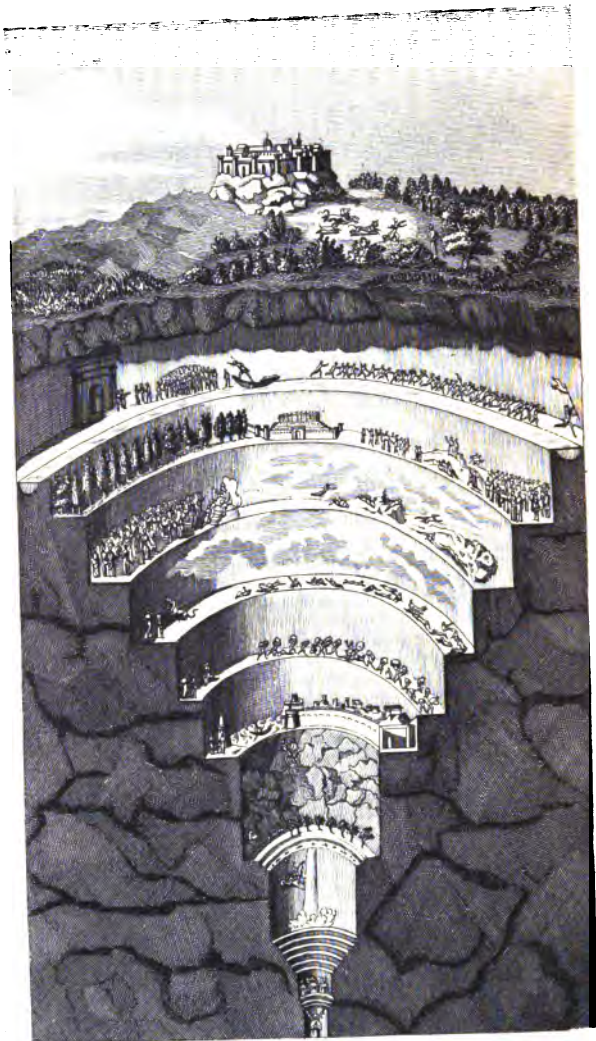


# The *Inferno* of Dante Alighieri

Translated by the Rev. E. O'Donnell  
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# THE DIVINA COMMEDIA

OF

DANTE ALIGHIERI.

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HELL.

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CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.

The poet misses his way in a thick, gloomy forest, and is prevented by certain wild beasts, from ascending a mountain. He fortunately meets with his friend Virgil, who promises to conduct him to the different regions of hell, and then to purgatory. He also consoles him with the promise, that he will be afterwards conveyed by Beatrice to paradise.

**I**N the middle (1) of the course of this our life, I found myself in a gloomy forest, for I had missed the right direction. Alas! what a difficult thing it is to relate, how wild and rough and thick the forest was, which still renews terrors in my thoughts! It is so frightful that death is but little more; but to relate the happiness I found there, I shall mention other things which I therein discovered. I cannot

(1)—1. This means that the poet was in the thirty-fifth year of his age, which, according to Aristotle, is the middle of man's age, and as mentioned in Scripture: three score and ten is the life of man. In my opinion this may admit of another meaning, that is, in the midst of this life of ours, denoting the troublesome state of Italy, and the poet's affliction and tribulation, which well correspond with the allegorical spirit of the whole canto.

sufficiently describe how I entered it, I was so overpowered from drowsiness at the time I lost the right path. But a little after I had come to the foot of a hill, where the valley terminated, which pierced my heart with consternation ; I looked up and saw its sides already covered with the rays of the planet,(2) which leads man to all directions. Then the terror was a little abated, that lasted in the recesses of my heart the night that I passed in such anguish ; and like one who in painful palpitation, coming from the sea to the shore, turns back and looks at the dangerous waves, so my mind that was still in agitation, returned to recontemplate the passage, which never permitted a living being to pass. After I had refreshed my languid body, I recommenced my journey through such a desolate region, that I had always to secure my steps with a solid foot. And behold, almost at the commencement of the ascent, a very slender fleet panther, covered with mottled hair. It remained constant before my eyes, and so much obstructed my passage, that I was often and often inclined to return.

It was then at an early hour of the morning, and the sun was rising with those stars which were with it when Divine Wisdom at first put those beautiful planets in motion. Now all was a cause of great encouragement to me : the lively colour of this wild beast, the hour of the day, and the beautiful season ; but not so much that the sight of a lion that appeared before me, did not excite some alarm. He appeared to advance towards me with the head erect, and such raging hunger, that the air seemed to tremble in his presence. At the same time I saw a she-wolf, which, from her lean flanks, seemed full of frightful voracity, and long since rendered the life of many

• (2)—17. The Sun.

most miserable. She caused me such depression of mind by the terrors she displayed in her ferocious attitude, that I lost all hope of ascending the mountain. The same as a person who joyfully obtains some advantage, and there happens a sudden calamity by which he forfeits it, and is melancholy and sorrowful in all his thoughts ; so I became at the sight of that troublesome animal, which was gradually approaching towards me, and repelled me back where there is no sunlight. Whilst I was rolling down in a low region, there presented to my view some one who seemed hoarse from long silence. As soon as I saw him in the vast dreary wilderness, I cried out to him and said : Have compassion on me, whoever thou art, whether ghost or living being.

He answered : I am no living being, I was formerly one, and both my parents were of Mantua in Lombardy. I was born in the reign of Julius Cæsar, and lived at Rome, though late, under the bountiful Augustus, in the time of the false and heathen deities. I was a poet, and sang the praises of the pious son of Anchises, who came from Troy after the destruction of the famous Illium.

But why dost thou return to this region of so much perplexity ? Why dost not thou ascend this delightful mountain, which is the origin and cause of all joy ?

Oh ! art thou, said I, with a bashful countenance, that Virgil, that fountain that gusheth forth such a copious torrent of eloquence ? O ! of all other poets the ornament and luminary, grant me thy protection, for the long study and profound veneration that made me search thy works. Thou art my master and my model ; thou art the only poet whose beautiful style I have adopted, and that has done me so much honour. See that beast on whose account I return ; relieve me from it, noble sage, for it makes all my nerves and arteries tremble.

Thou must take another direction, said he, when he saw me all in tears; if thou desirest to extricate thyself from this wild desert; as that beast, on whose account thou weepst, allows none to pass by his way, but torments him to such a degree as to kill him; it is of such a wicked cruel disposition, that it never satiates its voracious appetite, and after its meal is still more hungry than before. There are many animals with which it couples, and will be still more numerous, till the greyhound(3) comes, which will torment it to death. He will not make the riches of the earth his food, nor gold nor silver, but wisdom, charity, and virtue, and his birth-place will be between the two Feltros(4). He will be miserable Italy's preservation, for which the Virgin Camilla, Euryalus, Turnus and Nisus died of wounds. He'll chase that beast from town to town, until he'll replunge it into hell from which Envy had at first discharged it. Therefore, for thy happiness, I am of opinion that thou hadst better follow me, and I'll be thy guide, and conduct thee hence through an eternal region, where thou wilt hear desperate lamentations, and see souls of past generations in such torments, that each cries out for a second death. Thou wilt also see those who are content in the fire of Purgatory, for they hope, one day or other, to live with the blessed souls in Heaven, to which, if thou shouldst afterwards desire to ascend, thou wilt find a soul(5) more worthy than mine for that enterprise, to which I shall entrust thee at my departure; as that King

(3)—101. The general opinion is, that the poet means by this, his generous and hospitable friend, Can Grande della Scala, noble lord of Verona.

(4)—105. Some editions have Feltre and Feltro. One is a city in the Marca Frivigiana, and the other a city in the territory of Urbino.

(5)—122. Beatrice, who conducts him through paradise.

who reigns in heaven, in consequence of my disobedience to His laws, does not wish that thou shouldst come to His kingdom under my guidance. He rules the universe ;—there He is Sovereign ;—there is His kingdom and His heavenly throne. Oh happy are they whom he chooses for such a place.

I then said to him, Poet, I implore thee, in the name of that God whom thou hast not known, in order that I may escape this danger, and worse things, to conduct me where thou has just described, so that I may see the gate of St. Peter, and those whom thou representest so miserable.

He then proceeded and I followed him.

#### ALLEGORY.

By the thick gloomy forest is meant the path of vice and error, in which man, in his youth, without faith or moral principles, is easily led astray. By the three wild beasts are denoted the three predominant passions of man : incontinence by the panther, pride by the lion, and avarice by the wolf, all which prevent him from ascending the mountain, that is a virtuous life. By Virgil is meant reason and philosophy, and by Beatrice, theology, which are the best means, next to the grace of God, to keep man in a state of virtue and innocence. The poet, in a double allegory, means also by these wild beasts to denote Florence, France, and Rome.



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 CANTO II.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

The poet, after a solemn invocation to the Muses, expresses apprehension of his inability to undertake such a long and perilous journey. He says that Æneas and Paul went there, but that he has not merit nor fortitude enough to imitate them. Virgil changes his resolution, and encourages him for the arduous undertaking, by assuring him that three blessed ladies in heaven are interested for his success and safety. He then follows his guide and master in his dreadful and dangerous passage.

**T**HE day was now on its decline, and the evening's atmosphere was relieving the animals of the earth from their labour; and I alone was preparing myself for the toilsome journey and pitiful spectacle, which my memory shall faithfully retrace.

O Muses! O lofty Genius, assist me now; O Memory that hast recorded what I have seen, on this occasion thy superiority shall appear.

I thus began: Poet, thou art my guide, consider if I be possessed of sufficient fortitude, before thou entrustest me to this dreadful passage. Thou hast said that the father of Silvius, still in corruptible flesh, went to the immortal kingdom, and was there in all his natural faculties. But if the enemy (1) of all evil had been propitious to him, knowing what extraordinary results were to originate from him, and who and what he was, that does not appear unworthy of a man of high intellectual powers; for

(1)—16. God.



he had been selected in the heavenly empire to be the father of illustrious Rome and her powerful dominions. That Rome and that empire, we must truly acknowledge, had been established to become one day the holy see where the successor of St. Peter rules. By means of that journey which thou hast so well described, he learned things that were the cause of his victory, and the origin of the papal purple. The vessel of election went to the other world too, to bring joy and consolation therefrom to that faith, which is the fundamental principle of salvation. But why should I go there? or who grants me permission? I am neither Æneas nor Paul, neither do I nor does any one else consider me worthy of such privilege. Therefore, if I submit to go with thee I fear my undertaking is only folly, but thou art wise, and understandest better than I can demonstrate. And, like one who no longer desires what he wished for before, and, on a second consideration, changes his mind, so as to have abandoned what he had commenced, such was my case on approaching this gloomy region, for I accomplished my enterprise merely in imagination, whereas, at the very commencement it was forsaken.

If I have properly understood thy words, answered the spirit of the great poet, thy soul is affected with pusillanimity, which oftentimes so embarrasses a man that he renounces a glorious enterprise, the same as a false appearance makes a beast start back, when it is frightened only by a shadow. Now, in order to free thy mind from this apprehension, I shall tell thee why I have come, and what I have learned on the first moment I took compassion on thee. I was among those who were detained in Limbo, and was called by a lady of such beauty and sanctity, that I requested her to charge me with her commission. Her eyes shone more brilliantly than a

star, and she began to speak to me in a sweet, clear voice, with angelical harmony in her countenance.

O gentle soul of Mantua, said she, whose fame lasts still in the world, and shall last as long as the revolution of the earth, my friend, but not the friend of Fortune, is so much embarrassed on his journey in the desolate region that he is returning back through fear, and I am afraid he is already so much out of his way, that I have come too late to his assistance, according to what I have heard of him in Heaven. Now proceed, and with thy refined eloquence, and whatever is necessary for his deliverance, relieve him, so that I may rest satisfied. I am Beatrice, and beg thee to go; I am come from a place whither I am anxious to return; charity is my only motive for speaking so, and when I am before my Lord, I shall often speak of thee to him in praise. She then was silent, and I thus began:—

O Lady of Virtue, by whom alone the human race surpasseth everything contained under that planet (2) which has the smallest orb, thy orders are so acceptable, that it seems to me too late to obey thee, even had they been already executed; it is no further necessary for thee to explain to me the object of thy message. But pray, tell me why thou hast not been afraid to descend here to the central region, from that spacious place where thou art desirous to return.

Whereas thou wishest to know it so minutely, said she, I shall tell thee briefly why I am not afraid to come down here. One should fear only those things which are capable of injuring others, and not things that are innocent in themselves. God in his mercy has created me such, that your misery does not affect me, nor the flames of this fire

(2)—79. The Moon.

touch me. There is a gracious lady(3) in heaven, who is concerned for the embarrassment of him to whose assistance I send thee, and who mitigates the hard judgment of that place above.—She earnestly supplicated Lucy,(4) saying, Now thy faithful friend wants thy assistance, and I recommend him to thy care.

Lucy, the enemy of all cruelty, got up, and came to the place where I was seated near old Racheael,(5) and said, Beatrice, the true praise of God, why dost not thou help him who loved thee so ardently, that for thee he separated from the vulgar class? Dost thou not hear the anguish of his complaints? dost thou not see how he struggles with death near the river(6) that has no passage to the sea?

There was never in the world a person more willing to acquire riches or escape danger than I was after hearing those words:—I am come from the blessed choir above, confiding in thy polished language, which honours both thee and those who have heard and learned it.

After she had expressed these words, she turned towards me her brilliant eyes all in tears, which made me come sooner to thee. So according to her desire I have come, and relieved thee from that wild beast, which debarred thee the passage of the beautiful mountain. What is the matter, then? why dost thou hesitate? why dost thou entertain such cowardice in thy heart? why hast thou not more

(3)—94. Divine Clemency.

(4)—97. Divine Grace.

(5)—103. Symbol of a contemplative life.

