è sicura."

And saw, and knew me, and did call me back,
 Fixing with great fatigue on me his eyes,
 Who, wholly bent, with them my course did take.
 "O," said I to him, "art not Oderis?
 Agobbio's pride, and honour of the art,
 Illuminating called, in Paris' guise?" 80
 "Brother," said he, "the shapes more lifelike start
 Which Franco Bolognese's pencil drew,
 Now is the honour his, and mine in part.
 I had not been so courteous, it is true, 85
 While I was living, for the great desire
 Of excellence, which in my heart then grew.
 Of such a pride, here do we pay the hire;
 And even here I'd be not, had I not,
 While scope was left to sin, sought out God nigher. 90
 O empty glory of our human lot,
 How briefly lasts the green upon the bough,
 Unless succeeds the fame an age of nought!
 In painting, Cimabue they avow 95
 The master once, now Giotto has their cry,
 So that the other's fame obscureth now.
 So the first with the latter Guido could not vie,
 In pride of style, and haply one is born
 Who'll chase them both from out their nest on high.
 Mundane renown is but a breath forlorn 100
 Of wind that cometh now from here, now there,
 Named various from the quarter whence 'tis borne.
 If thou stripp'st off thy aged flesh, wilt share
 More fame than if thou'dst early died in grace
 Before thou'dst ceased thy childish prattle, ere 105

Line 79. Oderisi was a miniature-painter, a friend of Giotto and Dante, and the master of Franco of Bologna, whose skill he extols beyond his own.

Line 93. The fame of any man is immediately eclipsed by that of his successors, unless there follows an age void of excellence.

Line 94. Cimabue was the father of Italian painting: the story of his discovering Giotto's talents, while the latter was tending sheep, is well known.

"Yet rightly was young Giotto talked about,
 Whom Cimabue found among the sheep,
 And knew, as gods know gods, and carried home
 To paint the things he painted, with a deep
 And fuller insight, and so overcome
 His chapel Virgin with a heavenlier sweep
 Of light."

Mrs. Browning's "Casa Guidi Windows."

Line 97. Guido Guinicelli, of a noble family in Bologna, whom Dante introduces in the 26th Canto of the "Purgatory," where he avows that he was his father in the art of poetry. The second Guido is Cavalcanti, Dante's intimate friend, whom his father in Canto X. of the "Hell" expected to find in his company. As the second Guido eclipsed the literary fame of the first, so Dante hints that he will rise over both.

A thousand years have past? A briefer space
 Beside the eternal, than a glance of the eye
 By that star's orbit, longest whirled through space.
 Resounded with his name all Tuscany
 Who there before me doth so slowly toil; 110
 Of him in Siena now they scarcely sigh,
 Where he was lord, what time their arms did spoil
 The rage of Florence, then so proud to view,
 Whom now, a harlot, all defilements soil.
 This your renown is like the grass's hue 115
 Which comes and goes, the sun that makes it fade,
 The tender leaf from the earth's bosom drew."
 And I to him: "What thou hast truly said
 Teaches humility, and levels pride;
 But who is he, of whom thou'st parlance made?" 120
 "Provenzan the Salvani," he replied,
 And he is here, because presumptuous,
 Beneath his hands all Siena he defied.
 Thus hath he gone, and goes without repose 125
 Aye since his death, who too much dares his fate,
 In satisfaction such a payment owes."
 And I: "Since every spirit who doth wait
 To the brink of life, with penitence delayed,
 Must dwell below, nor mount unto the gate, 130
 Unless the prayers of good men grant him aid,
 Till time full equal to his life has past,
 How unto this one was admission made?"
 "What time," he said, "his life in pride was past,
 Himself he humbled in Siena's plain, 135
 And every feeling of false shame forth cast.
 He then, to draw his friend from out the pain
 The which in Charles's prison-house he bore,
 His proud frame bowed, to tremble in each vein.
 I know I darkly speak, yet say no more: 140
 But little time will pass, ere friends of thine
 Will treat thee, that thou'lt read this riddle's core:
 Him did that act absolve from the hill's confine."

Line 110. Prevenzano Salvani was the general of the Siennese: he humbled himself so far, for the sake of a friend who was imprisoned by Charles of Sicily, as to beseech the people in the market-place of Siena to contribute the sum demanded for his ransom. This act of abasement saved him from the delays of the Ante-Purgatory, and Oderisi tells Dante that he will soon learn from experience the bitterness of having to solicit such favours: line 141.

CANTO XII.

The poets leave the burdened spirits, and as they rapidly advance, Dante's attention is drawn by Virgil to the effigies which are drawn upon the ledge, and which represent various examples of pride. They are finally met by an Angel, who points out to them the stairs by which they are to ascend, and touching Dante's forehead with his wing effaces one of the seven P's which had been engraved there at the entrance into Purgatory.

LIKE bullocks in a yoke together go,
 That burdened soul did I accompany,
 As long as my sweet master would allow.
 But when he said: "Now leave him, forwards hie,
 For here 'tis well that both with oars and sail, 5
 Each one in pushing his own bark should vie:"
 Erect, as eager the advance to hail,
 I raised my person, but nathless my mind
 Remained still bowed and humbled in the vale.
 I had moved on, and willingly behind 10
 My master's steps I followed, and we both
 Already showed ourselves as light as wind;
 "Turn thy eyes downwards," said he as he goeth,
 "To solace the long way 'twill profit thee
 To look on what the bed, thy feet tread, showeth." 15
 As, to preserve awhile their memory,
 The mounded tombs 'neath which the buried sleep
 Of their mute tenant bear the effigy,
 Whence there full many a time the passers weep 20
 By the keen puncture of remembrance fain,
 The which, the gentle-hearted only keep:
 So saw I, but the likeness better ta'en,
 Traced with the sculptor's skill divinest there,
 Throughout the length of that hill-circling plain.
 Him did I see who was created fair, 25
 More than aught other creature, down from Heaven
 Descending, with a lightning sheen through air.
 I saw Briareus, hundred-handed, riven
 By the celestial weapon, yonder lie,
 Prone to the earth in lethal force down driven. 30
 I saw Apollo, Pallas, Mars, on high
 In panoply around their father stand,
 Viewing the giant's limbs, all scattered nigh.
 Nimrod I saw, beneath the work he planned,
 Bewildered as it were, and with surprise 35
 Watching his proud compeers on Sennaar's land.

- O Niobe, with what woe-laden eyes
 Did I behold thee, sculptured on that plain,
 Mid thy fourteen dead sons in sacrifice!
- O Saul, how vividly wast figured, slain 40
 On thy own sword, upon Gilboa's hill,
 Which afterwards received nor dew nor rain!
- O mad Aragne, so I see thee still,
 Already half a spider, in the mass 45
 Of the sad work, which wrought for thee such ill!
- O Rehoboam, not a threat we trace
 There, in thy image, full of craven fear
 A chariot bore thee, ere the foemen chase.
 There showed us, too, that graven pavement, clear, 50
 What price Alcmeon made his mother pay
 For that unhappy necklace, won too dear.
 It showed how his own sons conspired in fray
 Against Sennacherib, in the Temple's rood,
 And how they left him dead, and fled away.
- The mangling, and the cruel deed it showed, 55
 Which Tamiris did, when she to Cyrus said,
 Blood thou didst thirst, I fill thee now with blood.

Line 42. "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you."—2 Samuel, ch. i., v. 21. Petrarch has a similar allusion to the curse of David, mourning for the death of Saul, probably imitated from this passage:—

"E'l pastor ch'a Golia ruppe la fronte
 Pianse la ribellante sua famiglia,
 E sopra 'l buon Saul cangiò le ciglia,
 Ond' assai più dolersi il fiero monte."

Sonnetto XXXVI.

Line 43. Aragne, changed into a spider for having challenged Pallas to a trial of skill in female work. Ovid's "Metam.," book vi.

Line 46. "Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute: and all Israel stoned him with stones that he died: therefore King Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot to flee to Jerusalem."—1 Kings, chap. xii., v. 18.

Line 51. Eriphile, bribed by Polinices with a necklace, discovered where her husband Amphiaras had hidden himself to avoid joining in the war against Thebes, and on the command of the latter, their son Alcmeon slew his mother in revenge.

Line 52. "And it came to pass as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his God, that Adrammelech and Shareger his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia."—2 Kings, chap. xix., v. 37.

Line 56. Tamiris, Queen of Scythia, whose son had been killed by Cyrus, having made him prisoner, cut off his head, and placed it in a basin full of blood, with the speech, "Satia te sanguine, quem sitisti." Justinian, book i.

It showed how in the rout the Assyrians fled
 After that Holofernes had been slain,
 And all the rest of their destruction dread. 80
 Troy I beheld in caves and ashes lain;
 O Ilion, thee how lowered and how vile
 Displayed the image, which is there seen plain.
 What mastery of pencil, and of style,
 Had he who drew the shades, and outlines here, 85
 Which subtlest intellects to gaze would guile.
 Alive the living, dead the dead appear;
 Who saw the facts beheld not more than I,
 Of what I trod on, whilst bent down I peer. 70
 Now with high looks, keep up your surquedry,
 O sons of Eve, and never bow your face,
 Lest that your evil pathway ye descry.
 Already had we turned, of the mountain's space,
 And turned the sun upon his pathway, more 75
 Than had the mind not free, the power to trace,
 When he, who ever watchful walked before,
 Commenced: "Lift up thy head," he 'gan to say,
 "No longer is there time thus rapt to pore.
 See yonder is an Angel on our way
 Who comes towards us; see, there doth return 80
 Now the sixth maid from service of the day.
 With reverence now thy acts and face adorn,
 That he with pleasure thy advance secure;
 Think that this day can ne'er again be born." 85
 In his advice experienced, I was sure
 It was 'gainst losing time, of that he ne'er
 Could parley with me in a style obscure.
 Advanced towards us the sweet creature fair
 All garbed in white, in face as doth appear, 90
 All tremulously bright the morning star.
 His arms he opened, and his wings did rear,
 And said: "Come on, henceforth with ease o'er all
 The mount can ye ascend, the steps are near."
 How very few approach unto that call;
 O human race, though born above to soar, 95
 Why at the slightest breath dost thou thus fall?
 To where the rock was cleft he led us o'er,
 There touched me with his wings upon the front,
 Then promised me an upward progress sure.

Line 81. The handmaids on the service of the day are the hours. Virgil tells him that an Angel is approaching, and that the sixth hour is past.

As on the right hand, to ascend the mount 100
 Where's built the church which overlooks the town,
 Aye so well governed, o'er the Rubaconte,
 The labour of the ascent is softened down
 By stairs, which in the early age were made.
 When weights and archives false were yet unknown ; 105
 So is the steepness of the bank allayed,
 Which from the higher cliff doth sheer descend ;
 But close on each side hangs the rock o'erhead.
 There, as we turned the mountain to ascend,
 Beati pauperes spiritu, there chanted 110
 Voices, whose tones description all transcend.
 Ah, what a difference to these straits is granted,
 From the Infernal ! welcomed here with airs,
 Beneath with wailings fierce of rage undaunted. 115
 Now did we mount above the holy stairs,
 And to myself meseemed in lighter mood,
 Than ever till that time to me appears.
 Whence I : " My master say, what heavy load
 Is lifted off me that no trace of pain
 Or toil besets me on this upward road ?" 120
 He answered : " When the P's which now remain
 Upon thy forehead still, though somewhat faded,
 Like to the one shall be entirely ta'en,
 Thy feet by good desire will be so aided,
 That not alone fatigue they will not know, 125
 But with delight the path will be invaded."
 Then was I like to those who onwards go
 With something unperceived upon the head,
 Till taught by glances which their neighbours throw :
 Wherefore to clear my doubts, my hand doth aid, 130
 And seeks, and finds, and doth that office do,
 Which by the sight alone cannot be made ;
 And by the right hand's fingers touched, I knew
 There rested but six letters, which erewhile
 He of the keys upon my temples drew : 135
 At which my leader watched me with a smile.

Line 101. The church of San Miniato, built on a hill overlooking the Arno, where it is crossed by the bridge Rubaconte. The well-governed town, it need hardly be said, is Florence.

Line 116. Dante, having been purged of his besetting sin of Pride, is surprised at the lightness of the ascent after the removal of that burden.

CANTO XIII.

They reach the second cornice, on which is purged the sin of Envy. As they proceed along it they hear voices from invisible spirits inculcating charity. Further on they see the souls of the envious, clad in sack-cloth, and with their eyes sewed up with an iron wire. Amongst these Dante converses with Sapia, a lady of Siena, who acquaints him with her story.

WE now had reached the summit of the stairs,
 Where for the second time the mount is cut,
 Ascending which the soul is freed from cares.
 There in like manner did a cornice jut,
 Exactly like the first, around the hill, 6
 Save that its bound in closer ring is shut.
 No shade is here, no outline drawn with skill,
 Appears the bank, appears the narrow way
 Like quarried rock, of livid colour still.
 "If here to question people we should stay, 10
 Haply I fear me," so the poet spake,
 "Our choice will not be made without delay."
 Then on the sun a fixed gaze did he make;
 Made of his right the point on which to turn,
 And swinging round his left, his course did take. 15
 "O dulcet light, on which my trust is borne,
 By the new path conduct us on benign,"
 He said, "to lead us to the wished-for bourne.
 The earth thou warmest; thou dost o'er it shine: 20
 If other cause doth not oppose its bar,
 Ever should be our guides those rays of thine."
 The distance of a mile on earth, so far
 From there already had we onwards gone
 In little time, through will so ready there;
 When there were heard towards us flying on, 25
 Although unwitnessed, spirits who did bring
 Sweet invitations to Love's benison.
 The first voice which past by upon the wing,
Vinum non habent, did it loudly say,
 And from behind us the same words did fling. 30
 Ere from the hearing it had past away
 In distance, past another like a wave,
 Crying, "Orestes I," nor yet did stay.

Line 29. The speech of Mary at the wedding feast in Cana. It is not very appropriately introduced as an example of Charity.

Line 33. The voice of Orestes is introduced, famous for his friendship with Pylades.

"What are these voices, father?" did I crave,
 And while I asked a third had filled their place, 35
 Saying, "Love those from whom ye evil have."
 My master then: "The sin of envy base
 This circle scourgeth, so with love divine
 The lashes of the whip are plied in grace. 40
 The curb must be of contrary design:
 And for myself I think thou'lt hear it, ere
 Unto the place of pardon thou dost join.
 But fix thine eyes intently through the air,
 A group that sit before us will be known,
 And each one seated 'gainst the hillside there." 45
 Then more than erst my gaze was forward thrown,
 With watchful eyes, and shadows I descry
 With garb, in hue not different to the stone.
 And after we had reached a little nigh,
 I heard them cry, O Mary, for us pray;
 On Michael, Peter, all the saints they cry. 50
 I do not think there goes on earth to-day
 A man so hardened, but at what I saw
 He would be touched beneath compassion's sway:
 For when so near to them my steps did draw, 55
 That all their semblances were clearly seen,
 That sight the anguish from my eyes did draw.
 Covered they seemed to me, with haircloth mean,
 Each on his shoulder did the other bear,
 And all of them against the bank did lean. 60
 Just so the blind, who want their daily fare,
 Stand at the church's gates to beg their needs,
 And one upon the other layeth there
 His head, whence in the heart compassion breeds,
 Not only by the sound of words resigned, 65
 But at the spectacle which no less pleads.
 And as the sun ne'er comforteth the blind,
 So to the shades of whom I spake just now
 The light of heaven in boon is not assigned.
 For to them all, an iron wire doth sew 70
 Their eyelids pierced, as a wild falcon's eyes
 Are treated, who in quiet will not bow.
 Walking, it seemed with insult to despise
 Gazing on others, I myself unseen,
 Wherefore I turned me to my counsel wise: 75

Line 39. Virgil explains that the shades of the envious are scourged towards purification by the voices exhorting to charity, and also restrained from envy by the curb of other voices, threatening with examples of that vice, which Dante will hereafter hear.

Well knew he what my silent look did mean ;
 And yet he did not sanction my demand,
 But told me : " Speak, and be thou brief and keen."
 Virgil came with me on the outer hand
 Of the cornice, where no balustrade was set 80
 To guard from falling down the cliff beyond.
 On the other side the pious shadows met,
 Who by the horrible seam in dim obscure
 Were suffering so that all their cheeks were wet.
 I turned me towards them, " O thou people sure," 85
 Thus I began, " to see the lofty light
 To which alone aspire your wishes pure :
 So may grace speedily remove the blight
 From off your conscience, so that hence descend
 Into your mind, the stream of knowledge bright, 90
 Tell me (for that to me delight will lend)
 Is any Latin soul here denizen,
 My knowledge haply to his good will tend."
 " O brother mine, each one is citizen
 Of one true city, but thou wouldest say, 95
 Who pilgrim lived in Italy's demesne."
 This answer did I seem to hear some way
 More forward than the place where I was based,
 On which to look still further I essay.
 Amongst the rest I saw a shade who gazed 100
 In aspect: How ? if any should exclaim,
 Like to the blind, the mind it upwards raised.
 " Spirit," I said, " who to ascend dost tame
 Thyself, if thou'rt the one who answered me,
 Make me to know thy country or thy name." 105
 " A lady from Siena," answered she,
 " With these I purify a life of spite,
 Weeping to Him, that He should come to me.
 Sapient I was not, though Sapia hight,
 In former days, and others' loss and cares, 110
 More than my gain, were ever my delight.
 That thou shouldst think not I deceive thy ears,
 Hear if I was not, as I say, insane ;
 Already going down the slope of years,

Line 109. The play of words in the original has been preserved, as a translation should exhibit flaws as faithfully as the whole body of the work, at least when the flaw is intentional, as in this instance. Sapia tells her own story: while living in banishment at Colle she witnessed the defeat of her countrymen by the Florentines, and prayed for immediate death, as there was nothing further for her to hope or fear.

My fellow-citizens on Colle's plain 115
 Were joined in battle with their foemen old:
 And God willed that for which my prayers were vain.
 There were they routed, and their ranks were rolled
 In bitter flight, I witnessing the chase
 Received such joy, whose like cannot be told : 120
 So that I raised aloft my daring face,
 Crying to God : ' I fear thee now no more :'
 As sings the merle at the first spring-like space.
 My peace I sought with God upon the shore
 Of human life, nor even yet would be 125
 My debt, through penitence in part paid o'er,
 Had he not kept me in his memory,
 Pier Pettinagno, in his holy prayer,
 Who gave me pity in his charity.
 But who art thou, who goest questioning here 130
 Of our conditions, and the eyes hast free
 As I believe, and speaking breath'st the air ?"
 " The eyes," I said, " will yet be sown for me,
 But as I thus erred little, not for long,
 Since they from envy have been almost free. 135
 Far greater is the fear in which lies hung
 My spirit for the torment underneath.
 Now with the weight I feel my shoulders wrung."
 And she to me : " Who then has led thy path
 Amongst us, if thou thinkest to retreat?" 140
 And I, " My comrade here, who nothing sayeth.
 I am alive, so ask me as 'tis meet
 Elected spirit, if thou wouldst that there
 Should hurry still for thee our mortal feet."
 " O this is such a novel thing to hear," 145
 She answered, " that God loves thee 'tis a sign :
 Therefore at times assist me with thy prayer,
 And by the thing for which thou most dost pine
 I pray thee, if thou tread'st the Tuscan plain,
 Mid my relations clear this fame of mine. 150
 Thou wilt behold them 'mongst the people vain

Line 123. The merle, according to the story, escaped from confinement at the first gleam of fine weather, and had soon to lament the return of winter.

Line 128. Pier Pettinagno, a hermit of Florence.

Line 136. Dante feels that his besetting sin is Pride, and fears the punishment of the lower cornice far more than that for Envy.

Line 151. In "Hell," Canto XXIX., Dante has already vented his satire on the folly of the Siennese. He here alludes to their idle schemes of becoming a great naval power through possession of Talamon, a port on the confines of the Maremma, which turned out as chimerical as their former attempt to discover a subterranean stream in their city, which for some unknown reason was called Diana.

Who trust in Talamon, and there will lose
 More hope, than seeking Dian's fount to gain :
 The admirals will risk even more than those."

CANTO XIV.

Dante is addressed by two shadows, Guido del Duca of Brettinoro and Rinieri de' Caldoli of Romagna. The former, on Dante's mentioning that he has come from the vale of Arno, inveighs against the degeneracy of its inhabitants. On leaving these, the poets hear voices recording instances of the crime of Envy.

"WHO then is he, who cometh round our hill
 Ere death to soar has granted him the boon,
 And opes his eyes, and closes at his will?"
 "I know not who, but he is not alone,
 Ask him thyself, since thou art placed more near, 5
 To make him speak, accost him fair in tone."
 Two spirits thus, bent towards each other, there
 At my right hand, this parley held on me,
 Then to address me they their faces rear;
 And spake the one: "O spirit who not free, 10
 Yet from thy body, mountest Heaven's serene,
 For charity console us here, and say,
 Whence come, and who thou art; thy favour seen
 Makes in us wonder so intensified,
 As claims a thing which never yet has been." 15
 And I: "Through central Tuscany doth glide,
 In Falterona sprung, a little stream,
 With course of hundred miles unsatisfied:
 There is the region whence I bring this frame;
 To tell ye who I am were idle prate, 20
 Since yet but little doth resound my name."
 "If thy intention well I penetrate
 In understanding," made to me reply
 He who first spake, "thou speak'st of Arno's seat."
 The other then to him made parley: "Why 25
 That river's proper name did he conceal,
 As man does of a thing of horrible dye?"
 The shadow unto whom that question fell,
 Repaid it thus: "I know not, but of right
 Should perish even the name of such a vale. 30

Line 16. The river Arno, whose course extends for 120 miles, rising in the Falterona, a mountain in the Apennines.

For, from its source, where rise in pregnant might
 The Alpine Hills, now from Pelorus torn,
 Which rarely passes Falterona's height,
 On to the seashore where it doth return 35
 All that for it the skies from ocean drain,
 By which are rivers filled, and onwards borne,
 All who are there, to fly from virtue strain
 As 'twere an adder, either by the lot
 Of the locality, or habit's bane.
 Whence all the dwellers in that wretched spot 40
 Are metamorphosed in their nature so,
 It seemed that Circe held them in her groat.
 Mid filthy swine, for gallnuts fit I trow,
 More than for other food prepared for man,
 Its miserable course at first doth flow. 45
 Then it finds curs, descending to the plain,
 More snarling than their strength can give them claim,
 And here it twists, to avoid them, with disdain.
 Falling it goes, and as doth swell its stream 50
 So doth it find the curs to wolves have grown,
 That ditch accursed, and of unlucky fame.
 Descended then through deeper channels down,
 Foxes it finds so full of fraud, that fear
 They know not to meet wit outmatch their own.
 Nor will I cease to speak, though others hear : 55
 Good it will be for him to bear in mind
 That which the source of truth to us shows clear.
 I see thy grandson, of the wolfish kind
 Become the hunter, on the bank arrive 60
 Of the proud river, all to him resigned.
 He sells their flesh, the while they're yet alive,
 Then slays them like to old and fattened beeves ;
 Many of life, himself of fame doth 'prive.

Line 31. From the source of the Arno in the Apennines, now separated from Pelorus in Sicily, the highest of whose hills is Falterona, until it enters the ocean, all the dwellers beside it fly from virtue, so that they seem as if changed by Circe into animals.

Line 43. The swine are the people of the Casentine, but the Conti Guidi, alluded to in Canto XXX. of the "Hell," are probably chiefly alluded to.

Line 46. The curs are the Aretines; the river curves, leaving Arezzo four miles to the right.

Line 50. The wolves are the Florentines, and the foxes the men of Pisa.

Line 55. The presence of Dante, a Tuscan, will not restrain him.

Line 58. Fulcieri de' Caldoli, grandson of Rinieri, became Podesta of Florence in 1302, and massacred many of the Florentines, especially of the Bianchi party, being bribed thereto by the Neri.

Bloody he issues from that wood that grieves,
 He leaves it such, that in a thousand years,
 Will not grow green again its withered leaves." 65
 As at the warning of some future tears,
 Troubles the face of him, who listening learns
 From what side will assault him perilous fears :
 So did I see that other soul by turns 70
 Listen, grow troubled, and to sorrow yield,
 As the words' meaning pondered, clearer burns.
 The speech of one, the other's woe revealed,
 Made me desirous both their names to know,
 And for that boon with praying I appealed. 75
 On which the soul who first addressed me, so
 Began again : "Thou wouldst I should incline
 To tell thee, what to me thou wouldst not show.
 But since God willeth that in thee should shine 80
 His grace so much, no niggard will I be :
 Guido del Duca, know me then in fine.
 My blood from envy was so little free
 That when I only saw a joyful man,
 My face all steeped in paleness thou wouldst see.
 Now from that seed I reap what straw I can. 85
 O human race, why set thy heart engrossed
 There, where is need of company or ban ?
 This is Rinier, the honour, and the boast
 Of the House of Caldoli, where owned by none,
 The inheritance of all his worth is lost. 90
 And not alone, his blood all bare hath grown
 'Twixt Po, the Hills, the Reno, and the shore,
 Of wealth required for needs, and joyaunce' boon :
 Since within all their boundaries, galore
 Grows the thick crop of poisonous shoots, that ne'er 95
 Will husbandry's slow toil root out the store.
 Where is good Lizio, and Manardi, where
 Carpigno, Traversaro ? Ah indeed
 Is changed to bastard every Roman heir !
 When in Bologne takes root plebeian breed : 100
 When in Faenza, Bernardino too
 Springs up a gentle growth from lowliest weed.

Line 86. This expression is explained in the following Canto. If man were to seek for heavenly good, the fact that it was shared also by others would not cause envy, but gratification.

Line 92. The boundaries of Romagna, the country of Rinieri.

Line 100. At this period, one Lambertaccio, of the lower orders, arrived at supreme power in Bologna, while Bernardin di Fosco, also of low origin, rose to the government of Faenza. The other names mentioned are all of noble Italian families.

Marvel not, Tuscan, if I weep anew,
 When with Da Prata to my mind I call
 Ugolin D'Azzo, who hath lived with you: 105
 Frederic Tignoso, and his comrades all;
 Both race alike disherited one sees,
 The Anastazi and Traversarian hall,
 The ladies, and the knights, the toils, the ease 110
 Which lured us unto love, and courtesy,
 There, where all hearts have fallen in knavish ways.
 O Brettinoro, wherefore dost not fly
 Since thy own family from thee is gone,
 And many more to escape from perfidy?
 Bagnacaval most rightly gets no son: 115
 And Castrocar and Corno both do ill,
 Sons to such counts but make the broils go on.
 Yet when their Demon has gone out, will still
 Do the Pagani well, though never more
 Can spring a sample of old worth and skill. 120
 O Ugolin de' Fantolin, secure
 Is thy good name, sure of no race behind
 Degenerate, who can render it obscure.
 But Tuscan go thy way, I'm now inclined 125
 Far more to weep henceforth than parlance share,
 So has that speech of yours disturbed my mind."
 We knew those charitable souls were 'ware
 Of our departure, so their silence made
 Us certain of the road we followed there. 130
 When in our solitude once more we strayed,
 Like lightning cleaves the air in forked play,
 From opposite there smote a voice, which said,
 "Ah, whosoever findeth me, will slay."
 And fled like thunder, which in distance growled 135
 If suddenly the cloud doth break away.
 Scarce truce from hearing that our senses hold,
 And lo! another, with such shattering tone,
 Resembled thunder which behind it rolled:

Line 112. Brettinoro was the castle belonging to the speaker, Guido del Duca.

Line 115. Counts of small territories in Romagna. The Pagani were lords of Faenza, one of whom, Mainardo, was surnamed the Demon on account of his treachery. He is named in Canto XXVII. of the "Hell" as ruling the cities of Faenza and Imola, and always changing sides.

Line 133. The speech of Cain after God had cursed him for his brother's death. Gen., ch. iv., v. 14.

"I am Aglauros, who was turned to stone:"
 Then closer to the poet's clasp to creep, 140
 Backwards, not forwards, were my footsteps thrown.
 Already did the air on all sides sleep:
 And he spake thus: "That was the stern rebuke
 Mankind within his measure meant to keep. 145
 But ye the bait so swallow, that the hook
 Of the old enemy doth draw ye close:
 Hence, curb, or urging ye so little brook.
 Calls ye the sky, which circling round ye goes,
 Showing the eternal beauties of the sphere,
 While still your eyes intent on earth repose: 150
 Whence smites ye, He, who seeth all things clear."

Line 139. Aglauros was changed into a rock for preventing, through envy, her sister Herse's intrigue with Mercury. Ovid's "Metam.," book ii.

CANTO XV.

The poets advancing meet an Angel, who invites them to ascend to the next steep. Mounting the stairs they issue on the third cornice, where the sin of Anger is purged. Dante falling into a waking trance, beholds in vision various famous examples of patience—the Virgin seeking Jesus amongst the doctors in the Temple, Pisistratus calming his indignant wife, and the martyrdom of Stephen. As the evening advances, the poets are enveloped in a thick smoke.

As much as 'twixt the third hour of the day
 And morning's rise, appeareth of the sphere
 Which ever totters like a child at play;
 So much towards the evening, did appear
 Of the sun's journey through the sky to rest; 5
 'Twas evening there, when it was midnight here.
 Directly on our front the rays molest,
 For we had so turned round the mountain now
 That we were walking straight towards the west,
 When I perceived the splendour smite my brow 10
 With glory even more brilliant than before,
 That I was dazed with what I did not know:
 On which I lifted up my hands before
 My eyebrows, making them a shade between,
 To guard my sight from light's superfluous shower, 15

Line 1. The first six lines are very obscure. The meaning is that it was now three hours before sunset, which Dante makes the commencement of evening.

As when from water, or a mirror keen,
 Leapeth the sunray to the opposite side
 With equal angle darting up its sheen,
 To which it fell, that differently doth glide 20
 To a stone falling from an equal height,
 As art, and our experience have descried :
 So did I seem there by reflected light
 Before me to be smote; the which to fly
 Was quite impossible unto my sight.
 "Sweet father, what is this, which from my eye 25
 I cannot banish, whatso'er I do,"
 I said, "and which towards us seems to hie?"
 "Be not surprised, if dazzles still thy view
 The family of Heaven," he answered me,
 "A messenger he comes man's heart to sue. 30
 'Twill not be long, ere such as these to see
 Will not be painful, but will give thee zest,
 As perfect as thy nature can agree."
 After we'd reached unto that Angel blest,
 With joyful voice he told us "Enter in 35
 On stairs less steep than what you yet have prest."
 Starting from there, the ascent we now begin,
Beati misericordes then was sung
 Behind us, and Rejoice, who thus dost win. 40
 The master and myself alone upsprung
 The stairs, and as we went, I thought to gain
 Profit, upon his lips sweet teaching hung :
 To him I turned me then, demanding fain,
 "What that Italian spirit wished to say, 45
 The while he spake of company and ban."
 Whence he to me, "The loss he well doth weigh,
 Caused by his greatest fault, so marvel not
 He blames it, that it be less wept for aye.
 Because there ever turns your longing thought
 There, where through company grows less each share, 50
 The bellows blow with Envy's sighings hot.
 But if the love of the eternal sphere
 Human desire to heavenly aims could turn,
 There would not linger in your heart that fear.
 For there the more to say our own, we yearn, 55
 So much doth each possess increased store,
 And more of charity doth thither burn."

Line 38. "Blessed are the merciful." Matt. v. 7.

Line 44. Dante demands an explanation of Guido del Brettinoro's remark at line 86 of the preceding Canto.

"Through being contented, I do hunger more
 Than if thou first hadst silent been," I said,
 "And in my mind I gather doubt galore,
 How can it be that wealth distributed,
 Numerous possessors can more richly dower,
 Than if beyond a few it be not spread?"
 And he to me: "Because thou still dost lower
 Thy mind alone upon affairs terrene,
 With the pure light of truth the shadows scour.
 That Infinite, ineffable demesne
 Which is above, so runneth love to meet
 As on the polisht substance strikes the sheen.
 So much it gives, as it doth find of heat :
 So that whatever charity may be
 The eternal worth above it broodeth sweet.
 The greater number can that lore agree,
 The more there are to love, and more is loved,
 And glasslike each the other mirrors free.
 If by my speech thy hunger be not moved,
 Thou'lt see thy Beatricè ; clearly plain
 Will every hope of thine by her be proved.
 Only make haste the five wounds that remain
 To clear away, as two have gone from sight,
 The which are closèd through the healing pain."
 Wishing to say, "Thou dost content me quite :"
 I saw that we had reached the higher round,
 So made me silent my expectant sight.
 There, on a sudden in ecstatic swound,
 Appeared to me my spirit to retreat :
 A group I saw within a temple's bound ;
 A lady in the entrance with the sweet
 Action of mother, saying, "Son, ah why
 Towards us hast thou done this thing unmeet ?
 Behold with sorrowing hearts thy sire and I
 Have sought thee:" and as here she silent grew
 Vanished the scene which first I did descry.
 Then there appeared another with the dew
 Upon her cheeks, which grief distilleth down,
 Through anger at the deeds which others do :
 And said : "If thou art master of the town,
 To name the which 'mongst gods the strife was shared,
 And whence proceedeth every science known,

Line 94. This story is told of Pisistratus, tyrant of Athens.

Line 98. Minerva and Neptune strove for the honour, which was won by Athene through her gift of the olive.

Avenge thee of those shameless arms that dared, 100
 Pisistratus! our daughter to embrace."
 And gently and benignantly appeared
 Her lord to answer her, with grave, calm face,
 " What shall we do to those who wish us ill,
 If we doom one who loves us to disgrace?" 105
 Then I saw people with the flaming will
 Of anger kindled, who a youth did stone,
 Each crying loudly to the other, kill.
 And him I witnessed there by death bent down,
 Which bowed him towards the earth, yet still with life 110
 For ever in his eyes, Heaven's glories shine :
 Beseeching his high Lord, in such a strife
 That to his persecutors he would yield
 Pardon, his aspect all with pity rife.
 What time my spirit came back from that field, 115
 Unto the things which in themselves are true,
 I knew no fiction had my dreams revealed.
 My leader, who might me in actions view
 Like one who rouseth up from slumber deep,
 Asked me: " What hast thou, that thou totterest so? 120
 For more than half a league dost thou thus creep,
 Closing thy eyes, and with thy limbs awry,
 In guise of one o'ercome by wine, or sleep."
 " O my sweet father," did I make reply,
 " Hear, and I'll tell thee, what to me was shown, 125
 The whilst my limbs had lost the power to hie."
 And he: " A hundred masks if thou hadst on,
 Over thy face, from me thou couldst not veil
 Thy thoughts, how slight soever be their tone.
 That which thou saw'st, was shown thee, not to fail 130
 Thy heart to open to the streams of peace,
 Which from the eternal fountain ever well.
 I did not ask, what hast? like one who sees
 With mortal eyes alone, which nought can weet
 What time the body lies all spiritless, 135
 I asked thee to give strength unto thy feet :
 Thus it behoves to stimulate the slow
 To use their waking vigilance, as meet."
 'Twas evening now, and we intent did go,
 Looking beyond, far as the eye could scan, 140
 Against the westering rays, that shone so low :
 And lo! a smoke, little by little 'gan,
 To gather towards us like the night obscure,
 Nor was it possible escape to plan :
 So it bereft us of the daylight pure. 145

CANTO XVI.

Dante proceeds through the smoke, guided by Virgil, and hears the voices of spirits who are purged there from the sin of Anger. He converses with Marco Lombardo, from whom he inquires the reason of the degeneracy of the age. The spirit points out to him the error of attributing it to necessity, or the starry influences, as man is gifted with free will, and explains it as the consequence of the union of temporal and spiritual powers in the Papal Government.

DARKNESS of Hell, and of a night depriven
 Of every planet 'neath a murky sky
 O'er which the clouds in hurrying gloom are driven,
 Ne'er made so thick a veil before my eye,
 As did that smoke which us enshrouded there, 5
 Nor to the sense so rough, and harshly dry.
 To stay unclosed the eyesight could not bear :
 On which my escort wise, so often tried,
 Drew near, and offered me his shoulder fair.
 So like a blind man goes behind his guide, 10
 Not to forsake the pathway, nor be shent
 'Gainst anything where danger may abide,
 Through that most foul and bitter air I went,
 Aye listening to my leader, who did say,
 " Watch only that from me thou be'st not rent." 15
 And voices then I heard, which seemed to pray
 For peace, and for compassion, all and each,
 Unto God's Angel, who lifts sins away.
 The *Agnus Dei* aye began their speech,
 In all one word, one manner did appear, 20
 To perfect concord they had seemed to reach.
 " These must be spirits, master, whom I hear ?"
 I said ; and he to me : " Thou judgest true,
 Loosening the bond of anger, go they here."
 " Now, who art thou, our smoke who cleavest through, 25
 And yet dost speak of us, as if that thou
 Still time by calends didst divide anew ?"
 Thus by a voice was spoken there I trow :
 On which my master said : " Do thou reply,
 And ask if hence the way above doth go." 30
 " O creature who dost clear thyself," said I,
 " To turn again to him, who made thee, fair,
 Thou'lt hear a marvel if with me wilt hie."

Line 27. As if thou wert still living, and computing time.

"I'll follow thee as far as I may fare,"
 He answered, "since the smoke doth not permit 35
 To see, we'll keep together by the ear."
 Then I began, "That burden which we quit,
 Dissolved by death, I bear with me above,
 And here have come from the infernal pit.
 If God has chosen me with such a love, 40
 So that he wills that I should see his court
 In way, from modern use, that far doth rove,
 Conceal not from me, who ere death thou wert,
 But say and tell me, if direct I go,
 Unto the pass, thy words be our escort." 45
 "Marco Lombardo was my name below,
 The world I knew, that worth I well did love,
 To which now each one has relaxed the bow:
 To mount above, thou dost straightforward move."
 So answered he, and added: "Thee I pray 50
 To pray for me, when thou shalt be above."
 And I to him: "I bind my faith to thee
 To do the thing thou askest: but I own
 A doubt within, I cannot clear away.
 First it was single, now 'tis double grown 55
 Through this thy judgment, which now makes me sure
 Coupled with what was elsewhere to me shown.
 The world in sooth is altogether poor
 Of every virtue, as thou now didst say,
 And covered heavily with malice' store: 60
 But point me out the reason now I pray,
 Which I may see and unto others show,
 Since one in Heaven, and one on earth doth lay."
 A deep sigh laden with the soul of woe
 He vented first, then, "Brother," he began, 65
 "The world is blind, thou comest from below.
 All ye who live, attribute every plan
 To skye influence, as if that all
 Through stern necessity in first grooves ran.
 If thus it were, 'twould be the funeral 70
 Of your free will, and justice 'twould not be
 That joy on good, and grief on ill should fall.

Line 46. A Venetian gentleman, Lombard in name and nation.

Line 57. Referring to Guido del Duca, who was also a *laudator temporis acti*.

Line 63. Some attribute this degeneracy to mankind, and some to the influence of the stars, which it is impossible to evade.

The sky begins your movements, I agree :
 I say not all : supposing so I said,
 For good and evil, light is granted ye : 75
 And will all free ; which, if when sore bestead,
 It can, in struggle with the sky, endure,
 Will conquer all things then, well nourishèd.
 To a better nature, and a higher power,
 Though subject ye are free, and that doth make 80
 Your soul, on which the skies no influence shower.
 But if the present world doth worth forsake,
 To thee the true cause will I now declare,
 In ye the reason lies, ye there must seek.
 There issues from his hand, who loves it, ere 85
 It be, in fashion of a little child,
 Weeping and laughing with an infant's air
 The soul all simple, by no lore defiled,
 Save that as prompted by a Maker kind,
 To aught that pleases it, it turns beguiled. 90
 Of lower good the taste it first doth find ;
 There 'tis deceived, and runneth after it,
 If guide or curb its longing doth not bind.
 Hence it behoved the laws to place for bit :
 Kings it behoved to have, that one might greet 95
 At least the turret of a city fit.
 Laws are there, but who yields observance meet ?
 No one because the Pastor who's supreme,
 Can ruminate, but hath not cloven feet.
 Therefore the people, greedy of the same, 100
 Seeing their guide to worldly 'vantage cleave,
 Pasture on that, and nothing further claim.
 Their evil teaching, well may ye believe
 The reason why the world has grown so vile,
 And not corrupted nature that you have. 105

Line 78. Dante is a firm believer in the influence of the stars on human actions and natures, as will be seen fully in Canto VIII. of the "Paradise;" but he allows that the will is free, and that a man can combat successfully the evil nature implanted in him by the stars.

Line 79. To God himself, the Creator of the soul.

Line 99. In the Mosaic law, those beasts are clean who chew the cud and have the cloven hoof. The Pope is an unclean beast, because though he can ruminate and pass good ordinances, he wants the cloven foot—*i.e.*, he does not separate the spiritual from temporal authority. This ingenious explanation is by Venturi, who at the same time bids the reader remember that Dante was a Ghibeline, and factious to fanaticism!

Was wont old Rome, which made the world to smile
 To have two suns, who each of them displayed
 Various, the earthly, and the Godly style.
 One has usurped the other, the sword blade 110
 Is joined to the crosier, and together grown,
 Through open force the ill accord is made :
 The one fears not the other, when thus one.
 If thou believest not, think thee of its corn ;
 For by its seed is every herbage known. 115
 Upon the land the Adige and Po adorn
 Valour and courtesy were wont to appear
 Ere Frederic there in battle was outborne.
 Now with security can wander there
 Whoever wishes to avoid, through shame,
 Converse with good men, nor to see them near. 120
 Still are there three old men, through whom doth blame
 The ancient age, the new, ah ! how they would
 That God to a better life their souls should claim.
 Pallazzo's Conrad, the Gherardo good,
 And Guido da Castel, far better named 125
 The simple Lombard in the Frankish mode.
 Say then henceforth, the Church of Rome that claimed
 Two opposite powers within herself to wed,
 Falls in the mire, herself, and burden shamed."
 " O Marco mine, thou arguest well," I said, 130
 " And now I see why from the heritage
 The sons of Levi were disherited.
 But who is that Gherardo, who as gauge
 Thou saidst remained amongst a worn-out race,
 As a reproof unto a barbarous age ?" 135
 " Thy speech deceives me, or thou dost but press,
 Since speaking Tuscan to me," he replied,
 " Of good Gherardo thou hast heard no trace.
 No other surname be to him applied, 140
 Unless his daughter, Gaja's, be allowed,
 I cannot further come, God with you bide.

Line 107. The Emperor and the Bishop of Rome. The necessity for a separation of the temporal and spiritual rule is the keynote of Dante's system of politics.

Line 117. Frederic II., introduced amongst the heretics in Canto X. of " Hell : " his defeat before Parma, in 1248, by the Papal forces is here alluded to.

Line 126. The French called all Italians Lombards.

Line 138. Gherardo da Camino, of Trevizi. Dante alludes to him honourably in his *Convito*. His daughter Gaja was one of the first Italian poetesses, celebrated more especially for her beauty and modesty.

Behold the light that shimmers through the cloud,
 Already whiten : to appear before
 The angel there, to me is disallowed :”
 He spake, and would not hear me any more.

145

CANTO XVII.

The poets issue from the smoke, and various scenes of anger are shown to Dante in vision—Philomel, Haman, Amata. He is roused by the appearance of an Angel, who directs them to mount to the next cornice. The night closes as they reach the summit of the stairs, and halting there Virgil informs Dante that spiritual sloth is purged in that circle.

READER, recall to mind, if e'er did roll
 A cloud athwart thee, on an Alpine height,
 Through which thou saw'st no other than a mole :
 How when the thick and humid vapours white
 Began to rarefy, within its veil
 The sun's sphere dimly pierced its welcome light :
 And let not thy imagination fail
 To picture how, while sinking to its rest,
 Within that smoke, the sun once more I hail.
 Mine, with my master's trusty footsteps prest,
 So from that cloud I issued to the ray
 That only lightened now the mountain's crest :
 Imagination, that dost steal away
 At times the outward scene, that man marks nought,
 Although around a thousand trumpets bray,
 What moves thee from the senses if not caught ?
 Moves thee that light, by angel will conveyed,
 Or self-engendered, which in Heaven is wrought.
 Of her ferocious deed, who from a maid
 Became the bird that most delights in song,
 Upon my spirit's sight appeared the shade :
 And here my mind was centered with such strong
 Absorption, that on it no trace could lie,
 Of things that to the outward scene belong.
 Then showered within to my high fantasy
 One in his rancorous fury crucified,
 Fierce in his aspect, and as such did die.

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Line 19. Either Philomel or her sister Progne is here alluded to, some poets having translated the latter also into the nightingale. Philomel, to avenge the insult received from her brother-in-law, Tereus, killed his son Itis, and gave some of the flesh to the father as food. Ovid's *Metam.*, book vi.

Line 26. The end of Haman : Esther, chap. vii.

The great Ahasuerus, and his bride
 Esther were round, and justest Mordecai,
 He, both in speech and act so trusty tried. 30
 And as this image, vanishing away
 Broke of itself as bursts a bubble, made
 Of falling water, when doth cease the spray :
 There rose upon my vision a young maid
 Weeping aloud, and saying, " O my queen 35
 In anger wherefore hast thyself betrayed?
 To save Lavinia, thou thyself hast slain :
 Now thou hast lost me : mother, these sad eyes
 More than all other, thy destruction 'plain."
 As breaketh slumber, when in sudden wise 40
 Upon the closèd lids new light is thrown,
 Which broken, struggles, as it wholly dies :
 So my imaginations fell adown,
 Soon as there smote upon my face the light,
 Far stronger than to mortal usance known. 45
 Where I might be, I turned to take in sight,
 When there exclaimed a voice, " One mounteth here,"
 Which from all other purpose won me quite :
 And made my eagerness so great to peer
 Upon that form, who thus our steps did hail, 50
 That rest it could not till it saw him near.
 But as against the sun the sight doth fail,
 Which veils its figure through excess of light,
 So was my virtue here of no avail.
 " A spirit divine is this, who on the height 55
 Without a prayer, the passage upwards shows,
 Himself concealing with his glory bright.
 He treats us as a man himself would use ;
 For who so waits for prayer, who need doth see,
 Already he malignly doth refuse. 60
 To such inviting let our feet agree :
 To mount ere it grows darker, let us haste ;
 Later we could not, till returns the day."
 So spake my leader, and together prest
 Our footsteps, turning to the stairs that spire : 65
 Soon as my foot on the first step I placed,
 I felt the moving of a pinion nigher,
 And air blown o'er my face, and voices cried,
Beati Pacifici, who're free from ire."

Line 34. Lavinia, mourning over the suicide of her mother Amata, who killed herself on the supposed death of Turnus. "*Æneid*," lib. xii.

Line 67. The Angel removes another P from Dante's brow, the sin of wrath having been purified. *Beati Pacifici*, Matt. v. 9.

Far overhead already we descried 70
 The last sunrays, on which there follows night,
 So that the stars appeared on every side.
 "O virtue mine, why dost thou take thy flight?"
 Unto myself I asked, as I perceived
 The vigour of my limbs then fail me quite. 75
 We now had mounted, where no more upheaved
 The staircase upwards, and we there were stayed,
 Like to a vessel at the port arrived.
 A little while intently I surveyed 80
 Something to hear upon that circle new,
 Then to my master turned me, and I said :
 "Sweet father mine, what sin will meet our view,
 Purged here upon this circle where we are,
 Though the feet halt, halt not the converse true."
 And he to me: "The love of what is fair 85
 When less than it should be, is here restored :
 The tardy oar the boatman plieth here.
 But that more clearly this be not ignored,
 To me address thy mind, and thou shalt bring
 From our delay some useful fruitage stored. 90
 Neither Creator, nor created thing,
 Was ever without love, thou know'st, my son,
 Or natural, or that from choice doth spring.
 The natural can ne'er to error wonne,
 But through wrong object can the other err, 95
 Or by excess or lack of vigour shown.
 The while on Heavenly objects it doth steer,
 Or upon earthly ones doth measure keep,
 To evil joy it cannot minister.
 But when to ill 'tis turned, or with more deep 100
 Or lighter will than right, on good is fain,
 Works 'gainst its Maker, the created shape.
 Hence thou canst comprehend, that like to grain
 In you each virtue springeth from love's seed,
 And every action which doth merit pain. 105
 Now since Love's bent was never yet agreed
 Save to the welfare of its object dear,
 From its own hatred everything is freed.
 And since the intellect we cannot sheer
 From the primal effluence, standing all alone, 110
 From hating that, the mental instinct's clear.

Line 106. It is impossible for any man to hate himself, or God his first cause, therefore a man can rejoice only in the evil which befalls his neighbours.

Remains, if my distinctions well are shown,
 That evil loved must be our neighbour's woe ;
 And in your mire that love has threefold grown. 115
 There is, who through his neighbour's ruin, so
 Hopeth pre-eminence, who hence doth call
 That he from grandeur may be cast down low.
 There is, who fears to lose power, grace, and all
 Honour and fame, because that others rise,
 Which grieves him so that he desires their fall. 120
 There is, who seems so hurt by injuries,
 That he on vengeance greedily doth brood ;
 And such a one another's ill must prize.
 This triform love bewailed, beneath we've viewed :
 Now of the other thou must comprehend, 125
 Which in corrupted fashion seeketh good.
 Some good doth each confusedly apprehend,
 In which to rest his spirit's longing fain,
 Therefore to reach to it doth each contend. 130
 If love is slow to see its real gain,
 Or to acquire it, yields this circling space,
 After repentance, purifying pain.
 All other good mankind can never bless :
 It is not happiness, not of all good fruit
 The essence, and the root of heavenly grace. 135
 Love that to those too closely taketh root,
 On three still higher circles is refined ;
 This we again in triple form will note,
 Of those I speak not, those thyself must find."

Line 115. In this, and the two following *terzinas*, are described Pride, Envy, and Anger, the result of the Love of Evil, and which were purged in the three preceding *cornices*.

CANTO XVIII.

Virgil, continuing his discourse, explains the nature of love, which, though innate in its affections, in man, does not do away with the restraining influences of his free will. At the close of his disquisition, a troop of shadows rush by, compensating by their present ardour for their former lukewarmness in life. Two in the van encourage the rest by reciting examples of zeal: the Abbot of San Zeno declares himself to the poets while racing by, and two bring up the rear, shouting out instances of the sin which they are there purging away. On their departure, Dante falls into a dreamy slumber.

WHEN he had finished his discourse, the high
 Teacher intently gazed upon my face,
 To see if I appeared content ; and I

Whom thirst aye new exciting still did press,
 Outwardly silent, said within, "Perchance 5
 My too much questioning will please him less."
 But that true father, whose perceptive glance
 Read all the timid wish which I concealed,
 Speaking to me gave courage speech to lance,
 Whence I: "O master, in thy light revealed, 10
 My sight is vivified, that I see clear
 Whate'er thy parley can describe or yield.
 Therefore I pray thee, O sweet father dear,
 That thou explain this love, whence springs we find 15
 Each action good, or bad, in man's career."
 "Towards me direct the keen light of thy mind,"
 He said, "and be to thee made manifest
 The error of the blind who lead the blind.
 The soul created prompt to love's behest,
 Turneth to all the things that pleasure yield, 20
 Soon as through pleasure unto act address.
 Your apprehensive power from truth revealed
 Draweth the purpose, hence within designed,
 So that towards that the spirit is impelled. 25
 And when thus turned towards it 'tis inclined,
 That inclination's love, that is the new
 Nature which pleasure in yourselves doth bind.
 Then as fire ever mounteth upwards true
 By its own nature, which is born to aspire 30
 Unto the sphere from whence it substance drew ;
 So the caught spirit enters on desire,
 The motion spiritual, which cannot rest,
 Till it enjoy the well-loved object nigher.
 How has been hidden, now appears confest, 35
 The truth unto the people who aver
 Love in itself praiseworthy at the least.
 Because perchance its matter may appear
 Always a good thing: 'tis not every seal
 Is good, although the wax be good and clear."
 "My judgment following what thy words reveal, 40
 Hath made love clear to me," I then replied,
 "But that with doubt more pregnant makes me feel.