(6)—109. The torrent of misery, alluding to his exile, more boisterous than the ocean; or, in another sense, the endless torrent of concupiscence that corrupts and devours the heart of man.

courage and confidence, whereas those three blessed ladies are interested for thee in the court of heaven, and that my words promise thee so much happiness ?

The same as little flowers, drooping, and closed by the night's frost, rise fresh and bloomy on their stem, as soon as the genial heat of the sun refreshes them ; so I recovered from my languid spirits, and resumed such good resolution in my heart, that I began like one earnestly determined, and said, O how compassionate is she who helped me, and how complaisant thou art to have so promptly obeyed the faithful words she addressed thee ! Thou hast so filled me with desire to persevere by thy words, that I am now returned to my first resolution. Now proceed, we are both of the same inclination, thou art my guide, my master, and my model.

Thus I spoke to him, and after he had advanced, I entered the wild dangerous passage.

#### ALLEGORY.

By Dante's diffidence of his own strength and fortitude, and his reluctance to undertake the journey, notwithstanding Virgil's promise, is shown the condition of man in the state of vice and ignorance. But when Virgil promises to show him the horrors of hell, that is, his spiritual evil, and that Beatrice will show him the glories of heaven, that is, the triumph of the soul by Divine grace ; he assumes a firm resolution to surmount all obstacles, and rise from vice to virtue, in order to attain the principal object of man ; i. e., his eternal happiness.



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 CANTO III.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

Dante, in company with Virgil, comes to the gate of hell, and after having read the frightful inscription written thereon, they both enter the regions of darkness. Virgil informs him that the souls of those who spent their lifetime in complete indifference to good or evil, are punished there. Then they proceed onwards to the river Acheron, where they see Charon, the ferryman, conveying the guilty souls to the opposite shore. Dante, on his arrival there, is struck with terror of the awful spectacle, and falls into a state of convulsive lethargy.

Through me they pass to the city of desolation;  
 Through me they pass to eternal torments;  
 Through me they go among the souls of the damned.  
 Justice moved my great Creator;  
 I am the work of his Divine Power,  
 Of his sovereign wisdom and first love.  
 Before me nothing was created but what is eternal,  
 And I remain eternally; ye that enter here, give up all hopes.\*

**T**HESSE words I saw written in gloomy colour over the gate, for which I exclaimed: Master, their signification is awful.

And he, as a wise skilful man, answered: Here all timidity must be given up, here all perversity must be stamped with death. We are now come to the place where I have told thee that thou wouldst

\* This inscription over the gates of hell is a general notice and caution to all sinners. I have therefore used the third person plural.

see the miserable souls that have forfeited the gift of understanding.

Then taking me by the hand with a cheerful countenance, he conveyed me into these mysterious things. Here sighs, lamentations, and horrible groans resounded through the starless region ; so that, at the first sight of them I began to weep. Different languages, shocking discourses, words of agony, expressions of anger, hoarse vociferations with frightful clapping of hands, caused general confusion, which runs in succession through this eternally gloomy region, the same as the pebbles of the strand in time of a vortex.

And I, with the head oppressed with horrors, said : Master, what is this I hear ? What is that multitude that appears overwhelmed with grief ?

And he said : This is the miserable destiny of those poor sorrowful souls, that lived without disgrace or merit. They are mingled with that unfortunate choir of angels, who were neither rebellious nor faithful to God, but were only for themselves. Heaven, to preserve its splendour banished them, and hell did not receive them, that the guilty should have no comfort from them.

I then said : Master, what is so grievous to them, as to make them lament in such a frightful manner ?

He answered : I'll tell thee in a few words. They have no hopes to die, and their obscure condition is so mean, that they are desirous of some other destiny. There is no remembrance of them in life: mercy and justice disdain them. Let us say no more about them, but observe and pass on.

And as I looked forward, I saw a standard which was turning about so quick, that it seemed incapable of any rest ; and after it there came such a long procession of ghosts, that I could never have thought that death could put an end to such a number of

lives ; and after having recognized some of them, I principally remarked the ghost of him (1) who through false delicacy rejected the great offer. By this I instantly perceived, and was convinced that this was a crowd of contemptible beings, displeasing to God and his enemies. These miserable creatures, that never lived like men, were all naked, and horribly stung by wasps and hornets, that covered their faces with blood, which, being mixed with their tears, was sucked up by filthy maggots at their feet.

And looking farther on, I saw crowds at the bank of a large river, and said : Master, pray let me know who are those, and what law or custom makes them pass over in such hurry, as far as I can distinguish them through this faint light. And he said : Thou wilt be informed of those things when we arrive at the melancholy river, Acheron. Then, with bashful and downcast eyes, fearing my observation might be offensive to him, I kept silent all along to the river. And behold ! there approached us in a boat, an old grey headed man, furiously shouting : Woe to you perverse souls, never hope to see the sky again ; I am coming to convey you to the other bank, in eternal darkness, in fire and frost, and thou that comest here alive, depart from those who are dead ; but seeing that I was not inclined to leave, he said : Thou shalt come by another passage, by another shore to that region, but not here, for a lighter boat (2) is necessary to convey thee thither.

And my guide said to him : Charon, do not be in a

¶ (1)—59. This is generally supposed to be Pope Celestine V., who, in 1294, abdicated the pontifical power nine months after his election. This is not very probable, according to the tenour of his life.

(2)—93. Charon here alludes, perhaps, to the bark and passage, in which the souls are conveyed by an angel to Purgatory.

rage, for it is decreed there, where will (3) is power, and require no more. At these words, the long-bearded ferryman of the infernal lake, with circles of flaming fire all round his eyes, was quiet. But the ghosts that were naked, and weary, changed colour, and gnashed their teeth, as soon as they heard those tremendous words. They blasphemed God, and their parents, the human race, the time and place of their birth, and even their children. Then they retired altogether, bitterly weeping, to the cursed river, that expects every soul that feareth not God. Charon, the ferryman of hell, beckoning at them with flashes of fire in his eyes, assembled them all, and beat with his oar whoever lingered behind. The same as the leaves in autumn, fall one by one to the ground, until the branch is stript of its foliage; so did the miserable children of Adam, at the orders of the ferryman, precipitate themselves, one after another, like a bird (4) taken in a snare. Such is the way those poor souls scud on the darksome river, and before they descend the other bank, a fresh crowd is assembled here.

My son, said my courteous Master, all who die in God's anger, are collected here from every nation, and are anxious to pass the river, for Divine Justice so torments them, that their fear is changed into desire. Hence a just soul never passes here, and if Charon complain of thee, thou mayest easily judge henceforth what his words mean.

When he finished, the region of darkness trembled

(3)—97. This means that the will of God sanctioned Dante's journey to hell, and therefore Charon could not disobey the decree of heaven.

(4)—118. Some explain this, as a falcon at the call of his master, and others, like birds taken in a net, enticed thereto by other birds in a cage, and which is much more probable, according to the simile.



so much, that the remembrance of the terror still covers my body with cold perspiration. From this place of woe issued a tempest, intermingled with lightning of blood-like colour, which deprived me of all sensibility, and I fell down like one seized with drowsiness.

## ALLEGORY.

By the words written on the gate of hell, that whoever enters therein must give up all hopes of ever returning, is meant the eternal and irrevocable judgment of God. By the light which threw the poet into a state of lethargy, is meant the operation of Divine grace on the soul of man, which banishes all vice and sensuality therefrom, and makes him more capable of discerning the light of reason, and of acting always in conformity to the will of God.

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 CANTO IV.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

The poet is awakened by a loud clap of thunder; he then descends with his guide into Limbo, which is the first circle of hell, where he finds the souls of many illustrious men, who, though living innocently, but being deprived of baptism, cannot enter paradise. Hence he is conducted by Virgil to the second circle.

**A** TREMENDOUS clap of thunder shook my head in heavy slumber, so I started up like one wakened by a violent shock, and rising up, I cast my eyes composedly all round, to observe the place I was in. I then evidently saw I was on the borders of a dreadful valley, with a profound abyss, the receptacle of innumerable horrors. It was so obscure, deep, and cloudy, that, looking to the bottom, I could discern nothing. Let us go down

to the dark world, said the poet, all pale. I'll go first, and come after me. And perceiving the change of his countenance, I said : How can I go, if thou, who art accustomed to be my comfort in perplexity, tremblest with fear ?

And he said : The agony of those poor souls below there, depicts compassion in my countenance, which thou thinkest to be fear. Let us go on, as the long journey presses us. So he proceeded, and conducted me to the first circle, which surrounds the abyss. Then, as far as I could hear, there was no crying, but sighs and groans, which made the eternal region tremble. That proceeded from grief, without punishment, which affected innumerable crowds of children, men and women. My good master said : Thou dost not enquire who those ghosts are, whom thou seest, then I wish to acquaint thee before thou proceedest any further, that they have not transgressed, and if they have any merit, it is not sufficient, for they have not received baptism, which is the foundation of the faith thou professest ; and if they lived before Christianity, they did not adore God with a right spirit, and of that number I am myself. For that deficiency but for no other crime, we are lost, and our only punishment is, that we live in desire, without hope.

On hearing this, my heart was oppressed with grief, for I knew among them some souls of sublime merit, detained in that Limbo. Tell me, my worthy Master, said I, in order to be certain of that faith, which is invincible to all error, has any among you, either by his own merit, or the intercession of another, come from that place, so as to be afterwards happy ? And he, guessing my counterfeit sentiments, (1) answered :

(1)—51. This means that the poet, though knowing it well, did not openly mention Christ's descent into Limbo.

I was only a short time in that place, when I saw coming a powerful man, (2) crowned with the trophy of victory. He released therefrom the souls of our first father, of his son Abel, of Noah, of Moses, the legislator, of the obedient Patriarch, Abraham, of King David, of Israel (3) with his father and children, and Rachel, for whom he served so long, and of many others whom He brought to heaven. I wish to tell thee likewise, that before them, no human soul ever entered the kingdom of glory.

During his conversation we did not cease our movement, but passed through the forest, I mean the forest of a multitude of ghosts. Our journey was not now far from the gulf, where I saw a blazing fire, which shined over the hemisphere of darkness. We were still a little distance off, but not so far as not to be able to perceive that some noble souls inhabited that place. O Thou, the ornament of all art and science, tell me who are those who have such honourable distinction from all the others. And he replied: Their glorious fame in the living world, is favourable to them in heaven, to obtain this privilege. At the same time I heard a voice exclaim: Honour the great poet, his ghost that disappeared is now returning. When the voice ceased, I saw approaching, four eminent souls, whose countenances indicated neither sorrow nor joy.

My faithful Master then resumed: Behold him that comes with sword in hand, like a king before the other three, he is Homer, the sovereign poet, the second is Horace, the Satirist, the third is Ovid, and the last is Lucan. As each of them participates

(2)—53. Our Blessed Redeemer.

(3)—59. Jacob, with his father Isaac, and his wife Rachel, for whom to obtain in marriage he had to spend fourteen years in servitude.

with me of that renown proclaimed by unanimous voices, they do me honour, and have reason to do so.

So I saw assembled the famous school of that master of the most harmonious poetry, who expands his brilliant wings over the others, with the superiority of an eagle. After having conversed together for a time, they turned towards me with a gracious salutation, and my Master smiled at the compliment. They did me still much more honour, for they received me into their company, so that I was the sixth among men of such talents. So we went on together to the abyss of fire, speaking of things not now fit to relate, though not improper to do so in the company I was with. We came to the foot of an immense castle, encircled by seven high walls, with a beautiful rivulet all round them. We passed over it as if solid ground. I entered through seven gates with those sages, and we came to a meadow of blooming verdure. There were there ghosts of a slow grave deportment, in attitude of great authority; they spoke now and then with sweet voice. We retired to one side, into an open, bright, lofty place, so that they all could be seen. And there standing on a green plot, I was shown a number of noble souls, whom I glory to have seen.

I saw Electra, (4) with many companions, among whom I recognized Hector, Æneas, and Cæsar, in coat of arms, emblazoned with hawk's eye. I saw Camilla, Penthesilea, and king Latinus, sitting with his daughter Lavinia. I saw Brutus, that chased Tarquin, Lucretia, Julia, Marsia, Cornelia, and Saladin apart by himself. And then, casting my eyes further on, I saw the Master (5) of doctors seated

(4)—121. The daughter of Atlas, and mother of Dardanus, the founder of Troy.

(5)—135. Aristotle.

amidst the philosophic band. He is an object of honour and admiration to them all. I saw Socrates and Plato, who stood next to him, Democritus, who thinks the world a creation of chance, Diogenes, Anaxagoras, Thales, Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Zeno. I saw the judicious observer of qualities, I mean Dioscorides, and Orpheus, Tully, Livy, and Seneca the moralist, Euclid the geometrician, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, Avicen, Galenus, and Averroes the great commentator. I have not time to mention all, for my copious theme presses me so hard, that very often the description is inferior to the reality. The company of six is now reduced to two, and my judicious guide leads me through another passage, from the serene to the trembling air, and I come to a place destitute of light.

#### ALLEGORY.

The thunder that rouses Dante from his somnolency denotes reason, which, by the aid of Divine grace that quells in man his sensual appetites, awakens him as it were to a sensibility of his condition, and presents to his mind and heart the state of his soul, and opens his eyes on the gulf of perdition, as the poet does over the horrible abyss of hell.



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 CANTO V.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

At the entrance of the second circle, Dante meets Minos, the Judge of hell, who cautions him how he ought to enter those frightful regions. Here he sees a great multitude of ghosts, who, in their lifetime, prostituted virtue to gratify their sensuality. Their punishment is to be tossed about incessantly in dark loathsome air, by furiously boisterous tempests. Among these he meets with the spirits of Frances of Rimini, and Paul, her brother-in-law, at the recital of whose melancholy fate he is so struck with terror and compassion, that he almost drops dead.

**O** I descended from the first to the second circle, which contains less space, but much more agony, that causes horrible screams. There Minos stands in a frightful growling posture ; at the entrance he examines the nature of the crime ; he judges and condemns according as he girds himself. That is, when an unfortunate soul comes before him it must confess all its crimes, and the judge, seeing what part of hell it is to go to, makes as many signs with his tail to indicate the depth of the gulph that it is to be plunged into. There is always a numerous group of souls standing before him ; they all come in turn, they speak, they listen, and are then jumbled down to the pit.

O thou that comest to this habitation of grief, said Minos, when he saw me, suspending his solemn commission, take care how thou enterest, and to whom thou entrustest thyself ; let not the amplitude of the entrance beguile thee. And my guide said to him :

Why dost thou grumble? Do not obstruct his predestined journey; it is sanctioned there where will is power—require no more.

Now I began to hear sorrowful lamentations, and frightful groans. I came to a place of obscurity, that roars like the sea, when agitated by a violent storm. A horrid tempest issuing from hell, incessantly drags along these ghosts in its vortex, and torments them by tossing and throwing them about. When they come to the gulf, there is nothing but groans, sighs, and lamentations; they even blaspheme Divine power. I understood, that to such punishment were condemned the voluptuous who prostitute reason to passion. As starlings in troops flap their wings in frosty weather; so the boisterous squall tosses here and there, up and down, these poor wretched souls. They are never comforted, either by hope of rest, or mitigation of their torments. And the same as cranes go, in large flocks, croaking in the air; so I saw these ghosts tossed and shuffled by the storm, heaving horrible groans. Master, said I, who are those that are so tormented by that awful tempest?

The first of those whose history thou wishest to know, was queen of several tribes, who, being so addicted to vice and dissipation, sanctioned libertinage by law, in order to avoid blame for her profligate conduct. She is Semiramis, who is said to have succeeded Ninus, and was his wife; she possessed the country which the Sultan now governs. The other is she who killed herself in a passion of love, violating her oath to the ashes of Sicheus. She that comes next is the voluptuous Cleopatra. I saw Helen, on whose account such a long war took place, and the great Achilles, who contended with love to his death. I saw Paris and Tristan, and more than a thousand ghosts, which he pointed out to me with his finger, who all lost their lives through love.

And when I heard my Master naming dames and knights of old, I was overpowered, and almost distracted with compassionate feeling. I then said: Poet, I'd be glad to speak to those two, who go together so light before the storm. And he said: Very well, when they are nearer to us, thou mayest ask them in the name of that love that sways them, and they'll come. And as soon as the wind turned them near us, I exclaimed: O afflicted souls, come to speak to us, if there be no hindrance.

The same as doves, enticed by desire, fly through the air with smooth expanded wings to their beloved nest, so these came to us through the malignant air, from the crowd where Dido is: such was the effect of my affectionate call.

They thus replied: Kind and courteous creature who camest through this detestable air to visit us, who have defiled the earth with blood; if the King of the universe had been propitious to us, we would supplicate him for thy peace, whereas thou hast compassion on our deplorable state. Whatever thou wishest to say or hear we shall comply with pleasure, whilst the wind holds calm, as it does at present.

The country where I was born is situated near the sea, where the Po discharges itself quietly with other rivers that join it. Love, that quickly inflames gentle hearts, captivated this man for the graceful body of which I have been deprived in such a cruel manner, as to be still sorrowfully afflicted. Love, ever indulgent to any one loved to love in turn, inspired me with such affection for him, that he does not abandon me still, as thou seest. Love exposed us to the same death, and the abyss of Caïna (1) awaits

(1)—107. Caïna. This is a place of torments in hell for murderers, and which the poet marks out beforehand for the



him that deprived us of life. In such language they addressed us.

After having thus heard those afflicted souls, I bent my head and kept it so, until the poet said: What art thou pondering on?

When I was able to answer, I said: Alas! what affectionate sentiments, what simple inclination brought them to such a deplorable end! I then turned to them and said: Frances, (2) thy torments make me shed tears of sorrow and compassion. But tell me how did love permit you to know your inclination doubtful at the moment of those delicious raptures?

And she answered: There is no greater affliction than the remembrance of happy days in time of adversity, and that thy Master knows. But if thou be so desirous to know the first cause of our attachment, I'll tell thee in words mingled with tears. One day we were reading for our amusement how Lancelot became in love. We were alone and without the slightest diffidence, and in reading his amorous intrigues our eyes often met in sensation, and changed complexion; but one particular passage completely overpowered our feelings. As we were reading how the affectionately smiling lips were

punishment of Lanciotto, who killed Francesca and Paolo, here mentioned.

(2)—116. This is one of the most interesting and melancholy episodes of the whole poem. Francesca, a young lady of remarkable beauty, was daughter to Guido of Polenta, lord of Ravenna, and married to Lanciotto, Lord of Rimini, who was lame and deformed, but of great courage and noble spirit. His brother, Paolo, who was possessed of all the charms of youth, and the refined accomplishments of a high nobleman, engaged her affections. One day as they were reading together the love romance of Lancelot and Queen Genevra, Paolo had the misfortune to kiss her, at that moment the husband entered the apartment, and killed them both on the spot. Galotto was the name of the purveyor or love-intriguer between Lancelot and Genevra.

kissed by the passionate lover, he, who is my eternal companion, kissed me all in a tremble. The book and he who wrote it were our Galiotto; that fatal day we read no more of it.

Whilst one ghost was thus relating the case, the other wept so bitterly that I fainted with compassion as if dying, and so I dropped down like a dead body.

#### ALLEGORY.

By Minos, judge of the damned, is denoted the conscience of those who live in habitual vice, and though they often feel its pangs of remorse, still persevere in their wicked course of life. His admonition to Dante to be cautious at the entrance of hell means, that when man once knows the enormity of his vicious life, he should change and make an amendment. By Francesca's culpable intimacy with her brother-in-law, is shown the evil consequence of an idle life, and the reading of bad books.

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### CANTO VI.

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#### ARGUMENT.

The poet, on his recovery, finds himself in the third circle, where the gluttonous are tormented, whose punishment is to lie flat in mire, with heavy showers of hail and filthy water pouring down on them, and the three-headed Cerberus furiously howling over them, and dragging them to pieces. He meets with the ghost of Ciaccio, who foretells him the civil dissensions of Florence. He proposes a question to his guide, who explains it, and then they both descend to the fourth circle.

**A**FTER recovering my senses, alienated through grief and compassion for the deplorable condition of those two relatives, I saw all round me in every direction other ghosts tormented with a different species of punishment. I am now in

the third circle full of eternal, cursed, cold, and heavy rain, that falls regularly and without any alteration in its quality. Showers of thick hail, of filthy water and snow, fall incessantly from the loathsome atmosphere, covering the ground with infectious stench. Cerberus, a cruel monstrous brute with three dog-like heads, barks at the ghosts that are there submerged. His eyes are sparkling red, his beard black and greasy, with a large belly and paws full of nails, he scrapes, tears, and dismembers the ghosts. The rain makes them howl like dogs, and they turn about incessantly to make one side a shelter for the other.

When the huge mastiff Cerberus perceived us, he opened his jaws and grinned with all his body trembling with rage. Then my guide took up two handfuls of clay and threw it into his voracious mouths. The same as a dog barking with hunger gets quiet, as soon as he receives a morsel of food, which he eagerly devours, so did the three-headed Cerberus of hell, that annoys the ghosts so much by his howling, that they would wish to be deaf. We passed through the ghosts all drenched by heavy rain, walking on the shades as if they were solid bodies. They all lay flat on the ground except one, that sat up as soon as it saw us pass by.

O thou, who art conducted to this region of hell, said it to me, recognise me if thou canst, for thou wast born before I died.

And I replied: The state of thy sufferings makes me perhaps forget thee, as if I had never seen thee. But tell me who art thou, that hast been sent to this woful place, and consigned to such punishment, that if any be greater, none can be more intolerable.

He then answered: I have spent a happy life in that city of thine, which overflows with excessive envy. Ye my fellow citizens used to call me Ciacco,

(1) and for the damnable crime of gluttony I am now tormented with this rain, as thou seest, and am not the only soul miserable, as all these here are condemned to the same punishment for the same vice ; and he said no more.

Ciaccio, said I, thy torments afflict me so much as to make me shed tears. But tell me if thou knowest what will become of the citizens of that factious city ; (2) is there one just man among them, and what is the reason they are always in such dissensions ?

He replied : After long altercations will succeed a bloody battle, and the savage faction will chase the other with considerable loss. Then after the lapse of three years, that shall succumb in turn, as the other party will become victorious by the assistance of one (3) already in movement. It will be triumphant for a long time, keeping the adverse party in great oppression, affliction, and disgrace. There are still two honest men, (4) whose counsel is disregarded ; for pride, envy, and avarice, as three firebrands, inflame and corrupt their hearts.

Here he finished his lamentable discourse, and I resumed thus : I wish to be still informed by the gift of thy knowledge ; pray let me know where are the worthy (5) Farinata and Tegghiaio, Giacopo, Rusticucci, Arrigo, Mosca, and many others, who devot-

(1)—52. A gluttonous parasite of Florence, which also signifies a hog.

(2)—6. Florence divided into two factions, called the Bianchi and Neri.

(3)—70. Charles of Valois, of France, who befriended the Neri party.

(4)—73. Those two just men are generally supposed to be Dante and Guido Cavalcanti. Others think they mean human and divine law.

(5)—79. The poet praises all these as good citizens, but as great sinners he places them in hell.

ed their talents for the welfare of their country, as I am extremely desirous to know whether they are happy in heaven or tormented in hell.

And he answered : They are among the blackest souls, plunged for their various crimes to the bottom of hell, and if thou descend so low thou wilt see them there. But when thou return to the living world, I pray thee to remember me to my old friends. I can't say nor answer more. He looked at me for a time with fixed eyes, then turned them aside, bent his head, and fell in among the other ghosts in eternal darkness.

My guide then said to me : He shall rise no more until the sound of the angel's trumpet, when the formidable power shall come, then each of them shall return to his sorrowful grave, resume his flesh and form, and hear the judgment resound for all eternity. Thus we passed through a horrible mixture of ghosts and rain at a slow pace, discussing a little on future life. I said : Master, will these torments cease after the general judgment, or will they be less, or so excruciating ?

And he replied : Consult thy philosophy (6) which teaches, The more perfect one is, the more he feels pleasure or pain. Hence, though these damned souls can never be perfectly happy, still they expect to be more so after than before the judgment. We thus went all round that circle, talking of more things than I can relate, and came to the place of descent, where we found the great enemy Plutus.

(6)—106. The philosophic maxims of Aristotle. St. Augustin says also, that at the resurrection of the flesh, the beatitude of the just and the torments of the wicked will be increased.

## ALLEGORY.

By Cerberus, who torments the gluttonous, is meant the insatiable and inordinate appetite of man. By the clay which Virgil throws into his jaws to appease his fury, is shown that man ought not, for the support of life, to use delicacies and luxuries, but content himself with simple, wholesome nourishment. By the mire, filthy water, hail and darkness, is meant intemperance, which is often the cause of many human infirmities, and clogs and darkens the faculties of both soul and intellect.

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 CANTO VII.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

Dante meets with Plutus at the entrance of the fourth circle, where the ghosts of the prodigal and avaricious are tormented. Their punishment is to roll up heavy burdens against each other, and to be eternally at variance. Virgil shows the vanity of worldly riches, and explains how great is the influence of fortune over human transactions. Then they pass on to the fifth circle, where the slothful and passionate are punished, and come at last to the foot of a lofty tower.

**F**APE Satan, Pape Satan, Aleppo, (1) exclaimed Plutus, with a hoarse half-choked voice. And my gentle intelligent guide, in order to encourage me, said: Let not thy fear embarrass thee, for he shall not prevent thee, whatever his power may be, from descending this rock. Then turning to that visage full of fury, he

(1)—1. This line puzzles all the commentators. Some think it is Hebrew, and I do not know what. But a certain doctor was rambling one day in Paris, and chanced to slip into the court of justice, and heard something like it, ergo, it is French. A sweet compliment to that polite nation. The poet, to denote that monster's ferocity, put this unintelligible language into his mouth, as it were to intimidate him and his guide.

said : Be silent, cursed wolf, consume thy rage within thy bowels. It is not without authority that he comes to this gulf, as it is decreed on high, where Michael took revenge of the haughty rebel troops.

As the sails of a ship swollen before the wind are furled in, when the mast is broken, so this cruel beast fell powerless on the ground. We then entered the fourth circle, proceeding further on the frightful ridge of the abyss, where the plague of the universe is engulfed. Ah ! justice of God, who can relate all the sufferings and torments that I saw there ? or how can our crimes disfigure us so horribly ? As the waves under Charybdis are violently dashed against each other in a storm ; so are these poor spirits obliged to shuffle about here in confusion. Here I saw a greater multitude of ghosts than elsewhere, and with frightful exclamations on both sides turning heavy burdens by the pressure of their breasts. They met each other with a violent shock, and then turned back screaming thus : Why dost thou retain thy burden, one says ; and the other, Why dost thou let it fall ?

Such was their movement through the dark circle from one side to the other, always shouting the same horrible repetition, and when coming to the point of conjunction, they returned back in a semicircle to renew the shock, and I almost with a broken heart said : Master, pray tell me who are those ghosts, and if all those toutsured at our left hand side were clergy.

He answered : All were so blind of intellect in life, that they set no bounds to their prodigality or avarice, and their barking at each other like dogs, when coming to the two points of the circle, where contrary crimes separate them, sufficiently proves it. Those who have no hair on the head were clergy,

popes, and cardinals, over whom avarice exercised its greatest power.

And I said : Master, among that number I must have known some that were disgraced by such vices.