Line 14. It is seen that Dante considers love the groundwork of all the passions, on which principle it would appear, as Cary acutely remarks, that Collins has not introduced love separately amongst the passions.

Line 18. The error to be exposed is explained afterwards to be that of considering all love in itself praiseworthy.

Line 37. Venturi remarks that throughout this disquisition Dante uses the phraseology of the Peripatetics, where *matter* denominates the *kind* of things as determinable by many differences.

Since from without to us is love applied,
 And in no other mode the spirit strayeth,
 Or right, or wrong, all merit is denied." 45
 And he to me: "As far as reason seeth
 Can I explain, beyond that, thou must wait
 On Beatrix alone, 'tis work of faith.
 The soul, substantial form, which separate
 From matter, yet with it is linked as one, 50
 Doth in itself specific power collate,
 Which without operation is not known,
 Nor shows itself except by its effect,
 As by green leaves the life of plants is shown : 55
 But from what place there cometh intellect
 Of primal notions, that man nothing sees,
 Nor what the primal appetites affect,
 Which are in you, as the desire in bees
 To store up honey : and this primal will 60
 Doth not deserve itself, or blame, or praise.
 Unto this end, to which all gathers still,
 Reason ye have innate, whose voice should make
 Counsel with due assent to guard the sill.
 This then we find the source, from whence ye take 65
 Reason of merit in ye, as ye keep
 Love good or evil, and the husks outshake.
 Those, who in reasoning pierced unto the deep,
 Accorded all this innate liberty :
 Hence left their morals for the world to reap. 70
 Whence we assert, that of necessity
 All love doth rise, which in you lights its flame,
 To keep it in restraint, the power's in ye.
 The noble virtue Beatrix doth name
 Free Will, remember therefore of the maze 75
 This key, if e'er she speak upon this theme."
 The moon, which now till midnight near delays,
 Quenching the starlight with its brilliancies,
 Rose like a rounded bucket, all ablaze.
 'Gainst the sky's course it moved, through those degrees 80
 In which the sun flames, when at Rome its fall
 Is seen 'twixt Corsican and Sardic seas.
 And he, the gentle shade, through whom we call
 Pictola more than any Mantuan town,
 Had borne the burden of my questionings all.

Line 68. The moral philosophers of the old world.

Line 79. The moon rose against the course of the Heavens, in the constellation of Scorpion, in which the sun is, when by those at Rome it is seen to set between the islands of Corsica and Sardinia.

Line 83. Pictola, formerly called Andes, was the birthplace of Virgil.

Whence I, who of the doubtings I had known 85
 A clear and full solution had received,
 Was like a man who stands in sleepy swoune.
 But from all trace of sleepiness relieved,
 I was aroused by people from behind,
 Who seemed to reach us almost ere perceived. 90
 Such as Ismenus and Asopus find
 Along their banks, the furious rout at night,
 What time the Thebans needed Bacchus kind ;
 So round that circle, urge their whirling flight,
 Those who towards us coming I descried, 95
 Spurred onwards by good will, and love of right.
 Soon they had reached us, for with eager stride,
 All that great crowd, still forwards racing, strain ;
 And two in front of them with weeping, cried,
 "Mary with haste unto the mountain ran ;" 100
 "And Cæsar, too, Herda to subdue,
 Attacked Marseilles, and hurried into Spain."
 "Faster, yet faster, lose not time anew
 Through lack of love," the others shouted near,
 "Grace groweth green through zeal good acts to do." 105
 "O people, in the whom keen fervour here
 Makes up perchance for negligent delay,
 And your lukewarmness in a former sphere ;
 This one who lives (and certes truth I say),
 Would mount above, when shines again the sun, 110
 So tell us where doth nearest lie the way."
 Such were the words my leader said : and one
 Amongst those spirits told us, "Follow ye
 Behind us, and the opening will be won.
 We are so full of the desire to flee 115
 That rest we cannot : think it not dishonour
 Since justice drives, and grant us pardon free.
 I was San Zeno's abbot in Verona,
 Under goed Barbarossa's empire suave,
 Of whom Milan still weeps his hand upon her. 120
 And one has now a foot within the grave,
 Who through that monastery soon will mourn
 In sadness, that he used it as his slave.

Line 91. Rivers near Thebes.

Line 100. When she went into the hill country to visit Elizabeth. Luke i. 39.

Line 101. Cæsar, in the war with Pompey, left Brutus to complete the siege of Marseilles, and himself hurried into Spain, and defeated the generals of Pompey at Herda.

Line 119. The Emperor Frederic I., who reduced Milan to ashes in 1162.

Line 121. Alberto della Scala, lord of Verona, who had forced his natural son, a deformed person, on the monastery as its abbot.

Because he placed his son, to evil born,
 Misshaped in body, and in mind more vile, 125
 In place of its true pastor hence upturn."
 I know not if he spake more or grew still,
 So far from us ere then his course did speed,
 But this I heard, and I retained the while.
 And he, who was my help in every need, 130
 Said, "Turn thee hither, and behold two more
 Chiding the sin of sloth, as on they speed."
 In rear of all they said; "All those, before
 Whom the Red Sea its pathway opened, died,
 Ere their descendants saw the Jordan's shore." 135
 "And those who all the labours could not bide
 Unto the end, with good Anchises' son,
 Doomed by themselves, a life inglorious tried."
 Thereafter, when so far from us had run
 Those shadows, that they vanished from our sight, 140
 Within my mind new thought its course begun,
 Whence many more all diverse rose in might,
 And I so raved o'er one and the other theme
 That there my eyes I closed in delight,
 And changed my fancy's vision to a dream. 145

Line 136. Those Trojans who remained with Acestes in Sicily, rather than accompany Eneas in his further travels and toils. "Æneid," book v.

CANTO XIX.

Dante beholds in vision Falsehood and Virtue, personified in two female shapes. He is then led by an Angel to the stairs, and ascends to the fifth cornice. There he finds the shades prostrate on the ground, purging the sin of Avarice, and amongst them he converses with Pope Adrian V.

Now in the hour, when the diurnal heat
 Can warm no more the coldness of the night,
 Conquered by chill of earth, or Saturn's seat :
 What time there rises on the Geomants' sight
 The Greater Fortune, where before the morn, 5
 The eastern sky is shortly flecked with white ;

Line 1. The hour before morning.

Line 5. The Greater Fortune was a figure drawn by Geomanti for their divination, after a constellation visible in the eastern sky before the dawn.

A tongue-tied woman on my dream was borne,
 With squinting eyes, distorted on her feet,
 With maimèd hands, and pale in hue forlorn.
 I gazed on her; and as the sun's bright heat 10
 The frigid limbs, the night hath numbed, doth warm,
 So, 'neath my gaze, her tongue won parlance sweet,
 And straightened afterwards her crippled form
 In briefest time, and on her faded face, 15
 Revived the roseate hue which love doth charm.
 Then when her tongue was granted such release,
 To warble she began, that scarce with pain
 I could have torn me from its witching grace.
 "I am the Syren sweet," began her strain,
 "Who in mid sea can sailor's course prevent, 20
 To hear me all possess such longing fain:
 Ulysses from his wandering voyage I bent
 Unto my song, who'er with me reposed
 Rarely departed, so I yield content."
 Not yet her mouth of witchery was closed, 25
 When there appeared a holy lady near
 My side, who came to render her confused.
 "O Virgil, Virgil, who is this one here?"
 Proudly she spake to him, while her he hailed,
 With eyes fixed ever on her aspect clear; 30
 She seized the other, and in front unveiled,
 Tearing her garments, and her belly showed,
 Which woke me with the stench that hence exhaled.
 I turned my eyes, and spake my Virgil good,
 "Three times at least I have called thee; up, away, 35
 For thee to enter, let us seek the road."
 Upwards I rose, already with the day
 The circles of the holy mountain glow,
 And with the sun behind, we went our way.
 Following upon his steps, I bore my brow 40
 Like one who has a weight of thought severe,
 And in a bridge's arch his frame doth bow;
 When I thus heard: "Come on, one passeth here,"
 Spoken in mode so tender and benign, 45
 As ne'er is heard upon this mortal sphere.
 With open pinions, like a swan's that shine,
 Directed us above, the one who spake,
 Betwixt the granite walls that there incline.

Line 7. An allegory of false human happiness.

Moving his plumes, a wafture did he make,
 " *Qui lugent*," then affirmed he, " are the blest, 50
 Who to their master souls can comfort take."
 " What hast thou, that thy eyes on earth still rest?"
 Thus to address me straight began my guide,
 When from the Angel we had upwards prest. 55
 " With such suspicion makes me go," I cried,
 " The novel vision which my thoughts enfold,
 So that from it they cannot more divide."
 " That ancient witch," he said, " didst thou behold,
 Which only o'er us now each spirit wails ?
 Didst thou behold how man bursts from her hold ? 60
 Enough, the earth now spurning with thy heels,
 Direct thy eyes towards the Heavenly lure,
 The eternal kingdom, with its whirling wheels."
 Like to a falcon, who his feet makes sure,
 Then turneth to the cry, and upwards heaves 65
 In longing for the prey that flies before :
 Thus did I do, and thus as far as cleaves
 The rock, in passage for those upwards boune,
 I clomb to where the level circle leaves. 70
 As on the fifth ledge I my entrance won,
 The people who were waiting there I see a-
 Lying on earth, with faces aye turned down.
 "*Adhæsit pavimento anima mea*,"
 I heard them saying with such deep-drawn sighs,
 That of the words one scarce could catch the idea. 75
 " O ye elect of God, whose miseries
 Justice and hope alike reduce in sum,
 Direct us towards the stairs, by which to rise."
 " Secure from lying down, if here ye come,
 And seek the shortest way, the outer side 80
 Keep ever to the right hand as ye roam."
 So spake the poet, and was so replied,
 Some way in front of us, whence from the speech
 I saw one-half my mystery yet was hid.
 And to my master's eyes my eyes I reach ; 85
 When he assented with a joyful sign
 To what my look of longing did beseech.

Line 50. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."
 Matt. v. 4.

Line 59. In the three higher circles are purged the sins of those who lusted
 after various forms of mere earthly good.

Line 73. "My soul cleaveth to the dust." Ps. cxix. 25.

Line 84. The shade was aware that Dante had arrived there undoomed to
 that particular penance, but knew not that he was alive.

Then with permission given for my design,
 Over the creature there I bent me down,
 Whose words that knowledge made me first divine : 90
 Saying, " O soul, in whom tears ripen soon,
 That, without which to God thou canst not turn,
 Cease for a while the chief care thou dost own.
 The who thou wert, and why all hold your stern
 Turned upwards, say if thou desirest greatly 95
 That I, who live, for thee earth's prayers should earn."
 And he : " Why Heaven our hinder parts thus meetly
 Reverseth towards itself, thou'lt know, but now
Scias quod ego fui successor Petri.
 'Twixt Siestri and Chiaveri down doth flow 100
 Rushing a river fair, and to its name
 Our race the title of its lineage owe.
 How weigheth the great garb, kept free from shame,
 A month and little longer did I know : 105
 All other loads are feathers by the same.
 Ah woe! my soul's conversion was but slow :
 But since the Roman Pastor I was made,
 Thence I discovered life's false-seeming show.
 I saw that there the heart no rest essayed,
 Nor in that life could climb to loftier seat ; 110
 Therefore on this new-kindled love I laid.
 Until that time, wretched and separate
 From God, my greedy soul to all things clave ;
 Now I am punished here, as thou dost weet. 115
 The stain, produced by avarice, here we lave
 In the purgation of converted spirits ;
 This mountain knows no bitterness so grave.
 As erst, in life, the soul did never steer its
 Eyes to the height, engroseed on things terrene 120
 So Justice here prostrates it, as it merits.
 As erst, through avarice, our love has been
 Extinguisht to all good, hence failed its spell,
 So justice holds it here in bondage keen,
 Tied by the hands and feet thus close and well ;
 And long as it shall please just God to wreak, 125
 So long we'll stay, stretcht out immovable."
 I had knelt down, and was about to speak,
 But ere I had commenced, to him was known,
 Only by listening, my reverence meek.

Line 100. The speaker is Ottobuono, of the family of the Fieschi, Counts of Lavagno. The river Lavagno runs through the Genoese territory. Ottobuono was elected under the name of Adrian V. in 1276, and died one month and nine days after his election.

"What cause," said he, "hath bent thee thus adown?" 130
 And I to him: "Your sacred dignity,
 My honest conscience smote me, thus to own."
 "Straighten thy limbs, and rise O brother free,
 Err not, a fellow servant," he replied,
 "Am I to one, with others, and with thee. 135
 If e'er the Gospel's holy text applied,
 Which sayeth *Neque nubent*, thou hast known,
 Why I thus speak, will clearly be descried.
 Thy longer stay I wish not, go thee on;
 Thy presence to my weeping gives respite, 140
 With which I ripen that which thou hast shown.
 I have a niece on earth, Alagia hight,
 Good in herself, since her hath lured in vain
 Our house, by bad example, from the right.
 On earth she only doth to me remain." 145

Line 137. Since, as Matthew says, we neither marry nor are given in marriage, I am no longer the spouse of the Church, nor entitled to more reverence than any other servant of God.

Line 142. Alagia, wife of the Marchese Malespina, one of Dante's protectors in his exile.

CANTO XX.

Continuing their journey round the cornice, Dante hears a spirit relate illustrious examples of Poverty and Liberality. He tells him that he is Hugh Capet, and mourns over the career of his descendants. He concludes by relating notorious examples of Avarice. As the poets continue their way the mountain trembles as with an earthquake, and all the spirits sing "Gloria in excelsis."

THE will can strive not against stronger will;
 Therefore to please him, in my own despite
 From the wave I drew the sponge I might not fill.
 I and my leader moved along the site
 Beside the rock encumbered, as one goes 5
 Close to the battlements on a narrow height.
 Because the people, from whose eyes there flows
 In drops the evil which the wild has nursed,
 On the outer edge of the circle lay in rows.
 O ancient she-wolf, be thou aye accurst, 10
 Who more than all the other beasts hast prey,
 Through thy unquenchable and endless thirst.

Line 10. Avarice. See Canto I. of the "Inferno;" the advent of Can Grande della Scala is supposed to be again alluded to in Line 15.

O skies, since we have credence in thy sway,
 To change the aspect of the world below,
 When will He come, who'll chase this beast away? 15
 We wended on with niggard steps and slow,
 And I, the shadows watching, heard them plain,
 Piteously weeping, there lament their woe.
 "Sweet Mary!" I at hazard heard the strain
 Cried out in front of us as if with moan 20
 Forced from a woman in a labour pain.
 "Thou wast as poor," it then continued on,
 "As ever could be seen, when in these mews
 Thou wast delivered of thy holy son.
 O good Fabricius, thou didst wisely choose, 25
 Preferring virtue even with poverty,
 Than, vice accompanied, great wealth to use."
 These words such satisfaction gave to me,
 That I drew onwards, with that spirit sooth
 To hold relationship, and parlance free. 30
 It spake again of the boon, with liberal ruth
 Which to the maidens Nicholas had made,
 In the path of honour to preserve their youth.
 "O spirit, who so very well hast said,
 Tell who thou wert," I askt, "and why alone 35
 Those worthy praises are by thee conveyed.
 Not thankless will the word to thee be known,
 If I return, the short paths to complete
 Of life, which to its goal still fieth on."
 And he: "I'll tell thee, not for comfort sweet 40
 I look for earthwards, but since grace doth grant,
 Ere thou art dead, to thee such favour great.
 I was the root of that most evil plant,
 Whose shade o'er all the Christian land so huge is,
 That hence good fruit one can but gather scant. 45
 But if the towns of Douai, Ghent, Lisle, Bruges,
 Possessed the power, such vengeance soon would light,
 Which at his hands I seek, who all things judges.
 Upon the earth Hugh Capet was I hight;
 From me the Louis and Philippes go down 50
 Who recently have ruled o'er France's might.

Line 30. The legend of St. Nicholas relates that he dowered three virgins, whose chastity, he learned through an angel, their father was about to sell.

Line 43. The speaker is Hugh Capet, and as acutely conjectured by Archdeacon Fisher, in the notes to Cary's "Dante," the evil plant is probably not the French monarchy, but Philippe le Bel, who is a peculiar object of the poet's dislike. *Vide, inter alia*, "Purgatory," Canto VII. The vengeance looked for from the Flemish towns that Philippe le Bel ravaged during his war in the Low Countries was gained in the battle of Courtrai.

I of a Paris butcher was the son,
 What time the line of ancient monarchs ended,
 All except one, who the grey garb did don.
 Into my hands the government descended 55
 Firm in my gripe, with all the power that springs
 From new-gained wealth, by troops of friends attended,
 Which to the widowed crown promoted brings
 The forehead of my son, who from that hour
 Begins this line of consecrated kings. 60
 Ere was acquired the great Provençal dower
 Which from my race took honest shame away,
 It did but little ill through lack of power.
 There it began with force and fraudulent sway
 Its rapine, seized thereafter in amends, 65
 Ponthieu, and Normandy, and Gascony;
 Charles came to Italy, and in amends,
 His victim Conradino there did slay,
 And then to Heaven sent Thomas in amends.
 I see the time not distant from to-day 70
 Which draws another Charles from out of France,
 Himself and his the better to display.
 Unarmed he goes, or only with the lance
 That Judas jousted with, and thrusts the same
 So that to Florence he doth burst the paunch. 75
 No kingdom there, but only sin and shame
 Will be his gain, to him more grievous far
 As such a loss so lightly doth he deem.

Line 52. Probably alluding to his father's sanguinary temper, not his trade.

Line 54. The last of the Merovingian kings, Childeric III., became a monk. Venturi conjectures that Dante confounded this fact with the close of the Carolingian line, to which Capet succeeded.

Line 61. The great Provençal dower, according to Archdeacon Fisher's explanation, is the kingdom of Navarre and Duchy of Champagne, acquired by marriage by Philip le Bel.

Line 66. I have not ventured to follow Cary's bold alteration of the text, who reads for Ponthieu and Normandy Poitou and Navarre. Under any explanation of the passage, however, the acquisition of Normandy was long anterior to that of Provence, and there must be an error in the text.

Line 67. Charles of Anjou, who having taken Conradino prisoner, cut off his head publicly in 1268, and became King of Naples. Saint Thomas of Aquinas was rumoured to have been poisoned by one of Charles's physicians while proceeding to the Council at Lyons.

Line 71. Charles of Valois, brother of Philip le Bel. Called in by Pope Boniface, and sent to settle the troubles in Florence, he intrigued with the party of the Neri, and, bribed by them, drove out the Bianchi faction, amongst whom Dante himself was driven from the city.

The other Charles, but now a prisoner,
 His daughter sells, and makes the bargain sure, 80
 As corsairs do with other slaves of war.

O Avarice, how canst thou bind us more,
 Since to thyself thou thus hast drawn my race
 On its own flesh to place such little store? 85

All evil past and future to efface,
 Into Alagna bursts the fleur-de-lis,
 And in his vicar, Christ doth there disgrace.

Again I see him shamed with mockery :
 I see renewed the vinegar and gall,
 Him slain 'twixt living thieves once more I see. 90

I see the cruel Pilate, with it all
 Unsatisfied, bear on with lawless heat
 His greedy sails into the temple hall.

O Lord, how long ere I can joy complete 95
 In seeing vengeance which Thou now dost hide,
 Thy anger o'er its secret brooding sweet?
 That which I spake of the one only bride
 Of the Holy Spirit, and which drew thee near
 In order that some gloss might be supplied, 100

Thus, amongst all of us is framed the prayer
 As long as day lasts, but when night draws on
 A strain all contrary in turns we bear.

Then speaks our burden of Pygmalion,
 Who traitor, robber, and a parricide
 Through his all-craving lust of gold had grown. 105

And greedy Midas' misery beside,
 Which followed on his gluttonous demand,
 And which 'tis fit all after time deride.

Then each recalleth foolish Achan's end,
 And how he stole the spoils, so that the ire 110
 Of Joshua seemeth here once more to rend.

Line 79. Charles II., King of Naples, eldest son of Charles of Anjou. He was taken prisoner in a naval action with the forces of Aragon, and after his release he married his daughter to a Marquis of Ferrara, in consideration of a heavy payment.

Line 86. Bishop Boniface VIII. was seized at Alagna by command of Philip le Bel, and kept as a prisoner in his palace for three days. The indignity so worked on his proud heart that he died three days afterwards.

Line 91. Alluding probably to the destruction of the Order of Templars in 1310.

Line 97. The spirit at last answers Dante's question as to why he alone recited the worthy praises of liberal deeds, saying that such was not the case.

Line 103. Son of a king of Tyre, who killed Sicheus, Dido's husband. *Æn.*, book i., l. 350.

Line 109. Stoned by order of Joshua for concealing the spoils. *Joshua*, ch. vii.

Then with her husband, we accuse Sapphire :
 We praise the kicks bestowed on Heliodorus :
 And with the shame rings all the mountain's spire
 Of Polinestor, who slew Polidorus. 115
 Tell us the taste of gold, for thou dost know,
 O Crassus ! lastly do we shout in chorus.
 So do we speak, one high the other low,
 As inclination spurareth us to say
 Now in more swift, and now in time more slow. 120
 But of the good, of which we speak by day,
 I spake not now alone, but near me then
 No other voice was raised with equal sway."
 From him we now had parted, and again
 We strove along the encumbered path to crawl, 125
 As much as to our power was granted ; when
 I felt as something tottering to its fall,
 The mountain tremble ; like one deathwards driven,
 The sudden froze my senses did appal.
 Certes, so strongly was not Delos riven 130
 Before Latona there her nest did hide,
 There to bring forth the twin-born eyes of Heaven.
 Then there began a cry on every side,
 Such that my master closer to me drew,
 Saying, " Doubt nothing while beside thy guide." 135
Gloria in excelsis Deo, cried the crew
 As I made out from those the nearest placed,
 From whence the meaning of the cry I knew.
 Immovable and doubtful did we rest,
 Like to the shepherds who first heard that strain, 140
 Till it was finisht, and the trembling ceased.
 Then we resumed our holy path again,
 Watching the shadows who on earth still lay
 While in their wonted mourning they complain. 145
 No ignorance ere felt so great a fray
 Created in me, with desire to know,
 If on that point my memory doth not stray,
 As then meseemèd in my thoughts to flow ;
 Nor through our haste to question did I dare,
 Nor by myself could I perceive the how, 150
 Timid and thoughtful, so I travelled there:

Line 118. Sent by Seleucus against Jerusalem to spoil the temple. On his crossing its threshold "there appeared unto them a horse, with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran fiercely, and smote at Heliodorus with his forefeet." 2 Maccabees iii. 25.

Line 115. King of Thrace, who to obtain his treasure slew the son whom Priam had entrusted to his care. Virgil, *Æn.*, book iii.

Line 132. The twin eyes of Heaven are Apollo and Diana, the sun and moon, twin children of Latona.

CANTO XXI.

Proceeding on their way, the poets are joined by the shadow of Statius, who explains to them that the earthquake on the mountain takes place whenever a spirit in Purgatory is released Heavenwards, when all the spirits unite in praising God. He tells the poets who he is, and describes his enthusiasm for Virgil, whom he then learns to his delight to be one of his companions.

THAT natural thirst which none can satisfy,
 Except the water, for the which of old
 The woman of Samaria made her cry,
 Within me travailed, haste my steps controlled
 Behind my guide o'er the strewed path to steer, 5
 The while that justest vengeance I controlled.
 And lo, as Luke doth write, that did appear
 Christ unto two, upon their way, and joined
 Already risen from the sepulchre,
 So did a shadow join us from behind, 10
 Regarding at his feet the prostrate press.
 Nor were we 'ware, till his saluting kind
 Addressed us, " Brothers mine, God give ye peace."
 Sudden we turned, and Virgil him addressed 15
 With salutation fitted to his grace,
 And then began, " Within the conclave blest,
 Place thee in peace the righteous majesty,
 Though endless exile be to me its 'hest."
 " How?" did he say. " Then wherefore do ye hie,
 If ye be shades, unworthy God's high spheres? 20
 And who has led ye on his steps so high?"
 My teacher: " If thou seest the signs he bears,
 Which on his brow the Angel did indite,
 Clearly thou'lt know him of the kingdom's heirs.
 But since the one who spinneth day and night, 25
 Has from her spindle not yet drawn the line,
 Which Clotho unto each allotteth right;
 His spirit, sister unto thine and mine,
 Thus soaring upwards, could not venture sole,
 Since in our fashion it cannot divine. 30
 Whence I was drawn from out the ample hole
 Of Hell to lead him, and so far will show
 As can conduct the virtue of my school.

Line 25. Lachesis, one of the Fates.

But tell us why such shocks, if thou dost know,
 The mountain gave just now, and why did cry . 35
 They all together to the waves below ?”
 So askt he, fitting in the needle’s eye
 Of my desire, that only with the hope
 Of satisfaction grew my thirst less dry. 40
 Began he : “ Nothing here beyond the cope
 Of order feels this mountain’s piety,
 And nothing haps beyond the accustomed scope.
 From every alteration here ’tis free :
 From what Heaven to and from itself doth owe,
 And from no other influence may it be, 45
 Because nor either rain, nor hail, nor snow,
 Nor dew, nor hoar frost e’er can fall adown
 Above that stair of three low steps I trow.
 Dense clouds, or lighter never here can wonne,
 Nor lightning, nor Thaumantia’s daughter bright. 50
 Which ever on the earth still shifteth on.
 Dry vapour cannot rise beyond the height
 Of the three entrance stairs of which I spake.
 Where plants his feet Saint Peter’s vicar bright. 55
 Lower perchance, it more or less can shake :
 But e’er by wind, within the earth concealed,
 How I know not, above it cannot quake.
 With us it trembles, when some spirit healed
 Is felt to rise, in act to soar above,
 With helpful greeting there such cry is pealed. 60
 Purification, will alone doth prove,
 For wholly free to change its company,
 The soul it seizeth, and assists with love.
 The will was ever there, but ’twas not free,
 For justice all divine, against desire, 65
 Proportioned to the sin the penalty.
 And I, who’ve lain within that sorrowful fire
 Five hundred years, and more, but now perceived
 The will released to a better home to aspire.
 Therefore thou felt’st the mountain all upheaved; 70
 And the pious spirits render praise to God,
 May He soon raise them from their pain relieved.”

Line 45. Venturi considers this to be light. I consider it may mean simply a pure heavenly influence, distinct from every elemental cause.

Line 50. Iris, the rainbow.

Line 61. The only restraining power to keep the soul in Purgatory is the will, which will not wish to depart until the penalty has been fully satisfactory to the sin.

Thus spake he, and as bliss the greater flowed
 From drinking, as the previous thirst was great,
 I cannot tell the joy which he bestowed. 75
 Then my wise leader: "Now I see the net
 Which holds ye here, and how from hence ye go,
 Wherefore it shakes, and ye rejoice thereat:
 Now who thou wert, be pleased that I know,
 And why so many ages thou wert laid 80
 Here, with an answer bind me to thee now."
 "In the time when worthy Titus, with the aid
 Of the highest King, avenged the holy wounds,
 Whence flowed the blood by Judas' lip betrayed;
 The name that longest lasts, and most redounds, 85
 Did I possess on earth," replied that spirit,
 "Though not yet now within the true Faith's bounds.
 Such sweetness did my vocal soul inherit
 That from Toulouse did Rome my presence claim,
 And deemed my brow the myrtle wreath to merit. 90
 Statius on earth still me the people name:
 I sang of Thebes, and then Achilles great,
 Although I fell beneath that second theme.
 The sparks were seeds to my poetic heat,
 Which warmed me ever from that flame divine, 95
 More than a thousand have been lit thereat.
 I speak of the Eneid, mother mine,
 And nurse it was in poetry sublime;
 Without it I had never writ a line. 100
 And only to have lived on earth what time
 Virgil was living, I would stay a year
 In this stern banishment, beyond my time."
 Virgil turned towards me when that smote his ear
 With look that in its silence, silence said;
 But all it wishes, will cannot forbear: 105
 For smiles and tears to diverse passion wed,
 Upon that passion follow so instinct,
 In open natures, will is quite outsped.
 I smiled then, as a man who takes a hint:
 On which the shade in silence watcht my eyes, 110
 Where the inward thought is shown the most distinct.
 "Ah to success conduct thy great emprise!"
 He said, "But tell me why thy face has shown
 Just now that rapid smile, like lightning rise?"

Line 89, Dante falls into the error of confounding the poet Statius with a Rhetorician of that name who was a native of Toulouse. The poet was a Neapolitan.

Line 98. Statius died when he had only commenced the "Achilleid."

Now am I straitened on each side: the one 115
 Commands my silence, and the one conjures
 That I should speak: I sigh, and I am known.
 "Speak," with a word my master reassures,
 " Fear not to speak out, and to tell him all
 Which his request so eagerly procures." 120
 Whence I: " Perchance on thee did marvel fall,
 O ancient spirit, when that smile did rise:
 I will, that more of wonder thee befall.
 This one, who guides on high my mortal eyes,
 Is Virgil, from the whom thou learn'dst of old 125
 To sing so high of men and deities.
 If other reason for my smile didst hold,
 Leave it as false, and this the true cause weet,
 The words which thou concerning him hast told."
 Already he bent down to embrace the feet 130
 Of my dear teacher: but he said, " Forbear,
 O brother: thou a shade, a shade dost greet."
 And he arising: " Now thou art aware
 Of the great love, which towards thee me doth warm,
 When I forget we are but empty air, 135
 Treating a shadow like a solid form."

CANTO XXII.

The poets ascend to the sixth circle, in which the sin of Gluttony is purged.
 As they mount the stairs, Statius informs Virgil that he had been a
 prodigal in his life, which sin, and not avarice, he had cleansed in the
 preceding circle. As they advance round the sixth cornice, they find a
 tree covered with odorous fruits, from which issues a voice, recording
 brilliant examples of Temperance.

ALREADY was the Angel left behind
 To the sixth circle who had shown our way,
 And from my brow another sin refined:
 And those, whose hope alone in justice lay,
 Had cried *Beati*, as we left their site, 5
 And *Sitio*, and therewith they closed their lay.
 And I, than in the other straits, more light,
 Without a trace of labour went above,
 Following those rapid spirits' upward flight:
 When Virgil Statius thus addressed: " The love 10
 By virtue kindled, be there apprehended
 Its outward flame, like passion aye will move.

Line 4. " *Beati qui esuriunt, et sitiunt justitiam.*" Matthew v. 6.

Whence from the hour that Juvenal descended
 Amongst us into Limbo, Hell's first court,
 And thy affection unto me extended, 15
 Towards thee my good will was of such a sort,
 As ne'er before to one unseen did tend,
 So that thy presence makes this staircase short.
 Now say, and as a friend thy pardon lend,
 If too great freedom loosens now my rein, 20
 And henceforth parley with me as a friend :
 How wert thou able in thy breast to gain
 A place for avarice, 'mid so great a mine
 Of intellect, thy zeal had stored amain ?"
 These words of Virgil, Statius did incline 25
 Somewhat to laughter first, then he replied :
 " All thou hast said, of love is dearest sign.
 Oftentimes truly things appear outside
 Wrongly creating cause for doubt to be,
 Since something from us the true causes hide. 30
 Thy question shows that thou believest me
 Sunk in the other life, in the vice of greed,
 Haply through reason of the place I flee.
 Too far from avarice, thou must now aread,
 That I was severed, and to that excess 35
 Thousands of moons have been awarded meed,
 And were it not that when I read that place,
 My zeal was quickened, in the which thou'st told,
 As 'twere in anger with the human race,
 To what lengths, O thou cursed thirst of gold, 40
 Dost thou not rule the mortal appetite?
 Whirling in Hell, the wretched weights I'd rolled
 Then I perceived that with too wild a flight
 The hands can scatter wealth, and I repented
 Of that, as of all other evil plight. 45
 How many with shorn hair will rise demented,
 Who from repenting, even at the last,
 Their ignorance that this was crime, prevented !
 And know, that whatsoever sin is placed
 Directly opposite to some other sin, 50
 Doth, with it here, its green luxuriance waste.
 If 'mongst the people therefore I have been
 Who wail their avarice, my soul to clear,
 Through the opposite vice that sentence did I win."

Line 40.

" Quid non mortalia pectora cogis
 Auri sacra fames ?"

Æn., lib. iii., v. 57.

Lines 42 and 46. See Canto VII. of the " Inferno."

"Now when thou sang'st the cruel strife of fear 55
 Waged by Jocasta's twin-born sons of woe,"
 The poet of the rural song spake here,
 "By that which Clio in thy stream doth show,
 It seemeth not that thee, faith yet had won,
 Without which good deeds are but dross below. 60
 If it be thus, what candles or what sun
 Lightened thy darkness so, that thou didst steer
 Thy sails direct behind the Fisherman?"
 And he to him: "Thou first my course didst veer 65
 To quaff the water on Parnassus' height,
 And Godwards thou my darkness first didst clear.
 Thou wert in sooth like one who goes by night
 Burning a light behind, for him in vain,
 Yet guideth all who follow him aright:
 There, where thou saidst, the age is born again, 70
 Justice returneth, and the primal day,
 And from the heavens descends a novel strain.
 Poet was I, and Christian, both through thee.
 And this I somewhat will explain in brief,
 That what I've drawn, thou mayst the clearer see. 75
 Already was the world all pregnant rife
 With the true Faith, which had been sown abroad
 By the new heralds of Eternal Life:
 And what thy verse, quoted above, foreshowed, 80
 With the new Preacher's truths agreed so near,
 That I was drawn to seek their haunts: so good
 And holy then to me did they appear,
 That when Domitian's tyranny began,
 Their woes were not without my tribute tear:
 And whilst on earth my allotted course I ran, 85
 Their influence, and their customs pure from blame,
 Made me despise all other sects in man.
 And ere my verse the Greeks had led to the stream
 Of Thebes, I had obtained baptismal rite,
 A secret Christian I through fear became. 90
 For long conforming to each Pagan rite:
 In the fourth circle, this my lukewarm crime
 More than four centuries prolonged my flight.

Line 56. Eteocles and Polinices, the heroes of the "Thebaid." See note to Canto XXVI. of the "Inferno."

Line 70. "Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna,
 Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto."
 Eccl. iv. 6.

Thou then, who liftedst in my early prime
 The veil, which all of good from me concealed, 95
 Whilst we have still such distance left to climb,
 Say, where is now our Terence famed of eld,
 Cecilius, Plautus, Varro, shouldst thou know
 If they are damned, say in what circle held."
 "These, Perseus, and myself, and others too," 100
 Answered my leader, "with that Greek sojourn
 Whom, more than all, the Muses nursed below,
 In the first circle of the prison lorn.
 We often parley of that mountain lone,
 On which our nurses ever make their bourne. 105
 Euripides is ours, Anacreon,
 Simonides, and Agathon, and more
 Greeks, on whose foreheads twines the laurel crown.
 There of thy people are beheld galore,
 Antigone, Deiphile, Argia, 110
 And sad Ismene, as she was of yore.
 She there is seen who pointed out Langia :
 There is 'Tiresias' daughter, Thetis too,
 And with her sisters, there Deidamia."
 Each of the poets now to silence grew, 115
 Once more intent around the hill to gaze,
 Since we had sallied from the stairs anew :
 The first four handmaids of the day gave place,
 And at the Pole the fifth was standing now,
 Directing upwards still the ardent blaze, 120
 When spake my leader : "Still the brink I trow
 In wandering we must keep upon our right,
 Circling the mount as we were wont to do."
 So custom was our guide around the height ;
 And with less doubt the path we followed on, 125
 From the consent of that most worthy sprite.
 They went before me, and I all alone
 Behind them, listened to their parlance meet,
 Which taught my intellect the poet's tone.

Line 110. The characters introduced in Statius' poems.

Line 112. Hypsipyle, who pointed out the river Langia to the fainting army of Adrastus. The story is again alluded to in Canto XXVI.

Line 113. Tiresias' daughter, Manto, already introduced in the eighth circle of Hell as a sorceress, a solitary piece of forgetfulness on Dante's part, though he may have fancied that Tiresias had another daughter, named Daphne, who it appears was identical with Manto herself.

Line 119. It was now the fifth hour. Dante has already called the hours the handmaids of the sun in Canto XII. of the "Purgatory."

But to their arguments a pause they set, 130
 Finding a tree in the centre of the way
 With apples in their odour fair and sweet.
 And as a fir-tree tapereth away
 Upwards from branch to branch, this tapered down
 That none should upwards there a passage fray. 135
 Beside our pathway from the lofty stone
 That hemmed us in there fell a liquor clear,
 That scattered o'er the leaves its sparkling crown.
 The poets twain unto the tree drew near :
 And from amongst the leaves a voice did cry, 140
 " To touch the food within your reach beware."
 Then said, " Maria thought far more to try
 And make the wedding honoured and complete,
 Than of herself, who prays for you on high,
 The ancient Roman ladies, as 'twas meet, 145
 Drank only water, and all learning's grade
 Daniel acquired, and spurned the royal meat.
 As fair as gold the first age was arrayed :
 Hunger made savoury the acorns rude,
 And thirst a nectar every rivulet made. 150
 Honey and locusts were the simple food
 On which the Baptist in the desert lived ;
 From whence to him such glory has ensued,
 As through the Gospel has to you arrived."

Line 142. Mary's speech at the wedding feast in Cana has already been quoted as an example of charity.

Line 146. Daniel, ch. i., vv. 11, 12, 16, 17.

CANTO XXIII.

As the poets advance round the cornice, they are overtaken by a troop of spirits utterly emaciated in appearance. Amongst them Dante recognises an old friend, Forese, by his voice. The spirit tells him that his rapid advance through Purgatory is due to the prayers of his virtuous wife, and from her he takes occasion to inveigh against the general shamelessness of the women of Florence.

THE whilst my eyes upon that verdant leaf
 I so had fixed, as they are wont to stare,
 Who watching little birds waste life so brief,
 My more than father said, " O son forbear, 5
 Onwards henceforth, the time to us imposed,
 Unto more useful purpose we must share."

I turned my face, and with swift footstep closed
 On my wise comrades, on whose parlance hung
 My journey now no trace of toil imposed :
 When lo was heard a weeping and a song, 10
Labia mea Domine, so clear
 That from it both delight and sorrow sprung.
 "O my sweet father, what is this I hear?"
 Thus I began : and he, "The shades who go
 Haply the debt of duty paying here." 15
 In such a guise as thoughtful pilgrims do,
 Meeting with unknown people on their route,
 Who turn towards them, nor their speed forego,
 So following on our backs with swifter foot
 Coming and passing by on us there gazed 20
 The crowd of spirits silent and devout.
 The eyes of each were hollowed deep and glazed,
 Pale in the face, and worn so utterly,
 That through the skin the bones were clearly traced.
 I do not think, to such extremity 25
 Was withered and reduced Erisiton,
 Through hunger when it reached its agony.
 Thinking, I said in self-communion,
 "The people lo ! who lost Jerusalem
 When Mary with her beak preyed on her son." 30
 Their eyes appeared like rings without the gem
 Who in the face of men reads O, M, O,
 Would very clearly there have seen the M.
 Who could believe an apple's scent could so
 Work upon spirits, and create desire, 35
 Or that of water, knowing not the how ?
 What thus could famish them, my thoughts inquire,
 The reason not yet manifest, which bred
 Their leanness and their rind than fish-scales drier :
 When lo from the deep cavern of his head 40
 A shadow turned his eyes on me to gaze,
 "What grace is given me?" then he loudly said.

Line 11. O Lord, open thou my lips. Ps. li. 15.

Line 26. Erisiethon, having cut down an oak consecrated to Ceres, was doomed by the goddess to suffer an unappeasable hunger, which compelled him, after he had consumed all his substance, to eat his own frame and die. Ovid, 8 Metamorp. Kallimachos. Hymn to Demeter.

Line 30. Josephus relates the story of the woman who ate her own son, during the celebrated siege of Jerusalem by Titus.

Line 32. The conceit is that *Omo*, a man, is written in his face; the temples and the sides of the face, with the nose, making the *M*, the eyes being the *O*'s. Owing to emaciation the letter *M*, formed by the bones of the face, was clearly visible in these shadows.

I never should have known him by his face,
 But in his voice there was laid bare to me,
 Of what his aspect had lost every trace. 45
 That spark sufficed to kindle memory
 Of his changed countenance, within my mind,
 My friend Forese's face once more I see.
 "Ah, do not doubt thee, for this withered rind,
 The skin thus all discoloured," did he pray, 50
 "Nor for the want of flesh which thou dost find.
 But of thyself speak truth; and who are they
 The pair of spirits who thy footsteps guide:
 Unless thou speak to me, thou must not stay."
 "Thy face, which at thy death I wept beside, 55
 Now makes me weep again with no less grief,
 Seeing it so distorted," I replied.
 "But say, for God's sake, what thus strips your leaf:
 Make me not speak, while rapt in wonder keen,
 For ill he speaks who on aught else is lief." 60
 And he to me: "From the eternal reign
 Falls virtue on the water and the plant
 Behind us, through the which I grow so lean.
 And all this people, who with wailing chaunt,
 From being sunk in boundless gluttony, 65
 With thirst and hunger here that weakness daunt.
 To drink and eat inflames this yearning high,
 The odour of the apple and the spray,
 Which showereth down upon the greenery.
 Nor even one revolution of this way 70
 Completing, grows our penalty less rude,
 I say our pain, solace I ought to say.
 The tree we seek with the same will embued,
 Which made Christ gladly upon Eli pray,
 What time He freed us wholly with His blood." 75
 And I to him: "Forese, from the day
 In which thou left'st the world for a better dower,
 Till now five years have not yet past away.
 If there was finished first in thee the power 80
 To sin, ere God's love to acquire again,
 Of happy grief there came to thee the hour,
 How to this height didst thou so soon attain?
 I thought I should have found thee far below,
 Where for their time life lost the spirits remain."

Line 48. Forese, apparently known only as the brother of Piccarda, introduced in the opening sphere of Paradise, Canto III.

Line 79. If thou hadst lost the power of sinning further, before thou embracedst repentance, how hast thou soon left the Ante-Purgatory?

And he to me : " So soon has made me know 85
 The draft of martyrdom's most bitter sweet,
 My Nella, with her tears that ever flow.
 The sighs and prayers she ever doth repeat,
 From that delaying hill my steps have drawn,
 And from the other circles freed my feet. 90
 More dear, and more beloved by God, is known
 My widowed wife, whom I so loved erewhile,
 As in good actions is she more alone :
 For the Barbagia of Sardinia's isle 95
 In female shamelessness is not so bold,
 As the Barbagia which I left erewhile.
 O brother dear, what wouldst have further told ?
 A future time already do I see,
 In which the present day will not be old,
 When in the Church they'll publish a decree 100
 Against the insolent lady Florentines,
 Not to expose their breasts for all to see.
 When were Barbarians seen or Saracens,
 To whom was needed clothing to enforce,
 Or spiritual, or other disciplines ? 105
 But if the shameless ones could see the course
 Which Heaven prepareth for them speedily,
 Now would begin their howlings of remorse.
 For if I'm not deceived in what I see,
 They will have sorrow ere his cheeks have hair 110
 Who now is soothed by nurse's lullaby.
 Brother, no more conceal thee from my prayer :
 See, not myself alone, but all my kind
 With wonder see thee bar the sunshine there."
 Whence I to him : " If thou recall'st to mind 115
 What thou to me and I to thee have done,
 On earth, the memory thou wilt grievous find.
 There turned me from that life of sin, this one
 Who goes before me, some few eves ago,
 When shone at full his sister ;" and the sun 120
 I showed ; " He through the deeps of night below
 Hath led my steps, amongst the dead in truth,
 With this true living flesh with which I go.
 Hence hath he drawn me upwards by his ruth
 To issue, and to travel round this hill 125
 Which you, with virtue, wreckt on earth, endueth.

Line 94. A mountainous tract of savage country, where the inhabitants were supposed to be naked. Hence Forese applies the name to Florence.

He promises to be my comrade still,
 Until I reach where Beatrix will be,
 There I must stay without him, Heaven doth will.
 Virgil is he, who this has told to me :” 180
 And pointed to him : “ the other is the shade,
 For whom just now there trembled suddenly
 Your kingdom, his deliverance to aid.”

CANTO XXIV.

Forese names some of the other spirits, and amongst the rest Buonagiunta of Lucca, who afterwards converses with Dante. When the troop of shadows depart, Forese still lingers with Dante, and foretells to him the death of his political enemy, Corso Donati. Forese then follows his companions, and the poets advance to a second tree, from which issues a voice relating examples of intemperance. After passing the tree, an Angel points out to them the ascent to the next cornice.

Nor motion speech nor speech our motion made
 More slow, but speaking onwards still we strain,
 Like to a ship by favouring winds conveyed.
 The shadows who seem dead once o'er again, 5
 In their deep-sunken eyes fresh marvel wake,
 Aware that I was there a living man.
 And I, continuing my parley, spake :
 “ His spirit haply presses on more slow
 Than it would do, were't not for Virgil's sake.
 But tell me where's Piccarda, shouldst thou know : 10
 Say, if I see here people of renown,
 Amongst this crowd, who gaze upon me so.”
 “ My sister, who 'twixt fair and good, unknown
 The which she was the most, already glad 15
 On high Olympus triumphs in her crown.”
 Thus spake he first, and then : “ 'Tis not forbade
 Each one to name, since here has diet spare
 All former semblance taken from each shade.”
 With finger pointing, “ Buonagiunta's here.
 Buonagiunta da Lucca ; and that face 20
 Thinner than all the rest beyond him there,
 Possessed the holy Church in his embrace :
 He came from Tours ; and fasting doth atone
 The wine-stept eels of famed Bolsena's race.”

Line 19. Buonagiunta of Lucca was a poet of the age just preceding Dante.

Line 22. Simon of Tours, who became Pope with the title of Martin IV. in 1281. He is said to have died of obesity from eating too many eels, and is in consequence represented as the thinnest in Purgatory.

He showed me many others, one by one ; 25
 As they were named, they all seemed satisfied,
 Not once I saw dissatisfaction shown.
 I saw on air their teeth by hunger plied,
 Ubaldin dalla Pila, and Boniface,
 Whose crosier luxury to such crowds supplied. 30
 I saw the marquis, who spent such a space
 Of old in drink at Forli, when less dry,
 Though even there his thirst could never cease.
 But like a gazer, whom some one doth spy
 Chiefly, my friend of Lucca did I claim, 35
 Who seemed to see me with familiar eye.
 He made a murmur, and Gentucca's name,
 I know not how, I heard within his throat,
 Where most consumeth him stern justice' flame.
 "O soul, whose looks such eagerness denote 40
 To speak with me, that I may understand
 Speak clear, with parley to content us both."
 "A maid is born, who yet the woman's band
 Wears not," he said, "will make my city dear
 To thee, although men now may reprimand. 45
 With this my prophecy right onwards steer :
 If through my murmuring thou dost error prove,
 Coming events will make my meaning clear.
 But tell me, if I see the one who wove
 The recent rhymes that with these words begin : 50
 Ye ladies who possess the lore of love."
 And I to him : "I am a man who when
 Love breatheth, all its symptoms noteth clear :
 I show to others, what it says within."
 "O brother, now I see," said he, "the bar 55
 Which kept Guitton, the notary, and me
 So far from your new style, so sweet to hear.
 How your plumed pinions clung, I clearly see,
 Close to the arch dictator in his flight,
 Which certes with our own might never be. 60

Line 30. Boniface, Archbishop of Ravenna, famed for his sumptuous living.

Line 31. The Marquis de' Rigogliosi, who being accused of always drinking, answered that he had always thirst.

Line 37. A young lady of Lucca, of whom Dante is stated to have been enamoured in 1301, after his exile from Florence.

Line 51. The first line in one of the Canzoni in Dante's "Vita Nuova."

Line 56. Guittone d'Arezzo and Jacopo du Lentino, called the notary, were amongst the earliest poets who wrote in the vernacular.

Who would go further, hoping to delight,
 Sees not the gulf which separates our style."
 Silent he grew, as one contented quite.
 As troops of birds who winter towards the Nile
 At turns fly onwards in a serried square, 65
 Then wing with greater haste, and go in file,
 So all the people who were with us there,
 Turning their faces round, their speed increased,
 Active through leanness, and the will they share.
 And like one wearied with his trotting beast 70
 Lets his companions wend, and walketh slower,
 Until the panting of his beast has ceased:
 Forese so, his comrades to pass o'er,
 Permitting, asked, as with me he did bide,
 "How long ere I shall see thee here once more?" 75
 "How long my life, I know not," I replied,
 "But my return can never be so soon
 But that my will will first have crost the tide,
 Because the place in which my lot is thrown 80
 From day to day destroyeth its fair fame,
 And seems to headlong ruin rushing down."
 "Now go," he said, "for he who's most to blame
 Behind a horse's tail I see him drawn,
 Towards the vale, where never ceaseth shame.
 The beast at every stride speeds faster on, 85
 Ever increasing, till it shakes him free,
 And leaves the body horribly undone.
 Yon wheels have not to turn for long," and he
 Raised to the sky his eyes, "ere will be clear
 That which I cannot more declare to thee. 90
 Now thou mayst stay, for me the time is dear
 In this domain, and I too much have lost
 Coming so slowly coupled with thee here."
 As issues at a gallop from the host
 An eager knight at times, and forwards bounds 95
 To gain the honour of the earliest joust,
 So did he start from us, with mightier bounds:
 And I remained in travel with the pair
 Who were such marshals of our earthly rounds,
 And when before us he had gone so far, 100
 That my eyes grew as dim in his pursuit,
 As was my mind his prophecy to bare,

Line 82. Corso Donati, the leader of the Guelph faction, fell from his horse while endeavouring to escape from the fury of the populace in 1308, was dragged by the stirrup, and died as described in the poem.

Appeared the living branches, thick with fruit
 Of another tree, which not far distant stands.
 Then, when towards it first was turned our route, 163
 People I saw beneath it raise their hands,
 And cry I know not what towards the leaves,
 Like eager children, making vain demands,
 To whom the one besought no answer gives :
 But to increase their fervent longing, rears 110
 On high the bait, and all unhidden leaves,
 Then, as if undeceived, each onwards steers :
 And we to the great tree advanced anon,
 The which denies so many prayers, and tears.
 " Beware of touching me, but pass ye on : 115
 The tree, whose fruit Eve tasted, ye will view
 Yet higher, though this graft from it is grown."
 So 'mid the branches spake, I know not who ;
 Whence Virgil, Statius, and myself past close
 On that side where the mountain lifts : anew 120
 It spake to us : " Recall to memory those
 Cursed sons of cloud, who their debauch scarce ended,
 Fought against Theseus, double-breasted foes :
 And those soft Hebrews, who their draft extended 125
 So long, that Gideon had but comrades few
 What time 'gainst Madian he the hills descended."
 Creeping along the cliff, we issued through,
 Hearing those tales of sinful gluttony,
 Followed for ever by its gains untrue. 130
 Then on the path united, once more free,
 A thousand steps and more we travelled on,
 In contemplation each, and silently.
 " What walk ye thinking of, ye three alone ?"
 A voice spake suddenly, on which with dread 135
 I started like a frightened colt half grown.
 To see what it might be I raised my head,
 And never yet in furnace were there seen
 Metals or glass so shining, and so red,
 As one I saw, who told us : " If ye mean 140
 To travel upwards, ye must turn this way ;
 Hence go they all, who seek for peace serene."
 His aspect had my vision ta'en away,
 Therefore behind my teacher's track withdrawn,
 I went like one who listening finds his way.

Line 122. The Centaurs. Ovid, *Metam.* 12.