He replied : Thou art mistaken ; their once obscure contemptible life now conceals them from the knowledge of any man. For all eternity they shall thus come in contact, and resuscitate from the grave, one with the hands shut, (2) and the other quite bald. Extravagance and parsimony deprived them of heaven, and exposed them to this interminable scuffle, which to explain I am at a loss for words. Now, my child, thou canst easily see the short duration of worldly riches intrusted to the caprice of fortune, for which the human race destroy each other ; and that all the gold that is, or that ever was in the world, could not give a moment's relaxation to these wearied souls.

Now master, said I, tell me likewise what is that fortune thou mentionest, and which holds the goods of the world in her grasp.

He thus answered : O foolish creatures, how blind ye are from ignorance ! Now I wish to make my opinion known to all. He whose wisdom is omnipotent, created the heavens, and gave them their respective ruling powers,(3) so that one communicates proportionate light to the other ; in like manner he appointed for the splendours (4) of this world, one invested with general authority, to transmit in succession, from nation to nation, from family to family,

(2)—57. The avaricious with empty hands, and the prodigal stript naked without a single hair on the head.

(3)—75. According to the philosophic doctrine of Aristotle, there is a ruling power, or particular divinity in each planet.

(4)—77. This means honours, riches, power, and human glory, all under the direction and influence of fortune, the divinity of the earth.



its transitory riches in spite of all human foresight. Consequently, one nation is in power and prosperity, whilst another is in oppression and slavery, according to the caprice of that power, which is invisible, like a snake in the grass. Your sagacity is unavailable against its influence, it pre-ordains, judges and governs its kingdom, the same as the other divinities do theirs. Its vicissitudes are incessant, it is volatile by nature and necessity, so that, in rapid succession, people rise and fall in turn. It is often the subject of reproach and calumny, even from those who ought to be grateful to it, in place of blaming it unjustly, with evil reports. But it is happy, and pays no attention to their language; it joyfully turns its sphere with the other primitive powers, and enjoys its happiness.

Let us now descend to a place of greater torture, as the stars that were up at my departure are now setting, and we have no longer time to delay. We passed the circle to the other side, near a fountain, that boils up, and falls into a pit cut by its waters. The water was blacker than Persian colour, and we, along its muddy waves, descended by another passage. This stream, of a frightful aspect, falling at the foot of a greenish pestiferous region, forms the Stygian lake. As I was looking on attentively, I saw muddy ghosts in this filthy slough, all naked, with their faces full of bloody wounds. They were beating each other, not only with their hands, but with their heads, breasts and feet, and tearing one another with their teeth.

My good Master said: My son, thou seest now the souls of those who were prone to anger, and I must also tell thee that there are more of them breathing under the water, and make it bubble to the surface, as thou seest in all directions. Sunk in the filthy mire they croak: We were miserable in the delight-

ful air, animated by the sun's rays, having within ourselves a vaporous fountain of sloth, and now we are eternally miserable in this hellish quagmire. They mutter this lamentation in a guttural tone, for they cannot express it in plain words. After having gone round the large circle of this stenchy pit, between the dry bank and the loathsome lake, with our eyes fixed on the ghosts, guzzling the fetid mire, we came at last to the foot of a tower.

#### ALLEGORY.

By *Plutus* is meant the insatiable lust of riches, the base and root of all human evil. By the rolling of those heavy rocks is meant the anxiety and perplexity of man's mind and heart, the natural consequence of avarice and prodigality. The Stygian lake, in which are plunged quite naked the passionate, shows the melancholy, troublesome state of their mind, always in rage and anger visible to others. The indolent, sunk therein to the bottom, denote their obscure contemptible life, without honour or benefit to themselves or others.



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 CANTO VIII.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

Dante is still in the fifth circle. He comes to the foot of a tower by a certain signal of two flames of fire on its top. He is there taken into the boat by Phlegyas, the ferryman, and passing down the lake he meets with Filippo Argenti, a Florentine, once remarkable for his passionate temper. He clings to the boat, presenting a most horrible spectacle of filth and rage. The two poets arrive at the city of Dite, where they wish to enter, but some of the furies of hell debar them the passage; still they succeed in passing the Stygian lake by the interference of an angel.

**I** SAY, on resuming my theme,\* that for some time before coming to the foot of the tower, we directed our eyes to its top, where we saw two light flames of fire, and another returning the signal, at such a distance, that our sight could scarcely reach it. Turning to Virgil, that ocean of knowledge, I said: What does that flame mean, and the other that answers it? and who are they that do those things?

Thou canst easily discern from those muddy waves, said he, what they expect, unless the fog of the swamp hinder thee. A bow never discharged its arrow, cutting through the thin air so rapidly, as a little boat dashed across the lake, directed by a single ferryman towards us, crying aloud: Thou art come, miserable soul.

Phlegyas, Phlegyas, thou screamest in vain this

\* By this is generally supposed there was a considerable interval between the first cantos and the rest of the poem.

turn, said my Master, for thou shalt have us no longer than whilst crossing the miry swamp.

As one who learns that a fraudulent act has been committed against him, and is much afflicted thereby, so was Phlegyas in his concentrated anger. My guide got into the boat, and made me enter after him, and it appeared laden only when I was in. As soon as we entered it, its long-practised prow ran deeper through the water than usual. Whilst we were running down the stagnant pool, there came before me a ghost, all daubed with mud and mire, and said: Who art thou that comest before thy time?

I said: If I come, I am not to remain; but who art thou, filthy brute?

He replied: Thou seest I am one of the damned.

And I said: Remain then among the damned, cursed spirit, for I know thee notwithstanding thy filthy disfigured state.

Then he grasped the boat with both his hands, but my skilful Master repulsed him, saying: Go off, and remain with the other dogs.—After that he cast his arms around my neck, and kissed me, saying: Disdainful soul, happy is she that gave thee birth.—He was a haughty fellow in the other world, and not a single good quality honoured his memory, wherefore his ghost is furious in hell. How many are there above, who think themselves great as kings, and leaving after them a contemptible memory, shall be treated here like hogs in mire.

And I said: Master, I should be glad to see him sunk in this muddy pit, before we get out of the lake.

He answered: Before thou seest the bank thou shalt be satisfied; thou must enjoy that pleasure. A little after I saw him receive such horrible treatment from the other bemired ghosts, that I still praise and thank God for it. They all shouted: Have at Filippo

Argenti! Then the haughty whimsical Florentine spirit bit himself with rage. So we left him there, and I shall say no more about him, for I heard some mournful lamentation, and directed my view further on.

Then my good Master said: We are now approaching the city of Dite, with (1) its grave inhabitants, with its numerous population.

And I: Master, I clearly see its flaming towers (2) in the valley, as if they came out of a furnace.

And he said: The eternal fire that blazes within there, makes them appear red, as thou seest in this low part of hell.

We came to the deep trenches that surround that disconsolate region, its walls appeared to be made of iron. After making a long round we came to a place, where the ferryman, with a loud voice, said: Come out, here is the entrance. At the gate I saw thousands that fell in showers from heaven, (3) spitefully crying out: Who is he that comes alive to the kingdom of the dead?

And my wise Master made a sign that he wished to speak to them in private.

Then having checked their anger a little, they said: Come thou alone, and let him go off who was so impertinent as to come to this kingdom; let him return by himself in his foolish journey, let him try it if he can, for thou who hast escorted him through such dark regions must remain here.

Judge, good reader, if I had not reason to be in-

(1)—69. Sunk under the pressure of crime and punishment, or philosophers tortured for their impiety.

(2)—70. Meschite, in the Turkish language, signifies temples, here taken for lofty towers.

(3)—83. The fallen angels.

consolable on hearing such cursed words, as I thought I could never return. O my dear guide, that hast more than seven (4) times saved and rescued me from imminent dangers, do not abandon me, I pray thee, in such emergency, and if I be refused to prosecute my journey, let us return instantly together.

And my Master, who conducted me so far, said : Never fear, none can prevent our passage, as being permitted by such power. (5) But wait for me here, cheer up thy broken spirits, entertain good hopes, for I shall not leave thee in this infernal world. Hereon the affectionate father goes off, and leaves me there, and I remain in doubt, for yes and no dispute in my head. I could not hear what he said to them, but he did not remain long there, when each ran back in a hurry. Our enemies shut the gate against my master, who stood outside, and then returned to me in slow pace. With downcast eyes and cheerless countenance, he said, sighing : Who has refused me entrance to the mournful habitation ?

Do not be discouraged, said he, to me, if thou seest me a little angry, for I shall overcome the difficulty whatever resistance they prepare within. That effrontery of theirs is not a new thing, for they have already used it at the outside gate, which remains still without bar or bolt. (6) It is over that thou hast seen written the inscription of death. Now is descending the entrance of the gate, passing through the circles without escort, that power by whose assistance this region too shall be opened for us.

(4)—97. This merely signifies a determinate for an indeterminate number.

(5)—105. Da Tal, an angel, or the power of God.

(6)—126. This refers to Christ's descent into Limbo.

## ALLEGORY.

By Phlegyas punished in the swamp between two towers are meant anger and pride; by the height of the tower, the ungovernable pride of the human heart; by the burning flames, the insatiable desire of advancement; by the velocity of the boat by a single ferryman, the imperious haughtiness of man, who, in the pride of his heart, passes over his fellow-creatures, and looks on them with contempt. By the demons who wanted to prevent them at the entrance, and separate Virgil from Dante, is denoted the artifice of the arch-fiend to blindfold man, and darken his reason, (which is here and throughout the poem meant by Virgil) so that he should not know the state of his soul, and thereby fall into his snares.

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 CANTO IX.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

The poets stand in impatience and anxiety at the entrance, where they see the furies of hell in the shape of women, with their bodies and heads covered with serpents and hydras. Virgil covers Dante's face with his hands, that he should not see the horrible spectacle. After that he sees thousands of ghosts in consternation at the appearance of an angel indignant at the obstinacy of these evil spirits. He then opens the gate for the two poets, and they enter without resistance the city of Dite, where they see the propagators of heresy most horribly tormented.

**T**HE colour (1) depicted in my countenance from fear, in seeing Virgil turning back, made him instantly change his. He stood attentive, like one listening, for he could not see far, on account of the dim air and thick fog. However, we must fight the battle, said he, or if

(1)—1. This means that Dante's paleness through fear made Virgil suppress his, and resume fresh colour, in order to encourage him.

not.....but the great power is our support. Oh, how anxious I am that it may come.

I clearly saw from what followed, that he disguised his sentiments, (2) as his words were different to what he said before. But, however, his language frightened me, for I attributed to his half-expressed words, perhaps more importance than what he meant. I then asked him this question : Does any one ever descend from the first circle, where their only punishment is to live without hope, to the bottom of this horrible lake ?

And he said : It seldom happens that any of us ever go the way that I now traverse. It is true that I have been there once before, conjured by that cruel Erichtho, (3) who used to restore spirits to their bodies. A little after my death she made me enter this place, to bring back a spirit from the circle of Judas. (4) That is the lowest, the most obscure, and the furthest region from the great heaven. I know the passage well, therefore, take courage. This stenchy, loathsome lake surrounds the city of woe and grief, where we cannot henceforth proceed without hard struggle.

He said more, but I do not remember it, for my eyes were directed to the lofty tower with its blazing fire, when all on a sudden, I saw standing in female form and attitude, three infernal furies, all covered with blood, having a circle of greenish hydras around their bodies, and their heads entwined with serpents and vipers, falling as locks around their temples.

And he that well knew the retinue of hell's queen, (5)

(2)—14. This refers to *or if not* above.

(3)—23. Erichtho. A famous magician of Thessaly.

(4)—27. Virgil is supposed to have recourse to this fiction, in order to prove his experience of the place to Dante.

(5)—44. Proserpine, the queen of hell.



said: Look at those raging furies;(6) that is Megæra at the left side, the other weeping at the right is Alecto, and she in the middle is Tesiphone ; he then said no more. They were all tearing their breasts with their nails, beating themselves with their hands, and screaming so loud, that I clung to the poet with terror.

Looking down from the tower, they all shouted : Let Medusa come, we'll surely change him into a stone, we have not sufficiently revenged ourselves of Theseus, for his audacious attempt.

Turn back and keep thy eyes shut, for if Gorgon appear, and thou shouldst see her, there will be no chance of thy return to the living world.

Thus spoke my master, and he turned me back himself, and not trusting my hands, he put his own to cover my eyes. O ye who are of sound intellect, study the doctrine coucealed under the veil of these strange verses.

At that moment there came from the agitated billows of the lake, a frightful tremendous crash, which made both banks tremble, like a violent hurricane furiously raging through a forest, breaking off boughs and branches, levelling the brushwood to the ground, tearing up flowers, and making the dust fly into the air, and the cattle and shepherd seek for shelter.

He then uncovered my eyes, and said: Now fix the nerve of thy sight on that ancient form where the vapour rises thickest and blackest.

As a multitude of frogs at the sight of a dangerous serpent plunge into the water, and sink in the bottom of the mud, so I saw thousands upon thousands of miserable ghosts, fly at the approach of one walking on the surface of the Stygian lake, without wetting the sole of his foot. Holding his left hand before

(6)—46. These are the furies of hell.

him, he dissipated the cloudy vapours from his face, and seemed fatigued only from that annoyance.

I evidently perceived he was a messenger from heaven, and turned to my Master, who made me a sign to remain quiet, and bow to him. Oh, how he appeared to be in great indignation. He advanced to the gate, and without any impediment, he opened it with a little rod.

Oh vile race, (7) eternally banished from heaven, said he at the horrid threshold, why do ye behave with such obstinacy? Why are ye so disobedient to that will, whose power is irresistible, and which has often increased your sufferings? What does it avail you to be in opposition to the decree (8) of heaven? That Cerberus (9) of yours, if ye remember it, had his jaws and neck stripped of his hair by it. He then turned off by the loathsome passage, without speaking to us, with the appearance of one whose solicitude is more for another object than that before him. And we proceeded to the city (10) safe and secure, by virtue of his powerful words.