Line 124. Judges, ch. vii., vv. 5, 6, and 7.

And like the breezy herald of the dawn 145
 Moveth the air of May and breatheth sweet,
 All pregnant of the flowers and grassy lawn,
 So on my brow I felt a soft breeze beat,
 And clearly heard the moving of a wing
 Scenting the soft air with ambrosia sweet : 150
 And words I gathered : "Blest in whom doth spring
 Such grace, that in their breasts the love of food
 Cannot enkindle too great hankering,
 Who ever hunger after heavenly good."

CANTO XXV.

As they ascend the stair, Dante expresses his wonder at the leanness of the spirits in the last circle, who as spirits stand in no need of nourishment. On Virgil's request, Statius, to explain his difficulty, describes the generation of the human body, its junction with the soul, and the nature of the latter after its passage to another world. They then reach the seventh cornice, where those who have been guilty of incontinence are purified in fire. The spirits in the fire record celebrated examples of Chastity.

Now without pause 'twas time to mount the height,
 Since the meridian circle of the day
 Filled Taurus' star, the Scorpion's that of night.
 So, as an eager man, who cannot stay,
 But presses on his road, whate'er appears, 5
 When any purpose pricks him on his way ;
 So entered we upon the narrow stairs,
 The one before the other hurrying on,
 Since climbers there, the narrow strait unpairs.
 And like a young stork lifts its pinion 10
 With wish to fly, but cannot yet attain
 To rise above its nest, and falleth down ;
 So rose in me the wish, and fell again,
 To question, coming even to the deed
 Of one who maketh preparation fain 15
 To speak. He did not slacken his swift speed,
 My own sweet father, but he said : "Shoot on
 The shaft of speech thou'st drawn unto the head."
 My lips I opened then, more certain grown,
 And thus began : "How are they made so meagre, 20
 There, where no need of nourishment is known ?"

Line 2. It was two o'clock in the afternoon ; the constellation of Taurus, the next to that of Aries, in which was the sun, being then in the meridian, and consequently that of the Scorpion, which was opposite to Taurus, was in the meridian of the night.

"If thou wouldst call to mind how Meleager
 Consumed with the consuming of a brand,
 This would not thus," he said, "thy thoughts beleaguer.
 And if thou'dst think how in a mirror scanned ²⁵
 Your image trembles to your trembling form,
 This would not be so hard to understand.
 But inwardly thy wish complete to charm,
 Statius is here : and him I now beseech
 To heal the wounds of doubt that work thee harm." ³⁰
 "If the eternal punishment I teach,"
 Statius replied, "whilst thou art by me there,
 Forgive that I can nought refuse thy speech."
 Then he began : "If in thy mind with care ³⁵
 My words receiving, thou dost guard my son,
 Unto thy question they will light declare.
 The perfect blood that is not meant to run
 Along the thirsty veins, but still remains
 Like food superfluous when the feast is done,
 Within the heart informing virtue gains ⁴⁰
 For every human member, thence doth pass
 To make them afterwards, through its own veins.
 Again prepared, to lower part it draws,
 Which not to name were best, and germs there, ⁴⁵
 Upon another's blood, in natural vase.
 The one and the other mix together there
 Through excellence of the place from whence they're born,
 The one disposed to act, and one to bear.
 There joined, begins their operating turn ; ⁵⁰
 Coagulating first, it vivifies
 That which by its own matter has been born.
 Endued with life, the active virtue lies,
 As of a plant, thus different indeed
 That one has reached the bourne, one onward hies : ⁵⁵
 Still working, now it moves and taketh heed
 As the sea fungus ; and it there doth learn
 To organise the powers of which 'tis seed.

Line 37. The system of generation here described is stated to be that of Averroes. The generating germ is formed from perfect blood in the man's heart, passes in that shape through vessels of its own to the lower organs (l. 43), and passing into the womb joins the perfect blood of the female, which has gone through the same process (l. 45).

Line 47. The heart, in which the perfect blood gained informing virtue.

Line 52. The fetus goes through the different stages of vegetable, zoophytic, and animal life, and when the brain is completely formed God breathes into it a soul.

Now groweth pliant son, and now doth yearn
 The virtue of the generating heart,
 In which doth Nature every member turn. 60
 But how from animal a man doth start
 Thou seest not yet, and on this point was blind
 One wiser than thyself in physical art,
 Who in his doctrine held to be disjoined
 The intellect receptive from the soul, 65
 Because he saw for it no place assigned.
 Open thy breast to the truth I now unroll,
 And know the instant that articulate
 The brain in the fetus is evolved a whole, 70
 The Primal Cause with gladness turns to it,
 Over such masterpiece of Nature's art,
 And breathes a spirit new, with power replete,
 Which, what it active finds, it doth impart
 To its own substance, and creates a soul,
 Which lives and feels, reflective and apart. 75
 The wonder my word causes to control,
 Think of the sun's heat, which createth wine
 Joined to the liquor from a vine-tree's bole.
 When Lachesis has no more flax to spin,
 The soul from flesh is freed, and of its fruit 80
 Bears with it both the human and divine :
 The other powers are altogether mute,
 Memory, Intelligence, and Will remain,
 In act far more than e'er before acute.
 Without a pause, self-moving it doth gain 85
 One of the shores, miraculously sent :
 There knowledge of its path doth first attain.
 Soon as within the ambient air 'tis pent,
 Informing virtue round about it rays,
 As if with human limbs, its tenement. 90
 And as the air, when full of watery haze,
 By the sun's light, which is on it reflected,
 Groweth adorned with vari-coloured rays,
 To the surrounding air hath here selected
 That form which in effect the soul doth claim 95
 With its own seal, which is on it reflected.
 And as the fire aye follows on the flame,
 There, where is shifted now the spirit's site,
 Follows upon that spirit the new frame.

Line 63. Averroes, who is stated to have asserted that there was only a common intellect for the whole human race, as he found no special organ assigned to it.

Thence afterwards it gains appearance, high 100
 A shadow, and its organs, hence the while
 Each one attaineth, even to the sight.
 Hence is it that we speak, and hence we smile :
 Hence is it that we break to tears and sighs,
 Which on the mountain thou hast seen erewhile. 105
 According as the spirit's yearnings rise,
 And its affections, so is shaped the shade,
 And this explains the cause of thy surprise."
 There, where the latest torture is essayed,
 We now had reached, and turning to the right, 110
 To other care attention now we paid.
 There the cliff hurleth outwards flamings bright ;
 And upwards from the ledge a blast doth blow
 Which beats it back, and clears a narrow site.
 On that closed pathway one is forced to go 115
 Singly, and I on this side feared the fire,
 On that I feared lest I should fall below.
 My leader spake : " Along this narrow pier
 A tight curb must be placed upon the eyes,
 For easily might err the footsteps here." 120
 In the bosom of the heat I heard arise
Summe Deus clementiæ, clearly sung,
 Which made me no less eagerly devise.
 And through the flame I saw the spirits throng : 125
 On which I looked both at my steps and them,
 My sight dividing as I went along.
 When they had closed their holy requiem,
 All, *Virum non cognosco*, cried aloud ;
 Then with low voices recommenced the hymn.
 Finished once more, they shouted, " To the wood 130
 Diana ran, and forth Elice chased,
 Who'd tasted Venus' poison in her blood."
 Then to their song they turned : and then of chaste
 Ladies and married pairs the examples cried,
 Who virtue and the law of marriage graced. 135
 And in this fashion I believe they bide,
 For all the time that they the burning feel :
 With such a nourishment and zeal applied,
 Closes alone that wound, the last to heal.

Line 122. "*Summe Deus clementiæ*." The beginning of the hymn sung on Sunday matins, as it stood in the ancient breviary.

Line 128. Luke i. 34. How can this be, seeing that I know not a man ?

Line 131. The nymph Calisto, driven away by Diana for unchastity, and changed finally into the constellation Elice, or Greater Bear. Ovid's *Metam.* ii.

Line 139. The last of the seven P's, healed on the last cornice.

CANTO XXVI.

While the poets advance along the brink of the cornice, the spirits are astonished at the shadow cast on the flames by Dante's body. Ere he can satisfy their curiosity, another troop of spirits advance in the fire from the opposite direction, and the two bands embrace and pass on their way, reprobating their earthly sins. On their departure Dante tells the shadows beside him that he is still alive, and he is then addressed by Guido Guinicelli, the Italian poet, who afterwards points out to him Arnault Daniel, the Provençal.

THE whilst that thus along the brink we wend
 In single file, my master often said,
 "See that my cautions to thy profit tend."
 On my right shoulder the sun's rays were sped 5
 The which already filling all the west
 On the sky's azure a white splendour shed :
 And I, upon the flame, with shadow cast
 A ruddier hue, and on that sign alone
 I saw the spirits ponder as they past. 10
 This was the reason which then led them on
 To speak of me, and they began to say,
 "He seems not a fictitious frame to own."
 Towards me, to grow as certain as they may,
 They bent them then, regarding evermo' 15
 Never to sally from the burning way.
 "O thou who goest, not because more slow,
 Perchance behind yon pair, in reverent heed,
 Answer me, burnt in thirst and fiery glow.
 Nor I alone for thy reply have need, 20
 These with me, for it are more thirsting all,
 Than for cold water Ind or Ethiop's seed.
 Tell us, how is't that thou dost make a wall
 Unto the sun, as if not yet hadst thou
 Down fallen in the net which Death doth haul." 25
 So one of these spake to me, and ere now
 I had declared myself, had I not been
 Intent on something new the place did show.
 For midway through the burning path I ween
 A troop, with faces coming towards them, hied,
 Which made me gaze once more, suspended keen. 30
 There saw I hurrying forward from each side
 The shadows kiss each other tenderly,
 Nor pause for stay, with brief feast satisfied.

Just so, within their dusky company,
 One with the other do the ants embrace, 35
 Perchance their fortune or their road to spy.
 As soon as these their friendly greeting cease,
 Before a single forward step can follow,
 Each louder than the rest to cry doth press :
 The new troop shouteth, "Sodom and Gomorrah ;" 40
 The other, "In the cow Pasiphæ went
 To bring the bull unto her lustful horror."
 Then like two flocks of cranes, in passage bent
 Towards the Riphcean hills and Lybian sands,
 To fly the frost, or the sun's heat intent ; 45
 So go in opposite ways the spirit bands,
 And turn with weeping to their former strain,
 And to the cries which most their zeal demands :
 And as before there prest by me again
 The selfsame spirits, who had me besought, 50
 With faces all intent to hear me fain.
 I, who had twice beheld their yearning thought,
 Began : "O spirits, certain at some time
 To a state of peace, all perfect, to be brought,
 Neither in tender youth nor in their prime 55
 Remain my limbs on earth, but borne with me,
 With their own blood and sinews from yon clime :
 Upwards I go, no longer blind to be,
 A lady there acquires for me this grace,
 Whence through your world I bear mortality. 60
 But that more speedily ye may embrace
 Your chief desire, and reach Heaven's Infinite
 Replete with love, that whirls through widest space,
 Tell me, that I may yet their story write,
 Who are ye, and who go in yonder crowd, 65
 That straight behind your backs, speeds opposite?"
 Not otherwise his wonder is avowed
 In silent gazing by the mountaineer
 All wild amid the city's turmoil loud,
 Than grew each shadow in his semblance here : 70
 But when from that surprise once free again,
 The which in high hearts soon doth disappear ;
 "Ah happy thou, who thus through our domain,"
 Began the one who first had questioned me,
 "Experience freight'st, a better life to gain. 75

Line 62. The Empyrean, or outermost sphere of Heaven.

The troop, who going from us thou dost see,
 Did Cæsar's sin, who in his triumph day
 Heard 'gainst himself Queen cried in infamy.
 Therefore they shout out Sodom on their way,
 As thou now heardest in their own despite, 80
 And help the burning with their shame away.
 Our own offence has been hermaphrodite :
 But since the human laws we did not hold,
 Following, like animals, our appetite,
 In blame of our own selves, by us is told 85
 What times we onwards start, the name of her
 Who worked her bestial end, in bestial fold.
 Thou know'st our acts, and how we guilty were :
 If haply thou desirest to know our names,
 Time would be wanting, nor am I aware. 90
 Of me I'll tell thee what thy longing claims :
 I'm Guinicelli, since without delay
 Repentant, I already purge my shames."
 As following on Lycurgus' sorrowful day,
 The sons, their mother found once more, embraced, 95
 So I, though not so far did I give way,
 When I heard name himself my father graced,
 Father to me, and to my betters, who
 Have rhymes of love and fancy ever traced :
 And without speech or hearing, on I drew 100
 In thought awhile, aye gazing on him still,
 Nor dared approach to him that furnace through.
 After of gazing I had ta'en my fill
 Myself in service offered I to him,
 With oath that gains belief from other's will. 105
 And he to me : "Such sign of love dost limn
 In what I hear, towards me, and so clear,
 That Lethe cannot take away, nor dim.

Line 77. A scandal related against the youth of Julius Cæsar, when in the Court of Nicomedes, King of Bithynia. Suetonius gives the pasquinade indulged in by his soldiers, at Cæsar's triumph, which is alluded to in the text—Cæsar nunc triumphat, qui subegit Gallias. Nicomedes non triumphat, qui subegit Cæsarem.

Line 92. Guido Guinicelli, already mentioned in Canto XI. as the elder Guido, so famous in his time, yet superseded by the younger Guido, Dante's friend Cavalcanti. A timely repentance saved him from all delay in the Ante-Purgatory.

Line 94. The story of Hypsipyle, already alluded to in Canto XXII. When she was about to be put to death by Lycurgus, because his son, her infant charge, was killed by a serpent, while she showed the stream Langia to the Argive army, she was recognised by her sons Thoas and Euneus, and Dante compares their joy on recovering her after her pardon to his own delight at recognising his father in art.

But if just now thy words the truth did swear,
 Tell me the reason why thou thus dost show 110
 In speech and looks that thou dost hold me dear ?”
 And I to him : “ Your verses dulcet flow
 The which as far as modern style can reach,
 Will make their very ink beloved below.”
 “ O brother,” said he, “ he whom I impeach,” 115
 And towards a shade in front his hand did move,
 “ Was better workman in his native speech :
 In prose romances and in lays of love
 All he surpast, whate’er the fools may say
 Who think Limoges’ poet stands above : 120
 To clamour more than truth men turn away,
 And hence is formed opinion ’mongst mankind,
 Till art and reason at the last find way.
 Thus many elders raised the shouting blind
 Yielding Guittone guerdon over all, 125
 Till truth has placed him many men behind.
 Now if to thee such privilege befall,
 That thou mayst enter in the Colledge cloister,
 In which is Christ the Abbot of the Hall,
 Say to him there for me one Pater Noster, 130
 As far as spirits in this world have need,
 Where unto us the power to sin is lost here.”
 Haply to leave his place beside me, freed
 To the spirit near, he vanished in the fire,
 As in the wave a fish to the depths doth speed. 135
 To him just shown to me I turned me nigher,
 And said that to his name a gracious place
 Had been made ready in my heart’s desire.
 He then began to speak with liberal grace :
 “ So much doth charm me this your courtesy, 140
 I would not, if I could, conceal my trace.
 I am Arnould, with tears and minstrelsy
 I go, in sorrow see the folly past,
 And joyous see the bliss I hope will be.
 Now I adjure thee, by the virtue vast 145
 Which guides ye to the summit of the spire,
 Remember on my grief your aid to cast.”
 Then hid himself in the refining fire,

Line 120. Gerault Berneil, who was called the Master of the Troubadours, but whom Dante ranks below the Provençal poet Arnould, here introduced.

CANTO XXVII.

As the day closes they reach the station of the Angel, who directs them to pass through the fire, to ascend the last staircase. While ascending this the sun sets, and the poets, unable to advance during the night, halt there until the morning. Dante, sleeping there, beholds in a dream two females representing the active and contemplative life. In the morning they reach the height, and Virgil directs Dante to follow alone his own promptings until the arrival of Beatrice, as his own guardianship has ceased.

So that his earliest rays were trembling o'er
 The land in which his Maker shed his blood,
 And Libra stood on high on Ebro's shore,
 And Ganges' wave with midday glory glowed, 5
 The sun was stationed, so that sank the day
 There, where God's Angel glad before us stood.
 Beyond the flame he stood, above the way,
 And sang: "Beati mundo corde," clear
 In voice, beyond the reach of human lay: 10
 Then, "Holy souls, ye cannot further steer
 Until the flame has bit ye; enter brave,
 And be not deaf unto the song ye'll hear."
 So spake he as we drew anear: believe
 When I heard that, that I all cold became, 15
 As one about to enter in his grave.
 Upon my claspèd hand I bowed, the flame
 Regarding, and imagining beneath
 Sights seen of old of the charred human frame.
 My good guides turned towards me then, and saith 20
 Virgil to me, "My son, undoubtedly
 Here may be torment, but cannot be death.
 Remember then, remember then, if I
 Upon yon Gerion thee in safety led,
 Can I fail now, more near the Deity? 25
 Believe for certain that within the bed
 Of this flame thou a thousand years might'st live,
 Nor couldst thou lose one hair upon thy head.
 And if thou think'st perchance that I deceive,
 Approach it, and thy own experience try, 30
 With thy own hands thy garment's border give.

Line 1. The sun was then rising at Jerusalem, which being the antipodes of the mountain of Purgatory, it was setting there, while midday was over the Ganges, and midnight in Spain.

Lay by henceforth, all cowardice lay by :
 Turn there, and onwards in security."
 And I, against my conscience, still deny.
 When he my obstinate resolve did see,
 A little troubled spake he, " Son, descry, 35
 This is the wall 'twixt Beatrix and thee."
 As at the name of Thisbe oped the eye
 Of Pyramus in death, to gaze on her,
 What time the mulberry changed to vermeil dye ;
 So all my hardness softening mellow, 40
 I turned unto my leader, hearing now
 That name which ever in my heart doth stir.
 On which he shook his head, and uttered : " How,
 We would have stayed beyond ?" and smiling bent 45
 As o'er a child who to the bait doth bow :
 Within the flame before me then he went,
 Beseeching Statius to come close behind,
 Who erst bewixt us had some distance lent.
 When once within, in boiling glass to find 50
 Some coolness I would gladly refuge take,
 So was the heat immeasurably refined.
 Still my sweet father as he went did speak
 Of Beatrice for my comforting,
 Saying : " Her eyes already on me break."
 A voice did guide us onwards, which did sing 55
 On the other side ; attentive to its lay we
 Came outwards where the ascent did upwards spring.
 " *Venite, Benedicti Patris mei,*"
 Sounded within a glory there, so bright
 That overcome I could not face its ray. He 60
 Added, " The sun descends, and comes the night :
 Make ye no pause, but swiftly hurry on,
 The while the west has still its fading light."
 The pathway rose, cut straight within the stone,
 In such direction that my shade I threw 65
 Before me from the now low sinking sun.
 When we had mounted of the stairs a few,
 By my lost shadow, that the sun had set
 Behind us I and my wise comrades knew.
 And ere the vast horizon's rim had yet 70
 Endued one single aspect in the shade,
 And wholly o'er the scene night's gloom was set,

Line 39. The white fruit of the mulberry changed to red, dyed with the blood of Pyramus. Ovid *Metam.* iv., 125.

Each of us of a step his couch had made,
 Since power to climb more than our bliss assailed,
 The nature of the hill to us forbade. 75
 As while they chew the cud the goats grow mild,
 Who ere they'd pastured on the herbage sweet
 Upon the hilltops bounded, wayward, wild,
 Still in some shady place, through midday's heat,
 Watched by the shepherd, on his long staff resting, 80
 Who serveth as a guardian their retreat :
 And as the herdsman 'neath the bare sky nesting,
 Beside his flock, throughout the night lies still,
 To keep them from all beast of prey's molesting :
 So were we then all three upon the hill, 85
 I as the goat, the shepherds they I ween,
 Bound on that hillside by a higher Will.
 But little of the outward world was seen,
 Yet by that little on the stars I gaze
 More large than their old wont, and more serene. 90
 So deep in thought, and looking thus on these,
 Sleep fell upon me : sleep that oftenest,
 Before it comes to pass, the truth foresees.
 I think 'twas in the hour that from the east
 Upon the mount first rayed sweet Venus' beam, 95
 In which the flame of love seems aye increased :
 Youthful and fair, there seemed to me in dream
 To see a lady on a wide plain go,
 Gathering flowers, and this her songful theme :
 " Whoe'er would wish to ask my name may know, 100
 For I am Leah, and my hands so fair
 I use a garland weaving evermo'.
 To please me in my glass, I deck me here ;
 My sister Rachel ever doth remain
 Before the mirror, to her soul so dear, 105
 To look upon her fair eyes there, as fain,
 As I to deck me with my hands alway :
 Her contemplation, action me doth chain."
 Now by the shepherds that precede the day,
 Ever more gladly by the pilgrim eyed, 110
 When turning home less distant grows the way,

Line 74. The nature of the hill prevented further ascent, but not their bliss.

Line 100. Leah represents the active and Rachel the contemplative life, as afterwards the two ladies, Matilda and Beatrice, whom Dante meets in the Terrestrial Paradise, as the dream is clearly intended to foreshow.

Line 103. The glass is the Deity, to please whom Leah devotes herself to action, while Rachel never ceases gazing therein.

The shadows fled away on every side,
 And with them fled my slumber, whence I rose
 And the masters risen already I descried.

“That fruit so sweet, which through so many boughs
 For ever seeking, goes the mortal care,
 To-day will bring thy hunger to repose.”

Towards me Virgil, such a parlance fair
 Address; and never yet were gifts could bring
 A pleasure that to these one could compare.

Upon desire such new desire did spring
 To reach the height, that as each step I rise
 I feel my longing still expand its wing.

When all the stair surmounted 'neath us lies,
 And we had reached unto the step superne,
 Upon me Virgil fixed his loving eyes,

And said: “The temporal flames and the eterne
 Thou hast beheld, my son, and reached a part
 Where for myself no farther I discern.

With knowledge I have led thee here, and art:
 Accept henceforth thy pleasure as thy guide:
 Beyond the narrow ways and straits thou art.

Behold, before thee beams the sun's bright tide:
 Behold the herbage, and the flowers and trees,
 This earth itself produces far and wide.

Until there come with joy the beauteous eyes,
 Which weeping, made me to thy help incline,
 Thou mayst sit down, or thou mayst walk 'mid these.

Await no more my parlance, or my sign:
 Thy judgment now is healthy, just, released,
 And 'twould be sin its promptings to decline;
 So o'er thyself I crown thee king and priest.”

CANTO XXVIII.

Dante advances through the tranquil forest to explore the Terrestrial Paradise until his progress is stopped by a stream. On the other side he sees a lady, who advances at his prayer to the brink, and explains to him the mystery of the place. She informs him that the river has two branches; the one before him is Lethe, whose draught takes away the memory of sin, while the other is called Eunoë, by drinking which the spirit recovers only the recollection of good.

ALREADY eager thoroughly to explore
 That thick and living forest, all divine,
 Which to the eyes the young day shaded o'er,

Without delay I left the bank's incline,
 Ascending the champaign with footsteps slow, 5
 O'er soil on all sides breathing odours fine.
 A dulcet air, which change did never know,
 Nor intermission, smote me on the front,
 Not stronger than the softest breeze can blow :
 Through which the leafy sprays with trembling wont 10
 Are altogether bent towards that side,
 Where its first shadow casts the holy mount,
 But from their level not inclined so wide
 That the small songbirds there their tuneful chime
 Upon their tops to warble are denied : 15
 But with a joy complete the hours of prime
 Welcome with song among the foliage green,
 Whose murmur adds its burden to their rhyme,
 Such as from branch to branch goes on the strain 20
 Along the pine trees upon Chiassi's shore,
 When Eolus the south wind doth unchain.
 Already my slow steps had borne me o'er
 So far within that ancient wood, that I,
 Where I had entered, could behold no more ;
 And lo ! a stream my further steps deny, 25
 Which towards the left hand, with its little waves,
 Inclined the herbage that was growing nigh.
 If the clearest water that earth's bosom laves
 Some mixture ever would appear to loom,
 Beside that runlet's all-transparent waves ; 30
 Although it moveth on in holy gloom
 'Neath the perpetual shade, that on it yet
 The rays of sun and moon could never come.
 Brought to a pause, my eager eyes I set 35
 To gaze upon the endless trees which there
 Grew fresh May boughs, beyond the rivulet :
 And there appeared to me, as doth appear
 Suddenly something which doth drive away,
 Through marvel, every other thought of care,
 A lady all alone, who on her way, 40
 Singing, and gathering flower on flower, did rove,
 With which her pathway was all painted gay.

Line 20. The pine forest near Ravenna, the scene of the hunt in the story of Theodore and Honoria, taken by Dryden from *Boccaocio*.

Line 40. The lady is afterwards named Matilda : I believe Venturi correct in considering her allegorical of active religious life, as Beatrice of the spiritual, though a real person may also be intended. In the dream which foreshadowed the event Dante beheld Leah and Rachel, the eidola of the two ladies who were his after guides.

" Ah lady fair, who at the rays of love
 Art warmed, if I the appearance may believe,
 Which ever the heart's truth is wont to prove, 45
 Would that thy pleasure," thus to her I crave,
 " Unto this bank thy steps would nearer bring,
 That I may hear the song which thou dost weave.
 Thou makest in my memory upspring
 The vale and Proserpine, what time there lost 50
 Her mother her, and she the flowers of spring."
 As turneth in a measure, intercross
 In dance, with gliding feet a lady fair,
 And dainty footsteps to the vision lost, 55
 Upon the vermeil, yellow flowerets there
 Towards me did she turn, in virgin guise,
 Bending her chaste eyes low, with modest air :
 And all that I had prayed for satisfies,
 So near approaching me, that her sweet strain 60
 Clear with its meaning, on my ear doth rise.
 As soon as she had reached to where the plain
 Was bathed by the waters of that river bright
 To raise her eyes towards me did she deign.
 I do not think there shone so sweet a light 65
 Beneath the lids of Venus, by her child
 Pierced in a mode beyond his wonted might.
 Upon the right bank of the stream she smiled,
 With her fair hands collecting flowerets still,
 Which on that upland grew, unsown and wild. 70
 Three paces were we severed by the rill,
 But the Hellespont. where Xerxes twice crost o'er,
 A curb for ever to the human will,
 More hatred from Leander never bore,
 'Twixt Sestos and Abydos rolling wide,
 Than this from me, that would not let me o'er. 75
 She thus began : " Ye here but newly bide,
 And haply that ye see me smiling here
 I' the place which human nature's nest supplied,
 With marvel may awake in ye some fear :
 The Psalm beginning *Delectasti* best 80
 Can give you light, your intellect to clear.

Line 51.

" O Proserpina,
 For the flowers now that frighted thou let'st fall
 From Dis's waggon."

" Winter's Tale."

Line 80. " Thou, Lord, hast made us glad through thy work."—Ps. xcii. 4.
 She is smiling, not at the new comers, as they may fear, but with delight at
 the beauty of God's works in the Terrestrial Paradise.

And thou, who praying stand'st before the rest,
 Say wouldst thou further hear; I come prepared
 For all thy questions, till I give thee rest,"
 "The wave," I said, "and sound in the forest stirred, 85
 Struggle within me 'gainst belief new won
 Of something which opposed to this I heard."
 Whence she: "I'll tell thee how proceedeth on,
 By its own law, what causeth thy surprise,
 And purge the cloud which o'er thy sight is thrown. 90
 God, who alone unto Himself can please,
 Man fit for good created, and this soil
 Gave him as earnest of Eternal Peace.
 Through his default he stayed here but awhile;
 Through his default to sorrow and to tears 95
 He changed the pleasing sport and honoured smile.
 That the disturbance which beneath appears
 The exhalation of the wave and plain,
 Which after heat, as far as may be, veers,
 Might cause no perturbation unto man, 100
 This mount ascended towards the heavens so high,
 Free, when its gate the outer world doth ban.
 Now, since in circuit aye continuously
 The air revolveth with its primal motion,
 If nought doth break its current through the sky, 105
 On this fair upland, free from all commotion,
 Such motion acts upon the living air,
 And makes resound the forest's leafy ocean:
 And the smote plant such excellence doth share,
 That it impregnates with its power the breeze, 110
 Which whirling ever, *that* doth onwards bear:
 So that the earth below, in its degrees
 Of soil and climate, doth conceive and bear
 Of diverse natures, all its diverse trees.
 And this once heard, hereafter will appear 115
 No marvel to thy mind, if any plant
 Without apparent seed doth germin there.
 And thou must know this Paradisal haunt
 In which thou art is full of every seed
 And bears such fruit as earth can never grant. 120
 The wave thou seest has no fountain head
 Restored by vapour, through cold air congealed,
 As streams whose course now wither, and now speed;

Line 86. The statement recently made to him by Statius, that there could be neither wind, rain, nor vapour on the hill of Purgatory.

Line 103. The air revolves ever from the empyrean to the lower spheres, with the current given to it in the primum mobile.

But from a fount perennial is it welled,
 That through the will of God has such a store, 125
 That with its water its two streams are filled.
 On this side it descendeth with the power
 The memory of former sin to hide;
 On the other, that of good it doth restore. 130
 Here it is Lethe, on the other side
 Called Eunoë: nor doth it work its spell
 Fully, till tasted has been either tide.
 All other flavours this surpasseth well:
 And that I may completely satisfy 135
 Thy thirst, although I nothing further tell,
 For grace I'll give thee a corollary,
 Nor think I that my speech will be less dear,
 If even beyond my promise I supply.
 Who sang in olden times, each poet seer,
 The blest condition of the Age of Gold, 140
 Have haply dreamed of their Parnassus here
 The human root was innocent here of old;
 Here is perpetual spring, and every fruit:
 This is the nectar of which each hath told." 145
 I turned me then unto our poets, mute,
 And in their-beaming eyes a smile did trace,
 Which in that closing sentence had its root:
 Then to the lady fair I turned my face.

CANTO XXIX.

As Dante advances by the side of the lady on opposite banks of the stream,
 its course turns towards the east, and on the side of the river opposite to
 Dante there descends an Apocalyptic vision.

As one enamoured, singing by the water
 She still continued, till the close was won,
Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata:
 And like the nymphs who wandered on alone 5
 Along the sylvan shadows, with desire
 Now to escape, and now to see the sun;
 Then did she move against the stream, yet higher
 The bank ascending, while with steps decreased
 On her short steps I followed, ever by her.

Line 3. Blessed are they whose transgressions are covered.—Ps. xxxii. 1.

R

We had not yet a hundred footsteps paced, 10
 When the banks altered their direction there,
 So that my face was turned towards the east.
 Nor yet again had we proceeded far,
 When towards me turned the lady mine, and said,
 " My brother, now thou must behold, and hear." 15
 And lo! a sudden splendour overspread,
 From every quarter all the forest wide,
 That in my mind the thought of lightning bred.
 But since that lightning, as it comes, doth bide, 20
 And as it lasts, acquireth splendour more,
 " What thing is this ?" within my thoughts I cried.
 And a soul-thrilling melody ran o'er
 The luminous air, which woke my ardent zeal
 Eve's hardihood to censure, and deplore : 25
 That there, where earth and sky obeyed her weal,
 Only a woman, and but lately made,
 She could not suffer one concealing veil.
 'Neath which, devoutly if she had but strayed,
 I should have tasted there ineffable
 Delights before, and longer had essayed. 30
 Whilst thus I wandered, rapt within the spell
 Of those first offerings of Eternal Peace,
 And for yet greater joys desirous still,
 Before us, like a fire whose flames increase,
 'Neath the green boughs the air all glowing grew, 35
 And song was heard in those sweet melodies :
 Muses, ye holy virgins, if for you
 Hunger, or cold, or vigils I have known,
 Good reason spurs me now to claim my due. 40
 Now o'er me you must pour your Helicon,
 Urania now must help me with her quire,
 To write in verse things hard for thought alone.
 Beyond appeared seven trees of gold like fire,
 In seeming by the distance falsified
 Which separated them from us : when nigher 45
 I had approached them, so that closely eyed
 The doubtful object which the sense deceives,
 Through distance had no lineament denied,
 That virtue which discourse to reason gives,
 That they were candlesticks, and in the strain 50
 That voices sang Hosanna there, perceives.

Line 50. The seven golden candlesticks are variously interpreted as typifying either the seven Sacraments of the Church or the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Above was flaming the resplendent train,
 More clear by far than in the cloudless sky
 The moon, that to her zenith doth attain.

With admiration full, I turned my eye 55
 To my good Virgil, who to me replied
 With face no less impressed with marvel high.
 Those lofty objects then once more I eyed,
 Which came towards us at a pace so slow,
 That would have past them the new-wedded bride. 60
 The lady asked me : " Why art gazing so
 With rapt attention on yon living light,
 And all that comes behind, seem'st not to know ?"
 Then did I see a people clothed in white,
 That onwards, as behind their leaders streamed, 65
 Was never on the earth such candour bright.
 Upon my left hand all the water gleamed,
 And if I looked on it, as in a glass,
 All my left side upon its surface beamed. 70
 When in such station on the bank I was
 That the stream only kept me separate,
 I stood to see the better what might pass :
 And I beheld the flames advance in state,
 Leaving behind them lines of painted air, 75
 Which bore the semblance there of streamers great,
 So that above remained distinctly there
 Seven bands of colours, those with which his bow
 Maketh the sun, her girdle Delia fair.
 These standards backwards to the distance flow 80
 Beyond my sight, and well as I could see
 The outer bands ten paces distant show.
 Beneath a sky so fair, as shown by me,
 Came four-and-twenty elders, two by two,
 All of them crownèd with the fleur-de-lis. 85
 And all of them were singing, " Blessed thou,
 Amongst the daughters born of Adam, blest,
 Thy beauties in eternal glory now."
 What time the flowers and other herbs that drest
 Freshly in front of me the opposite shore, 90
 By that elected troop no more were prest,
 As light doth follow light in Heaven's rich store,
 Close on their track four beasts behind them hied,
 And each a coronet of green leaves wore.
 They were all wingèd with six pinions wide, 95
 The feathers full of stars : and Argus' eyes
 If they were living would be such descried.

Line 78. The girdle of Delia is the lunar rainbow.

Their forms to tell no further I premise,
 For other matter, reader, urges higher,
 So that with length I cannot here avize. 100
 But how Ezekiel painted them, admire,
 When he beheld them from the freezing North
 Come with the wind, the cloud, and with the fire :
 And as thou'lt find them in his page set forth.
 So were they here, save as regards the wings,
 Which I beheld as John has set them forth. 105
 'Twixt the four beasts in the central space upsprings
 A chariot on its two triumphant wheels,
 Drawn at its neck, the which a Gryphon brings :
 Who both his pinions in the air reveals,
 'Mid the seven vari-coloured lines of light, 110
 So that he cleaveth none, and none conceals :
 So high they rose, that they were lost to sight :
 As far as he was bird, his limbs appear
 Of gold, the rest with vermeil mixt were white. 115
 In Rome ne'er triumphed with a car so fair,
 Or Africanus or the great August ;
 Poor would appear the sun's own chariot there :
 The sun's own car, which from its true course thrust
 Was fire-consumed through Tellus' pious prayer,
 When Jove in secret purpose was most just. 120
 By the right wheel three ladies circling bear
 In onward dance, one of such ruddy glow
 That in the flame she scarcely would appear ;
 The other in her colour such did show,
 As if her frame of emerald were made ; 125
 The third appeared of newly-fallen snow ;
 And now they seemed by the white lady led
 Now by the ruddy, from the latter's song
 Their measure slow or fast, the others tread. 130
 On the left side, four other damsels throng,
 In purple clothed, in festal choir they glance,
 Guided by one, to whom three eyes belong.

Line 100. Ezekiel i. 6. And this was their appearance : they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. John, in Rev. iv. 8, gives six wings to the four beasts.

Line 107. The chariot appears to be intended for the Church of Christ, who is represented as a Gryphon, half an eagle and half a lion, symbolical of His Divine and human natures.

Line 118. The story of Phaeton. Ovid's *Metam.*

Line 121. The three theological virtues : the ruddy one being Charity, the green Hope, and the white Faith. When Beatrice descends in the next Canto, she will be found drest in these three colours.

Line 130. The four cardinal virtues, led by Prudence, represented with three eyes that look at the Past, Present, and Future.

And close to all the interwreathèd dance
 Two old men, in their garb unlike, draw near,
 But like in comely bearing they advance. 135
 The one a chosen familiar did appear
 Of great Hippocrates, whom Nature made
 To help the beings whom she holds most dear :
 The other an all-different zeal displayed,
 Bearing a sword so brilliant, and so keen, 140
 That from across the rivulet it dismayed.
 Then I beheld four more of humble mien,
 And after all of them an old man lone
 With face Heaven-lighted, though he slept, was seen. 145
 And all these seven like those who first had gone
 Were habited, except that round their brows
 With lilies was not made their flowery crown,
 Rather of vermeil flowerets, and the rose :
 One would have sworn, who from some distance eyed,
 That all of them were flaming o'er the brows. 150
 And when the car had reached the opposite side
 I heard it thunder, and that train so fair
 Seemed as if further movement was denied,
 And halted with the first insignia there.

Line 134. These old men are supposed to be the physician Luke, and Paul, whose cutting style is represented by the sword.

Line 142. These are either the four Evangelists, unless these were already represented by the four beasts, or the authors of the Minor Epistles, James, Peter, John, and Jude. In either case John appears twice over, and is again supposed to be symbolised as the author of the Apocalypse in the old man with eyes closed in ecstatic vision. The poet's son, however, in his explanation asserts that this old man is Moses.

CANTO XXX.

In the midst of a shower of roses strewn by an Angel choir, a lady descends from Heaven upon the car. Dante instinctively recognises Beatrice, and turning to Virgil, finds that his faithful guide has left him. Beatrice tells him not to weep on that account, but to reserve his tears for the rebuke with which she greets him for his sins.

WHEN there the Empyrean Polar light,
 Which never setting yet nor rising knew,
 Nor other cloud, except sin's veiling night,

Line 1. The seven candlesticks, called the Polestar of the Empyrean, as the seven gifts of the spirit guide each soul to its harbour, in the same way that the Polestar of the lower sky is the guide to mariners.

And which each being to his duty drew,
 Directing as our Pole star o'er the seas 5
 Home to his port the helmsman guideth true,
 Had halted, all the truthful companies,
 Which 'twixt it and the Gryphon erst did hie,
 Turned round towards the car, as towards their peace. 10
 And one of them, as herald of the sky,
 Veni, sponsa de Libano, with song
 Cried out three times, and all the others nigh :
 As at the final ban with hurrying throng
 Troops of the blessèd, each one from his cave, 15
 His new-clad flesh all lightly borne along,
 So o'er that car divine in the concave
 A hundred rose, *ad vocem tanti senis*,
 Heralds of life eterne beyond the grave.
 All of them cried, *Benedictus qui venis*,
 And o'er it casting round the flowery spray, 20
 Manibus O datè lilia plenis.
 I have beheld ere now in dawning day
 The orient flushed all o'er with roseate hue,
 While o'er the heaven's serene no cloudlets stray : 25
 And have beheld the sun's face rising through
 That vaporous mist, so tempered in its tone,
 That for some length the eye could bear the view ;
 Thus so within a cloud of flowerets strown,
 That from angelic hands were poured beneath, 30
 And in and over all the folds fell down
 Upon her white veil, girt with olive wreath,
 Appeared to me a lady, in a green
 Mantle, above a scarlet robe beneath.
 And my own spirit which so long had been
 Before that presence troubled so of old, 35
 Through marvel trembled not, nor fluttered then.
 Although my eyes no recognition told,
 Through hidden virtue which from her there ran
 Of olden love I felt the mighty hold.
 Soon, as upon my sight there smote again 40
 Another's virtue, which had smote me quite
 Ere I had issued out of childhood's reign :
 Unto my left I turned me for respite,
 Just as the infant runneth to his dame
 Whene'er afflicted or whene'er in fright, 45

Line 7. The four-and-twenty elders—amongst whom the one mentioned in v. 10 is supposed to be Solomon, who quotes his own Song, ch. iv., v. 8.

Line 19. Virgil, "Æneid," lib. vi., v. 884.

To say to Virgil, "Rests within my frame
 No dram of blood that does not tremble now ;
 I know the symptoms of the olden flame."
 But Virgil had bereaved us of him, woe !
 Virgil, the sweetest father one could grieve, 50
 Virgil, to whom entrusted, life I owe :
 Nor all she lost, our olden mother Eve,
 Aailed, upon my cheeks erst washed with dew,
 But that the tears their soiling trace should leave.
 "Dante, though Virgil goeth from thy view, 55
 Weep not for that, no therefore weep not now,
 Since thou for other sword must weep anew."
 Just as an admiral on poop or prow
 Cometh to see the crew their service ply
 On the high masts, and cheers them zeal to show, 60
 Upon the left side of the car, when I
 Had turned me at the sound of my own name,
 Which here is written of necessity,
 I saw the lady who before did beam
 Upon me, veiled in flowers angelical, 65
 Towards me direct her eyes across the stream :
 Although the veil that from her brow did fall,
 Bound with a garland of Minerva's leaves,
 Displayed not to the sight her aspect all ;
 With royal bearing, like to one that grieves, 70
 Her parlance she continued, and severe
 The keenest point unto the close she leaves.
 "See truly, truly, Beatrix appear ;
 How hast thou deigned at last to approach the mount ?
 Didst thou not know that man was happy here ?" 75
 My eyes fell downwards in the crystal fount,
 But seeing there myself, unto the sward
 I turned them, such a shame was on my front.
 As seems a mother proud to child adored,
 So did she seem to me, because I knew 80
 The bitter taste of Piety's sharpened sword.

Line 53. "Alle guance nette di rugiada." The commentators explain this, cheeks free from weeping, and the words may bear that signification. The translators hitherto have followed this rendering, but I much prefer the simple translation in the text, believing that Dante refers to the mystical washing with dew described in Canto I. of the "Purgatory." Not even the beauties of the Terrestrial Paradise aailed to save from the soil of tears his cheeks washed with dew from every earthly stain.

Line 63. It may be remarked that on no other occasion has Dante written his name throughout the poem.

Suddenly sang the Angels, as she grew
 To silence, *In te, Domine, speravi,*
 At *pedes meos* to a close they drew. 85
 As on the living rafters lieth wavy
 On Italy's backbone the snow congealed,
 What time Scelavonian winds are blowing heavy,
 Then liquefied, the dropping ooze is welled,
 Breathe but the land on which no shadow lies,
 As melts within the fire the candle held : 90
 So was I there, without or tears or sighs,
 Until the song of those who ever sing
 Accordant with the spheral melodies.
 But when I heard in their sweet carolling
 Their pity towards me, far more clear confest 95
 Than had they said, " Why lady, thus him wring ?"
 The frost that round my heart's core had been prest
 To spirit and water changed ; in agony
 With sobs and tears it issued from my breast. 100
 She, still retaining all her bearing high,
 Beside the chariot's right wheel turned away,
 And thus addrest that pitying company :
 " Ye who keep watches through the eternal day,
 So that nor night nor sleep can steal from you 105
 One step the ages make upon their way :
 With greater zeal my answer hence is due,
 Since this one hears me there who yonder wails,
 That to his sin his grief be equal too.
 Not only by the turn of the great wheels, 110
 Which every seed to purposed end incline,
 Through the particular star whose spell it feels ;
 But by the largess of the Grace Divine
 Which from such lofty vapours feeds its shower,
 That to its height our vision cannot join : 115
 This one was such in new life's opening hour
 Fitted for good, that every virtuous growth
 Had made in him miraculous proof of power,
 But so much more malign and tangled groweth,
 With poisonous wilding seeds, the uncultured sward,
 As of terrestrial strength the more it showeth. 120

Line 88. The beginning of the 31st Psalm. The Angels sang to the end of the eighth verse only, the rest being unsuitable.

Line 89. The land under the Equator, where, during the equinox, bodies at midday cast no shadow : the verse means therefore when the south wind blows.

Some time I bore him up with my regard ;
 Showing to him my youthful eyes, that fain
 With me, straightforwards, led him still in ward.
 When of my second age the porch I gain,
 And changed earth's life for this immortal sphere, 125
 He left me, and to others turned amain.

When from mere flesh a spirit I uprear,
 Increased in virtue, and in beauty too,
 I grew to him less pleasing and less dear :
 He turned his footsteps then by paths untrue, 130
 Following images all falsely fair
 That never keep the promise which they shew :
 No inspiration could impede him there,
 With which, both in his dreams and otherwise
 I called him back ; so little did he care. 135

So low he fell, all other remedies
 Unto his safety had been vainly sped,
 Except to show him Hell's lost companies.
 For this I pierced the circle of the dead, 140
 And weeping unto him my prayers conveyed,
 Who upwards to this point his steps has led :
 The high decree of God he would invade,
 If Lethe he might pass, and such a cheer
 Were tasted without any payment made
 Of Penitence, that bids him shed a tear." 145

CANTO XXXI.

Rebuked by Beatrice, Dante confesses his error, and falls senseless to the earth. On his recovering perception he finds himself drawn through the stream by the lady he had first found on its bank. Having drunk of the waters of Lethe he is welcomed to the shore by the four cardinal virtues, who lead him to the Gryphon, where the three spiritual virtues intercede for him with Beatrice, who at their request unveils to him all her celestial beauty.

"O THOU who stand'st beyond the sacred stream,"
 Turning her speech with straightened point to me,
 Which only edgeways did so cutting seem,
 Following she recommenced without delay,
 "Say, say if this be true: to such a charge 5
 Thy own confession must be offered free."
 In such confusion was my mind at large,
 That when my voice sought motion it was dead
 Ere it was free from its own organ's marge.

She paused awhile; "What think'st thou?" then she said, ¹⁰
 "Answer me, ere all memories of woe
 Shall by the water's charm be wholly fled."
 Fear and confusion mixed together so,
 Thrust forth a yes so feeble from my mouth,
 Signs were required its meaning clear to show. ¹⁵
 As a balestra breaketh when one draweth,
 With too great tension of the bow, the cord,
 And with less force the spear to the target goeth,
 So broken 'neath my heavy load, I poured
 Outwards my tears and sighs, with which expires ²⁰
 My voice, or it had gone across its ford.
 Whence she to me: "Within my own desires,
 Which ever guided thee to love that good
 Beyond the which no being e'er aspires, ²⁵
 What thwarting moats, what fetters hast thou viewed,
 On which account of thought to pass beyond
 Thou didst strip off each hope thou hadst endued?
 And what allurements, or what profits found,
 Upon the other's brow didst thou descry,
 For which thou rather there shouldst wanton, fond?" ³⁰
 After the heaving of a bitter sigh,
 For words my lips with difficulty made,
 I scarcely found a voice for this reply.
 "The things there present," weeping still, I said,
 "With their false pleasure turned my steps aside, ³⁵
 Soon as ye hid your face from me, and fled."
 "Hadst thou been silent, or hadst thou denied,
 What thou confessest, none the less would note
 Thy sin the Judge from whom ye nought can hide. ⁴⁰
 But when there issues from the sinner's throat
 Self-accusation, in our Court above
 Against the edge the blunting wheel is brought.
 That ne'ertheless increasing shame improve
 Thy error, and that other times, whene'er
 Listening the sirens, thou mayst stronger prove, ⁴⁵
 Lay grief aside, the seed of tears, and hear:
 So wilt thou learn how to a different way
 My flesh even buried should have led thee, dear.
 Nature and Art did ne'er before thee lay
 Such pleasure as the fair limbs in which I ⁵⁰
 Was closed, that now are only scattered clay:
 And if thou lostest thy chief ecstasy
 Through death of mine, what merely mortal thing
 With ill desire should thee have led away?

Clearly thou oughtest at the primal sting 55
 Of those fallacious things have soared forth
 Behind me, who was never such. Thy wing
 Should not have drooped so heavily to earth,
 To wait for further blows, or a little maid,
 Or other vanity of briefer worth. 60

The new-fledged birdling twice or thrice delayed :
 But in the eyes of the full-feathered bird
 In vain the net is cast, in vain 'tis laid."
 As children silent, in their shame averred,
 Stand listening the rebuke with downcast ken, 65
 Knowing themselves, and to repentance stirred :
 So did I stand : and she addressed me : " When
 Thou grieveest but to hear, lift up the beard,
 And gazing, greater grief will seize thee then." 70

With less resistance are the roots upreared
 Of oak robust, by blast from Arctic strand,
 Or from Iarba's Afric region steered,
 Then I upraised my chin at her command :
 For what time by the beard she called my face
 Her speech's sting I well could understand 75

And as my shamèd countenance I raise,
 Ceasing from scattering their flowers around,
 Those Heavenly creatures fair the eye surveys :
 And my own eyes not yet assured, in swoond
 Saw Beatrice turned towards the beast 80
 That in one person had two natures crowned.
 Beneath her veil, beyond the river placed,
 She seemed her old self to surpass far more
 Than even on earth all others she surpast. 85

The sting of Penitence so pricked my core
 That towards all other things, which me had turned
 Most from her love, the greater hate I bore.
 Such recognition in my heart there burned
 That I fell senseless : and what then I grew
 Knows she the cause, whose beauty on me turned. 90

Then, when my heart things outward once more knew,
 The lady, whom I first had found alone,
 I saw above me ; and she said, " Hold true."

Line 59. This alludes either to Dante's alleged amour with Gentucca, which, however, took place after the assumed date of the vision, or, as Cary suggests, to his marriage with Gemma Donati, which took place after Beatrice's death.

Line 74. The sting is the allusion to the want of wisdom in spite of the beard.

Up to the throat i' the stream she'd drawn me on,
 And drawing me behind her hurried o'er 95
 Light as a shuttle o'er the water thrown.
 When I was near unto the blessed shore,
Asperges me, I heard in notes so suave
 I cannot write its unremembered lore.
 The beauteous lady oped her arms to lave, 100
 Embraced my head, and gently dipped me down
 Where it was fit that I should drink the wave :
 Then bore me up, and bathed she led me on
 Within the dance of those four damsels fair ;
 While each of them an arm had round me thrown. 105
 " We here are nymphs, in Heaven is each a star ;
 Ere Beatrice to the world descended,
 We were ordained as handmaids unto her.
 We'll lead thee to her eyes ; but in the splendid 110
 Light hid within them, will make luminous
 Thy own, yon three, whose gaze has deeper wended."
 Thus singing they began their welcome ; thus
 To the Gryphon's breast they led me in their arms,
 Where Beatrix was standing, turned to us :
 They said, " Of vision spare not now the charms ; 115
 Before her emerald eyes we've led thee nigher,
 Whence Love of old upon thee drew his arms."
 A thousand wishes, hotter far than fire,
 My eyes attracted to those beaming eyes,
 That still upon the Gryphon calm aspire. 120
 As in a glass the sun, not otherwise
 The double-natured beast within them rayed,
 Now in his single, now in double guise.
 Think, reader, if my marvel was allayed
 When I beheld the thing itself stand still, 125
 That thus was changed in its reflected shade.
 Whilst full of wonder and delight, its fill
 My soul devourèd of that heavenly food,
 For which, when satisfied, it hungers still ;
 Showing themselves with higher birth endued, 130
 In seemly port, the other three arise,
 And Angel dance with Angel song prelude.

Line 98. Sprinkle me with hyssop : the prayer recited by the priest when he sprinkles the congregation with holy water.

Line 106. The four stars described in Canto I. The seven virtues are given as handmaids to Beatrice in her allegorical character of Contemplative Religion.

"Turn, Beatrice, turn thy holy eyes
 Upon thy faithful one," their song did steal,
 "Who to behold thee has dared such emprise. 135
 Of grace, bestow on us the grace to unveil,
 Thy mouth to him, that he may now discern
 The spiritual beauties which thou dost conceal."
 O splendour of the living light eterne,
 Whoe'er grows pale beneath Parnassus' shade, 140
 Or drinketh inspiration at its urn,
 Would not appear to have his mind dismayed,
 Striving to paint thee such as thou appeared'st,
 There where the climbing heavens around thee played
 When thou in open air thy beauty bared'st? 145

CANTO XXXII.

The whole procession moves on, followed by Dante, Statius, and Matilda, until they reach the Tree of Life, to which the Gryphon fastens the car. Dante falls into a slumber, and on being roused finds that Beatrice, Matilda, and the cardinal virtues alone remain under the Tree. The History of the Church is then typified to Dante in a vision of changes that befall the car.

So were my eyes there fixèd and engrossed,
 To satisfy the thirst of ten long years,
 That all my other senses then were lost ;
 And even to my eyes a wall uprears
 To heed nought else, so did that holy smile 5
 Draw them towards it with its olden gears.
 When forcibly was turned my gaze awhile
 Towards my left hand, by those Goddesses,
 Whom I heard say too fixt a gaze were ill. 10
 The dazed condition that is seen in eyes
 That have but just been dazzled by the sun,
 Unto my own awhile their sight denies :
 But when my sight a moderate light could con,
 Moderate I call it with respect to the bright
 Marvel, from which with violence 'twas won, 15
 I saw them turned around upon their right,
 That glorious troop of spirits, with their gaze
 Turned to the sun, and those seven flames of light.
 As 'neath the shields they for protection raise,
 Turneth a troop, and wheeleth to the sign, 20
 Ere the whole army can be changed in place ;

Line 2. The ten years that had elapsed since the death of Beatrice in 1290.

So that Militia of the realms divine
 Which led the van, in circuit wholly wheels
 Before the chariot's pole began to incline.
 Then turned around the ladies at the wheels 25
 And moved the Gryphon the aye-blessèd car,
 Whilst not one trembling plume the load reveals.
 Who drew me o'er the stream, that lady fair,
 Statius and I, upon that wheel reverted
 Which makes its orbit with less circuit there, 30
 So passing through the lofty wood, deserted
 Through fault of her who trusted in the snake,
 Our steps with Angel singing were concerted.
 Haply such distance as three flights would make
 Of loosened arrow had we travelled o'er, 35
 When Beatrix her station did forsake.
 I heard them all 'gainst Adam murmur sore :
 Then go in circle round a tree all bare
 Of flowers or leaves upon its branches hoar.
 Its branches, that spread wider as they rear 40
 Aloft, would even in the groves of Ind
 Be gazed at for their height with wonder rare.
 "O Gryphon, blest art thou, that ne'er inclined
 Thy beak towards this tree, so sweet to taste,
 That in the belly leaves such ill behind." 45
 So in procession round the tree robust,
 Cried out they all ; the twice-born beast replied,
 "So is preserved the seed of every just,"
 And turned towards the pole which he had plied,
 He drew it to the foot of the widowed tree, 50
 And to its trunk, thence fashioned, left it tied.
 As earthly plants when falleth o'er the lea
 The sun's light, with that starry ray imbued,
 Which after Pisces' sign in Heaven we see,
 All pregnant swell, and each is then renewed 55
 With its own coloured foliage, ere as yet
 In Taurus' star, the steeds of the sun are viewed ;
 Paler than rose, darker than violet,
 That plant grew new with leafy colouring,
 Whose branches had before so bare been set. 60
 I understood not, nor on earth they sing
 The hymn which all that people chanted here,
 Nor could I bear the whole strange carolling.

Line 53. When the sun is in Aries, the constellation next to Pisces.

If I had power in sleep to make appear
 Those cruel eyes, when heard Siringa's plaint, 65
 Those eyes, whose watchfulness cost them so dear ;
 As by example doth an artist paint,
 I would describe how slumber closed my eyes :
 Tell it, whoe'er can slumber draw most quaint :
 But to my wakening my description flies : 70
 I say a splendour rent aside the veil
 Of slumber, and a cry, " What dost ? arise."
 As flowers of Heaven's own honey dew to hail,
 Which with their fruit create the Angels' greed,
 And marriage feasts in Heaven that never fail, 75
 Peter and James, and John were erst decreed,
 And overcome, awakened at the word,
 At sound of which far deeper slumbers fled,
 And saw departed from the band revered
 Both Moses' and Elias' presence gone, 80
 And their own Lord, in human shape averred ;
 So I awoke, and saw that piteous one
 Standing above me, who was first the guide
 Who led my footsteps by that river on :
 And all in doubt, " Where's Beatrix ?" I cried : 85
 And she : " Behold her seated 'neath the new
 Foliage upon the roots. In worthy pride
 The company that troopeth round her view ;
 The rest behind the Gryphon soar above,
 With song more sweet, of mystery deeper too." 90
 Whether her parlance any more did rove,
 I know not: since upon my eyes there shone
 She, who all else from my perception drove.
 She sate upon the naked earth alone,
 As though left there the guardian of the car, 95
 Which I had seen the two-formed beast bear on.
 Within their circle, girdled it the fair
 Seven nymphs, whose hands the holy lights retain,
 Secure from north wind's or from south wind's blare.
 " Here wilt thou be a short time denizen, 100
 Then habitant with me, without an end,
 Of that high Rome where Christ is citizen :

Line 65. The story of Argo, put to sleep by Mercury relating the transformation of the nymph Siringa, and afterwards slain. Ovid's *Metam.*, book i.

Line 73. Dante compares his awakening to that of the three Apostles after the Transfiguration, roused by that voice which had power to raise the dead.

But the world's evil habitudes to mend,
 Gaze on the car, and what thou seest write
 When once again to earth thou must descend." 105
 Thus Beatrix, and I whose whole delight
 To her commands devoutly would incline,
 As she directed, gave my mind and sight.
 With such swift motion never did careen
 The thunderbolt from riven cloud above, 110
 What time it rains in Heaven's most far confine,
 As I beheld descend the bird of Jove,
 Through the trees' branches, stripping off the bark,
 While flowers and leaflets all before it drove,
 And smote the car with all its violence stark: 115
 On which it staggered, as o'er stormy wave
 To starboard and to larboard rolls the bark,
 In evil fortune. Then upon the nave
 Of the triumphal car a fox upclimbs,
 Which only poisonous food appeared to crave. 120
 But keenly blaming it its laidly crimes,
 My lady urged it to as swift a flight
 As could effect such fleshless bones betimes.
 Then from the quarter whence it erst did light
 I saw the eagle glide down o'er the pile 125
 O' the car, and leave it with its feathers dight.
 And as there breaks from heart that grieveth still,
 Such voice there issued from the heavens, that cried,
 "O little bark of mine, what freight of ill!"
 Then I beheld the earth gape open wide 130
 'Twixt both the wheels, and hence a dragon spring,
 That smote the car with its tail's piercing gride:
 And as a wasp that draweth back its sting,
 It drew together with its tail malign
 A part of the car, and then went wandering. 135
 That which remained, as o'er rich earth doth twine
 The weedy grass, with the feathers' offered store,
 Given haply with intention thus benign,

Line 112. The Roman Emperors, who at the first persecuted the infant Church.

Line 119. The fox represents the spirit of heresy which was rife in the Church after the early persecutions had ceased.

Line 126. The second descent of the eagle alludes to the conversion of Constantine, and the gift of its plumage describes his donations to the Church, which Dante has already stamped as its ruin.

Line 131. The dragon is supposed to represent Mahomet, whose creed was embraced in a great portion of the earth once included in the Church.

Covered itself, and was all covered o'er,
 The one and the other wheel, and the pole, as soon 140
 As a long sigh keeps ope the lips' red core.
 The holy edifice thus different grown,
 Thrust outward heads, throughout its strange design,
 Three o'er the pole, in every corner one.
 The three upon the pole were horned like kine : 145
 The four had but one horn upon each front ;
 A similar monster never yet was seen.
 Secure as castle on a lofty mount,
 Seated upon it, an abandoned whore
 Appeared to me, with eyes of shameless brunt. 150
 And that none else should seize her evermore,
 I saw beside her stand a giant high :
 They kissed each other often, o'er and o'er.
 But since her roving and lascivious eye
 Wandered towards me, that ferocious lover 155
 Lashed her from head to foot with cruelty.
 Then with suspicion full, and ire all over,
 He dragged the monster, from the tree released,
 Into the wood, and made of that a cover
 Unto the harlot and the new-formed beast. 160

Line 144. The seven heads are interpreted 'generally as the seven capital sins, of which the three with two horns are Pride, Anger, and Avarice, which hurt the sinner himself and his neighbour; the four with one horn, Gluttony, Sloth, Lust, and Envy, which only injure himself. Some consider the seven heads to represent the seven sacraments, and the ten horns the ten commandments.

Line 149. Pope Boniface VIII. is intimated by the harlot, and Philip the Fair of France is her giant lover. The transfer of the Papal seat to Avignon is pointed at in the carrying away of the car.

CANTO XXXIII.

The seven virgins and Beatrice sing in lamentation on the vision. They then all leave the Tree, and Beatrice darkly prophesies to Dante the future fate of the Church. They then all arrive at the fountain from which the rivers Lethe and Eunoë are derived, and issue on their several ways. Matilda leads Dante and Statius to drink of Eunoë's wave, from which he rises renewed in spirit and purified for Paradise.

Deus venerunt gentes, now the three,
 And now the four dear ladies beauteous,
 Weeping began the dulcet psalmody.

Line 1. O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance.—Ps. lxxix. 1.

And Beatrix with sighs and piteous,
 In such a bearing heard, that little more 5
 Grief altered Mary when beside the cross.
 But when those virgins ceased their song to pour
 For her to speak, then upwards rising, she
 Answered, her face with flushing covered o'er,
Modicum, et non videbitis me; 10
 Et iterum, my sisters well beloved,
 Modicum, et vos videbitis me.
 Then all the band of seven before her moved;
 And after her she marshalled with a sign
 Myself, the dame, and the sage who had not roved. 15
 So she went on; nor was there I divine
 Our tenth step on the earth advancing placed,
 When on my eyes there smote her heavenly eyne,
 And with a tranquil look, "With better haste
 Come on," she said, "that I may speak with thee,
 And thou to listen may be fairly placed." 20
 When I was there, where duty bade to be,
 She said, "My brother, wherefore dost not care
 Henceforth to question, as thou comest with me?"
 Like unto those who with too reverent air 25
 Before the acknowledged betters whom they meet,
 Betwixt their teeth to whisper scarcely dare,
 Befell me then, that without sound complete
 I 'gan. "My lady, what my need doth claim
 You thoroughly know, and what for that is meet." 30
 And she to me, "From fearfulness and shame
 I would that thou from henceforth shouldst awake,
 So as to speak no more like one in dream.
 Know that the vessel which the serpent brake,
 Was and is not, on whom the sin we lay, 35
 Thinks he God's vengeance halts for soppèd cake?
 Heirless the eagle will not be for aye,
 Who to the car did leave that plumage fell,
 Through which it grew a monster, then a prey.
 For clearly I behold and therefore tell, 40
 To bring a time, the happier stars arrive,
 From all resistance free, and obstacle,

Line 10. John's Gospel, xvi. 16.

Line 15. Dante, Matilda (named for the first time in line 119), and Statius.

Line 36. There was a superstition in Florence that a murderer would be secure from vengeance if within nine days he ate a sop of bread in wine on the grave of the murdered man. Alluding to this, Beatrice says that no superstitious observances would secure the spoiler of the Church from the vengeance of God.

When a Five hundred, and a Ten, and Five,
 Sent down by God will slay the shameless whore
 And the giant who with her in sin doth thrive. 45
 And though my statement may appear obscure,
 Like Themis or like Sphynx persuading less,
 Since in their fashion it conceals its lore :
 Full soon events shall be thy Naiades,
 Who will resolve for thee this riddle deep, 50
 Without the loss of flocks or corn-grown leas.
 Take heed, and thus these words told by me keep
 In memory, that thou teach them thus aright
 To those whose life but hastes to Death's long sleep : 55
 And bear in mind, when thou dost this indite,
 Not to conceal how thou hast seen the plant,
 Which has been now twice spoiled within thy sight.
 Whoever tears it, or doth spoil this haunt,
 With such blaspheming deed offendeth God, 60
 Who made it holy for His private wont.
 Through tasting it, in pain, and yearning mood,
 Five thousand years and more, the primal soul
 Craved him, who on himself did turn the rod.
 Thy understanding slumbers, if the whole 65
 Reason it sees not, why this towers so high,
 And spreads so widely upwards from the bole.
 Were not like Elsa's waves that petrify,
 The thoughts so vain that swarm around thy mind,
 And dyed by pleasure, as the mulberry
 By Pyramus, in such great facts designed 70
 Alone, God's justice in this interdict
 Of the tree, to thy own profit thou wouldst find.
 But since I see thee in thy intellect
 Turned into stone, and so with sinning dyed,
 That dazzles thee the light my words reflect, 75

Line 43. Five hundred, ten, and five written in Roman letters are D, X, V, which make the word Dux, a leader. Who the leader here meant may be is disputed. It is supposed to be either Henry VII., the German Emperor, or Can Grande della Scala, the greyhound in the first book of the poem.

Line 49. Dante considered the Naiades as expounders of oracles, on the strength of a line in Ovid, which is now supposed to be corrupt, and which has been conjecturally altered by Heinsius. With this explanation, the error of Dante, if error it be, is of no consequence to the intelligibility of the passage.

Line 62. The opinion of the Church in the Middle Ages was that five thousand years elapsed between the fall of Adam and the birth of Christ.

Line 67. The Elsa is a stream that flows into the Arno, which was supposed to possess a petrifying quality.

I will that, if not written, yet descried,
 Thou bear it in thee, for a memory,
 As is the pilgrim's staff with palm-leaves tied."
 "As with the seal the wax is stamped," said I,
 "That changes not the impression on it dight, 80
 So is my brain stamped with your seal. But why
 Doth fly so soaringly beyond my sight
 Your speech, so long yearned after by my soul,
 Which most is lost when strove for most with might?"
 "That thou might'st clearly know," she said, "what school 85
 Thou'st followed, and behold its doctrine fine,
 How it can follow on my word's control,
 And see how far your way from the divine
 Is distant, as discordant in their lot
 Earth, and the Heaven which highest hastes to shine." 90
 On which I answered: "I remember not
 That I have ever turned away from you,
 Nor does my conscience sting me for such blot."
 "And if thou canst not that remember true,"
 Smiling she answered, "call thee now to mind 95
 How thou hast drunk but now of Lethe's dew:
 And if from smoke we argue flame to find,
 This thy oblivion proveth very clear
 Sin in thy will, to others too inclined.
 Within a little truly will be bare 100
 My words, as far as 'twill be fit to show
 Their meaning to thy vision debonnair."
 More brilliant now, and with a step more slow,
 The sun attained the circle of the noon,
 (Different in different sites on earth below), 105
 When to a pause there came, as pauseth one
 Who goes before as escort to a band,
 If on the track a novelty be known,
 The ladies seven, before a gloom at hand
 Such as 'neath verdant leaves and dusky boughs 110
 O'er the cool Alpine slopes the forests stand.
 Before them Tigris and Euphrates rose,
 Meseemed to see them in one fount embrace,
 Then like to friends that part each slowly goes.
 "O light, O glory of the human race, 115
 What wave is this that here doth spring to-day
 From its first source, and travels on in space?"
 To such a prayer was told me, "Thou mayst pray
 Matilda that she tell thee," here replied,
 As one who seeks some blame to clear away, 120

The lady fair. "This and much more beside
 Was told him erst by me; and I am sure
 That Lethe's wave from him this cannot hide."
 And Beatrix: "Perchance some greater care,
 That oftentimes the memory deprives, 125
 Has made his mental vision thus obscure.
 But Eunoë behold, which here derives:
 Lead him to it, and as thou'rt wont to use
 See that his deadened virtue here revives."
 Like gentle spirit who makes no excuse, 130
 But of another's will creates her own,
 Soon as by outward sign the purpose shows;
 When she had ta'en me by the hand, moved on
 The lady fair, to Statius who awaited,
 "Come thou with him," she said in queenly tone. 135
 Reader, if longer space to me were rated
 For writing, I would strive to sing in part
 That draught so sweet, which never could have sated.
 But since is now completely filled the chart 140
 Allotted for this second book, there leaves
 No power to wander more the curb of Art.
 I turned back from those most holy waves
 Created fresh, as plants made new once more,
 Renewèd through the birth of new green leaves,
 Pure, and prepared unto the stars to soar. 145

Line 139. The thirty-three Cantos allotted to each book being here completed for the "Purgatory," the poet says that the rule of art which he has imposed on himself prevents him from describing the rapture of this draught.

PARADISE.

CANTO I.

After solemn invocation, Dante describes his ascent from the earthly Paradise towards the first sphere of Heaven: his ignorance of how he thus past out of humanity, and Beatrice's explanation of his doubts.

His glory who moves all doth penetrate
Throughout the universe, and shineth bright
Here with a greater, there with lesser state.
In the sky which most partaketh of his light
Was I, and things I saw, which to repeat 5
Knows not, and cannot who'er leaves that height.
Because approaching to its yearned-for seat
The intellect deep diveth there so long
That memory behind it cannot fleet.
Of what to the holy kingdom doth belong 10
Which I had power to treasure in my mind,
Truly shall now be subject of my song.
To this last labour, O Apollo kind,
Make me such vessel of thy mysteries,
To thy loved laurel the best gift assigned. 15
One of the peaks that on Parnassus rise
Till now sufficed me, now the twain beneath
I must address me to the new emprise.
Enter my breast, thyself within me breathe,
As when of old thou Marsyas conquerest, 20
And drewest all his limbs from out their sheath.
O virtue most divine, now aid my 'hest,
So that the shadow of the blessed reign
Stamp'd on my brain I may make manifest.
To thy loved tree thou'lt see me coming fain 25
With its own leaves to crown me then, which thou,
And the subject, will have made me fit to gain.
If, rarely, father, there doth pluck it now
For triumph, either emperor, or bard,
(The sin and shame of human will I trow,) 30

Should bring forth joyaunce in the glad regard
 Of Delphos' deity, the Peneian leaf,
 When any one doth thirst for its reward.
 Great flame may follow from a spark but brief; 35
 After me haply with a voice of might,
 Others may win reply from Cyrrha's chief.
 To mortals rises aye on different site
 The great lamp of the world; but when it rears
 Where with three crosses circles four unite, 40
 In happiest course, with most propitious stars
 Conjoined it issues, and the mundane leaven
 Most with its influence seaeth, and prepares.
 Had made the morning there, and here the even,
 Such a conjunction, and was clad in white 45
 Yon hemisphere, the rest all darkly paven,
 When Beatrice turned within my sight
 Towards the left, to gaze upon the sun;
 Ne'er gazed so long an eagle on the height.
 And as reflected ray is wont to run 50
 From the direct, upwards again to soar,
 As pilgrim eager to return alone,
 So that her action, through my eyes did pour
 Upon my thought, and fashioned mine, that near
 The sun I gazed, beyond mere mortal power. 55
 Much there is lawful which is not so here
 Unto our virtue, guerdon of the place
 Made for humanity the chosen sphere.
 I could not bear it long, but yet such space,
 That all around me I beheld it gleam 60
 Like iron glowing from the fire's embrace,
 And to the day there suddenly did seem
 A new day joined, as though God's power had blazed
 Upon the sky another sun to beam.
 Upon the eternal spheres, with eyes that gazed 65
 Stood Beatrix, and I my vision laid
 On her, turned hither from the height that dazed;

Line 32. "The Peneian leaf, the laurel, meed of mighty conquerors and poets sage."—Spenser, b. i., can. 1, st. 9.

Line 36. Cyrrha, a city at the foot of Parnassus, devoted to Apollo.

Line 39. When the sun rises in such a manner that the circles of the horizon, the zodiac, the equator, and the equinoctial colure join, the last three intersecting each other so as to form three crosses, it is in the constellation of Aries, and produces the most favourable influences; in such a conjunction was it rising on the earthly Paradise, and setting on the other hemisphere, when Beatrice and Dante launched upwards to the spheres.

Line 55. Dante being on the terrestrial Paradise had his faculties so attempered that he was able to look at the sun in a way impossible on the inhabited hemisphere.

Within my soul her look such influence made,
 Such as when Glaucus tasted of the grass,
 And grew a sea-god in the ocean bed.
 By words cannot be told how one doth pass 70
 From human thus, the example must suffice
 For whom experience is preserved by grace.
 If I were fashioned only in such guise
 As thou madest newly, love that rulest the sky,
 Thou know'st, who with thy light didst make me rise. 75
 What time the sphere, which thou, loved deity,
 Dost ever whirl, attracted all my gaze,
 With its heaven-watched and tempered melody,
 That portion of the sky seemed all ablaze
 With the sun's flame, that never rain or stream 80
 Upon the earth such widespread lake could raise.
 The newness of the sound, and the bright gleam
 To search their causes kindled such a glow
 I ne'er had felt an ardour so extreme.
 Whence she, who saw me as myself I know, 85
 To still the perturbation of my mind,
 Spake, ere the question to my lips could go :
 And thus began : " Thyself thou makest blind
 With thy false fancy, that thou canst not see 90
 What thou wouldst see, if this were thrown behind.
 On earth thou art not, as thou think'st to be ;
 And lightning flying from its native sphere
 Ne'er coursed as swift as hitherwards dost flee."
 If from my primal doubt I was made clear 95
 By those few words she uttered smiling bright,
 I fell into another greater snare ;
 And said : " Content already I alight
 From my great wonder, but am now beguiled
 To think how I mount o'er these bodies light."
 When she had given a pitying sigh, her mild 100
 Eyes she directed towards me, with a face
 As of a mother o'er a raving child,
 And thus continued : " All the things in space
 Have order 'midst themselves ; and hence arrayed 105
 Beareth the universe its God-like trace.
 Here, high created beings see the shade
 Of the Eternal Power, the sole design
 For which this rule of order has been made.
 In the order, which I tell thee of, incline 110
 All natures, though in different lot each tends
 Nearer or farther from their source divine.

Line 79. They were passing through the sphere of fire, beneath the moon.

Hence they move onwards to their different ends,
 Through the great sea of being, and each one
 Is borne there by the instinct Nature lends.
 This carries up the fire towards the moon : 115
 This in the hearts of mortal kind doth move :
 This binds and gathers up the earth alone :
 Nor creatures only, whose low organs prove
 Their want of intellect, shoots forth this bow,
 But those that have both intellect and love. 120
 The Providence which all things fitteth so,
 The empyrean stills in its own light,
 In which the swiftest whirling Heaven doth glow :
 And hither now, as to our promised site,
 Bears us the potent virtue of that string. 125
 Which to a gladsome mark aye shoots aright.
 'Tis true the form intentions will not bring
 At times unto the purposed will of art,
 Because the matter fails in answering ;
 So from this Heavenward course there may depart 130
 Created thing at times, who has the power
 Thus driven, to bend aside to other port,
 (Just as one may behold fall down in shower
 Fire from the cloud), if the first impetus
 By false delight to earth be twisted lower. 135
 Thou shouldst not think with wonder marvellous
 Of thy ascent, but as a stream which fell
 Down to the deeps from mount precipitous.
 Marvel would be for thee, from obstacle
 When freed, if thou hadst downwards fallen amain, 140
 As though on earth the living fire could dwell."
 Then towards the Heaven she turned her face again.

Line 119. The bow of instinct, and again in line 125.

Line 130. The soul, abusing its liberty of will, may desert the Heavenward course on which its instinct sends it, as fire, instead of rising, falls at times on earth from the lightning cloud.

CANTO II.

Dante and his guide enter the sphere of the moon, and Beatrice explains to him the cause of the spots which appear on its surface.

O YE who follow in your little boat
 Behind my bark, with hope to hear the strain
 With which in song across the sea I float,

Turn ye to see your native shores again ;
 Put ye not forth on such a sea, where far, 5
 Ere lost, ye might be 'wildered on the main.
 The course I take was never steered before ;
 Inspires Minerva, and Apollo leads,
 And Muses new point out the guiding star. 10
 Ye other few, who help in time your needs
 With angels' bread, on which one lives even here,
 Although the feast to fulness ne'er proceeds ;
 Across this ocean wide ye well may steer
 Your navigation, following in my lee,
 Ere in the wave my furrow disappear. 15
 Those glorious ones who past across the sea
 To Colchos marvelled erst, as ye will do,
 When they saw Jason's wondrous husbandry.
 The ceaseless impetus which together grew
 With the God-made spheres, bore us still upwards raised 20
 Nearly as swiftly as the sky ye view.
 I upon her, on high Beatrice gazed,
 And haply in the time a bolt is plied,
 And flyeth, from the crossbow's notch released,
 We had attained, where drew my sight aside 25
 A wondrous thing, so she, from whom I ne'er
 The slightest working of my heart could hide,
 Turned towards me with a face as glad as fair.
 "Raise towards God the grateful mind," she said,
 "Who thus has brought us unto this first star." 30
 Meseemèd that we now with cloud were clad,
 Clear shining, thickly solid, and as bright
 As diamond on the which the sun has rayed.
 Within itself the eternal Margarite
 Received us as the glassy wave receives, 35
 Retaining still its whole, a ray of light.
 Being a body scarce the mind conceives
 How matter other matter can admit,
 Which must be, if a frame in frame enweaves
 The which should kindle our desire more bright 40
 To see that essence where beholds the adept
 How human nature doth to God unite.
 There shall we see that which through faith we kept,
 Not proved to us, but known beyond a doubt,
 Like to those first truths which mankind accept. 45

Line 19. I have adopted Venturi's explanation of this passage, which is that the ceaseless whirling of the spheres drew on Dante and Beatrice now that they had risen into its influence.

"Madonna," I replied, "with heart devout
 As there can be I render thanks to Him
 Who has thus brought me from the mortal rout.
 But tell me what are these suffusions dim
 Upon this body, which below on earth 50
 Create the fable of Cain's faggots grim?"
 She smiled a little, then "If thus there erreth
 The opinion," said she, "amongst mortals where
 The senses' key cannot unlock the birth, 55
 Certes, no more the darts of wonder rare
 Should prick thee, since behind the senses' flight
 Thou seest that Reason's wings are short to bear.
 But tell me what thou think'st thyself of it."
 And I, "What seems so different above
 I think is caused by bodies dense or light." 60
 And she: "Thou'lt surely see enough to prove
 False thy belief if thou wilt thoroughly hear
 The argument with which I will disprove.
 Lights many show to ye the far eighth sphere,
 Which in their quality and in their size 65
 Unto each other different will appear.
 If this were made by varying densities
 In all but one sole virtue would there be,
 Shared less or more or in equalities.
 Different virtues must the fruitage be 70
 Of varying sources, all of which save one
 By thy belief would be destroyed for thee.
 Again, were rarity the cause alone,
 Thou askest, of those spots, either in part
 This planet of its substance would be shown 75
 Quite wanting, or as lieth all apart
 The fat and lean upon a body, so
 Its volume's leaves would change from light to swart.
 Were the first true that would we clearly know
 In the eclipses of the sun, whose light 80
 As to all rarities would pierce it through.

Line 60. This opinion of the cause of the shadows on the moon's surface was offered by Dante in the *Convito*, and which he now makes Beatrice confute.

Line 64. The sphere of the fixed stars differing in size and brilliance, Dante considered that these, like the moon, received their light from the sun.

Line 73. She proceeds to prove the impossibility of the shadows being caused by the rarity of the moon's body, which rarity cannot pierce right through the moon, or the sun's rays would be then visible during an eclipse, nor if the rarity proceeds only to a certain depth, like fat on the lean of animal flesh, could that produce the effect. This possible alternate rarity and density is compared to the pages of a parchment volume, which are alternately light and dark, each sheet of parchment having a brown side.

Now this is not so. Then, to turn our sight
 To the other supposition, if that too
 Be broken thy conjecture falls outright.
 If, then, this rarity does not pass through, 85
 Some boundary to it must be effected
 Where density prevents its course anew,
 And thence the alien ray will be reflected
 Just as it turneth backwards from the glass
 Whose back with leaden coating is protected. 90
 Now thou wilt say the dimness on the mass
 Is in some places greater by the ray
 That from a greater depth doth backwards pass.
 Such a mistake to thee will clear away
 Experiment, if ever thou wilt try, 95
 O' the streams of all your arts sole source for aye.
 Take thou three mirrors, and place equally
 Before thee two, the other further on,
 So placed that 'twixt the first it meet thy eye.
 Turned towards these, behind thy back set down 100
 A light which on the mirrors three shall gleam,
 And from them all reflected towards the sun.
 Although in quantity is not the same
 The light most distant, thou wilt see it blaze
 As fitteth with no less resplendent beam. 105
 Now as beneath the touch of the warm rays
 Loses the earth the snow with which 'twas deckt,
 And its first colour, and its frozen glaze,
 So thee, thus stripped within thy intellect,
 I would inform with light whose living shine 110
 Shall tremble o'er thee in its first aspect.
 Within the heaven where resteth peace divine
 There whirls a body in whose magic power
 Sublies all being held in its confine. 115
 The heaven that follows with its starry shower,
 That being shares to its various essences,
 Distinct from it, yet held within its bower.
 The other spheres, with changing differences,
 The power distinct, which doth within them glow,
 Dispose to their own seeds and purposes. 120
 These organs of the universe thus go,
 As thou dost henceforth see, from stair to stair,
 Above receiving, giving from below.

Line 96. An enumeration of the true principle of Bacon's experimental philosophy.

Line 112. The empyrean. See the description of Dante's system of astronomy, in which moves the primum mobile.

Now mark me well, how I from this prepare
 To reach the truth which thou dost ever love, 125
 So that henceforth alone thou'lt pass the mere.
 The motion of the holy spheres above,
 As by the workman comes the hammer's art,
 Impelled by blessèd motors, aye must move.
 The sky yon starry beauty gleams athwart 130
 Takes from the deep soul of its guiding spirit
 The image and the seal 'twill thence impart.
 And as the soul that human dust doth 'herit
 Resolves itself through different limbs yet made
 Together unto powers of different merit, 135
 So the intelligence of the spheres displayed
 Its goodness through the stars all multiplied,
 Yet whirling in its unity arrayed.
 Virtue diverse has diverse compact plied
 With the precious body, which it vivifies, 140
 In which, as life within yourselves, 'tis tied.
 Glad through the nature whence it doth arise,
 The mingled virtue through the frame makes light,
 As joyousness shines out through living eyes.
 From this ensueth what from light to light 145
 Seems different, and not from dense or rare.
 This is the formal cause that makes aright,
 Conformed to its own goodness, dusk or clear."

Line 148. The common-sense reader will not be very satisfied with Beatrice's offered explanation. The moving angel of each sphere stirs in it like the soul in the human body, and shines out of it like joy from human eyes, hence the difference in each light rayed from a different power; but this does not appear to account for a difference in the light rayed out of one body by its own intelligence as the shadows visible on the moon's surface.

CANTO III.

Dante beholds in the moon the spirits of the blessed. He converses with Piccarda, the sister of Forese, and learns that she, with the rest, are confined to that lowest sphere through having been compelled to a breach of their vows, but that God's will makes every sphere perfect Paradise. She points out to him the spirit of the Empress Constance.

THAT sun which first with love had warmed my breast
 Had opened unto me of truth so fair,
 With proof reiterate, the aspect blest,
 And I, my sure conviction to declare
 As was most fitting, raised on high my head 5
 To her the due acknowledgment to bear.

But there appeared a vision which waylaid
 My purpose, drawing my attention near,
 That my confession was forgot ere said. 10
 Such as through glass diaphanous and clear,
 Or through the shining waters' tranquil deeps,
 Not of such depth as darkly to appear,
 The sketch of our own features upwards creeps
 So dimly, that of pearl or whitest front 15
 The eye no clearer the faint outline keeps.
 Thus saw I many eager faces mount,
 And fell into the opposite error there
 From that which kindled love 'twixt man and fount.
 For suddenly when I of them was 'ware, 20
 Believing they were mirrored images,
 I turned my eyes to see of whom they were,
 And nothing saw, and drew them with surprise
 Straight on the light, which in my own sweet guide
 Smiling was kindled in her holy eyes. 25
 "Marvel thou not because I smiled," replied
 My lady, "at thy childish judgment blind,
 Since thy foot trusteth not the truth descried,
 But turns thee, as its wont, to empty wind ;
 True substances are these which thou dost greet, 30
 Who, through their broken vow, are here confined.
 But speak with them, and hear, and credence mete,
 For the true light which in them shineth plain,
 From sliding any more will guard their feet."
 And I unto the shadow which most fain 35
 Appeared to parley with me, drew my gaze,
 And as by eagerness confused, began,
 "O spirit ! made for good, who in the rays
 Of life eterne drink'st sweetness of the skies,
 Which tasted not, in vain the soul essays, 40
 Wouldst thou but tell me I the boon would prize,
 Thy name, and all the mystery of your lot."
 Whence eager she replied, with smiling eyes :
 "Our charity the portal barreth not
 To just desire, no more than God's own worth 45
 Which wills that all His Court be like Him brought.
 I was a holy sister on the earth ;
 And if thy mind will well regard me here,
 Will veil me not my grace of heavenly birth,

Line 17. Narcissus conceived his shadow to be a reality. Dante mistakes the refined substances of the blest for shadows.

But as Piccarda thou wilt know me clear,
 Who stationed here amongst these other blest 50
 Are happy in the slowest whirling sphere.
 All our affections are alone imprest
 With what doth please the Holy Spirit, so
 Here, in His order, they rejoice at rest.
 And in this sphere, which seems so very low, 55
 High Heaven our residence allotted places,
 Because we did not wholly keep our vow."
 Whence I to her: "Within your wondrous faces
 There shineth something that is so divine,
 That quite it changeth all your former traces; 60
 Therefore thy likeness did my memory twine
 But slowly, aided by what thou dost tell
 More like my native tongue, I now divine.
 But tell me, ye who happy here do dwell,
 Do ye desire another higher place 65
 To see more fully, and your love to swell?"
 With the other shades she smiled a little space,
 Then answered me with such a joy galore,
 That love's first fires seemed burning in her face.
 "Brother, our will is quieted with lore 70
 Of charity, which makes us only seek
 That which we have, nor ever thirst for more.
 If higher lots for us we would bespeak
 Then our desires would all discordant be
 With His high will, who here our lots doth make. 75
 Which in these circles cannot be, thou'lt see:
 If here to dwell in charity is need,
 And if thou seest the law of charity.
 Nay, 'tis essential to our blessed meed 80
 To be restrained within the will Divine,
 That unto one our wills be all agreed.
 So that as we throughout this kingdom shine
 From sphere to sphere, it pleaseth every grade,
 As to the King, to whose will all incline.
 In his high pleasure all our peace is laid; 85
 This is that ocean unto which are brought
 All things which it creates, or Nature made."

Line 49. The sister of Forese, introduced in Canto XXIV. of the "Purgatory," and of Corso Donati. The latter, with some dissolute comrades, scaled Piccarda's monastery and forcibly took her away to marry her against her will. The legend states that before the spouse of Christ came together with her carnal husband she committed her virginity to the care of her Heavenly Lord, and was smitten with leprosy, and died in a few days, being thus saved from contamination.

Then was it clear to me how every lot
 In Heaven is Paradise, though the highest good
 His grace in one sole fashion raineth not. 90
 But as it haps, when glutted with one food
 After another still desire doth crave
 For which are thanks paid, and which still is wooed,
 So I with words and gesture to her clave
 To learn from her the story of the woof, 95
 The which her shuttle did not wholly weave.
 "A perfect life and high desert of proof
 Enshrines the lady in a Heaven more high,
 After whose rule on earth we live aloof,
 That we may see, and slumber when we die 100
 With that dear spouse, who every vow receives
 Which to his pleasure mouldeth charity.
 In youth I fled me from the world that grieves
 To follow her, and her chaste habit wore,
 And promised me the path her sect achieves. 105
 Men used to evil more than virtuous lore
 From the sweet cloister carried me away:
 God knows the life which afterwards I bore.
 This other, who her splendour doth display
 At my right hand, and burns with all the light 110
 Allotted to our sphere, whate'er I say
 About myself, applies to her aright;
 She was a nun, and from her head was torn
 Even thus the shadow of her nun's veil white. 115
 But even in the world where she was borne
 Against her will, and every usage good,
 Within her heart the veil was ever worn.
 This is great Constance' light, who from the rude
 Wind that the second blew from Suabia's plain,
 Produced the third, and latest of the brood." 120
 Thus she spake to me, and began the strain
 Ave Maria, vanishing with song,
 As heavy body through the dusky main.
 My vision, which still followed her as long
 As it was possible, when she was gone 125
 Turned to the target of my love most strong,

Line 96. St. Clare, the foundress of Piccarda's order.

Line 118. Daughter of Ruggieri, King of Sicily, and taken from her monastery, at the mature age of fifty, to marry the Emperor Henry VI., the second of the House of Suabia, by whom she became mother to Frederic II., the third and last of the brood.

And centered there in Beatrix alone ; .
 But she in glory beamed upon my gaze
 Such that at first I could not look upon,
 And that awhile my questioning delays.

130

CANTO IV.

Dante stands absorbed by two doubts arising from what he has just heard and seen. Beatrice removes both his difficulties, first with reference to the place assigned to the blest in Heaven, and then as to the effect of alien violence upon the will. Dante then inquires as to the possibility of making satisfaction for a broken vow.

BETWIXT two kinds of food, each equally
 Distant and tempting, ere a man could choose
 In freedom, he might first of hunger die.
 Even thus a lamb betwixt two wolfish foes,
 Equal in longing, would fear each the same ;
 Even thus would stand a hound betwixt two does. 5
 Wherefore if I was silent, I nor blame
 (Betwixt my doubts in mute suspension thrown,
 Since 'twas not in my choice) nor merit claim.
 Silent I stood ; but my desire was shown 10
 Upon my face, and with it my demand
 Warmer by far than if by speech made known.
 Did Beatrix, as erst when Daniel's hand
 Nebuchadnezzar's anger cleared away,
 Which had excited his unjust command. 15
 "Clearly I see how draws thee," did she say,
 "One and the other wish, which makes thy zeal
 So bind itself it cannot find a way.
 Thou arguest, if good intent lasts still,
 How can the violence by others done 20
 Decrease the measure of my spirit's weal ?
 Again a cause for doubting thou dost own,
 That souls returning to their stars we find,
 According to the law by Plato shown.

Line 1. The singular statement in the first *terzina* is taken from Thomas Aquinas.

Line 13. Beatrix did for Dante what Daniel did for Nebuchadnezzar when he explained to him his dream, and prevented the execution of his threat against the Chaldeans who had failed in solving the mystery.

Line 23. Plato, in the conversation named *Timæus*, advanced this theory, as again alluded to in line 49.

T

These are the questions which within thy mind 25
 Urge thee with equal cogence, therefore I
 First take the one where gall is most combined.
 The Seraph nearest to the Deity,
 Moses and Samuel, take either John
 Thou wilt, I say even Mary, Queen on High, 30
 Hold not in any other Heaven their throne
 Than these souls, who did even now appear,
 Nor longer or more brief existence own.
 All of them make the empyrean fair
 Though they possess sweet life in different ways, 35
 As more or less the Eternal Spirit they share.
 Not that this sphere is their allotted place.
 Here did they show themselves, but to unfold
 What grade they've mounted in celestial grade.
 Thus to your understanding must be told, 40
 Which only by sensation apprehends,
 What afterwards the intellect can hold.
 For this the holy Scripture condescends
 Unto your faculties, and hands and feet,
 Not meaning that unto the Deity lends. 45
 The holy Church with human aspect meet
 Gabriel and Michael to your vision bares,
 And him, who made Tobias' cure complete.
 That which Timæus of all souls declares, 50
 Does not resemble what we here behold,
 Since what he says its natural meaning wears.
 The soul unto its star returns, we're told,
 He thinking it descended first from there,
 When Nature gave it its own plastic mould.
 Haply his words another meaning bear 55
 To what their sound expresses; this may be
 With purpose to escape derision's snare.
 If he but means that on these spheres' decree
 Depends the shaping influence and the blame,
 Haply his shaft hath hit some verity. 60
 This truth miscomprehended led to shame
 All the world formerly, who wide astray
 Worshipped Jove, Mercury, and Mars by name.

Line 27. Plato's false opinion Beatrice pronounces the most dangerous.

Line 45. Dante's theology is wonderfully free from the anthropomorphic spirit which distinguishes Judaism, and which even the powerful mind of Milton, swathed in the trammels of Puritanism, heartily embraced. It is this which makes Milton's conceptions of Paradise fall so immeasurably short of those of the spiritual Florentine.

- The other doubt which now doth thee bewray
 Hath less of poison, since its evil gust
 Far from my side can lead thee not away. 65
- In eyes of mortals, that appears unjust
 Our Heavenly justice, is an argument
 For faith, and not heretical mistrust. 70
- But that your understanding with assent
 Unto this truth may clearly penetrate,
 As thou desirest I'll make thee all content.
- If violence excuses, when doth 'bate
 No jot the victim to compulsion high,
 By this these souls would not be exculpate. 75
- For will unless it chooses does not die,
 But acts like Nature in the flame, although
 A thousand times should force its purpose try.
- Because if much or little it doth bow
 It follows force; and so those acted here
 With power to embrace again their holy vow. 80
- If their intent had been unmixed with fear,
 As that which Laurence on the bars retained,
 And made stern Mucius to his hand severe,
- Their holy path they had once more regained, 85
 Whence they were taken, soon as they were freed;
 But rarely is such firm resolve maintained.
- And by these words, if thou dost rightly heed
 As fitting is, the argument's o'erthrown,
 Which many a time had done thee hurt at need. 90
- But now another doubt athwart thee grown
 Flits o'er thy eyes, which well would weary thee
 Ere thou couldst solve it by thyself alone.
- Within thy mind I've placed as certainty
 That never can speak false a spirit blest, 95
 Since to the Primal Truth 'tis ever nigh.
- And thou hast heard Piccarda now attest
 That Constance for the veil her love still kept,
 And contradiction here doth stand confest.
- Already, brother, many a time hath happed 100
 That peril to escape, against one's wish
 Something is done, the which may well be wept.
- Almeon thus of old, besought to this
 By a dying father, his own mother slew.
 Not to lose pity he grew pitiless. 105

Line 83. A martyr of the third century.

Line 103. The story of Almeon and his mother Eriphyle has been already introduced in Canto XII. of the "Purgatory."

Upon this point thou must bethink thee true
 That force with men can mingle with their will,
 So that it cannot shrive the sins they do.
 Absolute will consents not to the ill :
 But yet consents so far, in that it fears 110
 If it hold back, some greater evil still.
 Piccarda, therefore, when she this declares,
 Meaneth the will thus absolute, and I
 The other, neither thus the truth impairs."
 Thus surged that holy river, which on high 115
 Sprang from the fountain whence all truth doth move ;
 Thus both my wishes did it satisfy.
 " O Goddess, loved one of the Primal Love,"
 I said, " whose parlance floodeth me around,
 And vivifies with warmth from God above : 120
 Suffices not my love, though so profound,
 Unto your grace, with fit grace to reply,
 Let Him who sees and can to this respond.
 Clearly I see that nought can satisfy 125
 Our intellect, unless that truth shine there,
 Beyond whose bounds can roam no verity.
 Therein it resteth, like a beast in lair,
 When it has joined it, and has power to join,
 If not, each wish would be but empty air.
 Through that desire is born, like weeds that twine 130
 Beside the truth, the doubt ; and Nature's lure
 Thus leads from peak to peak to truth divine.
 This doth invite me, this doth make me sure,
 With reverence, lady, to request aright
 Another truth which still remains obscure. 135
 I now would know, if man can e'er requite
 With other good deeds vows he failed to pay,
 That in your balance may not weigh as light."
 Gazed on me Beatrix, with eye whose ray 140
 Beamed with such sparks of love, and so divine,
 That all my power o'ercome, I turned away,
 And lost as 'twere my drooping lids incline.

Line 113. Piccarda merely meant that Constance's inclination still turned to the monastic life. Beatrix asserts that her will was not strong enough to resist adverse circumstances.

CANTO V.

Beatrice answers Dante's question concerning the possibility of rendering other satisfaction for a broken vow. They then ascend to the sphere of Mercury, where they are met by a troop of spirits, one of whom offers to explain to Dante anything he may wish to know.

" If I with warmth of love upon thee flame,
 Beyond the fashion which on earth is seen,
 So that the valour of thy eyes I tame,
 Marvel thou not; for that proceeds I ween 5
 From perfect vision, which at once doth turn
 To meet the good it apprehended keen.
 How now there shineth, clearly I discern,
 Within thy intellect the eternal light,
 Which seen alone makes love for ever burn. 10
 And if aught else would win your love's delight,
 It cannot be except some vestige true
 Be shining there, not recognised aright.
 Thou wouldest know if other service new
 For broken vows in any way can pay,
 And free the spirit from the judgment due." 15
 Thus Beatrice did begin this lay,
 And like an orator who doth not cease,
 Thus she continued on her holy way:
 " The greatest gift which God's creating grace 20
 Made in His largess, to His clemency
 The most conformed, and prized as first in place,
 Was of the will the perfect liberty,
 With which the creatures of intelligence
 Were dowered, and are, and they alone. Thou'lt see 25
 Henceforth from this, if thou dost argue hence,
 The high worth of a vow which so is made,
 That what time thou consentest God consents.
 For when 'twixt God and man this pact is laid,
 This treasure as a victim doth one slay 30
 By his own act, even such as now displayed.
 What compensation therefore can one pay?
 If what thou'st offered thou wouldest use for good,
 Thou wouldest give alms of what thou'st ta'en in prey.
 The greater point thou now hast understood. 35
 But since the Church dispensing doth permit
 This seems opposed unto the truth I showed.

Line 29. The treasure of free-will, just described as the greatest gift of God.

A little at the board thou yet must sit,
 Since the crude fare which thou hast swallowed now
 For its digestion claims assistance yet.
 Open thy mind to that which I will show 40
 And guard within, for nought can make ye wise
 Though understood, unless retained enow.
 Unto the essence of this sacrifice
 Two things pertain, the one what ye agree
 To do, the other in the covenant lies. 45
 This last can never wholly cancelled be,
 Unless 'tis kept, concerning it I trow,
 Was what I spake above so rigidly.
 Therefore 'twas needful for the Hebrew's vow
 To offer something, though the offering 50
 For other might be changed, as thou shouldst know.
 The other, which was shown thee as the thing,
 May well be such that without erring ye
 May in its stead some other payment bring.
 But from the load your back you cannot free 55
 At your own judgment nor without the will
 Both of the silver and the golden key.
 And think each change is empty to fulfil,
 Unless the old is in the new contained,
 As in the six the four remaineth still. 60
 Therefore whatever vow such weight hath gained
 By its own worth that it outweigheth all,
 With other deed it cannot be maintained.
 Mortals should take no vow at idle call;
 Perform your vows, and therefore be not blind 65
 As Jephtha was to what might first befall:
 To whom 'twere better to have said, I've sinned,
 Than keep his oath by worse; in such mad gear
 The mighty leader of the Greeks thou'lt find:
 Iphigenia thence, bewailed, so fair, 70
 And made to weep the foolish and the wise
 Who ever of her sacrifice did hear.
 Christians, your movements ye should better poise:
 Be not like feathers in each wind that blew,
 And think not that all water purifies. 75
 Ye have the Testaments, the Old and New,
 And the Shepherd of the Church to be your guide,
 This for salvation should suffice to you.

Line 57. See "Purgatory," Canto IX., the gold key denoting the Divine Authority exercised by the Church, the silver key the learning required for using it fitly.

If evil avarice aught else hath cried,
 Ye should be men, not silly sheep or beeves, 80
 So that the Jew amongst ye may deride.
 Be ye not like the lamb, who frisking leaves
 Its mother's milk, and in a simple fit,
 At its own pleasure, with its shadow strives."
 Thus Beatrix to me as I indite : 85
 Then did she turn all yearning with desire
 Unto that part where most the world is bright.
 Her will, and changing countenance of fire,
 Silence imposed unto my questioning,
 Which much of new already would require. 90
 And like a dart that in the target's ring
 Is fixed before the trembling cord is still,
 So to the second kingdom did we spring.
 I saw my lady then such joy distil
 Entering that Heaven's bright glory undefiled 95
 That grew the planet's self more beaming still.
 And if the star was thus transformed and smiled,
 What did I grow, who in my nature's sphere
 To change in every fashion am beguiled ?
 As in a fishpond that is still and clear, 100
 The fish are drawn to aught that comes above,
 Thinking from habit that their food is near ;
 So saw I more than thousand splendours move
 Attracted towards us, and in each was heard,
 "Lo, who will bring addition to our love?" 105
 And as came towards us each o' the holy herd
 The shadow full of joyousness was seen
 In the clear glory that from in it stirred.
 Think, reader, if the inaugurated scene
 Were to proceed no more, what appetite 110
 To know what follows would possess thee keen :
 And by thyself thou'lt see the yearning might
 Which filled me then to hear the lots of these,
 Soon as their vision fell upon my sight.
 "O happy born, to whom high grace decrees 115
 Thrones of the eternal triumph to behold,
 Ere from the militants thou'st gained release ;
 With the light that o'er the whole of Heaven is rolled
 Are we inflamed ; if therefore thou wouldst crave
 By us to grow more clear, thy will unfold." 120

Line 79. An evident allusion to the sale of dispensations, which made the Roman Church a subject of derision even to the money-dealing Jew.

These words by one amongst the spirits grave
 Were told me, and by Beatrice, "Say,
 Securely say, and as to Gods believe."
 "Clearly I see how thou in rest dost stay
 In thy own light, and draw'st it from thy eyes, 125
 That when thou smilest brighter beams their play :
 But who thou art I know not, nor the ties
 That bind thee to this sphere, most worthy sprite,
 Which in the sun is veiled to mortal eyes." 130
 Thus did I speak distinctly to that light
 Which first had spoken to me, whence it grew,
 Even more than it had been, all beaming bright.
 Just as the sun conceals itself from view
 By too much light, what time the heat has dried
 The tempering vapours of the thick-rolled dew : 135
 Through greater joyousness he so did hide
 His holy form from me, within his ray,
 And thus envelop't unto me replied
 As will be set forth in the following lay.

Line 129. The sphere of Mercury, which from its nearness is often hidden by the sun.

CANTO VI.

The spirit informs Dante that he is the Emperor Justinian, and after describing his own career he sketches the previous victories of the Roman eagle. He then states that this sphere is allotted to those who did high deeds on earth for the sake of fame rather than for higher aims. Amongst them is the soul of the pilgrim Romeo, Minister of Count Raimond.

"WHEN Constantine had turned the eagle's flight
 Against Heaven's course, the which of old did move
 After Lavinia's wooer, following it,
 Two hundred years and more the bird of Jove
 Stayed in far Europe's corner, near the gloom 5
 O' the hills from which it issued first to rove,
 And 'neath the shadow of its sacred plume
 There o'er the world from hand to hand did reign,
 Till it revolving unto mine did come.

Line 1. Constantine in removing the seat of empire travelled towards the East, while Æneas first bore the Roman standard from Troy, conquering towards the West, following the sun. "Westward the course of empire holds its way."

Cæsar I was, and am Justinian, 10
 Who through the will o' the primal love I feel
 Expunged from laws the superfluous and the vain,
 And ere unto that task aroused my zeal
 In Christ one nature only I confest, 15
 And with such faith contented, sought my weal,
 For at that season Agapete the blest
 Was highest shepherd, to the faith sincere
 Me with his holy counsel he address.
 Him I believed, and what he told me here 20
 Clearly I see, as both the false and true
 In every contradiction doth appear.
 As soon as with the Church I moved anew
 It pleased God's grace my spirits to incline
 To my high task, and wholly cleave thereto. 25
 To Belisarius I my arms resign,
 On whom Heaven's favours so propitious shone,
 That I should rest from war it was a sign.
 To thy first question were my answer done
 But that its tendency demands as gloss 30
 Touching the eagle something to be shown.
 That thou mayst see how little reason knows
 Each faction, moving 'gainst that standard holy,
 Both those who claim as well as who oppose.
 Behold what virtue made it worthy wholly 35
 Of reverence deep, beginning with the hour
 When Pallas died that it might govern solely.
 Thou know'st it made its nest in Alba's bower
 Three hundred years and more, until that close
 When three 'gainst three gave battle for its power. 40
 From Sabine rape until Lucretia's woes
 Thou knowest its actions underneath seven kings,
 Conquering all round it, all its neighbouring foes.
 Thou know'st its actions when there bore its wings
 'Gainst Brennus and 'gainst Pyrrhus, Romans high, 45
 And 'gainst all other chiefs and gatherings.
 Torquatus thence, Decius, and Quintius by
 His unkempt locks nicknamed, and Fabius vied
 In fame, which I embalm thus willingly.