We entered it without any obstruction, and, as I was anxious to see the condition of the fortress, as soon as I was inside, I cast my eyes all round, and I saw in every direction, a great multitude in grief and torments. As sepulchral monuments cover the ground in different parts in the environs of Arles, (11) where the Rhone forms a lake, and of Pola, near Quarnaro, which confines Italy, and waters its boundaries—so were the like here in every direction, except

(7)—91. The fallen angels, and those deprived of heavenly beatitude.

(8)—97. The decree of heaven in favour of the poets, to descend the infernal regions.

(9)—99. This refers to the story of Hercules dragging Cerberus from hell, or as some relate, to Christ's descent into Limbo.

(11)—112. Places of celebrity for their ancient monuments.

that their form is much more frightful, as flames of fire spread among the tombs, by which they are so intensely hot, that no art could make iron more so. All the graves were uncovered, and there issued from them such horrible lamentations, that it could be easily perceived they came from the wretched souls of perdition.

And I said: Master, who are these ghosts buried under these vaults, that we hear in such lamentable agony?

He replied: They are heresiarchs with their followers, of every sect, and their tombs are much more crammed with them than thou imaginest. Each sect (12) is buried apart, and their monuments are different in degrees of heat. He then turned to the right, and we passed on between the graves, and the lofty battlements of the fortress.

#### ALLEGORY.

By these furies of hell are meant the dangerous doctrines of heretics. Virgil's advice to the poet to shut his eyes, shows how cautious we should be against the pernicious maxims of those enemies of God, and of his holy Church. The caution given here by the poet to his readers against their poisonous influence, indicates the danger of their doctrine, and disobedience to the Church. The interference of the angel on this occasion denotes that nothing can protect a good Christian from them, but sound reason and Divine grace. Finally, their punishment in these fiery graves intimates God's severe judgment against those, who, by their heretical principles, devour and destroy, like the raging tempest, the children of his holy church.

(12)—130. Each heretical sect has its respective sepulchre.



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 CANTO X.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

Dante wishes to see and speak with some of the ghosts, consigned to the most severe punishment in hell for their heresy and incredulity. Virgil introduces him to two of them, from one of whom he learns his future exile from Florence. He sees with pleasure and astonishment that the souls in hell have knowledge of future events, but not of the present, unless informed by those that come fresh from the living world.

**N**OW my Master goes through a narrow passage between the walls of the castle and the graves, and I follow close after him.

O sublime genius, that conductest me through these impious circles, said I, pray speak to me, and satisfy my wishes. Is it possible to see the souls that lie in these graves? they are all open and none are watching them.

And he said: They shall be all shut when they return here from the valley of Josaphat (1) with the bodies they left above. Epicurus (2) with all his followers, whose doctrine is that the soul dies with the body, are buried at this side. But as to thy request, and the desire thou concealest, thou shalt be satisfied immediately from within these graves.

And I said: Dear guide, I do not conceal my sentiments, it is only to be cautious of what I say, and

(1)—11. This means the day of general judgment.

(2)—14. An Athenian philosopher, who denied the immortality of the soul.

it is not on this occasion only thou hast disposed me to be so.

O Tuscan, thou that comest alive to this city of eternal fire, speaking with so much humility, be pleased to remain awhile. Thy language shows that thou art a native of that noble country, (3) to which I had been perhaps too troublesome. That voice came all of a sudden from one of the tombs, I therefore approached, all trembling, nearer to my guide.

And he said: What is the matter? turn back and see Farinati, (4) he is rising up, and thou wilt see him from the head to the waist. I then turned my face to his, and he arose, with the head and breast, as if holding hell in contempt.

My guide, with prompt and undaunted hands, pushed me forward through the graves near him, saying: Let thy words be precise.

As soon as I was at the foot of his grave, he looked at me for a while, and then, as if with disdain, he said: Who were thy ancestors? And being willing to obey him, I concealed nothing, but told him all.

Then he turned up his eyes a little, and said: They were implacable enemies to me, to my ancestors, and to my party, for which I dispersed them twice.

If they had been routed, they returned both times from all quarters, said I, but thine were not so successful in that art.

Then from the same grave another ghost near him arose up to the chin, I thought he got up on his knees, he looked around him as if to see if there was

(3)—26. Florence.

(4)—32. He and the others here mentioned, were, according to the poet, buried in the same grave of fire for their impiety.

(5)—53. These two ghosts appeared to Dante, one visible to his waist, and the other to his chin, on the brink of the grave.

any person with me, but when his suspicion subsided, he said, with tears in his eyes, If thou come to this dreary prison by means of thy great genius, where is my son, why is he not with thee ?

I replied : I do not come alone, he that conducts me here is waiting for me yonder, and for whom, perhaps, thy son Guido (6) had some dislike. His words and kind of punishment, informed me already of his name ; hence my answer was so precise.

Suddenly rising up, he exclaimed : Why hast thou said he had ? Is he not still living ? Does not he still see the rays of the sun ?

When he perceived my hesitation to his answer, he fell back and appeared no more.

But the other noble ghost in compliment to whom I remained, changed neither countenance nor attitude nor posture, but resuming his former discourse, said : If they have unsuccessfully learned that art, that torments me more than this grave of fire. But the face of the lady (7) who is queen here, shall not shine fifty times before thou shalt experience the difficulty of that art. And if ever thou return to the living world, tell me, and I'll wish thee safe, why those people are so cruel against my friends in all their laws.

I answered : The carnage (8) and horrid slaughter that tinged the river Arbia with blood, make them pronounce such judgment in our senate-house.

Then, heaving mournful sighs, he shook his head,

(6)—63. Guido preferred impious philosophy to poetry.

(7)—79. This means fifty new moons. The poets gave three names to the moon ; Luna in heaven, Diana on earth, and Proserpine in hell, which the poet means here by Donna.

(8)—85. After a bloody battle between the Guelphs and Ghibelines at Montaperti, the chiefs of the latter party being victorious, held council to destroy Florence, but Farinati alone courageously opposed their resolution.

and said : I was not alone in the field of battle, and it was not without reason that I joined the others; but when they were all of opinion to destroy Florence, I was the only person that vindicated its cause with courage and energy.

May thy posterity ever enjoy peace, said I, if thou explain me this difficulty, which here embarrasses my mind. It appears, if I judge rightly, ye foresee futurity, and have no knowledge of the present.

We see, said he, like one who has weak sight, things at a distance ; the Sovereign Master (9) grants us still such privilege. As to approaching or existing events, we have no knowledge of them, and unless informed of it by others, we know nothing of your human condition. Thou canst now conceive that our knowledge of things will cease, when the gate of the world's futurity (10) will be closed.

Then, as repentant of my fault, I said : Now, tell him that has fallen back into his grave, that his son is still among the living, and if I was silent to his request, let him know it was because I was thinking of the doubt thou hast just explained.

My Master at this time called me back, therefore, in haste, I requested the ghost to tell me who were with him.

He answered : Thousands lie here with me in this grave, Frederick the Second and the Cardinal (11) are there, and the others I shall not mention.

After that he disappeared, and I returned to the

(9)—God.

(10)—108. After the general judgment, when eternity commences.

(11)—120. Ottaviano Ubaldini, a Florentine. He took an active part with the Ghibeline faction in opposition to the pontifical authority, and is reported to have said, that if he had a soul, he lost it for that party.

ancient poet, reflecting on the words (12) I thought unfavourable to me.

He proceeded, and as he walked along he said : Why art thou so dejected ? and I satisfied his request.

Remember well the prediction thou hast heard against thee, said he, and now pay attention to this. He then pointed up his finger When thou wilt be in the presence of the sweet splendour of her, (13) whose beautiful eye sees all, thou wilt learn from her the future course of thy life. He then turned to the left side, and we left the walls of the fortress, and went towards the centre by a passage, that led to a valley, which cast up even to that place an infectious stench.

#### ALLEGORY.

By these walls surrounding the fiery sepulchres are still meant the obstinacy and tenacity of heretics to their anti-catholic doctrine to the end of life without repentance or reconciliation to the church. Virgil advising the poet the second time to be cautious and precise in his words, means the danger of having any intercourse or communication with them in religious matters. By Epicurism, here punished with heresy, is shown its abomination, and how man degrades himself in common with the brute beast, by his intemperance, and denying the immortality of the soul.

(12)—123. This prediction alludes to the poet's banishment.

(13)—131. Beatrice, whom Dante was to see in Paradise.





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 CANTO XI.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

The poet comes to the extremity of a deep precipice in the seventh circle. He retires behind a high monument of one of the damned, as a place of shelter from the pestiferous exhalation of the valley. Here Virgil tells him that within three circles are punished the souls guilty of violence, fraud, and usury. He then asks him why are not those guilty of lust, gluttony, avarice, prodigality, and anger, punished in the city of Dite. He also wishes to know why is usury so offensive to God. Then the two poets advance to the seventh circle, where they descend. Virgil enters into a philosophic dissertation on the nature and enormity of different crimes.

**A**T the extremity of a high bank, forming a circle of large split rocks, we came over a heap of ghosts, more cruelly tormented. And there, in consequence of the horribly filthy exhalation rising from the deep abyss, we retired behind the cover of a large monument, where I saw an inscription with these words: I watch, Pope (1) Anastasius, whom Photius seduced from the right way.

We must descend slowly, in order to accustom ourselves to that horrid miasm, and we shall be less sensitive of its effects afterwards.

Thus spoke my Master, and I said: Find some mental entertainment that we should not lose time, and he replied: Thou seest that such is my intention.

(1)—8. He was suspected by some writers to have countenanced the heresy of Phosinus, a deacon of Thessalonia, which is evidently false. The poet here confounds the Pope with the emperor of that name, who truly patronized that heretical doctrine.

He then began: My son, within these rocks are three narrow circles of a gradual descent, like those thou hast left. They are full of miserable souls, and that the sight of them may hereafter satisfy thy curiosity, learn how and why they are so confined.

Of every wickedness that is an abomination to heaven, injustice is the final object, and such object becomes detrimental to another, either by violence or fraud. But as fraud is of man's own peculiar perversity, it is more displeasing to God, and, therefore, the fraudulent are the lowest of all, and suffer the greatest torments. The first circle is full of those guilty of violence, but as violence may be committed against three sorts of persons; so it is distinct and made into three circles. Violence is committed against God, oneself, and his neighbour, I mean to say against them in person, and what belongs to them, as thou shalt learn by self-evident argument. The neighbour suffers from death, or dangerous wounds, and his property from ruin, fire, and pillage; hence, murderers, and whoever inflicts dangerous wounds, incendiaries and plunderers, are all punished in the first circle, in different crowds. He who commits suicide, or destroys his property, must suffer in the second circle, without mercy. Whoever in your world deprives himself of the necessities of life, or gambles, or lavishes his patrimony, is there miserable, where he ought to be happy. Man commits violence against the Divinity, by denying or blaspheming it in heart, and by despising nature and her bountiful gifts; and, therefore, the third circle keeps in eternal imprisonment, Sodom(2) and Cahors, and whoever despises God in word or mind.

Fraud, from which every conscience feels remorse,

(2)—50. Cahors, a town of Guienne, in France, was then full of usurers. So by these two towns are meant sodomy and usury.

can be committed by a breach of confidence, or want of confidence. This species of distrust destroys only the tie of love formed by nature, for which reason are confined in the second circle, hypocrisy, flattery, witchcraft, forgery, theft, simony, seduction, swindling, and such like abominations. By the former, that love(3) formed by nature, and every thing connected with it, by which mutual confidence is established, are disregarded. Therefore, in the last circle, at the centre of the universe,(4) over which is placed Dite, whoever commits fraud, is tormented for all eternity.

And I said : Master, thy dissertation is very clear, and perfectly explains the nature of this gulf, and the people that inhabit it. But pray tell me, why are not those tossed about by the storm, and those drenched by the rain, and those quarrelling with each other, I say, why are not they punished in the city of fire, if God be angry with them, and if not, why are they detained in such awful condition ?

And he said : Why are thy thoughts wandering more than usual ? Dost not thou remember that passage of thy moral philosophy,(5) which treats of three things offensive to heaven, i. e., incontinence, malice, and foul bestiality, and how incontinence, is less offensive to God, and less blameable ? If thou consider well that doctrine, and recollect who they are, that are punished in the outward circles, thou wilt clearly see why they are separated from those wicked souls, and why divine justice torments them less.

(3)—56. The poet here explains the different obligations of mankind by two distinct characters. The first indicates the ordinary transactions of life, and the second, the particular obligations of society, such as friendship, gratitude, family connections, &c. &c.

(4)—65. The centre of the earth, where Dante places the lowest pit of hell.

(5)—80. The doctrine of Aristotle's philosophy.

O sun,(6) that healest all blindness, thou renderest me so happy by thy illustrations, that I am almost as well pleased, to doubt as to know. Now I pray thee, revert a little to that point, where thou hast said, that usury offends Divine bounty, and resolve the difficulty.

Philosophy, said he, in several passages, teaches him that studies it how nature takes her source in the knowledge and wisdom of God,(7) and if thou study physics attentively, thou wilt find in some of the first pages, that your art, as much as possible, follows nature, as the scholar does his master, and that your art is, as if the grandchild of God. Now, if thou remember the book of Genesis, thou shalt be convinced, that from the beginning, man's existence and happiness must depend on these two principles. Therefore, as the usurer follows a different course, he despises both nature and art, whereas, he places his hopes on other objects.

But now follow me, as I am desirous of proceeding, the Pisces(8) appear already bounding on the horizon, and the Chariot is over Corus, and we have to descend the bank a little distance off.

#### ALLEGORY.

By this exhalation from the gulf of fiery sepulchres is still shown the dangerous influence of heresy over Christian society, and how it poisons and contaminates the souls of others. By the poets hiding and securing themselves behind the monument, shows how man ought to avoid it by every means, and on all occasions. In the rest of the Canto is shown how murder, violence, injustice, and usury cry to heaven for vengeance, as being outrageous to God and man, and are severely punished for all eternity.