Line 14. Justinian, in fact, throughout his life favoured the heresy of Eutichus, who appears to have denied Christ's *human* nature. Against this heresy Agapete, Bishop of Rome, wrote. The Empress Theodora's influence inclined her uxorious spouse towards the sect she favoured long after the death of the saint. Dante could not, however, place a heretic in Paradise.

Line 36. Killed by Turnus on coming to the assistance of Æneas. *Æn.*, lib. x.

Line 46. Quintus Cincinnatus.

This overcame the fell Arabians' pride,
 Who, led by Hannibal, found out their way 50
 O'er the Alpine rocks, from which thou, Po, dost glide.
 Beneath this standard triumphed in youth's day
 Scipio and Pompey, and unto that hill
 Where thou wast born most bitter seemed its sway.
 Then, near the time when all the world to still 55
 To its own habitude was Heaven's design,
 Cæsar the standard seized through Rome's high will,
 And what it did from Var unto the Rhine
 The Iser saw, and Loire, and saw the Seine,
 And all the vales that towards the Rhone incline. 60
 Its actions from Ravenna issuing, when
 It crossed the Rubicon, were such in flight
 That cannot follow them or tongue or pen.
 Again towards Spain it veered its serried might,
 Then towards Dyrachium and Pharsalia smote, 65
 That to the Nile was felt its blow's despite.
 Native Antander, Simois remote,
 It saw again, where Hector's ashes lie,
 Hence soaring ill for Ptolemy it wrought.
 On Juba hence like lightning did it fly; 70
 Then to your natal West again it veered,
 Where the Pompeian trumpet sounded high.
 Its deeds with him who next its standard reared,
 Brutus with Cassius bark of them in Hell,
 Modena and Peruge in sadness feared. 75
 Sad Cleopatra waileth for it still,
 Who from the asp, flying that sign before,
 Obtained the death she sought for, swift and fell.
 With him it ran even to the Red Sea's shore;
 With him it gave such peace unto the world 80
 That Janus' temple-gate was barred once more.
 But all the deeds the which that sign unfurled
 Had ever done or ever was to do
 'Mongst mortals, while it triumphed o'er the world,
 Become in seeming all obscure and few, 85
 If with clear eye and pure affection's fire
 His the third Cæsar's mission we but view.

Line 54. The city of Fiesole, sacked after the defeat of Catiline.

Line 87. Tiberius, under whose reign the Jews sacrificed Christ. The deeds of Julius and Augustus are said to pale before the great consummation of God's anger, of which Tiberius is represented as the unconscious instrument.

The living justice which doth me inspire
 Yielded unto his hand of whom I speak
 Glory to wreak the vengeance of his ire. 90
 On what I tell thee now thy wonder slake ;
 With Titus to revenge the standard ran
 The vengeance taken for man's sin antique.
 And when the Lombard tooth did gnawing stain
 The holy Church, beneath its outstretcht wings 95
 Came to her succour conquering Charlemain.
 Now thou canst judge the rival bickerings
 Which I above did blame, their faults expose,
 Which are the cause of all your sufferings. 100
 The Lilies to the public sign oppose
 One side, the other claim it for a part,
 'Tis hard to see which most of error shows.
 Work now, ye Ghibelines, work now your art,
 'Neath other sign ; this standard now eschew, 105
 Who it and justice evermore would part ;
 Nor strive to strike it down. This Charles the new,
 With all his Guelphs, its talons let him fear,
 Who lordlier lion has ere now made rue.
 Many a time the sons have wrung a tear
 For the father's sins, and be it not believed 110
 That, for his Lilies, God his arms will veer.
 Adorn this little star, as dowry sheaved,
 The spirits good, who erst have active been,
 That fame and honour hence might be achieved. 115
 And when for such an end the wishes lean,
 Declining thus, 'tis certain that the rays
 Of true love upwards journey less serene. 120
 But with our merit measuring the phase
 Of our reward is part of our delight,
 Which fitly to its due doth Heaven appraise. 125
 Hence our affection, Justice' living light,
 So draweth towards itself with yearning sweet
 That it can never more be turned from right.
 Different voices make the music sweet,
 So different stations in this life of ours 125
 Make sweeter harmony in the spherall seat.

Line 107. Alluding probably, as suggested by Mr. Cary, to Charles of Valois, son of Philip III. of France, who was sent for by Pope Boniface into Italy under promise of being made emperor. See Canto XX. of the "Purgatory" and note.

Line 112. The subject is suddenly changed, and Dante's second question answered.

And here within this planet's pearly bowers
 Shineth the light of Romeo, whose high deed
 Was ill acknowledged by the worldly powers. 130
 But the Provençals did not all succeed
 Who strove against him; ill their road I ween
 Who others' worth as their own loss aread.
 Raimond had daughters four, and each a queen,
 Such high alliances for him achieved 135
 The pilgrim Romeo, of such humble mien.
 And yet the jealous murmurs him deceived
 To call unto account that steward just,
 Who rendered twelve for every ten received.
 Thence, poor and aged, he was outwards thrust, 140
 And if the world but knew his heart unflawed,
 The while he begged his living crust by crust,
 Even more than now his virtue would it laud."

Line 128. The Italian story of Romeo, steward of the Count of Provence, is that being called to an account of the revenues he had carefully husbanded, he called for the mule, scrip, and staff with which he had come to the Count as a pilgrim of St. James, and departed no one knew whence or whither.

CANTO VII.

Justinian and the other spirits disappear singing praises to God. Dante remains confused with doubt engendered by what he has heard. Beatrice for their satisfaction explains the whole scheme of human redemption.

*Osanna Sanctus Deus Sabaoth,
 Superillustrans claritate tuâ
 Felices ignes horum malahoth:*

Returning thus unto his strain anew, a- 5
 Gain was that substance heard by me to sing,
 O'er which the doubled glory double grew. A-
 While those fair spirits moved in mazy ring,
 Then like to swiftest sparks they sped away
 On a sudden in the distance vanishing. 10
 I was in doubt, and to myself did say,
 "Tell it, O tell it to my lady dear,
 Who with sweet drops my thirsting will allay."
 But the deep reverence, akin to fear,
 Which ever overcame me all, for Bice, 15
 Like one inclined to slumber bowed me here.

Line 1. *Osanna*, Lord God of Sabaoth, illuminating with Thy brightness the happy fires of these kingdoms, *malahoth* being a Hebrew word.

Line 14. Dante's pet name for the lady of his love.

Such state allowed but briefly Beatrice,
 And thus began, as o'er me rayed her smile,
 Such that in flames to happiness 'twould reach ye.
 "My sight infallible has seen erewhile,
 How just revenge can justly punished be, 20
 To doubtful thought thy reason doth beguile,
 But from this doubt thy mind I soon will free :
 And mark me well, because these words of mine
 Boon of great import will present to thee.
 Through suffering not the curb, for will benign 25
 Imposed on him, that man who ne'er was born,
 Damning himself at once damned all his line :
 By which the human species lay forlorn
 For many ages in its error great,
 Until the Word of God was pleased to adorn 30
 That place where human nature, separate
 From its Creator, was with him renewed,
 By act of love eterne regenerate.
 Now be my subject by thy vision viewed ;
 This nature with its Maker joined in one 35
 Such as created was sincere and good :
 But by itself in sooth was it outthrown
 From Paradise, because it turned away
 From God, the path of truth and life alone.
 Therefore that penalty the Cross did lay 40
 On that assumed nature if we mark,
 A greater justice never did it pay :
 And so there never was such injury stark,
 If we regard the person who that doom
 Suffered, contracting human nature dark. 45
 Different effects from one act then did come ;
 Since one death pleased to God, and to the Jews :
 At it earth trembled, opened Heaven's dome.
 No more henceforth shouldst thou with doubt accuse,
 When it is told to thee that vengeance just 50
 By a just court was venged with rightful dues.
 But now I see thy mind again mistrust,
 Shaping in thought a doubt upon this theme
 For whose solution it doth sorely lust.
 Thou sayest what I hear I clearly deem, 55
 But why God chose, to me is still concealed,
 For our redemption this peculiar scheme.

Line 20. Alluding to line 90 in Justinian's speech, where the death of Christ is called with approbation the vengeance of God's anger.

Line 26. The man who ne'er was born is Adam.

This law, O brother, standeth unrevealed
 Unto the eyes of every one, whose mind
 Within the flames of love is not annealed. 60
 Since of a verity this truth to find,
 So many gaze, and yet so few discern,
 I'll say why this as worthiest was designed.
 Goodness Divine, which from itself doth spurn
 All labour, kindling in itself doth blaze, 65
 Displaying thus its beauties all eterne.
 Whate'er from it without a medium rays
 Can know no end, since ever must remain
 On it the seal which once the Deity lays.
 Whate'er without a medium hence doth rain 70
 Is wholly free, because it cannot lie
 'Neath the new influence of the starry train.
 The most conformed to God, most charms on high,
 Since the holy ardour which on all things rays,
 O'er its own semblance most doth vivify. 75
 In all these things the human creature lays
 His 'vantage-ground, and if he fail in one
 The prize of his nobility decays.
 To disenfranchise him can sin alone,
 Spoiling his likeness to the chiefest good, 80
 Since of the light so little he hath won.
 And never is his dignity renewed,
 Unless where sin has failed he satisfy,
 For evil joy just penalties endued. 85
 Your nature when it sinned thus totally
 In its first seed, even as from Paradise
 Was banished also from such dignity:
 Nor can it be regained, in subtle guise
 If thou regardest this by any road,
 Unless by one of the two I now devise. 90
 Either through courtesy alone must God
 Have this restored, or by himself must man
 Have satisfied his own mad hardihood.
 Let now thy eye be fixed, far as it can,
 I' the abyss of the eternal counsels deep, 95
 Intent on what I tell of Heaven's plan.
 While man his own allotted bounds doth keep
 He could not pay by his humility,
 However low might his obedience creep,

Line 67. Whatever proceeds directly from God, without mediate intervention, is immortal, and is free from the influence of the stars. These qualities, together with his resemblance to God, in whose image he was created, constituted the peculiar privileges of man until lost by sin, which also turned him out of Paradise. Such is the argument of the next twenty lines.

His former disobedient surquedry : 100
 This is the reason why mankind alone
 By their own act could never satisfy.
 It needed then that God, by ways His own,
 Unto his life entire should man restore,
 Either by both His ways, I say, or one. 105
 But since the deed delights so much the more
 The doer, as it most doth represent
 The goodness of the heart such fruit that bore ;
 Goodness Divine, that to the world hath lent
 His image, to proceed by every way 110
 To raise ye upwards was alone content.
 Nor 'twixt the last night and the primal day
 So high and so magnificent a deed
 Has ever been, nor e'er can be for aye.
 Since God was far more bounteous of His meed 115
 Giving Himself, to grant man strength to rise,
 Than had He by His mercy only freed.
 And not another method could suffice
 The claims of justice, if the Son of God
 Had not been humbled in a mortal's guise. 120
 Now to content each wish, even unavowed,
 I turn another place to clear to thee,
 That thou, like I, may see it clear and broad.
 Thou say'st I see the air, the fire I see,
 Water and earth, and all things hence arrayed, 125
 Come to corruption, and but briefly be :
 Yet all these things by God Himself were made :
 Therefore if what I said indeed be true
 These in corruption should be never laid.
 The angels, brother, and this country new 130
 In which thou art, may well be called created,
 So in their essence we entirety view :
 But the elements of which thou now hast prated,
 And all things which from them their being crave,
 Are influenced by a power itself created. 135

Line 105. Both the ways mentioned in lines 91, 2, 3—i.e., either by Mercy or Justice, or by both, the latter being alone consonant to the idea of God's perfection.

Line 121. Beatrice having stated that whatever proceeds directly from God, without mediate intervention, is immortal, proceeds to show that this is not applicable to the elements, which are influenced by the stars, themselves a created power, whose influence does not extend to the spiritual life of man and angels. Dante's belief in astrological influences has been already noticed, and is again dwelt upon in the following Canto.

Created was the matter which they have :
 Created too was the informing power
 In yonder stars, which round about them wave.
 The spirit of each brute and of each flower
 Doth influence with potential energy 140
 The ray and motion of yon starry bower.
 But this our life, the high Benignity
 Breathes without medium, and so fills with love
 That for Himself it yearneth endlessly.
 And hence thou also hast the power to prove 145
 Your resurrection, if thou think'st elated
 How man was made by God in Eden's grove,
 When both our primal parents were created."

CANTO VIII.

Dante ascends with Beatrice to the sphere of the planet Venus. Amongst the troop of spirits who greet him here he converses with Charles Martel, King of Hungary, who, after discoursing on the prospects of his descendants then alive, explains to him how the influence of the stars was used by God as a means for the advantage of human polity.

THE while the world in pagan error strayed
 It thought that on her epicycle rolled
 Fair Venus o'er the world her false love rayed.
 Therefore to her not only did they hold
 Their sacrifices, and their votive cry, 5
 That ancient people in their error old,
 But Cupid and Dione honoured high,
 The last her mother, and the first her son,
 And said that he in Dido's lap did lie.
 And eke from her, with whom my strain's begun, 10
 They took the appellation of the star
 Which leading now, now following, woos the sun.
 Of my ascent to it I was not 'ware ;
 But of my entrance gave me certainty
 My lady, where I saw her grow more fair. 15
 And as within the flame a spark we see,
 And as in voices joined a voice we hear,
 If one the tenour keeps, one ranges free,

Line 2. The epicycle in the Ptolemaic system is the smaller circle in which each planet revolves of its own motion, independent of the greater circle of the spheres, derived from the primum mobile.

Line 12. Venus being alternately the morning and evening star. " Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name, for what is one." Tennyson.

So in that light did other lights appear,
 Who in their circle, less or larger, keep, 20
 According to the eternal light they share.
 From a cold cloud the winds would never sweep,
 Or visible or not so to the eyne,
 But slow and hindered they would seem to creep
 To one who had beheld those lights divine 25
 Coming towards us, as they leave the wheel
 Begun before, 'midst higher seraphim :
 And after them who first appeared did peal
 Hosanna, so that ever since to hear
 That sound again the yearning do I feel. 30
 Thence one amongst them unto us drew near,
 And thus began alone : " To thy desire
 We all are ready for thy joyaunce here.
 We turn with heavenly pryncedoms in our choir,
 With them one circling motion, one resolve, 35
 To whom thou in the world didst tune thy lyre ;
 Ye, *who with knowledge the third Heaven revolve* :
 We are so full of love, for thy delight
 Some pause no less of sweetness will involve." 40
 After my eyes with reverence did invite
 Permission of my lady, who replied
 With look that gave them certainty of right,
 They turned unto the light who such a wide
 Promise had offered, and, " Who are ye, say !"
 With great affection by my voice was cried. 45
 Brighter and clearer did I see him ray
 By the new joyousness which o'er him grew
 When to his joyousness I thus did say :
 Embellished thus he told me, " Years but few
 The world possessed me ; had they longer been 50
 Much ill had been not which must now accrue.
 It is my gladness which conceals my mien,
 And hides me from thee as it rays around,
 Like creature swathed in its own silken sheen.

Line 21. As each, according to his deserts, shares more or less of the Divine vision.

Line 37. "Voi oh' intendendo il terzo ciel movete." The first line in Dante's first canzone in the "Convito."

Line 40. The speaker is Charles Martel, crowned King of Hungary, and son of Charles II., King of Naples and Sicily, before whom he died. His brother Robert succeeded to his father, whose evil reign Charles Martel's longer life would have prevented. He visited Florence in 1295, where he appears to have won the goodwill of Dante, and his present place in Paradise.

U

Well didst thou love me, and for this hadst ground. 55
 Had I lived longer, I to thee had shown
 More than the leaves, how much did love abound.
 That country on the left, laved by the Rhone
 When mingled with the Sorza it doth lie,
 Looked for the time when I should mount its throne : 60
 And fair Ausonia's horn, where studded lie
 Bari, Gaëta, and Crotona's town,
 From where the Trentè to the sea doth fly.
 Already shone upon my brow the crown
 O' the country where the Danube slips away 65
 When from its German banks 'tis glided down ;
 And fair Trinacria, which above the bay
 Betwixt Pachinus and Pelorus, (where
 Eurur for ever holds his stormy sway,)
 Grooms with the steaming sulphur in the air, 70
 Not by Typhœus, still would kings await
 Sprung from my loins, to Charles and Rodolph heir,
 If evil ruling, which makes desperate
 The subject people, had not roused the cry
 Of Death still Death, within Palermo's gate. 75
 And if my brother would but this descry,
 To save his people from the biting greed
 Of Catalonian harpies he would fly :
 For truly it behoveth him to heed,
 By him or others, that his vessel's freight 80
 With load on load be not sunk down indeed.
 His nature from free stock degenerate
 Has need of such a ministry, whose zeal
 Would never strive full coffers to create."
 "Since I believe the gladness which I feel 85
 Thy speech, my lord, within me sheds abroad,
 Where there begins and ceases every weal

Line 58. Provence, and in the next *terzina* Naples, to which kingdom he was heir.

Line 67. Sicily, called after its three promontories of Pachinus, Pelorus, and Lilibeus. Etna was supposed to be the burial-place of the giant Typhœus, from which he vomited forth fire and smoke, Ovid, 5 *Metam.* Eurur per Siculas equitavit undas. Horace, *Odes* iv., 14, 44.

Line 75. Alluding to the Sicilian Vespers, where the line of kings descending from Charles I. of Naples, Charles Martel's grandfather, was overthrown.

Line 82. Charles Martel accuses his brother Robert of avarice, though the son of a liberal father; that father, Charles II. of Naples, was contemptuously branded with the same vice by Hugh Capet, in *Canto XX.* of "Purgatory," when he accused him of selling his daughter like a pirate his captives.

Line 85. The joy thy speech causes me is greater, in that *thou* seest it in God, the mirror of truth, and even more in that thou seest it *there*.

By thee is seen, as unto me bestowed,
 It pleases more, and even this is dear,
 That thou discern'st it, gazing upon God. 90
 Thou'st made me joyful, so now make me clear,
 Since from thy words a doubt within doth glide,
 How from sweet seed can issue bitter cheer."
 This I to him, and he to me replied :
 " If any truth I can to thee dispense, 95
 This now behind thee, shall be frontways eyed.
 God, who this realm thou rangest o'er contents
 Revolving, in these starry forms doth place
 A power that worketh for His Providence. 100
 And not alone within His mind of grace
 Is every nature in itself foreseen,
 But all things that their safety doth embrace.
 For every shaft shot forth from Heaven's serene
 Falleth prepared to some concerted end, 105
 As to its mark wings straight the arrow keen.
 Were this not so, o' the Heavens where thou dost wend
 Every effect such weakness would inherit
 That not to art but ruin would they tend.
 Nor might this be, unless each guiding spirit 110
 That moves these stars deficient were and frail,
 And God deficient making their demerit.
 Wouldst thou this truth even yet more clearly hail?"
 And I; " No more: it is impossible
 That Nature in such work of need should fail." 115
 Whence he again: " Now tell me, were it well
 For man on earth were he not citizen?"
 " Surely," I answered, " is no need to tell."
 " And could it be so if the hive of men
 In different ways of living did not roam?
 No, if your master this doth truly ken." 120
 So to the point deducing did he come,
 And then concluded: " For each different bourn
 Mankind must different qualities assume:
 Hence one is Solon, one is Xerxes born, 125
 And one Melchisedek, another he
 Who flying in the air his son did mourn.
 Nature revolving stamps with her decree
 The mortal wax, and well her art hath thriven,
 Though note she takes not of each family.

Line 120. Aristotle, in his treatise " De Republica."

Hence is it Esau differ'd so in leaven 130
 From Jacob, hence did Romulus upspring
 From sire so vile, to Mars his birth was given.
 Nature begotten to its path would cling
 To the begetter aye in similar guise, 135
 If not o'ercome by Heaven's foreseeing King.
 What was behind is now before thy eyes,
 But still to show the joy thou givest my mind,
 A sequent truth to adorn thee I devise.
 For ever Nature when she Fate doth find 140
 Discordant to herself, like other seed
 Succeedeth not, out of its place designed.
 And if the world below would only heed
 The sure foundation Nature doth impose,
 By following her mankind would better speed. 145
 But ye divert unto Religion's vows
 One who was born to gird on him the blade,
 And one who's apt to preach, as king ye choose:
 Hence from the path so wide your steps have strayed."

Line 130. The difference in the nature of men does not spring from their progenitors, but from the influence of the stars, shown even in the case of the twins Esau and Jacob, whose birth, though so nearly simultaneous, was under different astrological influences, the smallest diversity of place being held sufficient to cause a diversity in the working of the heavenly bodies.

Line 145. An evident sarcasm on the fighting Popes of the Middle Ages.

CANTO IX.

The spirit of Charles Martel retires, and Dante is then addressed by Cunizza, the sister of Ezzelino, the tyrant of Romano, who foretells to him certain near events in Italian history. She is followed by Folco, the Provençal poet of Genoa, who informs him that the spirit of the harlot Rahab holds the highest place in their sphere, and inveighs against the Papacy for its neglect of the Holy Land, for which Rahab served so faithfully.

AFTER thy father Charles, Clemenza pure!
 Had solv'd my doubts, he showed to me the fears
 Which his own seed were destined to endure.
 He told me: "Speak not, leave the rolling years;"
 So I can tell thee nothing, but thy right 5
 Will after be avenged with justest tears.

Line 1. Clemenza, daughter of Charles Martel, and second wife to Louis X. of France. The allusion in the following lines is to the usurpation of the kingdom of Apulia by Robert, brother of Charles Martel, to the exclusion of the latter's son Canrobert, avenged afterwards by the misfortunes of the former.

And now the visage of that holy light
 Was turned unto its sun, that fills it o'er,
 That good, sufficient all things to requite.
 Ah, souls deceived, and impious to the core, 10
 Who from such largess wrench your hearts away,
 Your brows directing to all idle lore!
 And lo! another splendour came straightway
 Towards me, and with kindling brilliance showed
 Its wish my thirst for knowledge to allay. 15
 The eyes of Beatrice o'er me glowed,
 And as the former time of dear assent
 Unto my wish the certainty avowed.
 "Ah, the deep yearning of my heart prevent,
 O blessed spirit!" I cried, "and prove to me 20
 I can reflect on thee my thoughts close pent."
 On which that light that reached us recently
 From the star's deeps, in which it sang before,
 Joying in kindness thus continued free.
 "In that part of the vile Italian shore 25
 Which midway 'twixt the famed Rialto lies,
 And where the Brent and Piave their fountains pour,
 Not very high, a little hill doth rise,
 From whence of late a firebrand oft did flit,
 That to that region caused sore miseries. 30
 From the same root were born both I and it:
 Cunizza was I called, and here I shine
 Because I yielded to this planet's light.
 But in myself I joy, nor e'er repine
 At the reason of my lot, nor it condemn, 35
 The which your vulgar herd may scarce divine.
 Of this most lustrous and transplendent gem
 Which here beside me doth our Heaven unfold,
 Great fame remained on earth, nor will it dim

Line 25. Between Venice and the sources of the Brent and Piave lies the castle of Romano, the lord of which, Ezzelino, famous for his tyrannies, was introduced in Canto XII. of the "Hell," in the river of blood. The speaker is his sister Cunizza, celebrated for her amorous adventures, having been mistress, amongst others, to Sordello the poet, introduced in Cantos VI. and VII. of the "Purgatory."

Line 32. The meaning is not that by yielding to the influence of Venus Cunizza won her place in Paradise, which would have been a forestalling of George Sand's famous doctrine on the subject, and curious interpretation of Christ's words to the Magdalen, but that through her failings in this respect she obtained no higher sphere, which, however, according to the laws of Paradise, can now cause her no regret.

Line 37. Folco, the Provençal poet, born at Genoa, to whom Dante here promised a reputation that should last five hundred years. It has lasted longer in his poem.

Until a hundred years five times have rolled : 40
 See if mankind ought not for worth to strive
 So that another life the first may hold.
 But thinks not thus the present human hive,
 Which Tagliamento and Adige inclose,
 Nor for their punishment their sins they shrive. 45
 But soon will Padua in her mortal throes
 Crimson the water which Vincenza laves,
 Because her sons to right were ever foes.
 And where the Sile joins Cagnano's waves
 One lords it, and now goes with head on high, 50
 Whom to enmesh the net even now one weaves.
 Feltro will also weep the infamy
 Of its own impious pastor, never once
 In Malta entered crime of such black dye.
 That tub must hold a very large allowance 55
 That would receive the Ferrarese's blood,
 And weary work to weigh it ounce by ounce,
 Which by this courteous priest will be bestowed
 To show his party zeal : the country owns
 Such gifts conformed to its accustomed road. 60
 Above are mirrors, powers whom ye call thrones,
 From them God's judgments shine upon our eyes,
 So that my parley only truth intones."
 Here she grew silent, and became in guise
 Intent on other thoughts, within the wheel, 65
 Wherein unto her former place she hies.
 The other joyaunce she did not reveal,
 Became a splendent glory in my sight,
 Like ruby, on the which the sun's rays steal.
 With gladness there above the face grows bright 70
 As with a smile on earth ; in Hell grows black,
 The lost soul's shadow with the mind's despite.
 "Thou seest all things in God's visual track,"
 I cried, "blest spirit, so that no wish springs
 Which to thy keen perception eye can lack. 75

Line 44. The country then called the Marca Trivigiana.

Line 46. Alluding to the rout of the Paduans by Can Grande della Scala at Vicenza in 1314, which shows that this must have been written after that date.

Line 49. Riccardo du Camino, who was killed in Trevigi while playing chess.

Line 52. The Bishop of Feltro received, on a promise of protection, several fugitives of Ferrara who had rebelled against the Pope, and gave them up for slaughter.

Line 54. Malta was the name of the tower built by Cunizzo's brother Ezzelino, in which he confined his prisoners, and subjected them to unheard-of tortures.

Line 67. The other joyaunce, Folco, the Provençal poet.

Why then thy Heaven-delighting carollings,
 Mixt ever with the song o' the pious fires,
 Who shroud their faces with six spreading wings,
 Do they not satisfy to my desires?
 I would not thus have waited thy demand 80
 If thy thought thus, as mine, through thee transpires."
 "The greatest vale in which the waters stand,"
 Then his celestial parley he began,
 "Except that sea which garlands every land,
 Betwixt discordant shores against the sun 85
 Goes on so far, that its meridian
 With what was erst horizon grow to one.
 I dwelt beside that Mediterranean,
 'Twixt Ebro and the Macra, which divide 90
 The shores of Genoa from the Tuscan plain.
 Rises and sets alike the solar pride
 To Bezza, and the land which was my own,
 Which with its blood made warm its harbour's tide.
 The people unto whom my name was known 95
 Did call me Folco, and this Heaven doth bear
 My impress, as in life I bore its own;
 For burned not ever Belus' daughter fair,
 Both to Sichæus and Creusa's shame,
 Like I, while lasted youth's loose flowing hair. 100
 Nor she of Rhodope e'er nurst such flame
 For her Demophon, nor Hercules
 When Iole his mighty heart did tame.
 Not that one here repents, one smiles at ease,
 Not at the fault, that never comes to mind,
 But at the power that causes and foresees. 105
 Here on that art we gaze that hath designed
 Such deep affection, and the good discern
 By which your world the path to ours doth find.
 But that each wish with which thou here dost yearn,
 Contented thou mayst carry from this sphere, 110
 It needs that somewhat further thou shouldst learn.

Line 78. The seraphim. Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings. Isaiah vii. 2.

Line 82. The Mediterranean, largest of all seas except the world-surrounding ocean which extends between the shores of Europe and Asia so far eastwards that what was first its horizon becomes its meridian.

Line 91. Genoa and Bezza lie in the same longitude, on the opposite shores of Europe and Africa. The allusion in line 93 is to the naval victory of the Saracens over the Genoese in 936.

Line 97. Dido, Sichæus being her former husband, and Creusa Æneas' former wife.

Thou wouldest know who in this light so near
 Beside me sparkles thus with flame divine,
 Like the sun's ray upon a limpid mere.
 Now know that there within doth tranquil shine 115
 The soul of Rahab, to our order wed,
 Is sealed her impress in the highest line.
 Unto this Heaven, the last to which hath sped
 The shadow of your world, ere any soul,
 From Hell by Christ triumphant was she led. 120
 Well did it fit such trophy to enrol
 In any Heaven, for the conquest high,
 Won by His nailed hands to the Cross's dole.
 Because she favoured the first victory
 Of Joshua, entering on that holy land, 125
 Which little wins the Papal memory.
 The city, which by him doth planted stand,
 Who first did turn his back to his Maker's power,
 And from whose envy every grief has wonned,
 Produces and spreads wide the accursed flower 130
 Which now has scattereth wide both lambs and sheep,
 And turned to a wolf the shepherd at this hour.
 For this the Evangelists they no more keep,
 Nor the great Doctors, the Decretals solely
 Are studied, as is proved by margins deep. 135
 The Pope and Cardinals these have studied wholly :
 Their thoughts to Nazareth ne'er take their flight,
 Where opened Gabriel his pinions holy.
 But the Vatican, and every chosen site
 In Rome, which now a burial-place we see 140
 Of militants who fought good Peter's fight,
 From such adultery will soon be free."

Line 130. The gold florin of Florence stamped with a lily.

Line 134. The Decretals, or Canonical law, deeply studied, as their annotated margins show, for a means of human advancement.

Line 139. Alluding either to the death of his pet Pope, Boniface VIII., author of the sixth Decretal, or to the transfer of the holy see to Avignon.

CANTO X.

They ascend to the sphere of the sun, the fourth Heaven, where they are surrounded by a garland of twelve blessed spirits. One of these, Thomas Aquinas, names the rest to Dante.

GAZING upon the Son he loves so well
 With love which each breathes forth eternally,
 The Father, primal and ineffable,

Whatever by the mind or sight we see,
 Makes with such order that without delight 5
 Of him who looks on it it cannot be.
 With me, O reader, then lift up thy sight
 Straight to those lofty spheres unto that part
 Where on one motion doth another smite,
 And there commence thy rapture in the art 10
 Of the great Master, who so loves His work
 That never from it doth His eye depart.
 Behold how from that point doth springing fork
 The line oblique on which the planets go
 To satisfy the world which claims their work. 15
 And if their path were not thus twisted so
 Much virtue in the Heavens would be in vain,
 And almost every power be dead below.
 And if or more or less it were to gain
 From the straight path than now, would greatly fail 20
 In earth and Heaven the world's pre-ordered train.
 Rest on thy bench now, reader, and regale
 In thought on the feast to which I thee invite,
 Wouldst thou no weariness through joyaunce feel.
 I've placed the food before thee, taste aright, 25
 Since to itself recalleth all my care
 The matter which I purposed to indite.
 Of Nature the most powerful minister,
 Which dowers the world with virtue of the sky,
 And with His light the time doth meting share, 30
 Joined to that station, now to memory
 Recalled, was rolling on His spires in air,
 So that each day was born more rapidly ;
 And I was with Him : of my journey there
 I had known nothing any more than man 35
 Whence his first thought had travelled is aware.

Line 9. Where the general motion of the spheres strikes against the particular motion of each planet, which repercussion is supposed, according to Dante's system, to be strongest at the junction of the zodiac and equinoctial line, because each motion is then at its greatest velocity from being at the greatest distance from the poles. Such is Venturi's ingenious explanation.

Line 19. If the line of the zodiac were less or more oblique than it is the seasons would not be divided so happily as they now are.

Line 28. The sun was in the above-mentioned intersection of the zodiac and equinoctial lines after the vernal equinox, when every day it rises earlier.

Line 36. I have here adopted Venturi's interpretation. Mr. Cary translates the passage : " Thus a man is aware of his arrival before his first thought on it." The text will bear both meanings, but the last loses an original conception.

Ah! Beatrice, she who ever ran
 From good to better with such sudden flight
 That Time her action never yet could scan,
 How needed now that she should grow more bright! 40
 What, entering in the sun, was seen by me,
 Not as a colour, but apparent light,
 Genius, art, practice could I summon free,
 To fancy's eyesight I could never show,
 One can believe alone, and long to see. 45
 And if our fantasies indeed are low
 To such a height no marvel this I ween,
 For o'er the sun no eye did ever go.
 Here the great Sire's fourth family was seen,
 To whom the sight of His Begotten Son 50
 And Spirit proceeding aye gives joy serene.
 "Now thank, O thank," thus Beatrix begun,
 "The angel's sun, who by His grace has reared
 Thee to such sensible perception." 55
 Sure mortal heart was never so prepared
 For prayer, and never sought so yearningly
 Wholly to yield itself to God all bared.
 As at those words of holy counsel, I,
 And so my love on Him was fixt; it e'en 60
 Eclipsed my Beatrix in memory.
 It vexed her not: thereat she smiled serene,
 So that the splendour of her smiling eyes
 My centered mind recalled to the outward scene.
 There many clear, surpassing brilliances 65
 I saw make us the centre of their crown,
 Even sweeter in their voice than clear in guise.
 Thus do we sometimes see around the moon
 A halo, where so pregnant is the air
 It can retain the light that makes the zone. 70
 Within the court of Heaven, whence I repair,
 Such that they cannot from that realm be brought,
 Are found a store of jewels rich and fair.
 Such must the song of those pure lights be thought:
 Who hath not plumage for a heavenward flight,
 By him the account from silence must be sought. 75
 When singing thus, those suns so burning bright,
 Three times had moved in circle us around,
 Like stars that wheel close round the polar light,

Line 49. The spirits of the fourth Heaven.

They seemed like ladies to the dance still bound,
 But who, in silence while their dance they cease, 80
 Listen to gather the new burden's sound.
 And one of them I heard begin: "Of grace,
 Since the pure ray of love its light doth gain,
 Which afterwards by loving doth increase,
 Within thee multiplied so shines amain 85
 That it conducts thee upwards by this stair,
 Which none descends who will not climb again,
 Who to thy thirst the wine of his flask to share
 Would fain deny, possesses such a power 90
 As water, that to ocean must repair.
 Thou wouldest know what plants are those that flower
 Around this garland that woos lovingly
 The lady fair that wins thee Heaven as dower.
 One of the lambs of the holy flock was I
 Which Dominic along the path leads right, 85
 Where well they thrive who're free from vanity.
 He who stands nearest to me on the right
 Was erst my master, Albert of Cologne,
 And I am Thomas of Aquinum hight. 100
 If thou wouldst all the others should be known
 As I describe them let thy sight the while
 Around the blessed garland circling wonne.
 That other flaming issues from the smile
 Of Gratian, who gave joy in Paradise
 When either forum he did reconcile. 105
 He who the next doth in our chorus rise
 Was Peter, he who with the widow gave
 His treasure to the Church as benefice.
 The fifth light, and the fairest which we have,
 Such love inspires that all the world below 110
 Of his soul's doom to learn the tidings crave.
 Within it is that light wherein doth glow
 Knowledge so deep that if the truth be true
 No second ever rose so much to know:

Line 80. In those days the performance consisted of dance and song united, to which ballata, as it was called, Dante compares the choral circlings of his spirits in Paradise.

Line 94. The speaker is Thomas Aquinas, of the Dominican order.

Line 104. Gratian of Chiusi, another Benedictine monk, who reconciled the canon and civil law by his compilation of the Decretals.

Line 107. Pietro Lombardo, who commenced his "Liber Sententiarum" by comparing it to the two mites offered by the poor widow to the treasury.

Line 109. Solomon, concerning whom in the Middle Ages it was a common question whether his soul was saved or not.

Next him that taper's splendour thou dost view, 115
 Who, while in flesh, the most did penetrate
 The angelic nature and their ministering crew.
 He, of the Christian temples advocate,
 Smileth within that other little light,
 From whom Augustus borrowed stores of weight. 120
 Now if thou passest o'er thy mental sight
 From flame to flame behind my praises due,
 Already on the eighth thy thirst doth light.
 Of every good rejoiceth in the view
 The holy soul, who the fallacious world 125
 Made clear to all who hear his teaching true.
 His body, whence by violence 'twas hurled,
 Lies in Cieldauro, this from martyrdom
 And exile came unto this peaceful world.
 Behold, beyond the ardent spirits loom 130
 Of Isidore, and Bede, and Richard too,
 Who in the power of thought past mortal doom.
 This, where thy gaze returns to me anew,
 Is splendour of a soul whose thoughts of bliss
 Made death seem tardy in his longing view. 135
 The eternal light of Sigisbert is this,
 Who, reading deep at Paris, in Straw Street,
 Truths against envy well did syllogise."
 Then, like a clock which doth the hour repeat,
 What time the bride of God with joy doth rise, 140
 The spouse she loves with matin song to greet,
 That one part with the other rolls and flies,
 Sounding its chiming bells with such sweet tone,
 It fills the pious soul with loving sighs,
 So did I see that glorious wheel move on, 145
 In harmony so mingling voice with voice,
 And sweetness, such as never can be known
 Save there, where one for ever will rejoice.

Line 115. Dionysius the Areopagite, author of the mystical works "De Cælesti Hierarchiâ," from which Dante borrowed his scheme of the celestial hierarchy.

Line 118. Supposed to be Paulus Orosius, a father of the fifth century.

Line 125. Boetius, author of the work "De Consolatione Philosophiæ," here alluded to, and put to death by command of Theodoric. He was buried in a monastery in Pavia called Ciel d'Oro.

Line 131. The Venerable Bede is known as an Englishman. It is not worth while to occupy space by copying from the Commentaries notices of the remainder of these forgotten fathers of the Church.

Line 140. The Church, the spouse of Christ.

CANTO XI.

When the spirits of the fathers of the Church again come to a pause St. Thomas says that he has seen in God's mirror two difficulties which have arisen in Dante's mind. To solve the first he relates in glory of the founder of his own order, St. Dominic, the life of his great rival, St. Francis, and concludes by pointing out how the Dominicans have departed from the self-denying rules of their order.

O IDLE objects for which mortals care,
 How are defective all the syllogisms
 Which ever down to earth thy pinions bear!
 One after laws, one after aphorisms
 Was searching, one on priesthood was intent, 5
 And one to rule by force, and one by schisms,
 And one to rob, one lawsuits to invent,
 One wallowing in his sensual delight
 Grew sated, one on slothful ease was bent,
 While I, from all these things delivered quite, 10
 With Beatrice soared to Heaven's high sphere,
 There to be greeted with such welcome bright.
 After that each to his former post drew near
 Within the circle; motionless he shone
 Like candle burning in a chandelier, 15
 And I perceived within that beaming one
 Which first had parleyed with me, with a smile,
 Discourse commence, in light more lucid grown.
 "As from his ray I gather light the while 20
 On the eternal splendour gazing fair,
 Thy thoughts I apprehend, and whence they file.
 Thou doubttest, and dost wish me to explain
 With words that clearly, fully may arrive
 To make my saying all before thee plain, 25
 Both where I said before, 'where well they thrive,'
 And where thou heard'st, 'no second ever rose,'
 And here for clear distinction must we strive.
 The Providence which doth the world dispose
 With counsel, into which all mortal sight
 Is lost, or ere unto its deeps it goes, 30
 That she might walk towards her own delight,
 That bride of God (which with His blessed blood
 He spoused when on the Cross He cried with might),

Line 25. See lines 96 and 114 of the last Canto.

Line 31. The two guides chosen for Christ's bride, the Church, are St. Francis and St. Dominic, the founders of the two great orders.

Safe in herself, and with His faith endued,
 Two chiefs in her behalf did God endow, 35
 Who on each side should guide her on the road.
 One was seraphic in his ardent glow,
 The other by his wisdom was on earth
 A splendour of the light which cherubs know. 40
 Of one will I now speak, because the worth
 Of each is told, whichever one we take,
 Since for one need the deeds of both had birth.
 Between Tupino and the streams that break
 Falling from blest Ubaldo's chosen hill,
 A fertile slope hangs from the mountain peak 45
 From whence both heat and cold Peruge doth feel
 By Porta Sole, while behind their yoke
 Gualdo with Nocera are wailing still.
 From that fair mountain side where the steep rock
 Is sloped upon the world, was born a sun, 50
 As this has often o'er the Ganges broke.
 Therefore whoe'er this place by words makes known
 Let him no more Assisi curtly say,
 But be it styled henceforth the East alone. 55
 Far from its rising had not reached his day
 Ere he began to make the earth perceive
 Some comfort in his mighty virtue's ray,
 For while a youth, although his father grieve,
 He chose his lady, as to Death, the door
 Of Pleasure ne'er to her doth entrance give: 60
 And there the bishop's spiritual court before,
Et corum patre, he to her was wed.
 After from day to day he loved her more.
 She, of her former husband long bestead
 A thousand years and more, despised and poor, 65
 Till this one came was unsolicited,
 Nor 'vailed it aught that she was found secure
 Beside Amyclas when she heard the voice
 Which shook with fear the world, nor brave to endure,

Line 43. A description of the birthplace of St. Francis, born at Assisi, between the rivulets of Tupino and Chiasi. Ubaldo was a saint of the Middle Ages.

Line 48. Gualdo and Nocera were tributaries of Perugia.

Line 68. Alluding to the lines in Lucan's "Pharsalia," lib. v., where Cæsar, amidst the tumults of war, finds the fisherman Amyclas secure with poverty:—

"O vitæ tuta facultas
 Pauperis, angustique Lares! O munera nondum
 Intellecta Deum! quibus hoc contingere templis,
 Aut potuit muris, nullo trepidare tumultu,
 Casaræ pulsante manu?"

Availed her constant courage even in loss, 70
 So that when Mary mother wept below
 She took her place with Christ upon the Cross.
 But that too far my riddle should not go,
 Francis and poverty, those lovers true,
 Henceforth through this description thou mayst know. 75
 Their concord, and their guise of joyful hue,
 Their love, their marvel, and their tender gaze,
 Were cause of holy thoughts in all who view,
 So that the venerable Bernard lays
 His sandals by the first, and for such peace 80
 Hasteth, and hasting thinks that he delays.
 O wealth unknown! O good of sure increase!
 Egidius and Sylvester bare their feet
 Behind that bridegroom, so the bride doth please. 85
 Thence journeys on that sire and master sweet,
 Leading his lady and that family,
 Who gird the rope already, symbol meet,
 Nor shame of heart did make him droop his eye
 That he was Pietro Bernardone's son,
 Despised by those who watched him wonderingly. 90
 But king-like he his rule austere made known
 To Innocent, and at his hand received
 The signet first to his religion won.
 Then, when the lowly people who believed
 Round him increased, his marvellous renown 95
 In Heavenly glory well in song is weaved.
 The eternal spirit with a second crown
 Through Pope Honorius did his scheme illumine,
 Upon the patriarch's holy wish rained down.
 And afterwards by thirst of martyrdom, 100
 Within the presence of the Soldan's pride,
 He preached of Christ and those who with Him come.
 And when unripe that people he descried
 For their conversion, not to stay in vain
 To pluck Italian fruitage back he hied. 105
 'Twith Tiber and the Arno of Christ slain
 The signet he received upon the hill.
 Until his death two years the marks remain.
 When unto him who did such grace instil
 It pleased to bear him upwards to the meed 110
 Which he had conquered by his humble will,

Line 106. On the hill of Alvernia St. Francis is stated, according to the legend, to have received the stigmata, or marks of Christ's wounds on his hands and feet. The reception of the stigmata was a favourite subject with early artists.

Unto his brethren, as his heirs, the heed
 He recommended of his lady dear,
 That they with faith should love her he decreed. 115
 Then from his bosom sought his spirit clear
 To soar aloft, returning to his reign,
 And for his body asked no other bier.
 Think henceforth to what height he must attain
 Deemed his fit colleague to support the bark
 Of Peter, struggling in the stormy main. 120
 And this one was our own blest patriarch.
 Then whoso follows him as he commands
 A worthy meed doth bear thou well mayst mark.
 But his own flock grown gluttonous, demands
 New provender, or else they now would not 125
 In diverse pastures spread o'er all the lands.
 And aye so much the more his sheep remote
 From their own fold in wandering spirit go,
 More milkless they return unto the cote.
 In truth there still are some who fear their woe 130
 And cling unto their shepherd, but so few
 A little cloth would make them cowl's enow.
 Now if my words are not obscure to you,
 If in thy audience thou hast been intent,
 If what I've said thou dost in mind review, 135
 Thy wish in part by this is made content,
 Because thou'lt see the plant from which they fly,
 And the rebuke within my argument,
 'Where they thrive well if free from vanity.'

Line 117. He is said to have refused all pomp at his funeral, and directed that he should be buried with the common malefactors.

Line 121. St. Dominic, of whose order Thomas Aquinas was a member.

Line 137. The plant is the rule of the order, from which so many of the modern Dominicans went astray.

CANTO XII.

As St. Thomas ceases speaking, a second circle of twelve blessed spirits surrounds the first. One of these, St. Buonaventura, relates to Dante the life of St. Dominic, and then regrets the decay of his own Franciscan order. He then names the twelve spirits who compose the outer wreath, newly arrived.

Soon as the blessed flame, the latest sound
 Of that oration from its lips let fall,
 The holy millstone 'gan to wheel around :

Nor had it gone around its circle all,
 Before another ring did round it close, 5
 And step on step, and song on song did call :
 Song, that as far above our Muses rose,
 Our sirens in their sweetest melody,
 As light o'er the reflected rays it throws.
 As circle through a vaporous cloud on high 10
 Two rainbows parallel and like in hue,
 When Juno bids her handmaid deck the sky,
 The outer from the inner springs to view,
 As sprang the echo from the beauteous maid
 Whom love consumed, as does the sun the dew : 15
 And show the people upon earth, arrayed
 That sign of pact, which God to Noah sware,
 That never more should floods the earth invade :
 So, of those sempiternal roses there
 Circled around us the bright garlands twain, 20
 And so the one to the other answered fair.
 What time that merriment, and festal train,
 Both from their song, and from their flaming brand,
 Each light with light, rejoicing and serene,
 Together at one point in quiet stand ; 25
 (Just like the eyes which at one's pleasure move,
 Must close and ope together at command ;)

From the heart of one of those new flames of love
 Issued a voice, like needle to the star
 My being to its presence did it move : 30
 And it began : " The love which makes me fair,
 Prompts me to tell thee of that other guide,
 For whom, of mine was told the merit rare.
 Fitly does one stand by the other's side,
 Since, as they both for the same object strove, 35
 So now together shines their glory's pride.
 The host of Christ that cost so dear to love
 To furnish with their panoply again,
 Behind their standard, slow and scattered move :
 What time the Emperor, who aye doth reign, 40
 Provideth his militia in their stress,
 Not for their worth, but of his grace so fain :

Line 14. An allusion to the story of the nymph Echo, consumed by her love for Narcissus. As she echoes sounds, so one rainbow echoes the other. The prodigality of illustration in this passage constitutes its only difficulty.

Line 31. The speaker is a Franciscan, who in return for Thomas Aquinas' glorification of his master St. Francis, proclaims the praises of St. Dominic. Buonaventura, though a Franciscan monk, became a Cardinal and Minister-General, to which dignities he afterwards alludes.

And as was told thee now, his bride to bless
 Gave champions twain, whose council and emprise
 The hosts so widely scattered would redress. 45
 Within that region where the zephyrs rise
 To ope new budding leaves with kisses sweet,
 Whence Europe issues clad in vernal dyes.
 Not very far from where the sea waves beat,
 Behind the which, in a long track of flame, 50
 At times the sun from all men hides his heat,
 Lies Callaroga, town of blessèd name,
 'Neath the protection of the mighty shield,
 Whose arms two lions and two castles claim.
 Within that amorous lover was revealed 55
 O' the Christian faith, that holy athlete strong,
 Kind to his own, and to his enemies steeled.
 And as he was created, so did throng
 The living virtue in his mind, ere born
 He made his mother prophesy. Ere long 60
 When finally were the espousals sworn
 'Twixt him and Faith, before the holy fount,
 Where mutual safety each in dower had borne;
 She, who assented there on his account,
 Beheld the wonderful result in dream 65
 Which would from him and his successors mount:
 And as in fact, that he might be in name,
 The spirit moved her hence his name to take
 From that possessive which filled all his frame.
 Dominicus was he called; of him I speak 70
 As of the skilful husbandman whom CHRIST
 Chose for His garden, as a helpmate meek.
 Well did he seem familiar friend of CHRIST,
 Since the first love which in the child was shown,
 Was for the one chief counsel told by CHRIST. 75
 Oft by his nurse was he discovered thrown,
 Wakeful in silent prayer, upon the ground,
 As though he said, 'I've come for this alone.'

Line 46. In Spain, the birthplace of St. Dominic, Callaroga being in Castile.

Line 60. Before he was born his mother dreamed that she would be delivered of a black and white dog with a burning torch in his mouth, the former prefiguring the future dress of his order, and the latter his fiery zeal.

Line 65. His godmother dreamed that the child had a star on his forehead and another at the back of his head, illuminating the East and West.

Line 69. He was called Dominicus, the Latin possessive of Dominus.

Truly his father was a Felix found !
 Truly his mother bore Giovanna's name, 80
 If right they tell the meaning of that sound.
 Not for the world, for which men toil with shame,
 Following Taddeo's and Ostiensi's lore,
 But the true manna loving, he became
 In briefest time a doctor learned galore, 85
 So that he set himself to trench the vine,
 Which idly tended soon grows wan and poor.
 And at the seat, of old far more benign
 To righteous poor than now, (on it I lay
 No fault, 'tis his who sits there to decline,) 90
 No dispensation lightly bought, to pray,
 Not to make interest for a vacant berth,
Non decimas, quæ sunt pauperum Dei,
 Were his to seek, but 'gainst the wandering earth
 Licence to combat for the holy seed, 95
 From which these four-and-twenty plants had birth.
 Then armed with doctrine, and delight in deed,
 On his apostleship he moved along
 Like torrent rushing from a lofty head :
 And on the trunks of Heresy he swung, 100
 With impetus more lively on the land
 Where most he found opposed resistance strong.
 After from him were various streamlets drained
 Watering the garden Catholic so fair,
 So that its trees in living beauty stand. 105
 If such was one wheel of that two-wheeled car
 In which the holy Church her combat made,
 And conquered in the field of civil war,
 Clearly and well before thee is displayed
 The other's excellence, with courtesies 110
 Which Thomas ere I came did now parade.
 But the track's orbit, which of old did please
 That wheel to follow, is no longer trod,
 That now is mouldiness where erst were lees.
 His family, that once straightforward strode 115
 Upon his footsteps, is so turned away,
 That backwards many now retrace their road.

Line 80. Giovanna is interpreted Grace, the gift of the Lord.

Line 83. Taddeo was a lawyer of Bologna, and Ostiensi a Cardinal who wrote a commentary on the Decretals.

Line 93. Not the tenths, which belong to the poor of God.

Line 112. The rule of the order founded by the other wheel of the car, St. Francis, which is now neglected by his followers.