(6)—91. Virgil.

(7)—100. Philosophic maxims of Aristotle and Plato. The word art here means Divine, natural, and human economy. So this explains a *Dio quasi nepote*. The poet corroborates his argument by scriptural authority.

(8)—13. The sun is now on the sign of Aries, the constellation of Pisces over the horizon, and Charles's Wain appears in the most northern point of the heavens.

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 CANTO XII.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

The poet descends with Virgil to the seventh circle, where those guilty of violence are punished, and the Minotaur watching them. He comes to a river of blood, out of which the ghosts are endeavouring to rise, but are chased back by a group of Centaurs. Three of them oppose the poet's passage, but Virgil prevails on one of them to bring them both on his back across the river. Dante while passing over it, learns the condition of the river, and of the souls that are punished therein.

**T**HE place where we came to descend the precipice, was so craggy, and what appeared there was such as to render it a most horrible spectacle. As a heap of rocks, falling from the mountain into the Adige, beyond the Trent, occasioned by an earthquake, or want of foundation, render the passage to the valley so impracticable, that whoever is above, could not descend; such was the descent of this precipice, and on the top of the rocky bank lay stretched the monstrous animal(1) of Crete, that was conceived in the artificial cow; (2) and as soon as he perceived us, he began to bite himself, like one in convulsive rage.

My wise Master, on seeing him, exclaimed: Thou thinkest, perhaps, that he is the prince(3) of Athens, who killed thee in the upper world. Be off, wretched

(1)—13. The Minotaur.

(2)—14. Pasaphai.

(3)—17. Theseus, who destroyed the Minotaur by means of his Sister Ariadne.

brute, he doesn't come by thy sister's instructions, he only comes to see your torments.

As a bull, that breaks his chains at the moment he receives a mortal blow, cannot escape, but trembles, and bounces furiously—in that condition I saw the Minotaur, and my skilful Master said : Run to the bank while he is in such rage, to descend, thou hast no time to lose.

So we descended the precipice of rocks, which often rolled under my feet from the weight of my body.

In going my way I was absorbed in thought, and my guide said : Thou art perhaps thinking of that horrid steep, watched by that furious beast I have silenced. Now I wish to acquaint thee that the first time I came down to this part of hell, this was not then broken, but a short time, as well as I can remember, before the arrival of Him(4) that snatched the great booty from Lucifer in the upper circle, this deep pestiferous valley so trembled in all directions, that I thought the world felt the effects of that love, which made some believe that the universe was more than once replunged into a chaos, and at that time this old clift of rocks was split asunder here and elsewhere. But look close on that abyss, we are near the river of blood, where those who commit violent injury are bubbling up. O blind covetousness ! O foolish anger ! that sway us in our transitory life, and make us bloody victims for eternity. I saw a large trench cut in the form of an arch all round the gulf, as my guide told me, and between the foot of the rock and the trench, were rambling Centaurs, armed with arrows, as they were accustomed to be in the upper world for the chase. Seeing us descend,

(4)—38. Our Saviour.

they stopped, and three of the gang advanced towards us, with bow and arrow already prepared.

One of them cried out at a distance: To what punishment are ye coming along here? tell me from the spot, if not, I'll point the arrow.

My Master said: We'll shortly give an answer to Chiron, your too eager desire has been always your misfortune. Then he touched me with his finger, and said: That is Nessus, (5) who died for the beautiful Dejanira, and revenged himself after. He in the middle, looking at his breast, is the great Chiron, the foster father of Achilles, and the other is Pholus, who was a torch of anger. They go in thousands around the pit, darting their arrows at whatever soul that would rise from the pool of blood, beyond the place prescribed for its crimes. We approached those nimble monsters, and Chiron seized an arrow, and with its top smoothed his beard along his jaws, and opening his large mouth, said to his companions:

Have ye noticed that he who comes last, moves whatever he touches? the feet of the dead do not do so.

And my worthy Master, who was now near the double-shaped monster, replied: He is certainly alive, and I alone must show him the dark abyss; necessity and not pleasure brings him there.

A blessed lady, suspending her heavenly canticles, has charged me with this new office. He is not a robber, neither am I a fugitive ghost. But in the name of that power that guides my footsteps through this dreary passage, give us one of thy companions to guard us, and show us a fordable part of the river, and bring this man on his back, as he cannot pierce the air like a phantom.

(5)—67. The story of Nessus, Hercules, and Dejanira, is well known.

Chiron turned about and said to Nessus: Turn back and conduct them, and if any of the group should attempt to molest them, disperse them.

We then proceeded with our frightful escort along the waves of the boiling blood, where the tormented souls were furiously screaming. I saw some among them plunged to their eyes in blood

And the huge Centaur said: They are tyrants (6) who were guilty of human slaughter and plunder. Here the souls devoid of compassion for others are punished. Alexander is here, and Denny, the curse and plague of Sicily. He with the black hair is Azzolino, he with the fair is Obizzo of Este, who was certainly killed by his son in the open world.

Then I turned to the poet and he said: Now it is for thee to go first, and I'll follow thee. A little further on the Centaur fixed his eyes on a crowd, which seemed to rise to the neck from the furnace of blood. He pointed out to us one of the damned all alone, and said: It is he who assassinated in the sanctuary of the Lord, one whose heart is still revered near the Themes. After I saw several more holding not only their heads, but their breasts, over the surface of the bloody water, of whom I knew a great many. The blood by degrees got so low, so as merely to cover their feet, whereby we were able to pass the gulf.

The same as thou seest this abyss of blood decreas-

(6)—104. The ghosts tormented in this river of blood are Alexander, Dionysius of Sicily, Azzolino, lord of Padua, Obizzo of Este, Marquis of Ferrara, strangled by his son (here called Figliastro by the poet, through contempt for his cruelty) in order to become master of his title and property; Guy of Montfort, who through revenge killed Henry, nephew to Henry III., king of England, in the Church of Viterbo, in 1272; Attila, king of the Huns, Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, Sextus, son of Tarquin the Proud, and two notorious highway robbers, one of whom was of the noble family of the Pazzi of Florence.



ing on this side, said the Centaur, thou must know that it gets proportionably deep on the other side, until it rises to such point that tyranny shall groan in eternal agony. It is there that Divine justice punishes Attila, the plague of the earth, and Pyrrhus and Sextus ; it is there it makes Rinier of Corneto, and Rinier of Pazzi, lament eternally in the boiling waves for their highway robberies. Then he turned back and repassed the ford.

## ALLEGORY.

By Minotaur is meant the horrible unnatural crime of sodomy and bestialty. This vice is so abominable in the sight of God, that he punished two great cities guilty of it with fire and brimstone from heaven, as an everlasting example to mankind. By Virgil telling Dante to run to the bank while that monster is in such rage, shows that man should speedily overcome that unnatural passion ; and by the stones rolling under his feet, with what difficulty he can get rid of that vice, when once he has the misfortune to indulge his lustful desire therein. By this boiling river of blood is meant the violent anger of man, which makes his blood as it were boil within his heart and veins. By the Centaurs are meant tyrants, who generally cause the misery and desolation of the world by war and bloodshed, and destroy the comfort and happiness of man with the blessed fruits of Divine Providence and of bountiful nature.



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 CANTO XIII.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

Dante enters the second part of the seventh circle, where he sees those guilty of self-destruction, and others of dissipation and prodigality. The first are transformed into knotty rough branches, on which the harpies build their nests. The second are pursued by black voracious dogs. He converses with some of them, who inform him why they are thus punished. Lastly, he meets a Florentine, who explains the cause of the innumerable calamities of the city of Florence, and why he committed suicide himself.

**H**ESSUS was not arrived at the other side, when we got into a thick pathless wilderness. Its foliage was not green, but of a dusky colour; its branches were not straight, but knotty and cross-bent; there was no fruit of any description, but thorny stumps. The wild beasts that desert the cultivated places between Cecina and Corneto, have not such barren rough brushwood for their retreat. The hideous harpies, that chased the Trojans from Strophades, by the sorrowful prediction of their future destiny, build their nests there. They have large wings, human neck and face, legs full of claws, a huge plummy paunch, and make a mournful clatter on the top of those strange trees.

My good Master said: Before thou goest any further, know that thou art in the second part of the circle, and thou shalt be there until thou come to the land of woe and grief. But pay close attention, and thou shalt see things that will confirm my words.

I then heard groans on all sides, and saw no person there to groan, for which I stood in astonish-

ment. I think he supposed that I might imagine that those cries, coming from the branches, proceeded from some ghosts, that hid themselves from us.

Then my Master said: If thou tear off one of those little branches, thou wilt be of a different opinion.

Then I stretched out my hand and pulled off a branch from a large tree, and its trunk screamed: Why dost thou molest me? And when it became covered with black blood, it recommenced weeping and saying: Why dost thou tear me so? Art thou devoid of every feeling of compassion? We were once human beings, and we are now only withered trunks; thy hand should be more compassionate, were we to be even the souls of serpents. As from a green bough burning at one end, and dropping moisture at the other, there comes a whistling wind; so there issued from the branch words and blood together, so that I let it fall and stood like one trembling with fear.

O afflicted soul, had he believed sooner what he had read in my verses, said my Master, he would not have troubled thee; but his incredulity made me excite him to an act which I much regret. But tell him who thou wast, so that by way of reparation he may revive thy fame in the upper world, whither he is allowed to return.

And the trunk resumed thus: Thou inducest me so much by thy graceful language, that I cannot remain silent. As for you, said it to me, be not displeased if I detain you for a moment's conversation. It was I (1) who held the two keys of Frederick's heart,

(1)—58. This was Pietro delle Vigne, native of Capua, who, by his extraordinary aptitude in business, became chancellor to the emperor Frederick II., who, suspecting him for some treachery or disloyalty, committed him, and ordered his eyes to be pulled out. He being in such disgrace and affliction, dashed out his brains against the prison walls.

and turned them so gently to shut and open it, that I estranged almost every one from his confidence, and was so faithful to my glorious office, that I lost both rest and life by it. The prostitute (2) that never turned her adulterous eyes from the emperor's palace, (the common death and vice of courts,) inflamed against me the hearts of all, who also so much inflamed the emperor's, that my joyful honours turned to sorrowful mourning. Though a haughty disdainful spirit, thinking to escape disgrace by death, I who was till then just, became unjust towards myself. I swear by the renovating roots of this tree, that I have never been unfaithful to my royal master, who was worthy of much honour. And if any of you return to that world, let him re-establish my memory still disgraced by the fatal blow it received from envy.

It paused a little, and the poet said: Now while it is silent, lose no time, but speak and ask him if thou wish to know more.

And I replied: Ask him thyself whatever thou thinkest may interest me, for I cannot do it, my heart is so much affected with compassion.

He therefore resumed: O imprisoned spirit, if thou wish that this man may freely comply with thy request, be pleased to explain us how the soul is tied to these knotty trees, and tell us also, if thou can, if any soul be ever disengaged from these trunks.

Then the branch blew very strong, and the whistling wind therefrom was changed into this reply: My answer to you shall be concise. When the ferocious soul departs the body from which it separates of itself, Minos sends it to the seventh circle. It falls in the wilderness where chance tosses it, without any select place, and then it germinates like a

(2)—64. Envy, here called prostitute.

grain of corn. It rises to a twig, and then to a wild tree, and the harpies on devouring the foliage inflict a wound, and thereby issues a plaintive voice. As other souls, we shall return for our bodies, but none of us can be clothed with them, for it is contrary to justice to enjoy what oneself willingly forfeits. We shall only drag them after us, and they'll be suspended here throughout all the wilderness, each to the tree of its miserable soul.

We were still listening to the trunk, thinking it had something else to say, when we were surprised by a frightful noise, like one that hears the howling of hounds, and the rattling of branches in the forest, whilst a wild boar is hard chased to his den. And all on a sudden we saw at our left side two ghosts all naked and mangled, running so vehemently that they rushed through every obstacle they met with in the wilderness. The first exclaimed: Now, be quick, run on, death; and the other running slower cried out: Lano, (3) thy feet were not so nimble at the battle of Toppo. And he perhaps being out of breath hid himself in a fagot. The wilderness was full of black, hungry, ravenous dogs in pursuit of them, bounding like greyhounds let loose from their chains. They attacked him hidden in the fagot, tore him to pieces, and dragged along his palpitating members.

Then my guide took me by the hand and brought me to the bush that was weeping in vain from its bloody wounds. O James of St. Andrew, (4) said it, what use was it for thee to seek for protection from me, was thy culpable life any fault of mine?

(3)—120. Lano of Sienna, a great spendthrift. In a bloody battle with his enemies at Toppo, near Arezzo, he preferred voluntary death to flight.

(4)—133. He was a native of Padua. After lavishing all his property, he killed himself in despair.

When my Master came close to it he said: Who wast thou that utterest such mournful words, mixed with blood from thy wounds?

And it answered: O souls that come to see the horrible ravage that separates me so cruelly from my branches, pray gather them up at the foot of this tree. I was (5) of that city that changed its first patron for John the Baptist, in consequence of which he will keep it always in affliction by his martial art. And had it not been that there remains still some vestige of him over the bridge of the Arno, the citizens who rebuilt it on the ruins left by Attila, would have laboured in vain. I made a gallows for myself of my own house.

#### ALLEGORY.

By the leafless knotty branches of this barren wilderness, is meant desperation; by the Harpies perched on its boughs, stingy avarice, and insatiable rapacity, which often causes man to commit self-destruction. By those who run about in the wilderness with their skin and flesh torn, are meant those who prodigally lavish their property, and afterwards, through shame and disgrace, avoid every kind of commerce with man; by the voracious dogs pursuing them, are denoted incessant regret and remorse of conscience, which plunges them into misery and despair, and finally destroy themselves.

(5)—143. This ghost's name is not well known. There are different conjectures, but no certainty of the fact. Mars in time of Paganism was the protecting deity of Florence, but John the Baptist was afterwards its patron Saint. A part of Mars' statue was still in the poet's time, placed over the Ponte Vecchio of that city.



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 CANTO XIV.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

The two poets come to the entrance of the third part of the seventh circle, which is a valley of burning sand, a place of punishment for the souls of those guilty of violence against God, nature, and charity. Here they are tormented by showers of blazing fire, that fall eternally on them. Among the ghosts Dante sees Capanio punished for blasphemy. After that he finds a rivulet of blood, and Virgil speaks to him of an ancient statue, from whose tears springs that rivulet, with the other three rivers of hell. At last they cross the valley of sand.

**W**HEREAS I was touched with charity for my native country, I collected the scattered boughs and restored them to him whose voice was then silent. Hence we came to a place where the second circle is separated from the third, and wherein is displayed the awful sentence of divine justice. In order to explain clearly those extraordinary things, I say we came to a barren plain, destitute of every kind of vegetation. The wilderness of woe and havoc surrounds it in the form of a garland, the same as the gulf does the wilderness; there on its very brink we stood. The soil was of barren light sand, of the same quality as that formerly trodden by Cato.(1)

O vengeance of God, how frightful thou must be to whomsoever reads what I have seen with my own eyes. I saw multitudes of souls stark naked, lament-

(1)—14. The sandy deserts of Libya, where Cato conducted his army.

ing most pitifully, and seemed governed by different laws. Some were lying on the flat of their back, some sitting with down-bent heads, and others running about incessantly. Those lying were more numerous, and those sitting, exposed to torments, were less in number, but their tongue was more apt to express their grief and torture. Sheets of fire fell gently all over the sandy plain, like snow on the Alps in calm weather. The same as Alexander saw (2) such thick flames of fire fall on his army in the hot countries of India, that he ordered his troops to trample on the ground, in order to lessen its intensity, according as it fell; in like manner to increase their torments, the eternal fire fell there, which inflamed the sand like a match. Their miserable hands were in perpetual movement, to shake off the scorching flames from every part of their body.

I said, Master, thou who hast conquered all difficulties, except the infernal furies that opposed our entrance at the gate, tell me who is that great ghost, that seems regardless of the fire, and lies in an attitude of contempt, trembling with rage, and does not appear to be affected by the burning rain?

And he, perceiving that I had asked my master something concerning him, exclaimed: Such as I was alive, so am I when dead. Let Jupiter press his workman, from whom he furiously snatched his sharp pointed thunderbolt, by which I was struck at my last moment; let him hurry on his other workmen, one after another, in the smutty forge of Mungibello, (3) exclaiming: Good Vulcan, assist me, assist me—as

(2)—31. Alexander the Great. In his life, and the history of his wars in India, there is no mention made of this extraordinary circumstance. Still it is said that he wrote a letter to Aristotle on the subject of that strange phenomenon.

(3)—56. Mount *Ætna*, where Vulcan with the Cyclops prepared the instruments of Jupiter's vengeance.



he did before at the battle of Phlegra.(4) I say, let him dart his thunderbolt at me, with all his might, and he shall never have any satisfactory revenge of me.

Then my guide spoke to him in such forcible language, that I never heard him use before, and said : O Capaneo, as thy pride cannot be humbled, thou art the more tormented for it ;—no punishment except thy madness can be sufficient torture for thy ferocity.

He then turned to me with milder countenance, and said : He was one of the seven kings that besieged Thebes, and he had, as he appears still to have God in contempt, and little he cares to pray to him ; but as I told him, his disdainful temper is punishment enough for his savage heart. Now follow me, and take good care not to walk on the burning sand, but always keep close to the forest. We came, in silence, where there springs out of the wilderness, a little stream, whose red colour makes me still shudder. Just as the fountain of Bulicame,(5) which supplies the prostitutes of that place, so that ran through the sandy plain. Its bottom, two sides, and outward borders, were stone hard, so I perceived that was to be our passage.

Of all that I have shown thee since we entered the gate that is open to all, thou hast witnessed nothing so remarkable as this rivulet, on which all fire is extinguished.

Such were the words of my guide. And I requested him to furnish me with the food, by which he excited my appetite.

(4)—58. Valley of Thessaly, where the giants attempted their presumptuous war with Jupiter.

(5)—79. A hot mineral spring near Viterbo, in Italy, which flowed in a channel to a certain place much frequented by women of ill-fame.

There is, said he, in the middle of the sea, a devastated country, called Crete, under whose king the world was chaste. In it is a mountain, named Ida, which was formerly delightful for its fountains, and vegetation, but now in a state of abandonment, through antiquity. Rea(6) had chosen it as a cradle of safety for her son, and in order to conceal him better, when crying, had recourse to clamorous shouting. Within the mountain stands a tall old man, with his back turned to Damietta, and his face so direct towards Rome, as if it were his mirror. His head is of genuine gold, his arms and breast are of pure silver, of brass to the waist, and from that down, of steel, except the right foot, which is of argil, and he stands more erect on it than on the other. Each part of the body except the gold, has a crevice, that drops tears, which, being mixed together, penetrate the orifice of the mountain. Their current falls into this valley, and forms the rivers of hell, called Acheron, Styx, and Phlegethon. Then it descends by a narrow channel, forming the river Cocytus ; and as thou art to see what this gulf is, I'll say no more about it at present.

And I said : If this stream takes its source from our world, why is it to be seen only at this extremity ?

And he : Thou knowest the place is of a circular form, and that thou hast come to the bottom, always turning to the left, still thou hast not traversed the entire circle, and, therefore, if anything extraordinary present itself, astonishment must not be painted on thy visage.

I still asked him: Master, where are Phlegethon and

(6)—100. The story of Rea, wife to Saturn, and mother to Jupiter, is well known in mythology.

Lethe? Thou sayest nothing of the latter, and sayest the other is formed of that rivulet of tears.

I am well pleased with all thy enquiries, said he, but the boiling up of the red water ought to be sufficient to solve one of them. Lethe thou shalt see, but beyond that abyss, where the souls go to purify themselves, when they do full atonement for their sinful lives.

Then he said: It is time to leave the wilderness, and strive to follow me; we will go along the borders, which are free from the fire, for every flame that falls on them is extinguished.

#### ALLEGORY.

By these showers of fire falling on these three sorts of s'nners, are meant, first, those who insult the power of the Divinity on earth by impiety and blasphemy; secondly, those who by depravity destroy the laws and course of nature; thirdly, those who through extreme cupidity destroy the laws and duties of charity and justice. As fire consumes all, so they are burnt and consumed with eternal fire for their crimes, in destroying the means which God, nature, and charity grant for man's happiness. By the statue in the shape of an old man, is meant time, its head of gold, the primitive state of innocence, and by the other parts, the succeeding ages progressively more perverse. By the tears flowing from the crevices thereof, and forming four rivers, are denoted the four different effects of a wicked life.



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**CANTO XV.**

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**ARGUMENT.**

The poets proceed so far in the circle, as to lose sight of the fore-mentioned forest. They see a considerable number of souls most horribly tormented for their unnatural crimes. Dante recognizes among them Brunetto Latini, his former master, who foretells him his future misfortune and banishment.

**N**OW we proceed along one of the hard banks, and the smoke of the stream rises up so thick, that it shelters the water and its borders from the fire. As the Flemish between Cadsant and Bruges, fearing an approaching inundation, raise mounds to keep off the sea, and as the Paduans do, in order to secure their towns and dwellings along the Brenta from the floods of Chiarentana (1) before they are increased by the summer's heat; so were these formed, though not so high nor so thick, whoever the master might be that made them. We were now so far from the forest, that I could not have seen it were I even to have turned back, when we met a crowd of souls coming along the borders, and each gaping at us, as one does when he sees another late in time of new moon, and blinking like an old tailor when threading his needle. Being thus looked at by that miserable tribe, I was recognised by one of them, who took me by the skirt of the coat, exclaiming: What miracle!

(1)—9. A part of the Alps, where the river Brenta rises, which flows through Padua, and falls into the Adriatic.

And when he lifted up his hand toward me, I looked so sharp at his scorched face, that his disfigured complexion did not prevent me from knowing him, and, turning my hand to his face, I said: Is that really you Mr. Brunetto?

And he said: O my child, be kind enough to let Brunetto Latini (2) turn back a little with you, and let his company go on.

And I replied: With all my heart, and even to sit near you, if you wish, provided my companion permit me.

O my child, said he, if any of these souls stop back, they are afterwards obliged to be exposed to the flames for a hundred years: therefore go on, and I'll follow thee as close as possible, and I'll afterwards overtake my company, who are weeping in eternal woe.

I was afraid to leave my way to go down near him, but I kept my head bent like one that goes in sign of respect.

He then said: What chance or destiny brought thee down here before thy death, and who is he that conducts thee?

I replied: Before I came to full mature age in the serene world above, I went astray in a valley. Yesterday morning I left it, and this my friend appeared to me on my return, and conducts me home this way.

And he resumed: If thou follow thy star thou cannot fail to arrive at a glorious harbour, if I properly remember things that passed in the beautiful world, and were I not to die so soon, I would

(2)—30. He was a native of Florence, and Dante's preceptor. He was secretary to that city, and wrote several curious and valuable works, among which are his *Tesoretto* in Italian, and *Tesoro* in French, both remarkable for style, erudition, and variety of interesting subjects.

have encouraged thee in thy enterprise, seeing heaven so propitious to thee. But that ungrateful malevolent people, that anciently came down from Fiesole, and retain something still of its barbarous mountain and barren rocks, will in return for thy merit become thine enemies, as a thing of course, for the delicious fig-tree cannot produce fruit amidst wild trees. By an old tradition in that part of the world, they are called a blind, avaricious, jealous, haughty race; take good care not to be contaminated by their morals. Thy destiny reserves thee for so much honour, that both parties will be desirous of thy aid and counsel, but the cattle shall not taste of that sweet grass. The brutes of Fiesole may make a litter for themselves, but let them not defile the plant, if there still grow any on their dunghill, in which is revived the glorious seed of the Romans that remained there, when that nest of profligacy was built.

Had my wishes been accomplished, said I, you would not have been yet deprived of life, for your dear and kind paternal image has been impressed on my mind, and now my heart is afflicted to see you so, who once from hour to hour instructed me how man becomes immortal, and as long as I live my tongue shall express in what esteem I held you. What you relate of my future career I shall remember well, and reserve it with what I have heard from another, (3) to communicate it all to a lady (4) who shall know it, if I chance to come to her place. I wish to inform you likewise, that as long as I am in peace with my conscience, I am resigned to my lot, whatever may happen. Such predictions are not strange

(3)—89. This refers to the prediction of *Farinata* in *Canto x.*, v. 79.

(4)—90. *Beatrice*, whom he was to see in *Paradise*.

to my ears, but let fortune turn her wheel, and the peasant his spade, as they please.

My Master then turned back to the right, looked at me, and said : Good memory, good scholar. Still I wished to say something more to Mr. Brunetto, and asked him : Who are the most renowned and eminent among your companions ?

And he replied : It may be interesting to know some of them, but I cannot mention all, for time may fail me to do so. In a word, know they were all both clerks and men of high literary character, and great renown, disgraced in the world for the same crime. Priscian and Francis d'Accorso are mixed with that miserable tribe, and if thou have such itch to satisfy thy curiosity, thou canst see him (5) who was removed by the servant of servants from the Arno to Bacchilione, where he left his body consumed from disease. I would tell thee more, but I can't go further or say any more, for I see fresh vapour rising from the burning sand. Here comes another group of souls, with which I cannot mix. I recommend thee my Treasure in which I still live ; this is my only and last request.

He then turned off in such speed, as those who with the green flag run through the country at Verona, and seemed like him that wins the race, but not like him that loses.

#### ALLEGORY.

By Dante's difficulty in recognizing his old preceptor, is shown how that horrible crime contrary to nature renders one more like a brute than human being ; by his not descending with him through fear of the fire, is intimated how one should avoid the company of such vicious men, so that he should not be subject to the same brutal state and punishment. By bending down his head at such an awful sight, is meant how one should bend his head and shut his eyes against every temptation and concupiscence, prejudicial to his health, honour, and salvation.

(5)—112. Andrea de' Mazzi, bishop of Florence, who for some fault was translated by the sovereign Pontiff to the see of Vicenza.

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**CANTO XVI.**

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**ARGUMENT.**

Dante comes to the extremity of the third enclosure of the seventh circle, where he hears the rumbling noise of the river falling into the eighth circle. There he meets the ghosts of some military personages, punished for the above-mentioned crime. He converses with three Florentines on the state of their native country. The poets arrive at a very deep gulf, into which Virgil throws a cord which Dante wore as a cincture. Then he sees approaching a most horribly monstrous figure.

**I** WAS now in a place where I heard the resounding of the water falling into the other circle, like the humming of a swarm of bees, when three ghosts separated in full speed from a crowd of those suffering cruel torments under the rain of fire. They advanced towards us each crying out: Stop thou that appearest from thy dress to be some one from our depraved country.

Alas! what tortures and wounds, both fresh and old, I saw inflicted on all their members from the flames of fire. I am still afflicted even from the very thought of it.

My Master listened to their cries, and then turned to me and said: Now stop, these souls require civility, and were it not for the fire that naturally darts its flames from that place, I'd say that a speedy retreat would be more necessary for thee than for them.

When we stopped, they began their usual lamentations, and when they came close to us, the three formed a circle around us. The same as wrestlers



on the stage with their bodies naked, and rubbed with oil, take their position and advantage before they come to close engagement, in such like evolutions they turned towards us, but with their heads and feet in opposite directions.