And soon of such bad culture shall we see
 The harvest, when the tares are brought to count,
 And wail, thrust outwards from the barn for aye. 120
 Certes I say, who leaf by leaf will hunt
 Our volume through, some single page may find
 Where he will read, 'I am, as I was wont.'
 But not Casal's nor Acquasparta's kind, 125
 Where they who come the Scripture construe so,
 That one doth loose, and one too strict doth bind.
 Buonaventura's life within me know,
 From Bagnoreggio, in high place austere
 All objects sinister I thrust below. 130
 Illuminato, Agostino here,
 Were 'mongst the first of the barefooted poor
 Who with their cord to God became so dear.
 Hugh of San Victor, Pietro Mangiador,
 Are with them here, and Pietro he of Spain,
 Who shines below in twelve books' learned lore. 135
 Nathan the Prophet, Metropolitan
 Chrysostom, Anselm, and Donato who
 To the first art to place his hand did deign.
 Raban is here, beside him shines in view 140
 The Abbot of Calabria, Joachin,
 Whom God with power prophetic did endue.
 To chant the praise of such high Paladin
 Excited me the flaming courtesy
 Of Friar Thomas and his speech serene,
 And with me moved all this brave company." 145

Line 124. These two were Ministers-General of the Franciscan order, the first of whom relaxed its rules into licence, and the latter confined them too stringently.

Line 130. Early Franciscan monks; those whose names follow are chiefly forgotten divines, whose personalities it is not worth while to trace from the Commentaries.

Line 138. Donato wrote a treatise on grammar.

CANTO XIII.

The two circle of beatified saints join in a chorus of praise to God. Thomas Aquinas then explains the other difficulty, which his words concerning Solomon had raised in Dante's mind, adding that his superiority over all men in wisdom extended only to kings. He closes by warning Dante against rash judgments.

LET him imagine who desires to know
 What then I saw (the image, too, retain
 Like firm-set rock, the while in words I show),
 Fifteen fair stars, which in its wide domain
 The Heavens enkindle, that they overray 5
 The vastest sweep of air with light serene.
 Let him imagine the bright wain, alway
 That in the bosom of our Heaven doth burn,
 Revolving round its axle night and day,
 Let him imagine of the brilliant horn 10
 The summit, which points straightway to the Pole,
 Round which the first wheel evermore doth turn,
 In Heaven as two new constellations roll,
 Like Ariadne, who in stars did blaze
 What time she felt the chill of death's control : 15
 And one with the other mingle so their rays,
 Each within each their circles gliding through,
 That one still wendeth as the other strays ;
 And he will have some shadow of the true
 Bright constellation, and the double dance 20
 That round me there aye circled in my view ;
 Though it transcendeth more mere human glance
 Than passeth Chiana's slowly-gliding stream
 The sky that swiftest whirls the Heaven's expanse.
 No Bacchic song they sing, no pæan frame, 25
 But Persons Three in nature all Divine,
 And in one substance God and man the same.
 Their song they close, their measure cease to twine,
 And draw around us there those holy lights,
 Each service adding to the bliss they shrine. 30
 Then silence broke 'midst those accordant sprites
 The flame, by whom was told the wondrous life
 Of that meek pauper whom God now requites.
 He told me : " When the flail has threshed one sheaf,
 And when the gathered grain is laid aside, 35
 To the like labour then sweet love is lief.

Lines 1—21. To understand what follows in the motions of the four-and-twenty saints, one should imagine fifteen of the largest stars in Heaven, the seven of Ursa Major and the two pointers in Ursa Minor, revolving in two circles, formed into new constellations, like Ariadne, thus metamorphosed at her death.

Line 34. See Canto XI., lines 26 and 27, where Thomas mentioned the two difficulties which had arisen in Dante's mind, the first of which he then answered, and now turns to the second, roused by his assertion "that no second to Solomon ever rose," Dante being rightly of opinion that Adam and Christ were both superior to him.

Thou think'st that in that breast, from which a side
 Was taken, to create the cheek so fair,
 Whose craving cost the world such tearful tide,
 And in that breast, transpiercèd by the spear, 40
 Which after and before so fully paid,
 It turned the balance 'gainst all sin and fear,
 Whate'er on human nature might be laid
 Of wisdom's light, was in completion poured
 By God's high power, who one and the other made. 45
 Therefore 'twas thine to marvel at my word
 When I declared that he no second knew,
 The worth that in this fifth light is upstored.
 Now what I answer, ope thy eyes to view, 50
 And thou wilt see thy thought, and what I tell,
 Like circle in its centre meet i' the true.
 All things, eternal and corruptible,
 Must each be spark of that idea, the seed
 Our Father, loving, generates at will.
 Because that living Light which doth proceed 55
 From the Father's shining, and is never known
 From Him, and from the Triune Spirit freed,
 By His own bounty sheds His rays adown,
 Mirrored as 'twere on new existences,
 Itself eternally remaining one. 60
 Thence it descends to the lowest potencies,
 Downwards from act to act declining so,
 It makes no more than brief contingencies.
 And these contingencies thou here mayst know 65
 All generated things, the which unfolds
 With seed, or even without, Heaven's moving flow.
 The native wax of those, and that which moulds
 Are not alike, and so each 'neath the seal
 Ideal, more or less of glory holds :
 Whence 'tis that trees of the same kind reveal 70
 Diversity in fruitage which they bear,
 And ye your difference of talent feel.
 Were the wax printed perfectly and clear,
 And were the skies in influence supreme,
 The glory of the seal would all appear. 75

Line 55. The living Light is the Second Person of the Trinity.

Line 59. The new existences are angels and human souls; the lowest potencies are the elements and brute matter.

Line 67. The native wax is the matter of which all generated things are made; the seal which stamps it is the particular power that acts thereon.

But Nature ever makes the process lame,
 And like an artist eye doth operate
 With trembling hand that blurs what skill would frame.
 But if God's warmth of love doth generate
 Of primal power the vision undefiled, 80
 Entire perfection there He doth create.
 Thus fashioned was that clay, in which was piled
 Every perfection of mere living man ;
 Thus was the Holy Virgin found with child.
 So I commend thy sentiment as plain, 85
 That human nature never yet was known,
 Nor can be, such as in those persons twain.
 Now if no further had my reasoning gone,
 How then could this one be without a peer ?
 Thy words in answer would be thus begun. 90
 But that what now is hidden may be clear,
 Think who he was, and what his answer bred,
 When he was told : what wouldst thou ask ? declare.
 Thou well can see from that which I have said
 That he was king, who understanding sought, 95
 That worthily his kingship might be led.
 He did not seek to find the number out
 O' the Heavenly motors, nor if aye *neceſſe*
 With a contingency, *neceſſe* brought :
Non ſi eſt dare primum motum eſſe, 100
 Nor if to make triangle not a right
 From ſemicircle, were a problem eaſy.
 If this, and what I've ſaid, thou mark'ſt aright,
 That royal prudence, and that ken thou'lt learn
 On which the arrow of my aim did light. 105
 And if to that word, *Rose*, thy eyes doſt turn,
 Thou'lt ſee it had reſpect to kings alone,
 Who're many, though few good ones we diſcern.
 With this diſtinction be my ſaying known,
 And thus with what thou thinkeſt 'twill agree,
 Of the firſt man, and Chriſt our joy alone.

Line 79. Where God Himſelf creates without the intermediate agency of Nature, as in the caſes of Adam and Chriſt, there muſt be perfection.

Line 97. He did not aſk queſtions of curioſity, of logical, metaphyſical, or mathematical ſcience, but for wiſdom required by a king.

Line 98. If a neceſſary premiſe, joined to a contingent one, produced a neceſſary conſequence, which it does not, as *concluſio ſequitur debiliorem*.

Line 100. If it is neceſſary to admit one firſt motion, which the rule in metaphyſics forces one to do, to avoid an *ad infinitum*.

Line 101. If the angle contained in a ſemicircle can ever be other than a right, which is a mathematical abſurdity.

And let this to thy feet a dead weight be,
 Like one fatigued to make thee journey slow
 Towards the Yes, or No, thou dost not see. 115
 For he amongst the fools is very low,
 Who without thought affirmeth, or denies,
 Whether to one or other step he go ;
 Because it happens that too often flies
 Public opinion into error's part,
 And then its influence the intellect ties. 120
 Far worse than idly from the shore doth start,
 Since he returns not such as erst he went,
 Who fishes for the truth, and wants the art.
 Of this i' the world are proofs most evident,
 Parmenides, Melissus, Brissus, more 125
 Who wandered on, and knew not whither bent.
 Thus did Sabellus, Arius, and that store
 Of fools, who like to scimitars reflected
 In guise distorted the pure Scripture lore. 130
 Let not the people think themselves elected
 To judge like one who counteth on the corn
 Within his field ere it be ripe. Dejected
 I have beheld through winter time a thorn
 Its rude repelling aspect show, and bear 135
 After a rose, upon its top forlorn.
 And I have seen a vessel swiftly steer
 Through all its voyage across the ocean stream,
 Perish at last, the harbour's entrance near.
 Let not Dame Bertha nor Sir Martin deem,
 Because they see one rob, another pray, 140
 That they can pry within the will supreme ;
 For one can rise, and one can fall away."

Line 125. Ancient philosophers refuted by Aristotle.

Line 127. Well-known founders of heresies.

Line 130. Names applied in general to busybodies whose curiosity exceeds their judgment.

CANTO XIV.

In answer to Beatrice, the spirit of Solomon explains to Dante that after the final resurrection the blest will resume their glorified bodies now lying on earth. Beatrice and Dante are then translated to the fifth Heaven, the sphere of Mars. There he sees the beatified spirits moving athwart a cross of glory which is stamped upon that planet, and is ravished by the melody of their hymn.

FROM centre to the rim, or backwards bound,
 As struck from inwards, or without the rim,
 Moveth the water in a vessel round,
 Within my mind all suddenly did swim
 This image which I tell, as silent grew 5
 Of Thomas' glorious soul the saintly hymn,
 By the similitude which then I knew
 Between his speech and Beatrice' reply,
 Who after him was pleased to speak anew.
 "This one has need, though neither voice on high, 10
 Nor even thought the wish doth yet assume,
 Unto the root of one more truth to hie.
 Then tell him if the light, with which doth bloom
 Your shadowy substance, will with you remain
 As it is now, throughout eternal doom: 15
 If it remaineth, afterwards explain,
 When with your bodies remade visible,
 How will ye bear such brilliance free from pain."
 As ofttimes in the joy of festival, 20
 With rapture stirred, the dancers in a ring
 Hurry their motions, and their voices swell;
 So to that prompt and pious questioning
 The holy circles showed their bliss again,
 In wondrous melody and tourneying. 25
 To live above, whoever would complain
 That one must die, he never felt revive
 The coolness there of that eternal rain.
 "The One, and Two, and Three, who ever live,
 And ever reign in Three, and Two, and One,
 Uncircumscribed, yet all things circumscribe," 30
 Three times was chanted there by every one
 Of those blessed spirits, with such melody,
 To all desert were fair such guerdon won:
 And from the light, most like the Deity,
 O' the inner ring, I heard a voice released, 35
 With such perchance the angel made reply
 To Mary: "Howsoever long the feast
 Of Paradise may be, so long our love
 With ray around us such a beaming vest.
 Its fervour by this brightness it doth prove, 40
 Its fervour by its sight is bound, that solely
 According to its grace, its worth above.

Line 1. The physical fact appears doubtful and difficult of experiment. Dante, however, compares the speech made to them from the circle, and Beatrice's address from the centre to the saints around, to the above-described motion of water in a round vessel.

What time our flesh made glorified and holy
 Shall be reclad, our person must be dight
 More gracious far through all its being wholly: 45
 Therefore must be increased that gift of light,
 Which grants gratuitous the highest peace,
 Light which to see His glory makes us fit.
 Whence it must be that vision will increase,
 Increase the fervour which from it doth flame, 50
 Increase the ray which doth arise from this.
 But like a burning coal which gives out flame,
 Surpasses that with its own living glow,
 That it still keeps the outline of its frame,
 So this same brilliancy which swathes us now 55
 Will by that flesh in glory be o'ercome,
 Which for all days the earth doth cover now :
 Nor can such light be ever wearisome,
 Since strong will be the organs of the frame
 All things to bear, from which delight may come." 60
 So rapid and prepared they all did seem
 Both one and other choir Amen to say,
 For their dead frames it showed their wish supreme :
 Not for themselves alone perchance they pray,
 But for their parents' sake, and friends so dear, 65
 Ere they were flames in this eternal day.
 And lo ! around, of equal brightness, sheer
 Above the splendour there new lustre heave,
 Like a far-off horizon growing clear.
 And as at rising of the early eve 70
 The stars to pierce the sky commence again,
 So that confusedly we scarce perceive,
 Meseemed of new existences a train
 Thus to behold, who made a circle new
 Wheeling without the other circles twain. 75
 O' the Holy Spirit, O that sparkle true,
 How suddenly it grew all glowing white
 Unto my eyes, that could not bear the view !
 But Beatrix so fair and smiling bright,
 Won all my gaze mid other visions here, 80
 Words cannot tell, nor mind pursue such flight.
 My eyes thence won the power once more to rear
 Themselves aloft, I saw myself alone
 Borne with my lady to a higher sphere.

Line 67. Around the circles of saints now gather another circle of angels, dominations as Dante calls the powers of the fourth heaven, and these are described as of equal brightness, not shining more or less like the spirits of the blest according to their extent of vision, as above explained by Solomon.

Well was I 'ware that I had higher gone, 85
 By the fire beaming smiling of the star
 Which seemed more ruddy than its usual tone.
 With all my heart, and with that inward prayer
 In all the same, I gave myself to God
 The holocaust, that claimed such favour rare. 90
 Nor from my breast had yet the fervour flowed
 Of that my sacrifice, or ere I knew
 My offering was accepted and avowed :
 For with such glory and such roseate hue
 Appeared a splendour 'twixt two listed lines, 95
 I cried, " Elias ! how dost deck the view !"
 As from the stars, lesser and greater, shines
 Distinct in whiteness the long Milky Way,
 Whose cause in vain each learned sect divines,
 So, with stars studded made each listed ray 100
 On Mars's sphere, that venerable sign,
 Which quadrants joined within a round display.
 Here Memory conquers every power of mine :
 For in that cross of glory lightened CHRIST,
 That no fit simile can I divine. 105
 But whoso takes his cross and follows CHRIST,
 Will yet excuse this weakness, when through grace
 In that white gleaming, he shall witness CHRIST.
 From arm to arm, from top unto the base
 Wander the lights, throwing out sparks more strong 110
 Whene'er they meet, or pass them by in space :
 Thus see we here, now straight now crooked throng,
 Now swift, now slow, with aye-renewing dart,
 The atom-motes with bodies short and long,
 Move in the sunbeam, which doth shoot athwart 115
 At times the shadow, which the people sought,
 Made in defence against the glare by art.
 And as a lute and harp accordant wrought
 With many strings, create a dulcet chime,
 Even to one who ne'er the notes was taught, 120
 So from the lights which there before me swim,
 Collected in the cross a melody
 Which rapt me though I did not hear the hymn.
 Its burden well I knew was praises high,
 For rise and conquer on my hearing stole, 125
 Like one who hears, nor can the sense descry.

Line 85. He has now entered the planet Mars, red in colour.

Line 101. The cross which is placed on the planet Mars in honour of the Crusaders, who fought and conquered under that sign.

Thence so enamoured grew my listening soul,
 Compared with it, there was no other thing
 That yet had bound me with such sweet control. 130
 Haply my word too daringly doth spring,
 Lowering the pleasure from those beauteous eyes,
 Gazing on which my yearning folds its wing.
 But whoso seeth that the more they rise
 Those living seals more beauty have attained,
 And that as yet I had not turned to these, 135
 May well excuse me that, thus self-arraigned,
 Whilst truth I speak, myself from this to clear ;
 That holy pleasure is not here explained
 Because in mounting it grows more sincere.

Line 138. Dante had not excluded the delight he ever found supreme in gazing on the eyes of Beatrice, for these increased in beauty as they rose higher towards God, and he had not yet looked at her in this new sphere. The word "dischiuso" means both explained and excluded. "Che 'l piacer santo non è qui dischiuso," has, therefore, been variously interpreted as that holy pleasure too is contained in the delight I experienced, or that holy pleasure was not then alluded to by me. I have, however, preferred an ingenious interpretation offered by Padre d'Aquino, that holy pleasure is not here explained by me, because in mounting it grows too exquisite for words to describe.

CANTO XV.

The hymn of the Crusaders subsides into silence, and a spirit glides to the foot of the Cross and welcomes Dante as his descendant. He tells him that he is the spirit of his ancestor Cacciaguida, describes the simple life of the Florentines in his days, and states how he died in Palestine, fighting for the Holy Land.

BENIGNANT will, which doth exemplify
 Ever that love, which virtue's beams inspire,
 As will malignant, doth cupidity,
 Silence imposed unto that dulcet lyre, 5
 And hushed to quiet every holy chord
 Which Heaven's right hand attunes to notes of fire.
 How can be deaf to prayer for justice poured
 Those beings, who to give me will to pray,
 United all, that silence to accord? 10
 He of a truth doth nurture grief for aye,
 Who for the love of what can ne'er endure
 Eternally doth cast that love away.
 As o'er the tranquil skies serene and pure,
 Oft and anon doth glide a sudden blaze, 15
 Attracting careless eyes unto its lure,

And seems a star in Heaven that shifts its place
 Only from that part whence it kindles bright,
 Nothing is lost, and it so briefly stays :
 So from the Cross's horn, far on the right
 Unto its foot did sudden glide a star 20
 O' the constellation which there sheds its light.
 Nor from its riband fell that jewel rare ;
 But through the listed ray of light came down,
 Seeming a flame in alabaster fair :
 So did Anchises' pious shadow run 25
 (Unless to Virgil's Muse we now refuse a
 Faith) in Elysium when he saw his son.
 " *O sanguis meus, O super infusa*
Gratia Dei ; sicut tibi, cui
Bis unquam cæli janua reclusa ?" 30
 Thus spoke that light : to him I turned me free,
 Then to my lady turned once more my eyes,
 And here and there the marvel dazzled me.
 For in her eyes a beaming smile did rise
 Such that I thought that I the depths did near 35
 Of all my grace and all my Paradise.
 Then, pleasant both to gaze on and to hear,
 Things far too deep for me to understand
 The spirit added to his proem clear.
 Nor was that mystery of election planned 40
 But of necessity beyond the aim
 Of mortals, his conception so far wonned.
 And when the flight of his high soaring flame
 Was so allayed, that once more in the rood
 Of human intellect his meaning came ; 45
 The first thing which by me was understood,
 " For ever blessèd be the God Triune,
 Who in my seed to me such kindness showed."
 And he went on : " The long sweet fast I've known
 While reading in the volume of God's might, 50
 Whose pages never turn from white to brown,
 Thou'st satisfied my son, within this light,
 In which I speak to thee, through grace divine
 That preened thy plumage to such soaring flight.

Line 26. *Isque ubi tendentem adversum per gramina vidit*

Ænean, alacris palmas utrasque tetendit.—Virg. *Æn.*, lib. vi., 684.

Line 28. " O thou my blood, O superabounding grace of God, to whom, as to thee, was the gate of Heaven ever opened twice ?" Twice, because Dante now enters it alive, a certain sign that it will finally open for him again.

Line 51. In the notes to Canto II. of the " Paradise" it was mentioned that the leaves of parchment were brown and white alternately : the Book of God knows no change.

Thou thinkest that thy thoughts within me shine 55
 From the first source, as evermore doth ray
 From unity, all numbers we combine.
 And therefore dost not ask who I may be,
 Nor why in thee more joyous I appear
 Than any other in this concourse gay. 60
 Thou deemest truth; both less and greater here
 Of this life, ever on that mirror gaze
 In which ere thou hast thought, the thought stands clear.
 But that the sacred love on which delays
 My endless vigil, and from which I hold 65
 Such sweet desire, may better work its ways;
 With thy own joyous voice, secure and bold,
 Express thy pleasure. thy desire express,
 To which reply is ready ere 'tis told."
 I turned to Beatrix, whose smile did bless 70
 Ere her consent in speaking I could claim,
 Which added wings unto my eagerness.
 Thus I began: "Knowledge and love the same
 Since God's equality first met your sight
 In each of you an equal poise reclaim: 75
 Since in that sun which ye with heat and light
 Lightened and warmed, so equal are the two
 That no similitude would show it right.
 But knowledge and desire in mortal crew, 80
 For reason that to you is manifest,
 Have wings with differing plumage fledged untrue.
 Whence I, a mortal, see in me confest
 This inequality, nor thanks can rate
 Save with my heart for this paternal feast. 85
 O living Topaz, thee I supplicate,
 Who dost ingem this precious jewel rare,
 My longing, with thy name to satiate."
 "O leaf of mine, in whom I bliss did share,
 Even while expecting thee, thy root was I:" 90
 With such commencement did he answer fair.
 Then told me: "He, from whom thou dost apply
 Thy surname, who a century and more
 Has turned the mountain's first ledge wearily,

Line 73. In Heaven fervour is measured by sight, or knowledge, as explained by Solomon; amongst mortals love can exceed the power of expressing it, and Dante, therefore, can only offer his thanks in his heart.

Line 91. Alighieri, Dante's great-grandfather, from whom the family name was taken, was the son of Cacciaguada.

To life so tranquil, and so fair to see 130
 Mid citizens, to trustfulness so wise
 Of social life, to such sweet company,
 Mary vouchsafed me, called in childbed cries :
 And in your ancient baptistery's fane
 I, Cacciaguida, took on Christian ties. 135
 Moronte, Eliseo were my brethren twain :
 From Val de Perdo came my wife to me,
 Thou from her family thy name didst gain.
 The Emperor Conrad then I followed free, 140
 And he himself did gird me belted knight,
 So my good deeds did win his courtesy.
 With him I went the impious creed to fight,
 Whose people, by the shepherd's crime, controls
 The Holy Land, your heritage of right :
 There, by that race who in such foulness rolls, 145
 From a fallacious world I won release,
 The love of which debaseth many souls,
 And came from martyrdom to perfect peace."

Line 133. It was the custom to invoke the help of Mary in the pains of childbirth.

Line 137. Cacciaguida's wife, of the family of Alighieri, whose name was taken by her son, came from Ferrara, the valley watered by the Po.

Line 139. The Emperor Conrad III., who joined in a crusade, and died in 1152.

Line 143. The Mahommedans, who through the supineness of the Pope in not preaching a holy war, were left in possession of Palestine, which by right was the Christians' heritage.

CANTO XVI.

In answer to Dante's request, Cacciaguida relates to him the time of his birth, the extent of Florence at that period, and who were the chief families who then resided there.

O BLOOD's nobility of little worth,
 If thou dost make mankind take pride in thee,
 Where every longing wanders wide on earth,
 From henceforth now no marvel will it be :
 For there, where never doth the longing stray, 5
 I say in Heaven, it glory roused in me.
 Thou art a mantle that doth swiftly fray,
 While Time with shears doth ever clip it round,
 Unless we add to it from day to day.

With the old *you*, which first in Rome did sound, 10
 In which her family doth little bide,
 A recommencement to my speech was found.
 Whence Beatrice, who somewhat stood aside,
 Smiling appeared like her whose cough did fire
 Ginevra down her frailty's brink to glide. 15
 Thus I began my speech: "You are my sire:
 All boldness to express my thoughts you give;
 You raise me thus than my own being higher.
 Through such great streams doth gladness now arrive,
 My mind becomes a fountain, joy to pour, 20
 Or it would break with all it doth receive.
 O tell me then, my dear progenitor,
 Who were your fathers, and what year was known
 As marked with white amid your youthful store?
 O tell me of the sheepfold of Saint John, 25
 What was it then, and who the human kind
 Within it, worthy of the highest throne?"
 As glows before the breathing of the wind
 A flaming coal, so did I see that light
 With splendour beaming to my courtesies kind. 30
 And as before my eyes it grew more bright,
 So with a voice more tender, and more sweet,
 But not with modern parlance composite,
 It told me: "From the day All Hail! did greet
 The Virgin, till my mother, sainted now, 35
 Brought forth myself, her burden, to the seat
 Of its own lion did this planet go
 Five hundred, fifty times, and thrice, through space,
 Beneath its foot to re-illuminate its glow.
 My ancestors and I were born i' the place, 40
 Where the beginning of the latest ward
 Is found by those who run your yearly race.

Line 10. Out of respect for his ancestor Dante does not now address him with the familiar *Thou*, but uses the plural *You*, according to the custom introduced by the later Romans.

Line 14. The encouraging smile of Beatrice is compared to the gesture of Queen Ginevra's attendant, when she admitted Launcelot's first embrace—an allusion to the scene in the romance in which Francesca read with her lover. "Hell," Canto V.

Line 25. Florence, of which St. John the Baptist was the patron saint.

Line 34. The planet Mars had returned to the constellation of Leo 553 times since the conception of the Virgin Mary down to Cacciaguida's birth. As the revolution of the planet is somewhat short of two years, this brings the date of Cacciaguida's birth to the commencement of the twelfth century, though not with the mathematical precision the commentators attempt to obtain.

Line 40. The city was divided into four compartments, and Dante's ancestors lived in the last ward, through which ran the course of the annual race.

Y

Suffice it of my elders this to have heard :
 For who they were, and whence they hither came
 With silence more than speech is best averred. 45
 'Twixt the baptistery and Mars' sculptured fame
 Those who in age were fitted arms to wield
 Were then a fifth of what ye now can claim :
 But then the blood of citizens, now filled 50
 From Campi and Cortaldo, doomed to labour
 In the lowest artisan was pure revealed.
 How better far 'twould be to have as neighbour
 Such people, and to hold your boundary lines
 At Trespian and Galuzzo, than their savour 55
 To have to bear within your own confines,
 Such as Agaglione's kind, and Signa's, who
 To fraud already his sharp eye inclines !
 Had she not been to Cæsar stepdame new,
 The race who most on earth degenerate,
 But like a mother to its offspring true, 60
 One now made Florentine, with traffic great,
 Would back have turned him into Simifonti,
 Where erst his grandsire used for alms to wait.
 Still Montemarło would belong to the Conti :
 In Acon's parish would the Cerchi be, 65
 Mayhap in Valdiguevie the Buondelmonti.
 'Mongst persons ever more confusion free
 Within the city was the source of ill,
 As in the human body, gluttony.
 And a blind bull more heavily falleth still 70
 Than a blind lamb ; and oft one sword will tally a
 Better account of blood than five would spill.
 If thou regardest Luni, Urbisaglia,
 How they are gone, and how at this time go
 Behind them Chiusi too and Sinigaglia : 75
 To hear how races are destroyed below
 Will be to thee no novel thing, nor strange,
 After that cities such an ending know.
 All things amongst ye carry death and change,
 Just like yourselves, although in some 'tis hid, 80
 Since life is brief, and theirs of longer range.

Line 46. Between the baptistery and the statue of Mars on Ponte Vecchio, which stood for the boundaries of Florence in Cacciaguada's time.

Line 50. Places in the neighbourhood of Florence, which he regrets had been brought afterwards within its boundaries.

Line 58. It is supposed that Rome is here alluded to : had Rome continued in her allegiance to the emperor, the strife of Guelph and Ghibeline had not been roused, and the best citizens of Florence had not been changed for worthless strangers.

And as the changing moon, with shifting tide,
 Covers and bares the seashores without rest,
 Thus unto Florence Fortune ever did.
 Therefore no marvel be by thee confest 85
 At what I'll tell thee of high Florentines
 Whose fame through Time is no more manifest.
 I've seen the Hugos and the Catalines,
 Philippi, Greci, Ormanni, Alberichi,
 Already on the wane, how each one shines! 90
 I've seen as great, as ancient I who speak ye,
 With him of Arca, and Sanella too,
 The Soldanieri, Ardinghi, and Bostichi.
 Over the gate, now laden with a new
 Burden of felony, too great to bear, 95
 Which soon will be hurled over by the crew,
 The Ravnani dwelt, of whom is heir
 Count Guido, and whoever the great name
 Of high Bellincion since borrow there. 100
 Already knew the populace to tame
 Pressa, in Galligajo's house there were
 Already, gilded hilt and pommel frame.
 Great was the column clothed with miniver,
 Sacchetti, Givinchi, Sifanti, and Barucci, 105
 Galli, and they who blush at the bushel's slur.
 Great was the branch from which sprang the Calfucci
 Already, and already were they drawn
 To curule chairs, the Sizii and Arrigucci.
 How mighty saw I those who're since undone
 By their own pride! and they, the balls of gold, 110
 In all their great deeds flourished Florence' dawn.
 Thus in like fashion did the fathers old
 Of those, who ever when yon church is vacant
 Grow fat, the while its revenues they hold.
 That race of surquedry that rageth peccant 115
 On him who flies, and unto those who show
 Their teeth, or even their purse, like lamb is placant,

Line 94. The Circhi, enemies of Dante, now lived over the gate where formerly the Ravnani resided, of which family was Bellincion Berti.

Line 102. The symbols of knighthood.

Line 105. A family which committed a fraud by using a false bushel at the public granary, already alluded to in the "Purgatory," Canto XII.

Line 112. The fathers of certain families sprung from the founders of the Bishopric of Florence, who had hence the right to manage its revenues whenever the see was temporarily vacant.

Line 115. The Adimari, who were then of such small account that Donato objected to his father-in-law, Bellincion Berti, giving another of his daughters in marriage to one of them. Boccaccio Adimari was Dante's chief enemy in Florence, who always resisted his recall from exile because he had taken possession of his property on his banishment.

Already rose, but from a race so low
 That Ubertin Donato felt a smart
 Any connection with their blood to know. 120
 Already Caponsacco in the mart
 Had come from Fiesolè, and Guida too,
 And Infangato filled a worthy part.
 I'll tell a thing incredible and true:
 In our small bounds one entered by a gate, 125
 The which its name from those of Pera drew.
 Each one who borrowed the heraldic state
 Of the great baron, whose high worth and name
 The Feast of Thomas aye doth celebrate,
 From him did privilege and knighthood claim, 130
 Albeit one has joined the people's den
 Who binds that quartering in a golden frame.
 The Gualterotti and Importini then
 Were living, and their Borg would quiet be
 Had no new strangers entered on its ken. 135
 The house from which was born your misery,
 And which has slain ye by its just disdain,
 And put an end to all your life of glee,
 Was honoured, it, and all its numerous train.
 O Buondelmonte, to what ill ye fled 140
 That plighted wedding, on another fain!
 Many would now be joyous, who are sad,
 If God thy form in Ema's stream had thrown
 The first time to the city thou wast led.
 But well 'twas fitting to that maimèd stone 145
 Which guards the bridge, that Florence thee should make
 A victim to the last peace she has known.

Line 124. The incredibility is variously explained to consist either in the smallness of the boundaries of the city at that time or in the simplicity of the people who called one of their gates after a private family.

Line 128. The Marchese Ugo, Baron of the Emperor Otho III., who gave leave to several Florentine families to bear his arms. In an abbey in Florence founded by his mother, and dowered by himself, the Feast of St. Thomas was always celebrated in his memory, being the day on which he died.

Line 131. Giano della Bella, who still bore the Baron's arms, but had renounced the nobility and become one of the people. A democrat of the Middle Ages.

Line 136. The family of the Amidei, who slew Buondelmonte for withdrawing from a marriage arranged with a maiden of their house through his passion for one of the Donati, from whence arose the factions of the Bianchi and Neri in Florence. See "Hell," Canto XXVIII.

Line 143. A stream between Montebuona, where the family of Buondelmonte resided originally, and Florence.

Line 145. The bridge where the maimed statue of Mars was still standing when Buondelmonte was slain, a fit victim to that god. See "Hell," Canto XIII.

With others, and with those of whom I speak,
 Florence I saw in such a perfect rest,
 No reason had she then laments to seek. 150
 I saw her with those people, glorious, blest,
 And aye so just, that to the lance's head
 Her lilies never were reversely drest,
 Nor yet by civil strife were changed to red."

Line 153. The lilies, the arms of Florence, had never hung reversed on the spears of her enemies in token of her defeat, nor was their colour yet changed from white to red, as they were by the Guelphs, who altered the city arms from argent lilies in a field gules to lilies gules in a field argent.

CANTO XVII.

Encouraged by Beatrice, Dante questions the spirit of his ancestors concerning the future of his own life on earth. Cacciaguida foretells to him his approaching exile from Florence, and exhorts him to write all that he has seen in Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven.

LIKE him who came to Climene to learn
 The truth of what against his birth was given,
 He who to sons still makes all fathers stern,
 Such was I then, and such was I perceiven
 Of Beatrice, and that holy lamp 5
 Who erst for me had changed its place in Heaven.
 On which my lady: "Let the flame forth ramp
 Of thy desire," she told me, "let it pass
 Distinctly sealed with its internal stamp:
 Not by thy speech our knowledge to increase, 10
 But that to own thy thirsting thou mayst use,
 That men may mingle drink to give thee peace."
 "O my dear plant! that dost so soaring muse,
 That as our minds behold there cannot be
 In one triangle angles twain obtuse, 15
 So dost thou see the far contingency
 Ere in itself existent, on that point
 Gazing where all times present thou dost see;

Line 1. Phaeton, the son of Climene, who inquired of her whether he was really the son of Apollo, Ovid, *Metam.*, lib. i., whose fate in his attempt to drive the horses of the sun makes fathers sterner to a son's requests.

Line 11. That thou mayst practise a frank declaration of thy difficulties, so that men may offer thee their solution.

The while that I with Virgil was conjoint,
 Upon that mountain where the souls grow clear, 20
 And while descending in the world defunct,
 Were told me of my future life severe
 And mournful words; albeit every blow
 Of chance I feel myself well squared to bear.
 Therefore my wish would be content to know 25
 For me what fortune has the future drest,
 Since dart foreseen in flight is ever slow."
 Thus I that beaming light itself address,
 That first had spoken to me, and as willed
 My Beatrix, my longing was confest. 30
 Not with such riddles, in whose snares was held
 The credulous world of old, or ere was slain
 The Lamb of God, who every sin repealed,
 But with clear words and open parlance plain
 That love paternal unto me replied, 35
 Inclosed, and beaming in his smile so fain.
 "Contingency, which ne'er beyond the tide
 Of your material world can ever reach,
 On the eternal sight is wholly dyed. 40
 Not that from hence necessity I teach,
 More than from sight, a vessel glideth fair
 Adown the current, gazed on from the beach.
 From that eternal sight, as fills the ear
 Organs' sweet harmony, to me doth come
 In sight that time which towards thee draweth near. 45
 As left Hippolytus his Athens' home,
 Through his perfidious stepdame, passion fraught,
 So to depart from Florence is thy doom,
 Thus is it willed, and thus already sought;
 And soon they'll bring to pass what now they scheme, 50
 There, where Christ every day is sold and bought.
 Upon the injured side will cast the blame
 The wonted cry; but vengeance will achieve
 Witness to truth, whichever it doth claim.

Line 20. In "Purgatory" Conrad Malaspina, Canto VIII., and Oderisi the Illuminator in Canto XI., had hinted to Dante of his coming banishment, and in "Hell" Farinata degli Uberti, Canto X., and Sir Brunetti in Canto XV., had done the same. He now asks for clearer warnings.

Line 40. Necessity does not follow from God's knowledge more than when one gazes on a ship floating down the tide the sight causes it to descend.

Line 46. Owing to the unnatural passion of his stepmother Phædra.

Line 51. In Rome, where they were plotting the expulsion of the Ghibeline party from Florence.

Line 54. According to the then belief in the trial by duellum, that vengeance would declare itself always on the side of truth.

Each thing beloved most dearly thou wilt leave: 55
 And this is but the earliest dart which fares
 From the bow of exile, when it shoots to grieve.
 Thyself wilt prove what bitter taste there bears
 The alien's bread, and what a weary road
 Is climbing and descending alien stairs. 60
 And that which most of all thy back will load,
 Will be the evil troop, with whom thou'lt fall
 Into this valley, scattered all abroad.
 For all ungrateful, mad, and impious all,
 Against thee will they act, but very soon 65
 Their brows, not thine, will bear shame's reddened pall.
 Of their bestiality the progress on
 Will be the proof, to thee it will be fair
 To have made thy party by thyself alone.
 Thy earliest refuge and thy first repair 70
 Will be the courtesy of the great Lombard,
 Who bears the holy bird above the stair.
 For he on thee will show such kind regard,
 That between act and asking 'twixt ye twain,
 That will be first which others most retard. 75
 With him thou'lt see the youth who bears such strain
 Of this strong planet, even from his birth,
 That notable will be his actions' train.
 Not yet have people knowledge of his worth,
 By his young age, since yet have wheeled these starry 80
 Spheres round him but nine years since he went forth.
 But ere the Gascon shall deceive great Harry,
 Such sparks of his high virtue will be shown,
 In that for coin or toil he will not tarry.
 His liberalities will then be known, 85
 So that his very enemies who hate,
 Will not be able to shun speech thereon.
 For him and for his favours do thou wait:
 By him much people will be changed in lot,
 Altering alike of rich and poor the state: 90
 And do thou bear it written in thy thought
 Of him, but tell it not:" and things he said
 Incredible to those who see it wrought.
 "These are the glosses, son," he then did add,
 "On that which has been told thee, lo! the snares 95
 Which 'neath a few short years are hidden laid.

Line 71. Alboino della Scala, whose arms were an eagle on a stair of gold.

Line 76. Can Grande, brother of the above. See "Hell," Canto I.

Line 82. Before the Pope Clement V. shall deceive the Emperor Henry VII.

I would not thou shouldst envy thence thy peers,
 Since thy own life will in the future grow
 Beyond their punishment, through distant years." 100
 In silence then completed did he show,
 That holy spirit, all the woof which I
 Had placed before him to be woven through.
 Then I began, like one who doubtingly
 Longeth for counsel from a person wise,
 Who seeth true and wisheth lovingly : 105
 " My sire, I clearly see how spurring hies
 Towards me Time, to inflict on me a blow,
 Heaviest to him who self-abandoned lies.
 Therefore with foresight I must arm me now,
 So that when ta'en from me the place most dear, 110
 My verse may lose me not all others too.
 Down in that world of never-ending care,
 And on the mountain, from whose beauteous height
 The sweet eyes of my lady me did rear,
 And afterwards in Heaven, from light to light, 115
 That have I learnt, which should I say again,
 To many would have savour of despite :
 And if from truth I timidly refrain,
 Midst those I fear to forfeit life alway
 Who'll call the present times the antique strain." 120
 The light where smiled my treasure, which that day
 I there had found, first made a sparkling gleam
 Like golden mirror in the solar ray,
 Then answered me : " That conscience, which with shame 125
 Or of itself or others may be stained,
 Will surely feel the stinging of thy theme.
 But ne'ertheless be every lie refrained,
 Let all thy vision be made manifest,
 And let him wince who feels his withers strained : 130
 For if thy voice in any way molest
 At the first taste, a vital nutriment
 'Twill leave behind to him who doth digest.
 This cry of thine will be like winds unpent,
 That strongest smite against the loftiest peaks : 135
 This to thy honour is some argument.
 Hence in those spheres upon thy vision breaks,
 Upon the mount, and in the dolorous vale,
 Those souls alone of whom Fame's trumpet speaks ;
 Because his mind, who heareth, would not hail 140
 With trust the given example, if its root
 Were hidden and unknown, and ever fail
 Mere barren arguments to bring forth fruit."

CANTO XVIII.

Cacciaguida names to Dante the souls of many renowned warriors in the planet Mars, and quitting him to join his comrades in their song of praise, Dante finds himself raised with Beatrice to the sphere of Jupiter. The souls of those who had administered justice rightly in the world form themselves into letters before him, exhorting rulers to their own virtue, and finally settle into the shape of the head and neck of an eagle. Rapt in that vision of beatified justice, Dante calls on it to revisit earth and purify, where most wanted, the avaricious Court of Rome.

ALREADY in his word rejoiced apart
 That blessed spirit, on my thoughts I fed,
 Tempering the sweetness with the promised smart :
 When she, my lady, who me Godwards led,
 "Change now thy train of thought ; think I am near 5
 Him who doth recompense each wrong," she said.
 I turned me at that amorous voice so dear
 Of her my solace, and what I descried
 Of love in holy eyes I try not here :
 Not that I fear alone speech vainly tried, 10
 But that my mind could never so return
 Above itself if others do not guide.
 This only of that fact can I discern,
 That gazing on her my desire was freed
 From every other longing there to yearn, 15
 Until the eternal peace, which straightly rayed
 On Beatrice in reflected guise
 From her fair face on me contentment laid.
 O'ercoming me with light of smiling eyes,
 She said unto me ; "Turn thee now and hear, 20
 Not in my eyes alone is Paradise."
 As many a time and oft is witnessed here
 The longing in the face when nourished so
 That all the mind is centered in the care,
 So in the flaming of that holy glow 25
 To which I turned me then, the eager bent
 To speak to me once more I clear did know,
 And it began : "In this the fifth ascent
 Of the tree which draws life downwards from its height,
 And aye bears fruit, while ne'er a leaf is rent, 30
 Are blessed spirits on your earthly site,
 Or ere they came to Heaven was great their fame,
 To every Muse were each a chrysolite.

Gaze on the Cross's horns, as I will name
 Each spirit will glide there by me rehearsed, 35
 As in the cloud doth flash the nimble flame."
 I saw along the Cross a glory burst
 As Joshua was named; as past it shone
 I know not whether speech or deed was first.
 At the name of Maccabee I saw thereon 40
 Another moving by in whirling train,
 And gladness was the whip that spurs it on.
 So for Orlando, and for Charlemain,
 Followed the twain my own intent regard,
 As on the falcon's flight the eye doth strain. 45
 Along that Cross then William and Renard,
 And the great leader Godfrey drew my sight,
 With the heroic chief, Robert Guiscard.
 Thence moved, and mingling with each other light,
 The spirit who had spoken to me showed 50
 What artist he, 'mid singers in Heaven's height.
 To my right hand my vision then I bowed
 To see in Beatrix what course to steer,
 Either by spoken words or sign avowed,
 And I beheld her eyes so limpid clear, 55
 So filled with gladness that their semblance bright
 O'ercame all else, even her last wonted cheer.
 And as by more perception of delight,
 Doing good deeds, a man from day to day
 Perceiveth that his virtue grows in might, 60
 So was I 'ware that with the whirling sway
 O' the whirling Heavens my circle was increased,
 Seeing that miracle's beauty clearer ray.
 And as in momentary time is chased 65
 The hue from maiden's cheek which lately burned
 With burden of shame's blush, as quick displaced,
 So seemed it to my eyes when I had turned
 Into the whiteness of that tempered star,
 The sixth, which me within itself inurned. 70
 I saw within that torch of Jupiter fair,
 Before my eyes, the letters of our speech,
 Shaped by the lights of Love that revelled there.

Line 46. Probably two of the comrades of Duke Godfrey of Bouillon in the first Crusade.

Line 48. The conqueror of the kingdom of Naples, alluded to in Canto XXVIII. of "Hell."

Line 57. The beauty of her eyes surpassed what it had reached even in the last planet of Mars, as they have entered a higher sphere.

Line 67. From the ruddy planet Mars to the silvery Jupiter.

And as birds risen from a river's beach,
 As 'twere with greeting to their new-found mead,
 Now in long line and now in circle stretch, 75
 So in those lights the holy creatures swayed,
 Wreathing new figures as they soared in song,
 And now a D, an I, an L they made.
 First singing to their notes they move along,
 Then having ranged themselves into a sign, 80
 A little while they paused, and silent throng.
 O Pegasean goddess! who divine
 To genius, glory and long life dost spare,
 As it, to realms and cities, by thy line, 85
 Illume me with thyself, those shapes so fair
 That I may rise again as seen in Heaven:
 In these brief verses let thy might appear.
 Thus were there shown before me five times seven
 Vowels and consonants, and as they past 90
 I noted them as they appeared engraven.
Diligite justitiam first were cast,
 The verb and noun full blazoned, nothing slurred:
Qui judicatis terram followed last.
 Thereafter on the M of the fifth word 95
 They staid, in order ranged, so that Jove's star
 Like silver studded o'er with gold appeared.
 And other lights I saw descending, where
 Was the M's summit, and they then grew still,
 Singing, methinks, that Good, their only care. 100
 Then, just as burning firebrands shaken spill
 Innumerable sparks which seek the skies,
 Whence fools are wont to show their augur skill,
 More than a thousand lights seemed hence to rise,
 And soaring, mount above, some more, some less, 105
 As pleased that sun who gave their flaming dyes:
 And each one settled down into its place,
 An eagle's head and neck in fire descried
 Distinctly represented I could trace.
 He who paints there has no one for his guide,
 But guides himself, and from himself is lent 110
 The virtue which each station signified.

Line 82. O Muse that givest glory and long life to genius, as genius by thy strains gives the same to realms and cities, illumine me, &c.

Line 88. Thirty-five letters, forming the sentence "*Diligite justitiam, qui judicatis terram*"—"Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth."—Wisdom of Solomon i. 1.

The other blessedness, which seemed content
 At first with lilies to adorn the M,
 To the bird's impress with slow motion bent. 115
 O thou sweet star, how many a brilliant gem
 Was shown me there to prove our justice all
 Born of that Heaven which thou dost diadem!
 Therefore with prayers the mind divine I call
 Whence springs thy virtue to look forth abroad
 Where the smoke rises which thy ray doth pall, 120
 So that once more just anger be renewed
 'Gainst purchasing and selling in that temple
 Erst built by miracles and martyrs' blood.
 Militia of the sky I view so ample,
 O pray for those who on our earth have strayed 125
 Far from the road, behind a bad example.
 Of old one went to battle with the blade,
 Now by denying either here or there
 The bread, a pious sire for all has laid.
 But thou, who writest but to cancel dear, 130
 Think thee that Paul and Peter, who have died
 For the vine Thou spoilest, still are living here.
 Well mayst thou say: "My heart is so allied
 To him who ever sought to live alone,
 To him who for a dance was crucified, 135
 The Fisherman and Paul are both unknown."

Line 112. The other band of beatified spirits formed the rest of the eagle.

Line 122. The Church of Rome, polluted by the simony of the popes.

Line 127. By interdicts and excommunications, refusing the rites of the sacrament, the bread God spreads for all.

Line 130. Addressing Pope Boniface, who wrote his censures only to obtain as high a price as possible for cancelling them.

Line 133. I cling so to St. John the Baptist, at least to the coins of Florence stamped with his figure, that Paul and Peter are utterly forgotten.

CANTO XIX.

The collected souls of just kings, which form the shape of the eagle, speak to Dante with one voice. They tell him that salvation is impossible without belief in Christ, but that many who profess such belief will in the last day be worse off than the heathen, and they declare that many Christian kings will make a sorry figure when all secrets are then revealed.

APPEARED before me with wide-open wings
 That image fair, while in fruition sweet
 To its collected spirits gladness springs.

Each one of them appeared a rubinet
 On which the sun's ray with such burning shone 5
 That in my eyes was its refraction set.
 That which has now by me to be made known,
 Like never yet has wrote, nor voice did speak,
 Nor e'er was felt in fantasy alone :
 Because I clearly saw and heard that beak 10
 Speaking with voice that sounded I, and mine,
 Where we and ours as meaning we must take.
 "Through being just and good," did it begin,
 "Am I exalted to such glory here,
 That leaveth nought for which desire can pine. 15
 And on the earth I left such memory clear,
 That even wicked people give it praise,
 Although they follow not its deeds severe."
 As one sole heat from many coals that blaze 20
 Makes itself felt, so from these numerous powers
 That image but one single sound did raise.
 Whence I all eager : "O perpetual flowers
 Of the eternal gladness, who as one
 Bring to my sentience all your odorous showers,
 Breathing, appease that mighty fast alone, 25
 Which for so long has held me in its ties,
 Since upon earth no food for it was known.
 Well am I 'ware that if in other skies
 Makes its own mirror justice all Divine,
 That in your own no veil before ye lies. 30
 Ye know with what attention I incline
 To listen, and ye know what is the doubt
 With which I hunger from such weary syne."
 Like falcon who from hood doth issue out,
 Moveth his head, and shakes his wings abroad, 35
 Showing his eagerness and grace throughout,
 So I beheld that symbol, who with laud
 Of grace Divine was interwoven through,
 And song they know who in Heaven's courts applaud.
 Then it began : "He who the compass drew 40
 Unto the world's extreme, and in that space
 So much both hid and manifest did show,
 On all the universe could not impress
 His power so far but that His wisdom's might
 Must aye remain in infinite excess. 45

Line 40. The Divine nature could not so express itself in its works but that it must still remain incomprehensible, as was shown in the case even of the highest lower intellect, Lucifer, son of the morning.

And this we know for sure, since he, the height
 Of all created things, the primal pride,
 Imperfect fell through waiting not for light.
 Hence every minor nature is implied 50
 A cramped receptacle for such a good
 Which knows no end, and to itself supplied
 Its only measurement. Our vision rude,
 Which can be but a raying from the mind
 With which all things in nature are imbued,
 Cannot such power in its own being find 55
 But that its source it ever must discern
 From what it is, far different in kind.
 Therefore, within the justice sempiternæ,
 The vision granted to your worldly lore
 Enters as doth the eye in ocean's urn : 60
 For well one sees the bottom from the shore,
 But not in the midmain ; and ne'ertheless
 'Tis there, although the far deeps shroud it o'er.
 All light must come from that serene recess 65
 Which ne'er is troubled, or it is but shade,
 Or phantom, or the poison of the flesh.
 Enough the darkness has been now displayed
 Which hid from thee God's justice' living beam,
 Of which such frequent question thou hast made. 70
 For thou didst say, " A man by Indus' stream
 Is born, and there is no one there to tell
 Of Christ, and none to read or write such theme :
 And all his wishes, and his deeds as well,
 Are good, as far as human nature seeth, 75
 Sinless in life, by act or syllable :
 Yet unbaptised he dies, and without faith :
 Where is the justice which would him impeach ?
 Where is his fault who, unbelieving, strayeth ?
 Now who art thou who wouldest sit and preach, 80
 To judge at distance of a thousand miles
 With sight beyond a span that cannot reach ?

Line 56. Must see how God differs from itself.

Line 70. It will be observed that no answer is attempted to be given to the difficulty which Dante so boldly proposes. The inquirer is put down, as usual in such cases, by a reference to authority. This of course the advocate of Free Thought will not admit of as satisfactory—a fact Dante allows in the 84th line. In truth the doctrine of eternal damnation out of the bounds of a particular faith is an insult to the justice of God and the sense of man. Dante, by the invention of his Limbo, attempted to save the doctrine from its worst shape.

Certes to him who with me tries such guiles
 Were not the Holy Scripture o'er ye all,
 No wonder if he fell in doubt's defiles.

O earthly beings, minds of grossest pall, 85
 The Primal Will, that in itself is good,
 From its perfection never yet did fall.
 Justice is solely as with it imbued ;
 No good created draws it e'er aside,
 But from its rays hath every good ensued." 90

As when the stork its young ones hath supplied
 With food, above its nest it slow doth soar,
 And as they gazing in its love confide,
 So did I raise my eyes, and so sailed o'er
 That blessed image, which did move its wings 95
 Borne by such host of counsellors galore,
 And told me as it sang in circling rings :
 " As are my notes not understood by thee,
 Eternal justice such, to mortal things." 100

Thus they continued their high minstreley,
 Those lights of the Holy Spirit, in the sign
 Which gave the Romans their world victory.
 It recommenced : " Unto this realm Divine
 Never rose one who trusted not in Christ,
 Either before or since He died benign. 105

But many wilt thou see who cry, Christ, Christ !
 Who in the judgment-day will be less near
 To Him than some who never heard of Christ :
 The Ethiop will condemn such Christians here,
 When shall be ranged apart the cohorts twain, 110
 One to eternal wealth, and one to care.
 What will the Persians of your kings maintain,
 When they shall see that volume opened wide,
 In which their failings are all written plain ?
 There will be seen, midst Albert's deeds of pride, 115
 That which will soon give motion to the pen,
 When Prague is ruined 'neath his sword-blade's gride.
 There will be seen the grief which o'er the Seine,
 Debasing coin, that monarch shall array,
 Who 'neath a wild boar's tushes shall be slain. 120

There will be seen the pride which lusteth sway,
 And makes the Scot and Englishman so wild,
 That they within their bounds can never stay.

Line 115. The Emperor Albert I. See "Purgatory," Canto VI.

Line 118. Philip le Bel, who died in 1314 by a fall from his horse, upset by the charge of a wild boar.

Will be seen the luxury and the life so mild
 Of him of Spain, of him too of Boheme 125
 Who valour never knew, and never willed.
 Against the cripple of Jerusalem
 Signed with an I his liberality,
 The account against him will display an M.
 Will be seen the avarice and the villainy 130
 Of him who guardeth Etna's flaming isle,
 Where old Anchises, full of years, did die :
 And to display how he is very vile,
 The account in maimèd letters will be made,
 That in short space will note a world of guile, 135
 And will appear to all each laidly deed
 Of his uncle and his brother, who such great
 Family and two crowns have cuckolded.
 And they of Portugal's and Norway's State
 Will there be known, and he of Rascia too, 140
 Who Venice' mint did badly imitate.
 O happy Hungary, wouldst thou but eschew
 Further ill-treatment! and O blest Navarre,
 Would she but arm the hills that gird her view !
 And now in earnest of such final jar, 145
 Both Nicoséa's and Famagosta's town
 Against their beast complain, in urban war,
 Who from the others' side has never gone."

Line 124. Probably, as proposed by Mr. Cary, Ferdinand IV., who died in 1212 of intemperance.

Line 125. Venceslaus, mentioned in the "Purgatory," Canto VII.

Line 127. Charles II. of Naples and Jerusalem, the father of Charles Martel, and also praised by him for liberality in Canto VIII. of the "Paradise" by implication, and stamped previously with the vice of avarice by Hugh Capet in "Purgatory," Canto XX., which shows that Dante's judgments were sometimes not carefully weighed.

Line 130. Frederick of Sicily, son of Peter III. of Arragon. His uncle and brother were James, King of Majorca, and James II. of Arragon. See "Purgatory," Canto VII.

Line 143. Navarre was at that time under the rule of France, but shortly, following Dante's advice, it revolted from its subjection.

Line 145. Cities in the kingdom of Cyprus, who by their loud complaints against their monarch Henry II., as bad as the others before mentioned, foreshadowed what would be entered against him in the Book of Doom.

CANTO XX.

The eagle sings the praises of certain just kings, whose spirits are included in its image. Of these, six form its eye, David in the pupil, and in the iris around it Trajan, Hezekiah, Constantine, William II. of Sicily, and Ripheus. The eagle explains how Trajan and Ripheus, whom Dante did not know to be Christians, had become so, and obtained their seat in Paradise.

WHAT time the orb that lighteth all the world
 Descendeth from our hemisphere, the day
 In every part consumed, and downwards hurled,
 The sky, erst kindled solely by its ray,
 Its darkness suddenly doth re-adorn 5
 With numerous lights, in which one shines alway.
 This skyey change across my mind was borne
 What time that standard of earth's chiefs of might
 Grew silent in its beak's all blest sojourn. 10
 For then, of the multitude, each living light
 Shining more clear, began their songs to trill
 Such as from memory fleet and vanish quite.
 O sweet love that dost clothe thee with a smile,
 How in those sparkles didst thou burning swell,
 Whose spirit knew but thoughts all pure from guile! 15
 After those precious stones ineffable
 With which I saw ingemmed that sixth light's course,
 Silence imposed to each angelic bell,
 Meseemed to hear a river's murmur hoarse,
 That clear descendeth down from stone to stone, 20
 Showing the copious bounty of its source.
 And as from frame of cithern doth the tone
 Take up its shape, and as from out each hole
 Of flageolet the wind is breathing blown;
 So with a sweetly-linked delay did roll 25
 The murmur from the eagle issuing,
 From out its neck, as though 'twere pierced, it stole.
 There it became a voice, and thence did spring
 From out its beak, in form of words made known,
 Such as my heart could to its record bring. 30
 "The part in me which sees and bears the sun
 In mortal eagles," thus did it begin,
 "I would that thou shouldst fixedly gaze upon.
 For of the fires through which this shape I win,
 Those, whence the eye within my head doth blaze, 35
 Are of the highest grade of all within.
 He that as pupil in the middle rays
 Was the sweet singer of the Holy Spirit,
 Who bore about the ark from place to place :
 Now of his song he knoweth all the merit, 40
 In that 'twas prompted of his piety,
 Through the proportioned guerdon it doth 'herit.

Line 6. The fixed stars, according to Dante's belief, receiving their light from the sun.

Line 42. David knows now the full worth of his spiritual songs, by the proportionate reward allotted to him in Paradise.

Z.

Of the five who make the circle to my eye,
 He who unto my beak is placed most near
 For her lost son consoled the widow's cry: 45
 He knoweth now how it doth cost one dear
 Christ not to know, through his experience
 Of this sweet life, and the opposite of fear.
 The next to him in the circumference
 Of which I speak, along the arch superne, 50
 Delayed his death by his true penitence:
 He knoweth now that judgment's doom eterne
 Is never changed, although by worthy prayer
 To-day becomes to-morrow on earth's bourn. 55
 The next, the Roman laws, and me did bear,
 With good intention that bore evil fruit,
 To yield unto the Pope, to Greece afar.
 He knoweth now that though of ill the root,
 No harms to him from his good deeds derive,
 Though hence the world be ruined branch and root. 60
 Whom next upon the arc thou dost perceive
 Was William, whom that kingdom still deplores,
 Which Charles and Frederic living cause to grieve.
 He knoweth now how much of love Heaven stores 65
 For a just monarch here, and in the guise
 Of his shining splendour still that knowledge pours.
 Who could believe below in the world of lies
 That in this orb Ripheus of Trojan birth
 Were fifth amidst those holy mysteries? 70
 He knoweth now full well of what the earth
 Has not the power to see of Grace Divine,
 Though to its depths his vision goes not forth."
 Like little lark, that in the hyaline
 First launches forth in song, and then content 75
 Grows silent in its latest burst divine,

Line 45. See "Purgatory," Canto X., for the story of Trajan and the widow. The legend introduced by Dante is that the soul of Trajan was won back to life from Hell by the prayers of St. Gregory, in order that he might be converted and saved. See line 106 and sequitur.

Line 49. The next on the upper arch of the eagle's iris is Hezekiah.

Line 60. By the temporal authority of Rome being left with the Pope.

Line 62. William II. of Sicily, who reigned in the latter part of the 12th century, and whose death was as much lamented as the presence in the island at that time of Charles II. of Anjou and Frederic of Arragon.

Line 68. A character in the "Æneid," whose death is thus recorded:—

"Cedit et Ripheus, justissimus unus,
 Qui fuit in Teucris, et servantissimus æqui."

Æneid, lib. ii., p. 427.

Dante naturally wonders at finding him in the Christian Paradise.

So seemed to me that shape, which bore the print
 Of the Eternal Pleasure, at whose will
 Each thing is fashioned in its native bent.
 And though my doubt was there, as clear the while
 As upon painted glass the blazonries, 80
 I could not for a moment keep me still,
 But from my mouth, my doubt, "What things are these?"
 Was driven by the force of its own weight;
 On which beamed brighter those festivities. 85
 Then sudden with its kindled eye elate
 That blessed sign of Heaven to me replied,
 That I no longer in suspense might wait.
 "I see these things are not by thee denied
 Because I tell them, but thou seest not how;
 They are believed by thee, but not described. 90
 Thou dost like him, who learneth to avow
 A thing by name, but of its excellence
 Can nothing see, unless another show.
Regnum Cælorum suffers violence
 From glowing love, and from a living hope, 95
 Which conquereth the Will Divine, in sense
 Not such as doth a man a man o'ertop,
 But conquers it, since 'twould be conquered so:
 And conquered, conquers in its mercy's scope. 100
 The first light, and the fifth my eye doth show,
 Make thee to marvel, wherefore thou dost see
 The realm of angels with their glory glow.
 They rose not from their frames, as seems to thee,
 Gentiles, but Christians, in a firm-set faith 105
 One on Christ past, and one on Christ to be.
 For one of them, from Hell, where never swayeth
 The soul to good will, to his bones returned,
 And this of living hope was glory's wreath.
 Of living hope, that with such fervour yearned 110
 In prayer to God, that soul from death to wake,
 To move the Will Divine, his fervour earned.
 The glorious spirit, of the which I speak,
 Its flesh resumed, a brief while to respire,
 Believed in him who could his safety make. 115
 And so believing, kindled with such fire
 Of truest love, that at his second death
 Was worthy to this joyance to aspire.
 The other one, by grace that issueth
 From fount so deep, that never creature yet 120
 Unto its source with eyesight followeth,

On righteousness below his whole life set ;
 Wherefore from grace to grace God oped his eyes
 Future redemption in his life to greet :
 Whence he believed in it, and all the lies
 Suffered no more of stinking Paganism, 125
 And blamed for it his countrymen unwise.
 Those ladies three were his baptismal chrism,
 Whom by the chariot's right wheel thou didst note,
 A thousand years ere Baptism had arisen. 130
 Predestination, ah, how far remote
 Dwelleth thy root from every feeble ken,
 That never the First Cause hath wholly caught !
 And keep ye cautiously, O mortal men,
 From judgment : since ourselves, who God behold, 135
 Of the elect the number cannot ken.
 And sweetness doth such lack of knowledge hold ;
 Since in that Good our own good doth refine,
 And as God willeth, so our wills we mould."
 Thus by that image of the bird divine,
 My own shortsighted vision to make clear, 140
 Was proffered to me the sweet medicine.
 And as the harpist by the singer near
 Accompanies with tinkling of the cord,
 Whence in the song more pleasure greets the ear,
 So while it spake, my memory doth record, 145
 That I beheld those two blest lights the same,
 Like movement of two eyes in sweet accord,
 Move with the words, in cousing flame.

Line 146. The spirits of Trajan and Ripheus.

CANTO XXI.

Dante ascends with Beatrice to the sphere of Saturn, where he finds a ladder of gold, so lofty that he cannot see the top. Along the stairs ascend and descend the spirits of those who passed their lives in holy contemplation. Saint Peter Damiano approaches them, and in answer to Dante's questions states who he was, concluding by a vehement rebuke of the luxury of modern prelates, to which rises a shout of triumphant accord.

My eyes already on that sweet face gazed
 Of her my lady, and my soul the while,
 And every other thought was all erased :
 And she smiled not : but, " Were I now to smile,"
 Thus she began to tell me, " thou wouldst be
 Like Semele, who fell an ashen pile : 5

Because my beauty more exceedingly
 Kindles along the Eternal Palace stair,
 As it ascends on high, erst proved to thee :
 So would it shine were it not tempered here, 10
 That thy poor mortal being in its blaze
 Would be like leaf the thunderbolt doth shear.
 In the seventh splendour now our soaring stays,
 Which 'neath the lion's burning blazonries
 Its influence, somewhat mingled, downwards rays. 15
 Fix now thy mind intently in thy eyes,
 And be they to the shape a mirror made,
 Which in this mirror will to thee arise."
 Whoe'er perceiveth with what sweetness fed 20
 My sight ecstatic on that aspect blest,
 When thus to other object I was led,
 Will recognise how I with grateful zest
 To my celestial guide obedience paid,
 To pleasure counterpoising her behest. 25
 Within that crystal, which in circle swayed
 Around the world, named after its dear king,
 Beneath whose rule all wickedness lay dead,
 Of golden colour, where the sunrays cling
 In splendour, I beheld a mounting stair,
 Unto whose top my vision could not wing. 30
 And on its steps I saw descending there
 Such splendours, that I thought that every light
 Was there diffused, which in the heavens shine fair.
 And as in Nature at the fall of night,
 The choughs together at the dawn of day 35
 To warm their frozen plumage move in flight ;
 Then some without return go on their way,
 Others to whence they moved once more repair,
 And others, wheeling round their nest delay,
 So did it seem to me was acted there 40
 In all that glittering, which together came,
 Until it reached unto a certain stair :
 And one that lingered nearest us, in flame
 Became so bright, that in my thoughts I said,
 " Clearly I see the love which I may claim." 45
 But she, on whom my how and when is laid
 Of speech and silence, resteth still, whence I
 Rightly, though loath, no questioning essayed.

Line 14. The planet Saturn being then in the constellation Leo.

Line 18. Like what will be shown in the mirror if the planet Saturn be reflected in the mirror of thy eyes.

Line 27. The sign of Saturn, and the Golden Age of earth.

Whence she, who that my silence did descry
 In looking upon Him who all things sees, 50
 "Release thy fervent wish," to me did cry.
 And I began: "My little worthiness
 Makes me unfit to merit thy reply,
 Save for her sake who sanctions my address:
 O blessed life, who hidest in mystery 55
 Within thy rapturous joy, to me make known
 The cause that to my side brings thee so nigh:
 And say why silent in this sphere alone
 The dulcet symphony of Paradise,
 Which sounds in lower spheres such holy tone." 60
 "Thy hearing is but mortal, like thine eyes,"
 He answered me, "and hence one sings not here,
 As Beatrice now her smile denies.
 Down by the steps of this most holy stair 65
 With festival to greet thee am I come,
 Of parley and of light that clothes me fair:
 Nor speeds me here my love's exceeding sum;
 Above us more and equal love doth glow,
 As show to thee the flames that here illumine. 70
 But the High Charity which makes us bow
 To serve his schemes in the world's governance,
 Electeth here, as thou mayst clearly know."
 "O holy light," I said, "doth see my glance
 How in this court sufficeth love most free 75
 To execute the Eternal Providence.
 But this is what I find most hard to see,
 Wherefore wert thou predestined all alone,
 Unto this duty, midst this company."
 I had not to the latest word past on,
 Ere round its central soul the glory plied, 80
 Revolving like a swiftly-whirled millstone.
 And then the love that was within replied,
 "A light divine shed over me I find,
 Piercing through this one, in the which I hide;
 Whose influence with my proper vision joined, 85
 So lifts me o'er myself, my sight doth claim
 The Highest Essence, from the which 'tis coined.
 Thence comes the rapturous joy with which I flame,
 For in proportion as we clear descry
 Shineth the brilliance of our light the same. 90

Line 67. The spirit is not impelled to Dante by a love exceeding that of the others round them, as shown by their glowing radiance, but by God's election.

But not that soul most lustrous upon high,
 That seraphin who most on God doth gaze,
 This thy demand could ever satisfy :
 For what thou askest, in the deepest maze
 Of the eternal law is hid, a bourn 95
 Impossible to all created gaze.
 And when to mortal earth thou dost return,
 Report thou this, that they may ne'er presume
 To such a mark their mortal feet to turn.
 The mind that here is light is smoky fume 100
 On earth, then think how can they fathom there
 What we can see not, though in Heaven we bloom."
 As thus his words prescribed, I did forbear
 That question, and withdrew me, to demand
 Humbly that who he was he would declare. 105
 "Twixt the two shores of Italy there stand
 Mountains, so high the thunders never fall
 Upon their tops; not distant from thy land,
 And make a hunch which people Catria call,
 Beneath the which is consecrate a cell, 110
 Confined of old to God's pure worship all."
 Thus for the third time recommenced the swell
 Of speech, continuing he told me, "There
 Unto God's service did I bind me well,
 So that with olives for my only fare, 115
 Regardless did I pass through heat and cold,
 Content in contemplation, and in prayer.
 Was wont to bear for Heaven, that cloister's fold,
 With great luxuriance, now 'tis grown so vain
 That soon must God its worthlessness unfold. 120
 I, in that place was Peter Damiane :
 Peter, a sinner in Our Lady's hall,
 Beside the shore of the Adriatic main.
 Brief life was left me, when as cardinal
 I was importuned to accept the hat, 125
 Which still from evil unto worse doth fall.
 Came O' the Holy Spirit, barefooted and lean,
 Taking their food at the first open gate :

Line 106. Betwixt the shores of the Adriatic and Mediterranean seas, on a ridge of the Apennines, where is now the Abbey of Santa Croce, in the Duchy of Urbino.

Line 121. A monk born in the early part of the eleventh century, who became a bishop and cardinal, and closed his career in retirement.

Line 127. Saint Peter and Saint Paul, was electionis.

Now on each side they must be propped between, 130
 These modern shepherds, and they must be led,
 And hoisted from behind their burly mien.
 With their own mantles are their palfreys clad,
 So that two beasts within one skin repair.
 O Patience, thou indeed art sore bestead!" 135
 Upon that word I saw from stair to stair
 The numerous flames descend, and whirl, renewed
 At every whirl they seemed to grow more fair.
 Around this flame they came, and there they stood,
 And raised a shout of such a mighty sound 140
 I cannot liken it here : I understood
 Nought, so the thunder all my senses drowned.

Line 139. Around Peter Damiano, their shout being, as explained in the next Canto by Beatrice, on account of the approaching vengeance for such backsliding in the Church which they saw in the councils of God: alluding to the approaching fate of Boniface VIII. See "Purgatory," Canto XX.

CANTO XXII.

Beatrice clears away Dante's groundless alarm. He beholds many other spirits, and is addressed by Saint Benedict, who promises him that he shall see his form without its covering of splendour in the highest sphere. The spirits then depart, and Dante follows Beatrice up the golden ladder to the eighth Heaven, the region of the fixed stars, which they enter in the constellation of the Twins. There they pause, and Dante looks down on all the seven spheres through which he has past to the diminished earth beneath.

OPPRESSED with stupor, to my loving guide
 I turned me, like a little child in tears
 Who seeketh her where most he doth confide.
 She, like a mother whose caressing cares 5
 Instantly soothe her pale and breathless son
 With the sweet voice that wont to calm his fears,
 Told me, " Know'st not that thou in Heaven dost wonne,
 And know'st thou not that Heaven is ever holy,
 And what is done here springs from zeal alone ?
 How would their singing have transformed thee wholly, 10
 Or I by smiling, thou canst now descry,
 Since has so moved thee this their shouting solely,
 In which, hadst thou but heard their prayers on high,
 Already would the vengeance be seen-clear
 Which thou wilt surely see ere thou dost die. 15

Line 15. See the final note to the last Canto.

Neither in haste nor tardily doth sheer
 The sword of Heaven, except as he may deem,
 Who waits for it with longing or with fear.
 But now let others on thy vision beam,
 Illustrious spirits sure will meet thy gaze, 20
 If, as I tell, thou turn'st thee unto them."
 As pleased to her my vision did I raise,
 And saw a hundred little spheres, who dress
 Each other gaily with their mutual rays. 25
 I stood like one who in himself doth press
 The point of his desire, and does not dare
 To question, so he feareth all excess.
 And then the largest and most lustrous there
 Amongst those Margarites advanced to me,
 Contentment to my longing wish to bear. 30
 Within its flame I heard: "Didst thou but see
 Like I the loving that doth in us burn
 Thou wouldst have told thy inward fancy free,
 But that through waiting to thy lofty bourn
 Thou mayst not tarry, I will make replies 35
 Even to the thoughts thou dost so close inurn.
 The mountain on whose slope Cassino lies
 Was peopled of old time upon its height
 By a race deceived by foul idolatries,
 And I am he who first bore to that site 40
 The name of Him who on the earth educed
 The truth which leads to so sublime a height.
 And such a grace upon me was infused
 That the surrounding townships I withdrew
 From the impious worship which the world seduced. 45
 Those other fires were all contemplants too:
 Men who were kindled with that ardour clear
 Which maketh flowers and holy fruits ensue.
 Here is Macarius, Romoaldo here;
 Here are my brethren who their feet did rest 50
 Within my cloister with firm heart of cheer."
 And I to him: "The love thou hast expressed
 Speaking with me, and the fair semblant show
 I see and mark in every ardent breast,

Line 37. A castle in the Terra di Lavoro, where Saint Benedict found an ancient temple in which the rustics round still worshipped Apollo. He converted the people from idolatry, and built a shrine to St. John where the altar of Apollo had stood.

Line 49. Macarius, an Egyptian monk, and Romoaldo, the founder of the order of Camaldoli, who died in 1027.

Has made my courage burgeon 'neath its glow, 65
 As doth the sun the rose when openly
 It bares its bosom in its fullest blow,
 Therefore I pray thee, father, certify
 If to so high a grace I may aspire,
 Thee, with thy shape enshrouded to descry." 60
 Whence he: "O brother, this thy high desire
 Will be fulfilled within the furthest sphere,
 Where all our wishes are fulfilled entire.
 Perfect, completed, and mature is there
 Every desire: within that sphere alone 65
 Where aye they were are all things everywhere,
 Since there nor place nor whirling poles are known:
 Even to it our ladder mounteth high,
 Hence so beyond thy vision hath it flown. 70
 Dreaming, the patriarch Jacob did descry
 Its rounds uprearing, even to that height
 When laden with that angel company.
 To climb it now there never more take flight
 Feet set upon our earth, and hence my rule 75
 Is but a waste of leaves on which 'tis writ.
 The walls which wont to form my convent's school
 Are grown to caves, and full of musty meal
 Is changed into a sack each hooded cowl.
 But does not sin so much against God's weal 80
 The grossest usury, as that fruit which tends
 To make the monkish heart so madly reel.
 What pelf soe'er the Church as her own defends,
 Belongs to those who ask for God's own sake,
 Not to relations, nor for far worse ends. 85
 The flesh of mortal man is all so weak
 That good beginnings there give little claim
 From the oak's birth the acorn crop to seek.
 Without or gold or silver Peter came,
 I, Benedict, with fasting and with prayer, 90
 His convent humbly did Saint Francis frame,
 And if thou look'st at each commencement fair,
 And then regardest where they each have gone,
 Thou'lt see the white indeed discoloured there.
 Now of a truth hath Jordan backward run. 95
 More marvellous was the Red Sea's flight to view
 When God so willed, than here his succour won."

Line 62. In the empyrean, where there is neither time, place, nor motion, and where all the spirits of the blest have their seat.

Thus did he speak to me, and thence withdrew
 Amongst his comrades, who together closed
 Then like a whirlwind all of them upflew.

Behind them my sweet lady me disposed 100
 With a mute sign to mount aloft that stair,
 So much her virtue o'er my power imposed.

On earth ascending or descending ne'er
 Was ever motion of such swiftness ta'en
 That could be equal to my pinion there. 105

So may I, reader, once return again
 Unto that triumph, for the which I wail
 My sins and ever smite my breast amain,
 Thou wouldst not with such speed the flame assail, 110
 And draw thee back, as I beheld the sign
 Which follows Taurus and within it sail.

O glorious stars! O pregnant light benign
 Of mighty virtue, from the which I bear
 My genius all, whatever share be mine
 With you was born, and with you sought his lair, 115
 The sun, the father of all life 'mongst men,
 What time I breathèd first the Tuscan air,
 And when was granted me such benison
 To enter the high sphere in which ye wheel
 Your region was allotted to me then. 120

To you devoutly now the sighs appeal
 Of my rapt heart fit virtue to acquire
 For the hard task which claimeth all its zeal.

"Thou art so near the sum of all desire,"
 Began my Beatrice, "that indeed 125
 Clearness and strength thy vision should inspire,
 And therefore ere thou further dost proceed
 Gaze downwards and behold how vast a world
 Beneath thy feet thou hast already laid,
 So that thy heart, with fullest joy unfurled, 130
 Unto the host triumphant may draw near,
 Which joyous cometh, through this ether whirled."

My vision I turned back through every sphere,
 The seven beneath me, and this globe I saw
 Such that I smiled, so mean did it appear, 135
 And I approve as best that sage's law
 Which most despises it, and who doth dream
 Of other worlds, I think has least of flaw.

Line 110. The constellation of the Gemini, in which sign Dante makes his entry into the sphere of the fixed stars, as it was under that constellation that he was born.

I saw the daughter of Latona beam
 Without that shadow, which my reason won 140
 Falsely of old, of rare and dense to deem.
 The visage of thy son, Hyporion,
 There I sustained, and there I saw how near
 Around him Maja and Dione wonne.
 The tempering of Jove did thence appear 145
 Betwixt his sire and son, and thence the change
 Their stations underwent to me was clear.
 And all the seven were shown me in their range,
 How vast in space, and how each swiftly sways,
 And how in distant grooves they onwards range. 150
 The area where we fiercely strive our days,
 I, with the eternal Twins revolving there,
 Appeared to me with all its hills and bays :
 Thence turned my eyes unto those eyes so fair.

Line 139. I saw the moon without its spots. See Canto II.

Line 144. Mercury and Venus, here named respectively after their mothers.

Line 146. Between Saturn and Mars.

CANTO XXIII.

Dante beholds the triumph of Christ with His saints. The Saviour, followed by his Virgin Mother, ascends out of sight into the higher Heavens. The body of the saints of both Testaments remains with Dante.

As 'midst the lovèd leaves the small bird bides
 With her sweet young ones resting in the nest
 Throughout the night, which all things from us hides,
 And both to see those objects loved the best, 5
 And for their pasture to find food enow,
 For which all toil to her is sweet as rest,
 Forestals the time, and on the open bough
 With ardent longing waiteth for the sun,
 Fixed in her gaze, until the dawning-glow, 10
 So stood erect my lady, towards the moon
 Of Heaven's high concave turned, with gaze intent,
 Where the sun seems least hurriedly to wonne ;
 So that beholding her suspense unpent,
 I then became like one who something new 15
 Desireth, and in hope remains content.

Line 12. The sun appearing to travel slowest when in mid-Heaven.

'Twixt one and other but brief space I knew,
 I mean 'twixt expectation and 'twixt sight,
 When more and more the Heavens resplendent grew.
 "Of Christ's high triumph, lo! the serried flight,
 And all the fruit," did Beatrice exclaim, 20
 "Upgathered from those spheres of whirling light."
 It seemed to me her face was all aflame,
 And in her eyes such store of gladness shone;
 All undevelop't I must pass that theme.
 As in the nights serene of bright full moon 25
 Fair Trivia smileth 'midst the nymphs eterne,
 Which paint the Heavens through all its glorious noon,
 Saw I, above the thousand lights that burn,
 One sun, that all the others kindled there,
 As does our own the starry train superne, 30
 And through that living light beyond compare
 The shining substance beamed so brilliant clear
 That in my eyes the sight I could not bear.
 O Beatrice! my sweet guide and dear,
 Who told me "He who overpowers thy sight 35
 Is power 'gainst which resistance 'vails not. Here
 Is the Eternal Wisdom and the might
 Which sped the pathway 'twixt the sky and earth,
 For which was erst such longing infinite." 40
 Like fire expanding in a cloud takes birth
 That cannot hold it longer, and released,
 Against its nature, down to earth flies forth,
 So did my mind 'midst that celestial feast
 Issue from out itself, enlarged the while, 45
 And memory knows not how it then increased.
 "Open thy eyes to see me now awhile.
 Things thou hast now beheld to give thee power
 Amply sufficient to sustain my smile."
 I was like one in truth who thinketh o'er 50
 Some dream forgotten, and who strives in vain
 Within his mind its image to restore,
 What time I heard that all-thankworthy strain
 Proffered unto me, to be rased no more
 From that book where the past is written plain.
 If all those tuneful tongues the chorus bore, 55
 Which, nourished with their sweetest milk apart,
 Fair Polyhymnia and her train of yore

Line 26. A name of Diana, or the moon.

Line 37. Jesus Christ.

Line 57. The Muses.

To aid me, of the truth in thousandth part
 That holy smile would not be shown, nor how
 Beamed clear that holy face, with all their art. 60
 Thus I, who Paradise am painting now,
 Must leap o'er much of this my holy theme,
 As one who finds his path cut off, I trow.
 But of the weighty object if one deem,
 And of the mortal shoulder that doth bear, 65
 Although it tremble, still one would not blame.
 This is no sea for little bark to steer,
 Cleaving through which goes on my daring prow,
 Nor for a helmsman who himself would spare.
 "Why does my face so wholly charm thee now 70
 That for this garden fair thou dost not pine,
 Which 'neath the rays of Christ doth bloom and blow?
 Here is the Rose, in which the Word Divine
 The flesh became; and here the Lilies rise,
 Win the true path who seek their odorous wine." 75
 Thus Beatrix, and I, to her advice
 Who aye was ready, turned me once again
 Unto that strife for my poor dazzled eyes.
 As 'neath a sun ray which doth glance between 80
 A broken cloud, of old a flowery field
 My own eyes covered with a shade have seen,
 So the vast crowd of splendours I beheld
 Lit from above with lightning's burning rays,
 Nor saw the source from which the glory welled. 85
 Benignant virtue! which did o'er them blaze,
 Thou raisedst thyself above, to leave me room
 That my poor powerless eyes might hither gaze.
 The name of that fair flower, the Rose, to whom
 Morning and eventide I make my vow, 90
 Called to her flame my soul as to its home.
 And while on both my eyeballs did it glow,
 The size and nature of that living star,
 Which conquers all above as erst below,
 Within the Heavens a light descended there, 95
 Formed in a circle like a coronal,
 And girt her round, and wheeled around her fair.
 Whatever melody most sweet doth fall
 On earth, and mostly doth the soul inspire,
 Would seem like thunder burst from cloudy pall

Line 73. The Virgin Mary, termed by the Church *Rosa Mystica*.

Line 75. The Lilies are explained to mean the twelve Apostles.

Line 94. Stated by the commentators to be intended for the Angel Gabriel, who first announced to the Virgin her high destiny.

Compared unto the sounding of that lyre 100
 With which the beauteous Sapphire was encrowned,
 Through whom Heaven's Sapphire glows with brighter fire.
 " I am the angelic love that wheels around
 The rapture high, that breatheth from the womb
 Where for our love a dwelling-place was found. 105
 And, Lady of the Sky, I'll thee illumine
 While following thy Son; the sphere most high
 Thou mak'st more Godlike when thou there dost come."
 Then was that sweet revolving melody
 Brought to a close, and every other light 110
 The name of Mary sounded through the sky.
 That royal garb, which all the spheres with might
 Surroundeth, and which glows most vivified
 Beneath the breathing of God's infinite,
 Was stretched above us, with its inner side 115
 So distant that its semblance at that hour
 Where we were stationed could not be descried.
 Therefore my eyes did not possess the power
 To follow after that crowned flame above,
 Which soared aloft behind the seed it bore. 120
 And like a little child its arms doth move
 Towards its mother when it milk has ta'en
 Through that affection which its gestures prove,
 Each of those whitest flames did upwards strain 125
 Its soaring crest that the affection deep
 They bore for Mary unto me was plain.
 Thence in my presence they their station keep,
Regina Cœli with such sweetness singing
 That evermore the rapture do I reap.
 O what a wealth of bliss is there upspringing 130
 In those rich storehouses, who erst below
 The seed of good deeds aye abroad were flinging!
 Here they enjoy that treasure evermo,
 The which in exile and with tears they won
 In Babylon, whose gold they did not know. 135
 Here doth there triumph, 'neath the lofty Son
 Of God and Mary, with the saints o' the Old
 And the New Testament in unison,
 He who the keys of glory here doth hold.

Line 103. The beauteous Sapphire is the Virgin.

Line 112. The ninth Heaven, called the Primum Mobile, which enfolds and gives motion to the lower eight.

CANTO XXIV.

At Beatrice's request Saint Peter questions Dante upon his Faith, and approves his exposition of his belief and the grounds on which it was founded.

"O GUESTS elected to the Supper high
 Of the Blessed Lamb, who spreads for ye a feast,
 Which your desire doth wholly satisfy;
 If, by the grace of God, this one foretaste
 The crumbs which from your table ye let fall, 5
 Or ere that Death his bound of time hath traced,
 Unto his will immense, attention call,
 And sprinkle him with dew, since ever ye
 Drink from that fount whence come his dreamings all."
 So Beatrice, and those souls in glee, 10
 Spheres on their firmly-fixèd poles became,
 Like comets, blazing yet more brilliantly.
 And as the wheels within some clockwork frame
 Go round in manner, that the first as still, 15
 The last as flying rapidly doth seem,
 So did those carol dances, as they wheel
 In different measure, unto me make known,
 Or swift, or slow, the wealth that each doth fill.
 Out of that carol which the fairest shone 20
 I saw there issue forth such rapturous fire,
 That none were left so brilliant in their tone.
 And thrice around my Beatrice the spire
 Revolvèd, with a song so all divine,
 Cannot repeat it fantasy's desire: 25
 My pen goes o'er it, nor records my line,
 For our imagination has no hues,
 Much less our speech, such rich folds to design.
 "O saintly sister mine, what thou dost use
 Of prayer devoutly, through thy ardent love, 30
 Me from that beauteous circle doth unloose."
 Then, when that blessed flame had ceased to move,
 Towards my lady grew erect the spire,
 Which spake as I have written it above.
 And she: "O light eterne of the great sire, 35
 To whom our Lord did leave the keys, which He
 Carried below from this rejoicing choir,

Line 16. The carol dance, as already explained, was formed by a *set* who while dancing sang to their measure. The spirits here formed several carol dances, in which the various sets showed their amount of grace by the velocity of their movements.

Try this man on the points that pleaseth thee,
 Or light or hard, concerning that true Faith
 By which of old thou walkedst on the sea.
 If he loves well, and hopeth well, and hath 40
 Belief, is hid not to thee, since thou'st seen
 There, where one everything depicted seeth.
 But since this realm hath made each citizen
 Through the true Faith to make its glories shine,
 'Twere good to speak of it within his ken." 45
 Just as a scholar doth his thoughts combine
 And speaks not, till the master hath laid bare
 The question, to approve it, not define,
 So every argument did I prepare
 The while she spake, that I might ready be 50
 For such profession and such questioner.
 "Speak, O good Christian: make it clear to see
 What is this Faith?" on which I raised my front
 Towards the light whence this was breathed on me,
 Then turned to Beatrix, whose cheering went 55
 Encouraged me, that I should outwards pour
 The water stored in my eternal fount.
 "May grace, which granteth to confess me o'er
 To the high leader of our Church, assoil
 With clear expression my thought's inmost lore!" 60
 Then I continued: "As the truthful style
 Of thy dear brother, father, writes it clear,
 Who, with thee, to the truth won Rome erewhile,
 Faith is the substance of things hoped for here,
 And argument of things that are not seen; 65
 And this to me its essence doth appear."
 Then heard I: "Thou dost feel it right I ween,
 If thou well understand'st why Faith he brings,
 The substances and arguments between."
 And quickly I: "The deep mysterious things 70
 Whose sight is granted to me here as boon,
 Are so concealed from mortal communings,
 That there their being is in Faith alone,
 Upon the which is built Hope's soaring height:
 And therefore as a substance is it shown: 75
 And from this Faith, without all other sight,
 'Tis fit that man his reasoning powers should ply,
 And therefore as an argument 'tis hight."

Line 62. St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, xi. 1.

Then heard I: "If whate'er by learning high
 Is gained below were but thus understood, 80
 No place would be for sophist's casuistry."
 Thus breathed from out that love, which kindling glowed:
 Thereto was joined: "In metal and in print
 The coin is current, and I own it good.
 But tell me of thy purse, dost bear it in't?" 85
 And I: "I have it there so bright and round
 That nought can make me doubtful of its mint."
 Quickly there issued from the light profound
 Which there was beaming bright, "This jewel good,
 Built upon which all virtue must be found, 90
 Whence did it come to thee?" "The bounteous flood
 O' the Holy Spirit, which upon the Old
 And the New Testament is shed abroad,
 Is argument, so subtle in its fold
 Conclusive, that beside it to the view 95
 All demonstration as obtuse I hold."
 "The ancient proposition, and the new,"
 After I heard, "which thee do so persuade,
 Why dost thou hold them for Divine and true?"
 And I: "The proof, which hath that truth displayed, 100
 Is in the miracles, which Nature ne'er
 Wrought with her steel, nor on her anvil laid."
 Was answered to me: "Say who makes thee 'ware
 Those miracles in truth to be the same
 Which they would vouch for? others do not swear." 105
 "Had the world grown to Christian," I exclaim,
 "Without those miracles, this very one
 More power than all a hundredfold would claim.
 That thou didst enter poor and fasting, on
 The field, in which thou sowedst the holy plant, 110
 Which erst was vine, and now a briar has grown."
 This finished, in that lofty court each saint
 Shouted along their spheres, "One God we praise,"
 In melody the which in Heaven they chaunt.
 And that high peer, whose questions me did raise, 115
 Examining, thus on from bough to bough,
 So that we neared unto the highest sprays,
 Began again: "The grace which courteth now
 With thy own mind, hath made thee ope thy mouth,
 Just as it should have opened, until now; 120
 That I approve the whole that it avoweth:
 But now thy credence to express were meet,
 And to what cause thy soul that credence oweth."

"O holy father, who in God dost greet
 What thou believedst, so that thou didst go 125
 Within the sepulchre, ere younger feet,"
 Thus I began: "thou wouldst that I should show
 The form of the belief to which I cleave,
 And also of its motive thou wouldst know,
 And I reply: I in one God believe, 130
 Sole and eterne, who moveth all the Heaven
 With love, nor His own nature ere doth leave:
 And to such faith not only proofs are given,
 Both physical and metaphysical,
 But rather proves that truth the rainèd leaven 135
 Through Moses and the Psalms and Prophets all,
 The Gospel, and yourselves who wrote in turn,
 Because the Holy Ghost on ye did fall.
 And I believe in Persons Three Eterne,
 These I believe an Essence, One and Trine, 140
 Where Singular and Plural I discern.
 Of that profoundest nature so Divine
 Which now I touch, my mind has caught the mark
 Reading so many a time the Gospel line.
 This is the source: this is the little spark 145
 Which broadens after to such living flame,
 And shines on me, like star in Heaven's high arc."
 As when a master hears some pleasing theme,
 His servant thence embraces, who doth stand 150
 Silent, once told the errand whence he came,
 So singing o'er me benediction bland,
 Girt me three times as I to silence drew
 The Apostolic light, at whose command
 I'd spoken: so I pleased with parlance true.

Line 126. St. John xx. 4, 5, 6. In the original Dante writes, "*towards the sepulchre,*" which Venturi considers a slip, as John outran Peter: the slight alteration I have adopted reconciles the poem with John's account of the fact.

CANTO XXV.

Saint James joins Saint Peter, and questions Dante as to the grounds of his Hope. After his reply, Saint John advances to his brother Apostles and Dante blinds himself by gazing too intently on his flame, to see whether he has risen to Heaven with his body, which Saint John declares to have been the case only with Christ and his Virgin Mother.

If it should hap this holy poem e'er,
 Which Heaven and earth have helped, and which did mar
 My frame with abstinence for many a year,
 Conquer the cruelty which me doth bar
 From the fair sheepfold where I slept a lamb 5
 Hateful to wolves, who on me made their war ;
 With other voice henceforth, nor hair the same,
 A poet I'd return, and o'er the font
 Where I was christened, the wreathed laurel claim : 10
 For in the Faith, which only makes account
 Souls unto God, I entered there, and then
 For it did Peter circle thus my front.
 Thence towards us moved another denizen
 Out of the troop, from whence had issuèd 15
 The earliest vicar left by Christ o'er men.
 And my dear lady full of gladness said,
 "Look up, look up, behold the holy peer
 For whom, below, Galicia's roads they tread."
 As when a dove doth place itself anear 20
 Its comrade, one and other sheds abroad
 Circling and murmuring their affection dear :
 So I beheld the one with welcome good
 Greeting the other great and glorious chief,
 The while the food they feast in Heaven they laud. 25
 But when were closed their gratulations brief,
 Silent, before me, each its place did take
 So blazing, they o'ercame my sight though lief.
 Then with a smile did Beatrice speak :
 "O life of glory! by the whom was writ 30
 The hope-won gladness of our palace, make
 Hope's praises now resound upon this height,
 How often thou didst shape it thou dost know,
 Since Christ to thee displayest Himself most bright."
 "Lift up thy head, and confidence avow : 35
 For what comes hither from the mortal earth
 Must surely in our rays to ripeness grow."
 This comfort from the second fire had birth :
 On which, unto those hills I raised my eyes,
 Which erst had bowed them with their too great worth.

Line 5. The fair sheepfold, Florence, whence he was banished.

Line 17. The Apostle St. James, whose shrine at Compostella was a favourite resort for pilgrims from all Europe.

Line 38. When at the Transfiguration the three Apostles, Peter, James, and John, were present, representing the three spiritual virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Line 37. The second flame, St. James.

" Since Grace doth will that thou in mortal guise, 40
 Ere Death has ta'en thee, shouldst our emperor see,
 Amidst his peers in secret'st mysteries,
 So that this Court's true glory seen by thee,
 Hope, that below wins love with amplest dower, 45
 In thee and others rise to certainty :
 Say what it is, and how its bloom doth flower
 Within thy mind, and whence to thee descried :"
 Thus did proceed that second flame of power.
 And pious Beatrice, who did guide
 My pinions' plumage to such lofty flight, 50
 Preventing my response, for me replied.
 " In the Church Militant no son doth fight
 With more of hope, as written in that sun,
 God, who aye rayeth o'er our cohorts bright.
 Therefore to come is granted him as boon 55
 From Egypt to Jerusalem, to see,
 Or ere his militant course on earth be run.
 The other points, asked not to satisfy
 Mere knowledge, but that he may hence record
 How much this virtue ever pleaseth thee, 60
 I leave to him ; for they will not be hard,
 Nor cause him boasting ; let him now reply,
 And may God's grace its aid to him accord !"
 As a disciple, prompt and willingly
 In what he knows, that he may favour win, 65
 Unto his master's questions makes reply :
 " Hope is a certain waiting," I define,
 " Upon the future glory, built upon
 Preceding merit and the Grace Divine.
 From many stars this light to me did wonne : 70
 But he who first distilled it in my heart
 Was the sweet singer of God's heavenly throne.
 In Thee will place their trust, in sacred art
 Of song said this one, they who know thy name,
 And who knows not, who hath my faith at heart ? 75
 Thou didst the next instil it, with the flame
 In thy Epistle, so that on the rest,
 I, who am full, pour o'er your holy stream."

Line 56. From Egypt to Jerusalem, from earth to Heaven.

Line 73. They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.—
 Psalm ix. 10.

Line 77. The author of the Epistle is allowed to be the younger James,
 and not the elder disciple here introduced.

The while I spake, within the living breast
 Of that enkindled flame, a glimmer welled 80
 Sudden and oft like lightning quickly chased :
 Thence there breathed out : " The love in me revealed
 Towards this virtue still, which to me clung,
 Till with the palm I issued from the field,
 Wills that I breathe of it to thee, whose tongue 85
 Delights in it ; 'twill please me thou shouldst say
 That which this hope hath promised thee so long."
 And I : " The Scriptures Old and New display
 The bourn of hope, the which itself I greet
 In souls whom God has filled with love for aye. 90
 Each will be clad, Isaiah doth repeat,
 In their own region with a double vest,
 And their own region is this life so sweet.
 And thy own brother even more confest,
 There, where he treateth of the robes of white 95
 This revelation maketh manifest."
 Soon as my words were ended, on the height
Sperent in te, above us sounded near,
 To which made answer every carolling light.
 Then from amongst them drew a light so clear, 100
 That if in Cancer did such crystal glance,
 Winter's first month would but one day appear.
 And as doth rise, and enter on the dance,
 A joyous virgin, with no thought of sin,
 But to the bride to do obeisance, 105
 So I beheld that coruscating sheen
 Move to the pair, revolving in their wheel
 As fitted to their glowing love I ween.
 He joined them in their song ineffable :
 And on them gazed my lady unreprest 110
 Like spouse, in silence, and immovable.
 " This is the one who lay upon the breast
 Of our own Pelican : and this was he
 Chosen on the Cross unto the high behest."
 My lady thus, nor ne'ertheless did she 115
 Her vision move from gazing there attent,
 After, as ere the words she spake to me.

Line 91. Therefore in their land they shall possess the double.—Isaiah lxi. 7.

Line 94. St. John in the Apocalypse.

Line 101. Were a star of such brilliance in the constellation of Cancer, which shines throughout the night during the first month of the winter solstice, the sun would in reality never set, and the whole month would be as one day.

Like unto him who gazes with intent
 To see awhile eclipse the solar beam,
 Through too much gazing has his vision spent, 120
 So grew I, looking on that latest flame,
 Whilst it was told me: "Why, a thing to see
 Which here is not, dost face my dazzling gleam?
 My frame is earth on earth, and so will be
 With all the rest, until our sum be brought 125
 Equal in number unto God's decree.
 With their two garments in this blessed Court
 Are those two lights alone, who now ascended:
 And this within thy world thou mayst report."
 With this the glowing wheel its circling ended, 180
 Together with the sweet accompaniment
 Which from the trinal spiral's murmur blended:
 Just as for pause, or peril to prevent,
 The oars that erst within the water plied,
 When sounds the signal, sudden rest suspent. 185
 Ah! in my mind how I was terrified
 What time I turned to see my Beatrix,
 That her I could not see, though by her side
 I there was standing in the World of Bliss!

Line 121. Dante looks thus intently on the spirit, which he learns is St. John, to see whether he has risen with his body to Heaven, according to the doubt raised by the words of Christ to the disciples, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

Line 128. Christ and Mary, who were described in the last Canto as ascending to the higher Heaven, while the saints remained.

CANTO XXVI.

St. John examines Dante concerning Charity. A fourth flame then advances, in which is the soul of Adam, who acquaints Dante with the real reason of his fall, and the length of time he remained in the terrestrial Paradise.

THE while in doubt I stood, through vision spent,
 From out the beaming flame which dazzled it,
 There issued words which made me all intent,
 Saying, "While thou thy vision dost refit, 5
 Which gazing on me thou hast lost, 'twere well
 That converse now should compensate for sight.
 Begin, then, and declare, on what doth dwell
 Thy soul's desire, and meanwhile understand
 Thy sight not dead, but wandering for a spell,

Because the lady who throughout this land 10
 Divine doth lead thee, in her look doth claim
 The virtue granted Ananias' hand."
 "Or swift or slow as her good will may deem,
 May healing clear the eyes, which were the gates
 Through which she entered with my deathless flame! 15
 That Good, which wholly in this Court elates,
 Is Alpha and Omega of the whole
 Which love or lightly or with strength relates."
 The selfsame voice which caused away to roll 20
 The terror of my sudden dazzlement,
 To further parley prompted still my soul,
 And told me: "Thou must sift thy argument
 Certes through finer sieve, 'twere fit for thee
 To say who aimed thy bow to such intent."
 And I: "By proofs of high philosophy 25
 And by authority which from here descends,
 Such love was fitly printed upon me.
 For good, in what of good one apprehends,
 So kindles love proportioned, and the more
 That it the more of goodness comprehends. 30
 Then for the essence which contains such store,
 That every good which out of it is found,
 Is but a ray of its own light galore;
 More than in others then must it abound
 Within his loving mind who seeth clear 35
 The truth on which this argument is found.
 Such truth unto my intellect lays bare
 He, who displays to me the primal love
 Of all the beings in the eternal sphere.
 And that true author's voice doth also prove, 40
 Who unto Moses of himself did speak:
 ' I'll make before thee all my goodness move!
 Thou also makest it plain, where thou dost wake
 The proem high, which more than every ban,
 The secret of the Heavens to earth doth break.' 45

Line 12. Who by placing his hands on Saul restored his lost sight.—
 Acts ix.

Line 16. Dante here replies to St. John's question as to what constitutes
 his soul's desire, which he declares to be God, the Highest Good.

Line 37. Supposed to be either Aristotle or Dionysius the Areopagite, who
 wrote concerning the Celestial Hierarchies, already introduced in Canto X.,
 and again alluded to in Canto XXVIII.

Line 42. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee.—
 Exodus xxxiii. 19.

Line 45. The commencement of St. John's Gospel.

And then I heard : " By intellect of man,
 And by authority with it agreeing,
 Beyond all else thy love to God maintain.
 But tell me still, if thou dost feel thy being
 With other cords drawn towards Him, to descry 50
 How many fangs of love are on thee preying."
 The holy purpose of Christ's eagle high
 Was hidden not from me, but well I knew
 Where my confession he desired to ply.
 " Each grappling fang," I then began anew, 55
 " Which unto God the heart with power is swaying,
 Unto my charity is helpmeet true.
 The being of the world, and my own being,
 That I might live the death which He sustained,
 What each believer hopes, with me agreeing, 60
 With that the living knowledge now explained,
 Of evil love hath drawn me from the sea,
 And to the shore of right love me have chained.
 The leaves, of all the garden's greenery
 Of the eternal Gardener, love I solely 65
 As each from Him hath goodness won in fee."
 As I grew still a song of sweetness wholly
 Resounded through the sky, and with the rest
 My lady chanted Holy, Holy, Holy.
 As bright light chases dreams from one at rest, 70
 By the visual organ which doth greet the light,
 Piercing the retina from vest to vest,
 And he awakened, what doth greet his sight,
 Through sudden vigil doth not clear behold
 Until his judgment helpeth him aright ; 75
 So from my eyes each mote away was rolled
 By a bright ray from Beatrice's eyes,
 Which shone upon me thousand, thousand fold.
 Whence better than before my sight describes,
 And of a fourth light, as one stupefied 80
 I questioned, which I saw amongst us rise.
 " Behind those rays," my lady then replied,
 " The first soul there does his Creator woo,
 Who first made virtue, since he first was tried." 85
 Just as the leaf doth bend upon the bough
 When breathes the passing wind, and then doth rise
 By its own virtue rearing it anew,
 So did I reverent bow, while she replies,
 Awestruck, and then once more emboldened grown 90
 By the desire to speak which in me lies,

Line 52. Christ's eagle—St. John.

I thus began : " O apple, who alone
 Wast ripe created, ancient sire ! who aye
 Each wedded bride dost for thy daughter own,
 And daughter-in-law, devoutly thee I pray
 To speak to me : my wish thou well dost note, 95
 Which, to hear sooner, I forbear to say."
 Just as at times a dog doth sleek its coat
 As its affection prompteth, to display
 The feeling its appearance doth denote, 100
 So there that first soul, in a similar way
 Through medium of its covering made me see
 How much to please me grew its spirit gay.
 Then breathed : " Without its being told by thee,
 To me thy whole desire is better known
 Than aught by thee of greatest certainty : 105
 Because I see it that true glass upon,
 Which makes itself parhelion to all things,
 While nothing makes of it parhelion.
 Thou'dst hear how long, since God my sojournings
 Granted within that garden, whence this maid 110
 Thy steps along this lengthened ladder brings :
 And to my eyes how long its gladness stayed,
 And the true reason why God banished me,
 And what the language which I used and made. 115
 My son, it was not tasting of the tree
 That was the reason of so great exile,
 But only disobeying the decree.
 There, whence thy lady Virgil moved erewhile,
 Four thousand and three hundred years and twain,
 For this high conclave was I yearning still : 120
 And the sun passing through the Zodiac's train
 I saw nine hundred times and thirty more,
 The while on earth my living course I ran.
 The language which I spake was wholly o'er, 125
 Or ere in their impossible emprise
 The race of Nimrod strove to raise their tower.
 Since nothing which on man's mere reason lies
 Was everlasting, since the human will
 Aye changes 'neath the influence of the skies.

Line 108. A parhelion is an image of the sun, formed by its reflected light. God reflects His light on all things, but is Himself reflected by none.

Line 119. By this computation of the length of time in which Adam remained in Limbo, until borne hence in Christ's triumph over the powers of Hell, the birth of Christ is placed 5,200 years after the Creation.

That man should speak is work of Nature still : 130
 But so and so to speak doth Nature leave
 Unto yourselves, according to your will.
 Ere I descended to the infernal grave,
 The Highest Good on earth was callèd El,
 From whom doth now this joy around me weave. 135
 Eli 'twas after called : the change is well ;
 For use of mortals is like leaf on bough
 Which goes, and other cometh whence it fell.
 On the highest mount that soars o'er ocean's flow 140
 Was I in life of purity and shame,
 From the first hour until the seventh, whereto
 Changes its quadrant the sun's westering flame."

Line 140. The stay of our first parents in Eden, both before and after their fall, amounted to seven hours : such from a legend of the Middle Ages was the belief accepted by Dante, for which there is probably as much authority as for the Miltonic theory by which Protestant belief is guided as to the Adamite period.

CANTO XXVII.

After a chorus of praise to the Holy Trinity, the spirits listen silently to Saint Peter, who in an indignant outburst rebukes the government of his successors in the Apostolic See. The Heavenly Host glow with sympathetic indignation at his words, and all then vanish in the height. Beatrice then raises Dante to the ninth Heaven, the nature of which she explains to him, and blames the perversity of mankind, whose aims are set at a lower goal.

UNTO the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
 Glory throughout all Paradise began,
 That in the sweet song were my senses lost.
 That which I saw, meseemed a smile that ran 5
 Throughout the universe, since rapture newer
 By sight and hearing through my being ran.
 O joy ineffable ! O gladness pure !
 O life entire of love and tranquil good !
 O free from every longing wealth secure !
 Before me the four torches kindled stood, 10
 And the Apostle who the first did come,
 With growing brilliancy before me glowed :
 And in his semblance such did he become
 As Jove might do, were he and Mars's pride,
 Grown birds, to interchange them plume for plume. 15

Line 15. St. Peter, glowing with indignation, assumed the sanguine hue of Mars in place of his former silvery light.

The Providence which order doth provide
 And change of duty here, 'mid this blest crew
 Had silence now imposed on every side
 What time I heard: "If I take colour new
 Marvel thou not, for while my words begin 20
 Thou wilt behold each one of these change hue.
 He who usurps on earth that place of mine,
 That place of mine; that place of mine now vacant,
 Within the presence of God's Son Divine,
 Has of my cemetery made a fecant 25
 Cesspool of blood and filth, whence the perverse
 Who fell from Heaven, in Hell doth joy complacent."
 That roseate hue, which o'er a cloud adverse
 The sun doth paint at eventide and morn,
 Beheld I then o'er all the Heaven asperse. 30
 And like a virtuous lady who would scorn
 All sin herself, if only she doth hear
 Of others' frailty, groweth all forlorn,
 So Beatrice changed her semblance here,
 And so methinks eclipsed the Heavens that hour 35
 In which the Christ was suffering mortal fear:
 Proceeded then his words of angry power,
 With voice so changed from its own former tone,
 That even his semblance was not altered more.
 "The spouse of Christ was fed not with my own, 40
 With Linus', and with Cletus' blood for this,
 Now as a thing of purchase to be known:
 But to acquire this perfect life of bliss,
 Urban, Calixtus, Sextus, Pius too,
 Their lifeblood shed, after long agonies. 45
 It was not our intention that a few
 Alone should sit at our successors' right,
 And at his left the rest o' the Christian crew.
 Nor that the keys, granted to me with might,
 Should e'er become the standard in a war 50
 For those who 'gainst their christened foemen fight:
 Nor that my image should be signet for
 Mendacious privileges sold for gain,
 At which I oft glow red and sparkle o'er.

Line 41. All the martyrs named by St. Peter were amongst his successors, the Bishops of Rome in the second and fourth centuries.

Line 47. Alluding to the division between Guelphs and Ghibelines, factions fomented by the Popes, who of course favoured their own party.

Line 52. The seal of St. Peter being affixed to the Papal Bulls, by which were often purchased iniquitous privileges.

In shepherd garb rapacious wolves are seen 55
 From here o'er every pasture wandering free.
 O shield of God, why dost so still remain!
 They of Caorsa and of Gascony
 Hasten to drink our blood, to what vile ending
 O fair commencement hast thou hurried thee! 60
 But the high Providence of old defending
 At Rome, with Scipio, the world's glorious spoil
 As I perceive, will soon be succour lending;
 And thou, O son, who through thy mortal coil
 Once more below must turn thee, ope thy mouth, 65
 From what I hide not, do not thou recoil."
 As upon earth, from frozen vapours, snoweth
 Our lower air, what time in Capricorn
 The sun along his winter solstice goeth;
 So I beheld o'er ether upwards borne 70
 The beauteous snow of that triumphant cloud,
 Which there, till then, with us had made sojourn.
 My vision on their semblances pursued,
 And followed them till midway, when the height
 The power to soar yet farther disallowed: 75
 On which my lady, who beheld me quite
 Rapt in that upwards gazing, said, "To know
 How thou hast turned thee, downwards cast thy sight."
 Since that hour when my glance I first did throw,
 I found I'd traversed all the arc so great 80
 From the meridian to the horizon low,
 So that I saw on this side Gades' strait,
 Ulysses' mad emprise, on that the shore
 From whence Europa made so sweet a freight:
 And of the earth my sight had travelled o'er 85
 A further space, had not the sun gone on
 Beneath my feet a Zodiac's sign and more.
 The enamoured spirit which doth ever wonne
 In dalliance with my lady, her to greet
 My eyes with more than previous ardour won. 90

Line 58. John XXII. of Caorsa and Clement V. of Gascony, who transferred the Holy See to Avignon in 1308, and was alluded to in Canto XIX. of the "Hell."

Line 79. Since he had last looked down on entering the sphere of the fixed stars, Canto XXII., he had past from the meridian circle to the eastern horizon, one half of the hemisphere. The sun has travelled six hours, and Dante, above it, has travelled the same space in the last but one of the whirling spheres.

Line 82. The Straits of Gibraltar, from whence Ulysses sailed into mid-ocean—see Canto XXVI. of the "Hell"—and Phœnicia, from the shore of which Jupiter bore Europa as a bull.

And whether Art or Nature make a bait
 To win the soul with beauty through the eyes,
 In human flesh and blood, or pictured state,
 All heaped together I would nothing prize
 Beside the bliss divine, which on me shone, 85
 What time I turned unto her smiling guise.
 And the new virtue from that gaze alone
 From the fair nest of Leda me did lift,
 And in the swiftest Heaven, enwafted on. 100
 Its portions all, diaphanous and swift,
 Are so alike, 'twere idle to inquire
 In what part Beatrice chose to drift.
 But she who clearly saw my whole desire,
 Smiling, began with such a joyous air,
 That God seemed through her visage to transpire. 105
 "The nature of the movement circular,
 Still in the midst, while all the rest moved round,
 Commenceth hence, as from its goal afar.
 And in this Heaven is neither place nor bound
 Save God's Divine, in which is lit the love 110
 Which whirls it, and the power that hence is found.
 Of light and love the circle bounds above,
 As this the other spher'es, and He alone
 That precinct understands, who thus hath wove. 115
 Its motion is not by the others shown,
 But all the rest by this take measurement,
 As by the half or fifth the ten is known.
 And as within this vase Time's roots are pent,
 Henceforth upon the others for its leaves
 To be beheld, thy vision must be bent. 120
 O worldly lust, that mortals so enweaves
 Beneath its waters, that no one has power
 Upwards to cast his eyes beyond its waves!
 In men, desire of good doth fairly flower,
 But withereth through sin's continuous rain 125
 To abortive growths, each fruit that decked their bower.
 Pure faith and innocence, with all their train,
 Are found in children only, then each one
 Flies ere the cheek the down of manhood gain.

Line 98. From the constellation of the Gemini, so called from Leda being the mother of Castor and Pollux.

Line 112. The empyrean circles this sphere as this sphere circles all the others.

Line 118. Time takes its measurement from the motion of the primum mobile, although its apparent measure be the sun, stars, or moon. From this Beatrice marvels at human nature, which cannot soar from earth to the contemplation of Heavenly things.

- Who, while in childhood's prattle fasteth, grown 130
 To loosened tongue devours of sinful snares
 All food soever, under any moon.
- Who, while in childhood's prattle, loves and hears
 His mother, when his speech is perfect, now
 Desirous for her burial, counts the years. 135
- So into sable doth the white skin grow
 From its first aspect, in *his* beauteous child
 Who bringeth morn, and leaveth eve below.
- Thou, that this cause not in thee wonder wild,
 Think that on earth none rules the people o'er, 140
 Whence is humanity so far beguiled.
- Ere January pass from winter frore
 Through the neglected hours that mar your date,
 These spheres supernal will so loudly roar,
- That Fortune, that doth now with longing wait, 145
 Will shift each stern, where pointeth now the prow,
 So that straight onwards will career the fleet;
 And after flowers true fruit will stud the bough."

Line 136. So rapidly does man—child of the sun—degenerate from his fair childhood. The generating power of the sun has been before alluded to.

Line 142. Before the fractions, left out in each year, so alter the seasons as to take January out of winter: a periphrasis merely for before many years, before long. The introduction of the Gregorian Calendar has prevented the occurrence of such a catastrophe, which would otherwise have taken place.

Line 146. Dante probably alludes here to no known event, but merely to his own political hopes for the future of Italy, which have since been realised.

CANTO XXVIII.

Dante beholds in this ninth sphere the Hierarchies of Heaven in nine choirs of angels encircling the Divine Essence.

WHEN she who doth imparadise my soul
 O' the present state of wretched mortals' thrall
 Had thus laid bare to me the truthful scroll;
 As when upon a mirror there doth fall
 A torch's flame, enkindled from behind, 5
 Ere the spectator think of it at all,
 And he turns round to certify his mind
 Whether the glass speak truth, which doth accord
 With fact, like music unto words designed:

Just so my memory doth here record 10
 That I did, gazing on those eyes so fair,
 From whence to bind me, Love hath made his cord :
 And as I turned me round, and was aware
 Of what within that volume meets the sight 15
 Of whoso gazeth on that whirling sphere,
 A point I saw, which radiated light
 So vivid, that the eye on which it blazed
 Must close perforce, through its intensesness bright.
 That star, which from our earth appears the least,
 Beside it placed, would like the moon appear, 20
 As star with star in Heaven is interplaced.
 Perchance such distance as appeareth near
 The light unto its halo, thence impearled,
 What time the vapour is most dense in air,
 Such distance round that point, so swiftly whirled 25
 A circle of fire, that it in speed had past
 The sphere, whose motion swiftest girds the world.
 And this within another was enchased,
 That by a third, the third by a fourth again,
 And further yet a fifth and sixth were placed. 30
 Above, a seventh one followed round the train,
 Spread out so wide that Iris' coloured zone
 Were all too small its circle to contain.
 So on the eighth and ninth ; and every one 35
 Revolved more slowly, as its distance grew
 Yet further from the central unison :
 And each one had its flame of clearer hue
 As it was nearer to the crystal fire,
 From which each one its truthful essence drew. 40
 My lady, who beheld me in desire
 Of knowledge rapt, then told me : " Hangs the Heaven
 From that one point, and Nature's self entire.
 That circle see, whose place is nearest given,
 And know, its motion whirleth with such speed
 Through the fire-glowing love with which 'tis driven." 45
 And I to her : " If the visible world were laid
 In the order that I see amid yon spheres,
 That had sufficed me which has now been said.

Line 11. Dante, startled by the vision reflected in the eyes of Beatrice, turns round to gaze upon the reality.

Line 14. "That volume" has been differently interpreted, but apparently means the ninth sphere, in which is visible this image of the hierarchies of Heaven.

Line 46. The celestial spheres whirl faster the further they recede from the central point, the earth: the vision here beheld by Dante shows him each

But in the spheres celestial there appears
 That each with motion more divine doth move 50
 As to the centre less and less it nears,
 Whence if my longing may solution prove,
 Within this wondrous and angelic temple,
 Which has for boundaries only light and love,
 'Tis meet I still should hear how this ensample 55
 And thing exemplified at variance go,
 In vain I ponder on a theme so ample."
 "If of such knot thy fingers do not know
 The secret 'tis no marvel, since the way
 As yet untried doth make it hard I trow." 60
 My lady thus, then said to me, "Essay
 That which I'll tell thee, if thou wouldst be taught,
 And round about it let thy fancy play.
 The spheres of Heaven are wide and narrow wrought,
 According to the virtue more or less, 65
 The which through all their parts is interfraught.
 The greater goodness doth more greatly bless;
 Through all its parts if equal be the glow,
 The greater flame gives greater blessedness.
 This ninth sphere, then, which whirleth with its flow 70
 The lofty universe, doth correspond
 Unto that ring which most doth love and know.
 Therefore if thou wouldst stretch thy measuring wand
 Unto the virtue, not unto the seeming
 Of substances, now shown to thee in round, 75
 Thou wouldst behold a wondrous fitness streaming
 Of great to more, and less to less I ween
 In every Heaven unto its angels' dreaming."
 As there remaineth splendid and serene
 The hemisphere of air what time there blows 80
 The north wind in his mood of gentlest mien,

sphere, on the contrary, whirling faster the nearer it is to its centre—God. Beatrice's previous reply made no explanation of this contrariety, for which he now asks for the solution.

Line 64. In the material universe the spheres differ in size according to the extent of their power of good: all parts being equally perfect, the more ample the spheres the greater is the power of good, and the swifter must be the motion to complete the circle synchronously with the spheres of less amplitude. The intelligential spheres, which represent the intelligences or guiding spirits of each of the material spheres, revolve in speed according to the extent of their Divine vision, and so the ring, that which is nearest to the central point answers to the ninth Heaven, and so on every ring or choir of Heavenly powers answers to its corresponding material sphere. Such is the argument in the text, rendered difficult chiefly by its elliptical form of expression.

By which the scudding rack right onwards goes
 That erst defiled the sky, and all the Heaven
 Throughout its vault in smiling beauty glows ;
 So grew I, after that to me was given 85
 By my dear lady in her answer clear,
 The truth as manifest as star in Heaven :
 And when her words fell silent on the ear,
 Not otherwise than glowing iron flares,
 In coruscations glittered every sphere. 90
 Each sparkle blazing its ranged order bears ;
 And such their number, that a thousandfold
 They past the doubling of the chessboard's squares.
 From choir to choir I heard Hosanna rolled
 To the first point, that holds them in their place 95
 Unchanging, and for evermore will hold.
 And she exclaimed, who in my mind did trace
 My doubtful thought : " Those circles first in view
 Display the seraph and the cherub race.
 So in their orbits do they swift pursue, 100
 Growing more like the centre evermo',
 As is their sight of it sublime and true.
 The other loves that round about them go
 Are callèd thrones, before the gaze of bliss,
 With whom the first trine ends. And thou must know 105
 That all possess apportioned happiness
 As pierces deep their sight into the truth,
 In which all knowledge rests in blessedness.
 Hence canst thou see how happiness endueth
 Its essence wholly in the act of seeing, 110
 And not in loving, though that hence ensueth :
 To each the meed of sight is given agreeing
 With what goodwill and grace bring forth and bear ;
 So it proceeds from grade to grade of being.
 The other trine, that all its burgeons fair, 115
 Doth open in that sempiternal spring,
 Never despoiled by autumn's nightly star,
 Summering on high, Hosannas ever sing
 With threefold melodies, that sound in three
 Orders of gladness, in their trinal ring. 120
 Three Heavenly orders in this hierarchy,
 The dominations first, the virtues then,
 And third in order, powers thou there dost see.

Line 93. Counting one for the first square, two for the next, and doubling the product onwards to the last square of the sixty-four, gives a final result of a number with twenty ciphers.

In the penultimate dancing orbs again
 The princedoms and archangels circling move, 125
 The last is all of angels' festal train.
 All of these orders Godwards gaze above,
 And influence so beneath, that Godwards all
 Are drawn, and Godwards still all draw in love.
 And Dionysius on this festival 130
 Of orders pondered with such fervency
 That he distinguished each, and each did call.
 Then Gregory with him did disagree ;
 Who, when his eyes were oped 'mid seraphim,
 Could not but smile his old mistake to see. 135
 And if a truth so secret e'er could limn
 Mortal on earth, no marvel need be thine,
 Since one who saw above made plain to him
 This, and much else about these spheres divine."

Line 130. The Areopagite, in his book "De Cœlesti Hierarchiâ," from which Dante took his system of the Heavenly Powers attached to each sphere: with this system Gregory the Great disagreed in a trifling particular, changing the relative positions of the princedoms and virtues.

Line 138. St. Paul. The work of Dionysius is, however, of a much later age.

CANTO XXIX.

Beatrice satisfies the curiosity of Dante on certain points concerning the creation of Angels and the universe, and explains to him the truth as to the Angelic nature. She then vigorously blames the practice of modern preachers, who, forsaking the simplicity of the Gospel, teach as truths their own idle inventions concerning Divine mysteries.

WHEN of Latona's offspring, either one
 'Neath Aries' sign, and Libra's, in the skies
 Together of the horizon make their zone,
 Such time as each in equilibrium lies,
 Until exchanging hemispheres there dips 5
 The sun's vast orb the while the moon doth rise,
 So long a time with bright smile on her lips
 Was silent Beatrice, gazing on
 That point, which o'er my senses cast eclipse.
 Then she began: "I ask not, but make known 10
 What thou wouldst wish to hear, which I have seen
 There, where all place and time doth meet alone.

Line 1. So long as the sun and moon hang on the verge of the horizon opposite to each other, while one is setting and the other rising, for such a momentary duration Beatrice was silent.

Not to increase its excellence, I ween
 That cannot be, but that its splendour might
 Shining in power, assert its life serene : 15
 The eternal love, beyond Time's finite sight,
 Or comprehension, in eternity,
 New loves created for its own delight.
 Nor did it lie in torpor previously ;
 For not in dates of after and before 20
 Went forth God's spirit, brooding o'er this sea.
 Both form and substance, mixed as well as pure,
 Sprang into being, from all error free
 As arrows three from thrice-stringed bow made sure.
 And as on crystal, amber, glass, the ray 25
 So shines in passing through, that in the beam
 When issuing forth no interval we see,
 So issuing from its sire, the threefold stream
 Launched into being, all together rayed
 Without distinction as to whence it came. 30
 Together with the substances was made
 This order, of pure intellect the Race,
 Over the world their sovranly arrayed.
 Pure power, or chaos held the lowest place ;
 Betwixt them, power with intellect was whirled 35
 In such firm bond, that nought can e'er unlace.
 St. Jerome in his pages has unfurled
 That through long ages Angels were created,
 Ere the creation of another world.
 But this my truth in many texts is stated 40
 By writers, through the Holy Spirit taught,
 Which thou wilt see if carefully collated :
 And even reason this hath somewhat caught,
 Since one cannot conceive those powers I trow
 Short of perfection could so long be wrought. 45
 Now thou dost know the where, the when, the how,
 These Angels were created, so that three
 Are satisfied of thy heart-longings now.

Line 22. Form applies to pure intelligence, the highest order of created beings, substance to power or matter, the lowest, and between them intelligence mixed with power, forming the three arrows simultaneously shot from the three-stringed bow. As explained more fully in lines 28 to 37, this describes the simultaneous creation of the Angels, Chaos, and the Celestial Spheres composed of matter and Angelic nature mixed.

Line 37. St. Jerome had advanced the contrary opinion that Angels were created long anterior to the universe, which was controverted by St. Thomas Aquinas, whose views are adopted by Dante.

Line 45. It was impossible to conceive that the Angels could have been created before the Celestial Spheres, of which they were the motors, as they would then have existed without object, and consequent perfection.

Thou couldst not twenty count so rapidly,
 As of the Angel throned there fell a part, 50
 Troubling your elemental mystery.
 The rest remained, and then began this art
 Which thou discernest, with such deep delight
 That never from this circling they depart.
 The reason of the fall was his despite 55
 And pride accurst whom thou beheldest bound
 'Neath the world's weight, within the lowest pit.
 Those whom thou seest here were lowly found
 To know they all things to his goodness owe,
 Who them with aptness for such knowledge crowned. 60
 Therefore their vision was exalted so
 With their own merit, and illuming grace,
 That will complete, which cannot fall, they know.
 And doubt not, but as certainty embrace,
 That to receive God's grace is meritorious, 65
 According as the affection gives it place.
 Henceforth around their hierarchies glorious
 Gaze at thy will, if thou my words dost store
 Thou need'st no other aid to be victorious.
 But since according to the schoolmen's lore, 70
 They read on earth, the Angelic nature made
 To understand, remember, will, yet more
 I'll tell thee, that the truth all naked laid
 Thou mayst behold, confounded all below
 Equivocating in such studied braid. 75
 Since first those substances delight did know
 Before the face of God, they never turned
 From it, where nought was hid for evermo'.
 Therefore on novel objects never yearned
 Their vision, and they therefore never claim 80
 The help of memory for thought returned.
 So that on earth do men, while waking dream,
 And some believe, some not, that truth they speak,
 Unto the last is greater sin and shame.
 Philosophy's straight path ye do not take 85
 On earth: so much the mundane love of show
 And singularity ye ever seek.
 And even this far less of blame doth know
 In Heaven, than when the Holy Scriptures good
 Are overruled, and strained aside below. 90

Line 72. It is an error to attribute to Angels the gift of memory: as they always see all things in God's mirror, they can never require memory to call back an object that has past away. See line 81.

Ye do not think how much it cost of blood
 To sow it in the world, and what reward
 Is his, who welcomes it in humble mood.
 Still for appearance each one struggles hard,
 And makes his own inventions, which are theme 95
 For preachers, while the Gospel is debarred.
 One says that in Christ's dying hour supreme
 The moon returnèd back, and interposed
 So that below could shine not the sun's beam. 100
 Others that light within itself inclosed,
 So that to Spaniards, Indians, and to Jews,
 To all alike was such eclipse imposed.
 So many Lapi and Bindi in her stews
 Florence knows not, as in a year are told 105
 Within her pulpits such fallacious views.
 So that the sheep, all ignorant, to the fold
 Return from pasture only fed with wind,
 Not pardoned that their loss they ne'er behold.
 Christ spake not to His followers in this kind,
 Go forth, and preach ye fables to the world, 110
 But truth for their foundation He assigned :
 And that so fervently their preaching hurled,
 That for the battle, true faith to attest
 Their shield and lance was Gospel truth unfurled. 115
 Now they but seek for fine words, and a jest,
 In preaching, and who only wins a smile
 Swells in his cowl, and asks no further test.
 But in that cowl what bird doth nest the while
 If by the crowd were seen, they then would see 120
 What pardon 'tis they trust in to assoil :
 For which so grows the foolish greedery,
 That without any evidence or sign,
 To every promise doth the crowd agree.
 By this Saint Anthony makes fat his swine,
 And other things, than swine far worse, beside, 125
 Purchased and paid for with unminted coin.
 But since enough we now have wandered wide,
 To the straight path henceforth thy vision bear,
 That hastening the lost time may be supplied.

Line 102. Taken as the people inhabiting the extreme west, centre, and east of the inhabitable earth. The darkness was universal.

Line 103. Common names in Florence: the Smiths and Browns of the place.

Line 124. By the sale of these false indulgences, "unminted," not genuine coin, the brothers of Saint Anthony, formed into an independent order by Boniface VIII., grow rich and support their paramours.

The Angelic nature mounts from star to star 130
 In such a multitude, that speech had failed,
 And mortal thought had never gone so far.
 And if thou look'st on what has been revealed
 By Daniel, in his thousands thou wouldst see
 That all determinate number is concealed. 135
 The primal light which over all doth ray
 Doth in a different fashion mingling flow
 In every splendour, where 'tis paired for aye :
 Whence since to action that conceives, we know
 The affection corresponds, the dulcet love 140
 Germins in each of them with different glow.
 In future all the height and breadth approve
 Of the Eternal Worth which thus hath rent
 Itself in all these mirrors spread above,
 Still as before remaining permanent." 145

Line 134. Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.—Daniel vii. 10.

Line 137. God communicates His nature differently to each of the myriad Angelic host, so that each one differs from the rest in love and glory.

CANTO XXX.

The hierarchies vanish in the height, and Dante, rapt in the ineffable smile of Beatrice, ascends into the empyrean. There his sight being strengthened by gazing into the river of light, he is able to behold the triumph of the twofold Court of Heaven, the Angels and the souls of the Blessed, spread out like a full white rose.

THESE glows, perchance six thousand miles afar,
 The fervid noon, the while our Tuscan land
 Strips off the shadow of night's flying car,
 When the mid sky, the deepest o'er us spanned,
 Begins to change, that every starry light 5
 Loses its semblance where on earth we stand ;
 And as the handmaid of the sun most bright
 Advanceth onwards, so the Heaven doth close,
 Over each star through all its infinite.
 Not otherwise the triumph which arose 10
 Ever around that point which me o'erthrew,
 Appearing girt by what it doth inclose,

Line 1. Dante compares the disappearance of the hierarchies in the height to the stars vanishing in the sky when it is dawn at Florence and noon six thousand miles away.

Line 12. The hierarchies were inclosed in God, though apparently revolving around Him.

Little by little from my sight withdrew,
 Whence love, and nought to gaze at, me constrained 15
 To turn my eyes on Beatrix anew.
 If whatsoe'er till now of her was penned
 Were all included in one mighty praise,
 It had not of this turn the height maintained.
 The beauty that I saw so passes ways 20
 Not merely human, but I think alone
 Its Maker could its joyaunce all appraise.
 That I am conquered by this pass I own
 More than was ever bard of whom could boast
 The sock or buskin in a flight unknown. 25
 For as the sun, the sight that trembles most,
 So the remembrance of that smile so sweet
 From my own self my mind hath wholly lost.
 From the first day when I that face did greet
 In this our life until that sight divine 30
 My song to follow was not all unmeet;
 But now 'tis fit that henceforth I resign
 Her beauty to pursue in poet aim,
 As yields each artist to his art's confine.
 Such, then, I leave her to more high acclaim 35
 Than that of my weak trumpet, which draws on
 Unto a final close its arduous theme.
 Of conquering chief with gesture and with tone
 She recommenced: "Now, issued forth, we move
 In the Heaven of purest light, from the ninth zone. 40
 Light intellectual, and full of love,
 The love of Truth, all full of gladness aye,
 Gladness, all thought of sweetness far above.
 Here both the serried armies thou shalt see
 Of Paradise, and one in such a seeming 45
 As thou shalt see them on the judgment day."
 As sudden light that with its rapid gleaming
 Blindeth the visual powers, depriving quite
 The eye of objects that are brightest beaming,
 So did there shine around me living light, 50
 And left me shrouded with such veiling stream
 Of its own blaze that nothing met my sight.
 "Ever the love that stills the Heaven supreme
 With such a weal doth welcome to its home,
 To make the taper fitted for its flame."

Line 43. The hosts of Angels and of the souls of the Blest, the latter appearing as they will do on the final day of doom.

Not a whit sooner than to me did come 55
 These words so brief or ere I felt again
 My soul surmounting, with new virtue bloom,
 And with new vision was I kindled then,
 Such that no glory's clearest lightening
 But that my eyes were able to sustain. 60
 I saw the light in form of river fling
 Its blazing stream, the which two banks enfold,
 Impainted with the wonder-breathing Spring.
 From such a river living sparks uprolled,
 And everywhere they set them on the flowers, 65
 Like unto rubies girt around with gold.
 Then, as inebriate with the odorous showers,
 They plunged again into the wondrous stream,
 Whence one still issued as another lowers.
 "The high desire that thee doth now inflame 70
 To seek for knowledge of what thou dost see
 Pleases me more the more it swells thy aim.
 But ere such thirst be satisfied in thee
 'Tis needful of this wave that thou shouldst drink,"
 The daystar of my eyes thus spake to me. 75
 Thereto : "The river, with its smiling brink
 Of flowers and topazes that sink and glide,
 Of their own truth a shadowy prelude link
 Not that themselves are not all glorified, 80
 But the defect is on thy part alone,
 Who hast not yet thy vision purified."
 An unweaned child had not so swiftly run
 With mouth towards the milk, when he doth wake
 Far later than his wont, than I flew on
 Yet better mirrors of my eyes to make, 85
 Inclining me with rapture to the waves
 That flow to heal whoe'er his thirst doth slake.
 The instant that there drank of it the eaves
 Of my drooped lids the stream before my eyes
 Into a circling ring its length enweaves. 90
 Then like to people 'neath a masked disguise
 Who others seem than erst, themselves confest
 When stript away their semblant fantasies,
 So did there change to jubilee increased
 The flowers and sparkles that I there beheld 95
 Both Courts of Heaven before me manifest.

Line 61. "The pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb." Apocalypse xxii. 1.

Line 64. Dante as yet beholds the vision dimly, and the Angels appear to him as sparks, the souls of the Blest as flowers. See line 97.

O splendour of my God, whence I beheld
 The lofty triumph of the truthful reign,
 Give me the power to say how I beheld !
 Light is above that maketh visible plain 100
 The Maker to the creature, who alone
 In seeing Him doth perfect peace attain.
 And in a circular shape it rayeth on,
 Of such a size that its circumference
 Unto the sun would be too large a zone. 105
 Upon the primum mobile it hence
 Imprints its semblance with reflected sheen,
 Which thence doth draw its life and influence.
 And like a cliff that o'er the wave serene
 Mirrors itself, as 'twere, to see how fair 110
 Is all its wealth of flowerets and of green,
 So standing o'er the light in circles there
 I saw them glassed on more than thousand thrones,
 All of our race who thither made repair. 115
 And as the central grade within it owns
 So great a light, how vast doth spread in size
 This Rose's petals in its furthest zones !
 In all its height and amplitude my eyes
 Were not bewildered, but took in it all,
 The quantity and nature of its joys. 120
 Nearness and distance do not there befall,
 For where God rules immediate and supernal
 The laws of Nature have no sway at all.
 Within the yellow of the Rose eternal,
 Which opens out in grades and breathes delight 125
 And odorous praise to the sun for ever vernal,
 Like one who, silent, fain would speak, forthright
 Beatrix led me on, and said, " Behold
 How great the gathering of our stoles of white !
 Behold what space our city doth enfold ! 130
 Behold our seats already so complete
 That few more guests we wait to see enrolled.
 Where thou dost fix thy eyes, on that high seat
 Marked with a crown, already o'er it placed,
 Or ere that thou this nuptial supper greet, 135
 Shall sit the soul on earth Augustus graced
 Of the great Harry, who will come to heal
 Our Italy, or ere her mood be past.

Line 136. Henry VII., who died in 1513, and on whom Dante's hopes for the restoration of a united Italy were always turned.

Blind Avarice that doth witch your common weal
 Hath made ye like the child who drives away 140
 Its nurse, and pining, dies of hunger. Still
 Such prefect will possess the Papal sway
 Who openly and with his frauds unjust
 Will walk not with him on his noble way,
 But for short period in his holy trust 145
 Will God allow him, hence will he be thrown
 Where Simon Magus has his meed, and thrust
 The prelate of Alagna lower down."

Line 142. Pope Clement V., who transferred the Holy See to Avignon, and died in 1314, when he would relieve the prelate of Alagna, Pope Boniface VIII., from the outer place in the pit in which simoniacal Popes are punished. See "Hell," Canto XIX.

CANTO XXXI.

While Dante is rapt in the glorious vision of this triumph of the Blest, Beatrice returns to her throne in Paradise. Saint Bernard takes his place by Dante, and exhorts him to dwell on all the glories before him, that he may be prepared for the supreme reward of at last beholding the Deity.

THESE then in fashion of a pure white Rose
 Displayed itself the holy Host of Heaven,
 Whom Christ in His dear blood had made His spouse.
 But the Angel Host on wing, by them perceiven,
 His glory sings, who filled their hearts with love 5
 And goodness, who to them so much had given.
 So like a swarm of bees that now doth move
 Over the flowers, now doth again return
 There, where their labour doth its sweetness prove,
 O'er the vast flower it settled now, adorn 10
 With leaves so many, and thence upwards flew
 There where its love doth ever make its bourn.
 Of living flame were all their faces' hue,
 Their wings of gold, and all the rest so white,
 Driven snow so stainless never met the view. 15
 When on the flower they dropt, from site to site
 They shed abroad the peace and ardent power
 Which they acquired in their transcendent flight.
 Nor did their passing 'twixt the height and flower
 In all the hovering of their swarming state 20
 Hinder the vision and the splendour shower.

Because the light Divine doth penetrate
 Throughout the universe, as it is fain,
 So that its passage nothing can rebate. 25
 This safely harboured and rejoicing reign
 Frequented by the new race and antique,
 Vision and love shared all throughout their train.
 O trinal light that in a star unique
 Shines on their vision with such perfect sway
 Gaze down in pity on our stormy peak! 30
 If the barbarians from the Arctic Sea
 (O'er which there daily smiles Helice's smile,
 With her loved child careering round for aye),
 Beholding Rome and all its mighty pile,
 Were stupefied, what time in grand design 35
 The Lateran surpassed all mortal style;
 I who from human unto the Divine
 From time unto eternity had come,
 And out of Florence to a race benign,
 With what surprise must I have been o'ercome! 40
 Certes, 'twixt it and joy, I found it sweet
 Listening to nought to stand in rapture dumb.
 And like a pilgrim who doth gazing greet
 With holy joy the temple of his vow,
 And hopeth its description to repeat, 45
 So wandering o'er the light of living glow
 My eyes glanced onwards over every grade,
 Now circling round, now upwards, now below.
 Faces I saw that charity persuade,
 Adorned with God's own light and their own bliss, 50
 And acts with every comeliness arrayed.
 The form in general of Paradise
 Already had my gaze all comprehended,
 Whilst on no special part were fixed my eyes,
 And with new-kindled ardour I intended 55
 To ask my lady of some mystery
 On which my mind was eagerly suspended:
 On one I thought, another answered me:
 An old man garbed like all that glorious race
 I saw when Beatrix I thought to see. 60
 There was diffused o'er his eyes and face
 Benignant gladness, pitiful his air,
 Such as a tender father well might grace.

Line 26. The saints of the new and old dispensations.

Line 32. Callisto and her son Arcas, changed into the constellations of Ursa Major and Boötes.—Ovid *Metam.*, book ii.

"And where is she?" I sudden asked him, "where?"
 When he: "To bring thy longing to an end
 Beatrice sent me from my station there.
 And from the height, if thou thy search doth wend
 To the third row, she there will meet thy gaze
 Upon the throne her merits have attained."
 Without reply my eyes I upwards raise,
 And saw her where she made herself a crown,
 Reflecting from her the eternal rays.
 Whoever in the sea dived deepest down
 Hath not to raise his mortal eye so far
 Up to the region where the thunders groan,
 As was my sight from Beatrice there;
 But it was nothing, for her effigy
 To me descending did no medium bar.
 "O lady, thou in whom my hope is high,
 Thou for my safety who didst even deign
 To leave thy traces in Hell's precincts, I,
 By all the wondrous things which I have seen,
 Both of thy mighty power and clemency,
 The virtue and the grace acknowledge fain.
 From slave thou'st raised me unto liberty
 By all the various paths, by all the ways
 Which had the power to work such alchemy.
 O still thy liberal ægis o'er me raise,
 So that my soul, which thou hast made all sane,
 May win thy favour when it gains release."
 Thus did I pray, and she looked on me fain,
 And smiled on me from her far glory seat,
 Then to the Eternal Fountain turned again.
 And the holy old man told me: "To complete
 To full perfection thy accomplished way,
 For which her prayer and love did send my feet,
 Over this garden let thy vision stray,
 For gazing there will kindle thy regard
 To soar aloft to the divinest ray.
 The Queen of Heaven may such a grace award,
 For whom I burn with ardent love unbated,
 Because I am her faithful son Bernard."

Line 102. St. Bernard, the chief promoter of the second Crusade. Mr. Cary has pointed out that Dante was in error in attributing to him this particular reverence for the Virgin, as he opposed the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, so recently revived once more in the Roman Church.

Like one who from Croatia come hath waited
 Our true Veronica to gaze upon,
 Whose gazing, through its fame, is never sated, 106
 But says in thought, as long as it is shown,
 O Jesus Christ, my Lord, true God adored,
 In such a semblance then was made your own?
 Thus on his living countenance I pored,
 Glowing with charity, who while on earth 110
 Tasted Heaven's peace, contemplating his Lord.
 "O child of grace, all this rejoicing worth,"
 Thus he began, "thou never more wilt note
 The while thy eye this lowly view preferreth. 115
 But gaze upon the circles most remote,
 So as to see upon her throne the Queen,
 To whom this realm is subject and devout."
 I raised my eyes, and as in morning sheen
 Of the horizon all the Eastern front
 Surpasses all the rest of Heaven's domain, 120
 So passing as it were from vale to mount
 With my own eyes I saw the furthest verge
 O'er all the rest in glory light surmount.
 And as Heaven brightens where there doth upsurge 125
 The chariot Phaeton drove with skillless aim,
 While here and there the starry lights submerge;
 In such a way that peaceful oriflamme
 I' the midst glowed brightly, and on every side
 In equal fashion dimmed each lesser flame. 130
 And o'er that centre with wings open wide
 I saw above a thousand Angels glance,
 Each separately endowed and glorified.
 There saw I at their singing and their dance
 Her perfect beauty smiling, that a joy 135
 Was in the eyes of all that holy trance.
 If for the scene such words I could employ
 Even where my fancy soars, I would not dare
 To essay to paint the least part of that joy.
 When Bernard saw me with my eyes fixt there
 Upon the warmth which did his love enfold, 140
 He with such passion turned his own on her
 That it made mine more ardent to behold.

Line 104. The Veronica was the picture of Christ, miraculously stamped upon the handkerchief with which He wiped the sweat from His face, and which holiest of relics was preserved in the church of St. Peter at Rome.

Line 127. The Virgin Mother.

CANTO XXXII.

Saint Bernard points out to Dante the order of the saints in Paradise, how those of the Old and New Testaments are equal in number, divided, as it were, by a partition wall of celebrated Hebrew women, who head each row of thrones that make the petals of the flower. In the lowest grades are seated the souls of children saved by election solely, and not by their own merits. St. Bernard then exhorts Dante to gaze on the Virgin, so as to gain strength to behold her Son, and to join with him in prayer to her for that final boon.

In his own pleasure rapt, the dreaming man
 Freely the Teacher's office then assumed,
 And thus his holy parlance he began :
 "The wound, which Mary closed and balm-perfumed,
 That lovely one who sitteth at her feet 5
 First opened, when 'gainst God she first presumed.
 The next in order there, on the third seat,
 Sits Rachel, underneath our mother Eve,
 Beside her Beatrice thou mayst greet.
 Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, and the grave 10
 Ancestress of the Psalmist, who in grief
 Of sin his *miserere mei* gave :
 Thou canst behold them thus from sheaf to sheaf
 Descending downwards, while thus name by name 15
 I go adown the Rose from leaf to leaf :
 And from the seventh grade downwards, just the same
 To this, along the flower the rows succeed,
 And each one headed with a Hebrew dame .
 Because according to the sight that made 20
 Their faith in Christ, these as partition wall
 To separate the holy steps are laid.
 On this side, where the flower is ripened all
 With all its spreading leaves, are seated those
 Who on a Christ to come with faith did call.
 On the other side, where the semicircular rows 25
 Are set with vacant places, sit in state
 Who on Christ past their vision did repose.
 And as on this side doth the glorious seat
 Of Heaven's high Queen, and every other throne
 Beneath it, such a boundary line create, 30

Line 6. Eve, when she yielded to the temptation.

Line 9. On the third row from the top sits Beatrice, beside Rachel.
 "Io mi sedea coll' antice Rachele." "Hell," Canto II.

Line 11. Ruth, ancestress of David.

So opposite, the seat of mighty John,
 Who holy aye, the wilds, and martyr's woe,
 And afterwards Hell's pains two years had known,
 And him beneath there separating go 35
 Francis, and Benedict, and Augustin,
 With others lower down from row to row.
 Now see the lofty purposes divine,
 That one and other aspect of the faith
 Within this garden equally shall shine. 40
 Know too that 'neath the grade, whose cincture rayeth
 In equal portions the compartments two,
 Sit none by personal merit that he hath ;
 But by another's, with conditions too :
 For all of these are spirits who were freed 45
 Before that they had made election true.
 This by their faces thou mayst well aread,
 And even by their youthful voices clear,
 If well to look and listen thou dost heed.
 Now thou dost doubt, nor dost thy doubtings bar : 50
 But I will loose for thee the mighty bond
 On which thy subtle thoughts have bound thee here.
 Within the breadth of all this kingdom's bound
 A place chance granted never could upspring,
 As sadness, thirst, and hunger ne'er are found. 55
 For by the laws eternal, everything
 Which thou dost see is 'stablished, justly hence
 It answers as the finger to the ring.
 Therefore these spirits rathely gathered thence,
 Have come not to true life without a cause : 60
 Here entering with degrees of excellence.
 The king, through whom this kingdom maketh pause
 In so great love, and in so great delight,
 That daring will its wish no farther draws,
 The minds of all, in its own aspect bright 65
 Creating, at his pleasure dowers with grace
 Diversely ; let the effect suffice thy sight.

Line 33. St. John the Baptist having to remain two years in Limbo, awaiting the death of Christ and his triumph over Hell.

Line 49. The doubt unexpressed by Dante, and which Bernard endeavours to clear away, is why these souls of children, saved by no merit of their own, and only absolved from the stain of original sin by the Atonement, have in Paradise different grades of glory, which would appear to be granted by chance. This difficulty Bernard answers by asserting the doctrine of Election, which must be accepted from its visible effect, and not further questioned. See line 66.

And this express, and clearly ye may trace
 In Holy Scripture, which those twins declare
 To have struggled in their mother's womb for place.

Therefore according as is hued the hair 70
 Of such a granted grace, that highest light
 It fitteth worthily that one should wear.

Then without merit of their deeds done right,
 They here are placed in different grades of glory,
 Though differing only in their granted sight. 75

Sufficed it in the earliest years of story,
 With innocence, salvation to attain,
 Only their parents' faith hereditary.

When the first ages were completed, then 80
 To males it needed for their innocent plume,
 Through circumcision, virtue to obtain.

But after that the time of grace had come,
 Without the perfect baptism of Christ
 Such innocence was held below in doom.

Now gaze upon the face, that unto Christ 85
 Resembles most, since that all crystal light
 Alone can thee dispose to look on Christ."

I saw above her showered so great delight,
 Borne on the holy minds of the Angel brood,
 Created aye to hover o'er that height, 90

That whatsoever I before had viewed
 Me in such admiration ne'er suspended,
 Nor of our God such semblance ever shewed.

And the Angel love, who first had there descended 95
 Ave Maria, gratia plena, sung,
 And over her his golden wings extended.

Unto the song divine an answer rung
 From every portion of the blessèd Court,
 That o'er each face serene new beauty sprung.

"O holy father, who dost here resort 100
 For my sake, leaving the sweet station higher
 In which thou sittest by eternal sort;

Who is that angel, that with such desire
 Looks in the eyes of our dear Queen so fair,
 Enamoured so, he seemeth all on fire?" 105

Line 68. The doctrine of Election asserted by Saint Paul, and exemplified by the case of the twins Esau and Jacob:—"For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the promise of God according to Election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." Romans ix. 10, 11.

Thus to the learning still did I repair
 Of him, who caught from Mary beauty free,
 As from the sun sweet Venus' morning star.
 "Boldness and gladness such," said he to me,
 "As e'er can be in angel or in spirit, 110
 Is all in Him, as fitly it should be.
 For this is He, who bore the palm of merit
 Below to Mary, when the Son of God
 Willed all our mortal burden to inherit. 115
 But henceforth let thy eyes be cast abroad,
 While my speech wandering, every leader shows
 Of this most pious and most just abode.
 The twain that most in happiness repose
 By being nearest to Augusta placed,
 Are as it were the twin roots of this Rose. 120
 The one who on her left hand sitteth graced
 Is the first sire, through whose heart lusting bold
 The human race such bitterness doth taste.
 On her right hand thou seest the father old
 Of the Holy Church, to whom Christ gave the keys 125
 Of the garden which this crowning flower doth hold.
 He, who saw all the time of heaviness,
 Or ere he perished, of the beauteous bride,
 Whom by the lance and nails Christ won for his,
 Beside him sits: the other one beside, 130
 Resteth that chief, 'neath whom there lived on manna
 The people ingrate, fickle, cursed with pride.
 To Peter opposite see seated Anna,
 To gaze upon her daughter so content
 Her eyes she moves not while she sings Hosanna. 135
 Before the sire of all men's races blent,
 Sits Lucia, who thy lady moved to wonne,
 When thou didst bend thy brows, on ruin bent.
 But since thy vision to an end draws on,
 Here will we pause, like tailor who doth prove 140
 His skill, as cloth is given to make the gown.

Line 127. St. John, who saw and related in the Apocalypse the early persecutions of the Church.

Line 130. The Virgin divides the saints of the old and new dispensations. On her left hand are Adam, Moses, &c.; on her right Peter and John, &c., until the semicircles unite in John the Baptist, seated opposite to the Virgin. John the Baptist has for his neighbours Anna and Lucia, opposite to Peter and Adam, Lucia being supposed to represent Grace, though, from her rank in the first row of Paradise, some real person would appear to be intended, as the poet's love Beatrice also represents spiritual religion.

And we will raise our eyes to the primal love,
 That looking towards it thou mayst penetrate,
 As far as possible, its beams above.
 Yet of a truth, the while thy pinions beat, 145
 Thou dost fall back, believing thou dost speed,
 'Tis fit that first for grace I should entreat:
 Grace given by her, who hath the power to aid:
 And thou wilt follow me with yearning there,
 That to my words thy heart be closely laid." 150
 Therewith he thus began this holy prayer.

CANTO XXXIII.

Saint Bernard prays to the Virgin that Dante may receive grace to contemplate the Divine Essence, and the prayer is granted. Dante then prays that he may have power to record some portion of the glory he beholds, and describes his final vision of the Supreme Mystery.

"O VIRGIN MOTHER, daughter of thy Son,
 Humble and lofty more than any creature,
 The fixt bound where the eternal councils run,
 Thou art the perfect one who human nature 5
 Didst so ennoble that did not disdain
 Its Maker from thee to take form and feature.
 Within thy womb the love was lit again,
 Through warmth of which in its eternal peace
 This flower in beauty hath thus bloomed amain. 10
 Thou art the midday torch within this place
 Of charity, and unto mortals lower
 The living fountain of all hope and grace.
 Lady, thou art so great and hast such power
 That whoso willesh grace and runs to thee,
 Would without pinions wish his will could soar. 15
 Not only succours thy benignity
 Whoso demands it, but full many a time,
 Or ere the prayer be formed, 'tis offered free.
 In thee fair Mercy, in thee Pity's prime,
 In thee magnificence, in thee unite 20
 Whatever goodness doth in creature limn.
 Behold this man, who from the lowest pit
 O' the universe unto this height hath seen
 Of spiritual life the phases infinite.
 Of grace he prays to thee for virtue keen, 25
 Such that his human eyes may upwards yearn
 Until the sovran mystery be seen.

And I, who for my vision ne'er did burn
 More than I do for his, my prayers in whole
 Offer, and pray they have not scant return. 30
 Thou, therefore, from him every cloud uproll
 Of his mortality with prayers of thine,
 So that the highest bliss shine on his soul.
 Again I pray to thee, O queen benign,
 Who canst whate'er thou wilt, his passions all 35
 Keep ever pure after such sight divine.
 Let thy protection guard him from a fall.
 See Beatrice with all these the blest
 Join their raised palms in furtherance of my call." 40
 The eyes by God for ever loved the best
 Fixt on the speaker, then how holy prayers
 Are grateful to them made all manifest.
 Thence to the Eternal Light their vision rears,
 In which believe that never creature higher 45
 Within its mystery such clear eye bears :
 And I, who to the end of all desire
 Was then approaching, as was fit the while,
 Finisht the ardour of my yearning's fire.
 Then beckoned to me Bernard with a smile 50
 That I should upwards gaze, but I, in sooth,
 Already gazed where he my sight would guile.
 And as my vision more of strength endueth
 Yet more and more it entered through the ray
 O' the sovran light, which in itself is truth. 55
 From here henceforward more than par lance may
 My vision knew ; here words to sight must yield,
 And memory to such excess give way.
 Like one who sees in dreaming things revealed,
 And when the dream is o'er passion's impress 60
 Remains, while to the mind all else is sealed,
 So am I now, that all, as 'twere, doth cease
 My vision, while there yet on me distils
 Within the heart, born from it, Heavenly peace.
 Thus in the sun the snow dissolves in rills ;
 Thus in the wind, inscribed in flying leaves, 65
 Are lost for aye the sibyl's oracles.
 O highest light, that so itself upheaves
 Above all mortal thought, upon me shower
 Some likeness which thy witnessed image leaves,
 And make this tongue of mine possess such power 70
 That of thy glory but one spark alone
 To future ages it may leave as dower.

If but returns upon my mind a tone,
 And in these verses but the briefest sound,
 Thy victory more perfect will be known. 75
 I think I should have fallen in a swound
 The while I bore that blaze of living light
 If once, hence straying, were my vision found.
 And I remember that I gathered might
 By this to bear so much that I illumed 80
 My vision with perfection infinite.
 O grace abounding, whence I there presumed
 Upon the Eternal Light to fix my gaze
 So long as vision was not all consumed !
 Within its depths I saw, wherein doth blaze 85
 Bound up with love into one volume bright,
 Whate'er the mighty universe displays :
 Substance and accident in endless might,
 All breathed together, in such fashion planned
 That what I now describe is simple light. 90
 The universal form of the world's band
 Methinks I saw, because where thus displayed
 More largely I perceive my joy expand.
 One moment's pause had me even more delayed
 Than five-and-twenty ages the emprise 95
 Which Neptune's wonder won at Argo's shade.
 So my mind, gathering all its energies,
 Gazed fixt, immovable, and all intent,
 And ever more enkindled through the eyes.
 Upon that light, whoever's gaze is bent, 100
 From it towards any other sight to veer
 Impossible that he can e'er consent.
 Because all good, for which desire forms prayer,
 In it is centered, and beyond its rood
 All is defective which is perfect there. 105
 Henceforth my speech must fail in what I viewed,
 Even so far as I remember, more
 Than unweaned child's that craves its milky food.
 Not that the semblance other image bore
 Within the living light on which I gazed, 110
 Which ever is the same it was before,

Line 85. The Deity is figured as every quality of His universe condensed into what appeared at first as purely light.

Line 94. The pause of a moment at such a time were to him greater than a delay of twenty-five ages to the Argonauts.

Line 109. There was no change in the Deity, which appeared as light, but through increased strength of vision the seer caught a glimpse of its mysteries revealed to him.

But through my vision, which more keenly blazed
 As still I looked on it, one single seeming
 Before me travailed, as I changed amazed. 115
 Within the substance, deep and clearly gleaming
 Of the high light, three wheels appeared, which shone
 With colours three, and in one boundary beaming.
 And as from Iris, Iris, one from one
 Appeared reflected, and the third seemed fire
 That from them both was equally breathed on. 120
 O how my speech falls short, and doth retire
 Below my thought, and that, to what I saw,
 To say 'twere little answers not desire.
 O light eterne, who in thee dost withdraw
 Alone, self-comprehended, self-perceived, 125
 On me thou smiled'st down thy light and law.
 That second circling wheel, which so conceived,
 Appeared in thee as a reflected light,
 When somewhat further by my eyes received,
 Within itself, with its own colour bright, 130
 Appeared as painted with our effigy,
 Wherefore on it my vision pored with might.
 Like the geometrician who doth try
 To square the circle, and can never find
 In thought the principle he needeth, I 135
 Was thus before that vision new designed.
 I wished to see how there the shape found home
 Within the circle, and how there confined :
 But such a flight was not for my poor plume,
 Did not across my mind a glory steal 140
 From out the splendour, whence its wish did come.
 To the high fancy here my power did fail,
 But turned my will already as willed there
 (Moved on with equal motion like a wheel),
 The love which moves the sun and every star. 145

Line 116. The Trinity. The Second wheel reflected from the first, the Third progressing from the other two.

Line 127. In the Second Person he beholds a glimpse of the incarnation of the Deity clothed in human form, but such a mystery was beyond his powers

Line 140. The glory of the Deity breaking on Dante's soul inspired it with perfect accordance to the Divine Will, and left him content not to aspire after the unattainable.

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