If our punishment in this moving sand, and our scorched faces render us, and our prayers, contemptible in thy eyes, said one of them, may our fame at least induce thee to tell us who thou art, that comest alive with so much assurance to hell. He whose footsteps thou seest me follow, though naked and stripped of hair and beard, was of higher rank than thou imaginest. He was the grandson of the good Gualdrada, (1) his name was Guidoguerra, and in his lifetime he signalized himself for genius and military art. The other, who stamps the sand after me, is Tegghiaio (2) Aldobrandi, whose fame ought to be honourable in the world above; and I, who am tormented with them, was James Rusticucci, (3) and certainly my haughty wife has been more injurious to me than anything else.

Had I been secure from the flames, I would have thrown myself in their arms, and I think my master

(1)—37. She was so remarkable for beauty and virtue, that the Emperor Otho IV. gave her in marriage to Guido, one of his barons, with a very considerable fortune. Guidoguerra, her grandson, was principally instrumental in the victory obtained by Charles of Anjou at Puglia over Manfred, king of Naples, in 1265. The result of that victory was the expulsion of the Ghibellines, and the restoration of the Guelphs at Florence.

(2)—41. He was a man of great military genius and profound judgment. On one occasion he advised the Florentines not to undertake war against the people of Sciena, and their obstinacy was the cause of their defeat at Montaperti, and the banishment of the Guelphs from Florence.

(3)—44. He was a man of considerable wealth, and of a high and noble spirit, but unfortunate in marriage; his wife was of a haughty, irritable temper, and of very unsociable qualities, which was the cause of their separation, and of his misfortune.

would have allowed me to do so. But as I should have been scorched and burned in so doing, fear overcame my ardent inclination to embrace them. However I answered them thus : It is not contempt but grief for your miserable condition, that has made such painful impression on my mind, that it is for ever indelible, as soon as my Master gave me to understand by his words that such great souls as yours were to appear. I am from your country, and have always heard and extolled with affection your exploits and glorious names. I am to leave this place of gall and poison, and go to the delicious fruits, which my faithful Master promised me, but I must first descend to the centre of hell.

May thy soul direct thy body for many years, said he then, and may thy glory cast rays of light on thee ; but tell me, do courtesy and valour still flourish in our city as usual, or are they completely banished therefrom ? for Giuglielmo Borsiere, who is lately come to be tormented with us, and is now passing down with his fellow-sufferers, increases our grief by the information he gives us of that place. A new generation, and suddenly acquired riches, have generated pride and prodigality in thee, Florence, and now thou art in tears for it. Thus I exclaimed with uplifted head, and the three who understood my answer looked at each other, well convinced of the truth of it.

If thou satisfy people's curiosity on all occasions with so little trouble, said they, happy art thou who speakest with so much precision. But if thou depart from these dark regions, and return to see the beautiful stars, when thou wilt have the pleasure of saying, I have been there, be good enough to remember us to those people. After that they separated and fled off so quickly, as if their feet were made of wings. The word Amen could not be expressed so

suddenly as they disappeared. My Master then seemed inclined to continue his journey.

I followed him, and we were not far off, when the noise of the water was so near us, that we could scarcely hear each other's words. As the river that has its regular course, first from Mount Veso towards the east, on the left side of the Apennines, called Acquachita near its source, before it falls in the valley, and has no longer the same name at Forli, (4) resounds falling from the Alps into a precipice above the monastery of St. Bernard, which is spacious enough for a thousand inmates, so this muddy water fell resounding through broken cliffs in such a manner as to frighten one. I had a cord around my body, with which I often thought to take the panther of mottled colour. After taking it off, according to my Master's orders, I gave it to him folded up. Then he turned to the right, and at a little distance from the bank he threw it into the gulf.

Something extraordinary, said I to myself, must answer this signal, to which my Master pays so much attention. O how cautious people ought to be with those who not only observe their conduct, but penetrate their most secret thoughts.

He said: What I expect will shortly appear, and what thou ponderest on in thought will instantly be visible to thine eye. One ought not, if possible, to tell even the truth that has the appearance of a falsehood, for it renders him ridiculous without being his fault.

But I cannot be silent on this occasion, and I declare to thee, reader, by the words of this poem, if they be worthy of long esteem, that I saw a mons-

(4)—99. There it takes the name of Mantome, a river in Romagna, which falls down a deep precipice from the Apennine, above the celebrated Abbey of St. Benedict.

ter so frightful as to terrify any man's heart, coming up and swimming through the thick obscure air ; as one who sometimes plunges down to disengage an anchor stuck to a rock, or to some other thing in the sea, returns up extending his hands and contracting his feet.

#### ALLEGORY.

By Virgil ordering Dante to show courtesy and respect to those suffering souls, is meant that man should always have compassion for his fellow-creatures, whatever the enormity of their crimes might be, if they still retain even a spark of virtue, or show any signs of amendment. By the cord with which Dante was girded, and which Virgil throws into the gulf to the monster, is meant the mask of fraud and dissimulation which covers man's iniquities, and if he wish to be truly and sincerely converted, he must break the chain that ties his passions, and throw it to the enemy of his salvation, for nothing but sincere and perfect conversion can please the Lord, and merit his grace and glory.

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### CANTO XVII.

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#### ARGUMENT.

The poet describes the hideous form of the monster, called Geryon. He and Virgil descend along the borders of the gulf, that separates the seventh from the eighth circle. Virgil remains with Geryon, while he goes further on to have a more particular knowledge of the condition and punishment of the souls guilty of fraud and usury. He then returns to his guide, and they both proceed to the eighth circle on the monster's back.

**B**EHOLD the monster with the sharp-pointed tail, that penetrates mountains, breaks down fortifications, and destroys armies: behold him that contaminates the universe.

Thus spoke my guide to me, and made sign to him

to approach the bank near the extremity of the marble borders. And that hideous image of fraud advanced, with head and breast erect, but concealed his tail. He had the appearance of a just man, with a very candid aspect, but all the rest of his body like a serpent. He had two shaggy claws, reaching up to his arm-pits, his back, breast, and sides, were painted with a variety of knots and spots. Neither Turks, nor Tartars, ever painted such diversity of colours on their draperies, nor even Arachne on her web. The same as boats are sometimes along the shore, partly in the water and partly on the strand, or, as in the rivers of the gluttonous Germans the otter fixes itself to catch its prey; so this most horrible animal was placed near the rocky bank, that surrounds the burning sand. He wagged all his tail in the empty air, cocking up its sharp-pointed, venomous, forked top, like a scorpion.

My guide said: We must now turn off a little out of our way, to go to that perfidious brute, that is stretched below, there. We then descended to the right side, about ten paces on the border, to avoid the sand and flames, and when we came near it I saw souls at a little distance off, sitting on the sand, near a precipice.

So that thou mayest have full knowledge of that circle, said my master, now go and see their treatment, and do not prolong thy conversation,—till thou return, I'll beg of it to take us on its stout back.

So I went all alone to the end of the seventh circle, where the ghosts were mournfully sitting. Their grief and pain were depicted in their countenances; with their hands they screened themselves in turn, then against the burning flames, then against the scorching sand, the same as dogs do in the summer heat, now with their teeth, then with their paws, when they are bitten by fleas, flies, or wasps. And,

though looking steadfastly at some of these miserable souls, lying under showers of fire, I did not know any of them, but I observed that each had a purse suspended from his neck, with certain colours and signs, looking at it with an eager eye. And as I was still peeping at them, I noticed one purse, something of an azure colour, with the shape and attitude of a lion. Then looking with more attention, I observed another purse, red as blood, with the form of a goose, whiter than cream. And one of them, wearing a white satchel, marked with an azure coloured pregnant sow, (1) said to me : What art thou doing in this abyss? Now go off, and as thou art yet alive, know that my neighbour, Vitaliano, shall sit here by my side. Among these Florentines I am a Paduan,(2) they often thunder in my ears, exclaiming : Let the sovereign knight (3) come with his purse of three beaks. After that he grinned, and drew out his tongue, like a bullock licking his nose. And fearing to displease him who ordered me to make haste, I turned back from these distressed souls.

I then found my guide mounted on the haunch of that monstrous animal, and he said : Now is the time for courage and resolution, there is no other way to descend for the future, but with such ladders; mount before me, I wish to be in the middle, to prevent his tail from annoying thee. As one who feels an attack of a quartan ague, so severely that his nails become livid, and trembles all over, even at the sight of a cold place, such was my state on hearing

(1) -56. By these arms are designated some rich and noble families of Florence, that disgraced themselves by fraud and usury.

(2)—68. He was a famous usurer of Padua.

(3)—72. Giovanni Bugamonti, a Florentine, who was the king of usurers; i. e., the most infamous of all.

these words ; but his threats impressed me with all kinds of shame which stimulates the servant in the presence of a good master.

Seated on his broad shoulders, I wished to say : Embrace me, but my voice failed me. And he, who often before assisted me in time of danger, as soon as I mounted, put his arms round me, and kept me firm, saying : Geryon, all is right, large circles and gentle descent, think of thy new burden.

He moved like a boat pushed backward from the strand, and when he found himself at liberty, he turned his tail where his breast was, and stretching it back like an eel, he shook it, and grasped the air with his paws.

I think that neither Phaëton, when he abandoned the reins of his chariot, by which the firmament was disturbed, as it still appears to be, nor the unfortunate Icarus, when he felt his back stripped of his wings by the liquefaction of the wax, whilst his father exclaimed, Thou takest a false direction, felt greater terror than I did, when I was lifted up in the air, and saw nothing but the monster. He swims through the air with smooth wings, hovers about, and descends, and I feel nothing but the breeze, in my face, and under me.

I then heard, at the right side, the torrent, making a dreadful noise under us, so I bent my head, and looked down. I was then more terrified at the sight of the gulf, for I saw flames of fire, and heard doleful screams, which made my whole body shiver. I then perceived our descent and passage, from the horrible torments we were going to witness on all sides.

As the falcon, after hovering about a long time, without seeing either lure or bird, makes the fowler cry out : Ah ! thou art come at last, descends, fatigued, whence it fled in a hundred circles, and perches, displeased and angry, at a distance from its

master—so Geryon landed us at the foot of a rocky precipice, and after laying down his burden, started off as quickly as an arrow from the bow.

#### ALLEGORY.

By the monster Geryon is meant fraud, the traffic of iniquity. By his appearance of a just man are denoted the duplicity and deceitful insinuations of the fraudulent; by his shaggy claws, to the arm-pits is shown how they conceal their villanous practices; by the rest of the serpent is meant their craft and hypocrisy; and by the tail of the scorpion, that all fraud and knavery are at last discovered, and that its venomous top stings and poisons the heart of the fraudulent, and marks them with eternal reprobation. In a word, by fraud and wealth all power and art are quashed.

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### CANTO XVIII.

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#### ARGUMENT.

The poet describes the situation and form of the eighth circle, whose bottom is divided into ten pits, in which are punished ten sorts of fraud. In this Canto he only treats of two, the first is for seduction either for one's own gratification, or that of others. Their punishment is, to be flogged by demons. The second is for adulation, whose torments are, to be confined in filthy, stenchy mud.

**T**HERE is a place in hell called Malebolge, all in rocks, and of iron colour, and so is its surrounding circle. In the very middle of the cursed abyss, is situated a large deep pit, of which there will be given a description in its proper place. The remaining circle, between the pit, and the foot of the steep precipice, is round, and its bottom is divided into ten gradual declivities. They resemble citadels, surrounded by several



trenches, for the protection of their fortresses, and as from the battlements of the fortresses to the plain, bridges are erected outside; so from the bottom of this precipice rocks are extended, which cut a passage between the borders and the trenches to the pit, where they come to a point. At this place the Geryon shook us off his back: the poet kept to the left, and I followed him.

At our right side I saw new desolation, new torments, and new instruments of torture, of which the first abyss was full. Guilty souls were all naked in the bottom of it, some were coming from the centre against us, and others in the same direction with us, but in quicker pace.

Just as the Romans,(1) in time of a general jubilee, adopted measures to let the concourse of people pass over the bridge, so that all on one side face the castle, going to St. Peter's, and on the other they face the hill;—so on both sides of the gloomy precipice I saw horrid demons with long whips, lashing them behind most cruelly. Ah! how they made them lift their heels at the first blow, none of them waited for the second or third. Whilst going along I remarked one of them and instantly said: It is not the first time I saw that fellow. Therefore, I looked at him more attentively, and my kind master stopped, and allowed me to return back a little. The flagellated ghost thought to conceal himself by stooping his head, but it was of no use, for I said: Thou who keepest thy head down, unless I be mistaken in thy features, must be Venedico(2) Caccianimico, but

(1)—28. Pope Boniface VIII., in time of a general Jubilee in 1300, ordered the bridge of St. Angelo to be divided lengthways by a partition for public accommodation, so that all going to St. Peter's should take one side, and those returning to take the other, facing the Capitoline Hill.

(2)—50. He was a native of Bologna, and through personal in-

what has made thee come to taste of such bitter sauce ?

And he said : With reluctance I must tell it, but I am pressed with thy forcible language, which reminds me of the past world. It is I who beguiled the fair Ghisola to comply with the marquis' desire, whatever way the abominable news may be reported. And I am not the only one from Bologna that suffers here, even the place is so full of them, that all the tongues between Savena and Reno, are not able to repeat Yes in equal number, and if thou want a proof, or testimony thereof, thou hast only to remember our avaricious propensity.

Whilst he was thus speaking, a demon gave him a lash of a whip, and said : Go thy way, pimp, there are no women here for sale.

I returned to my escort, and after a few steps we came where a rock projects from the bank ; we very easily got upon it, and turning to the right on its projection, we left the never ending-windings. When we came where it forms an arch, to give a passage to the whipped souls, my guide said : Stop and look back at the other miserable group, whose faces thou hast not yet seen, for they come in the same direction with us. We saw from the old bridge, a crowd coming towards us from the opposite side, and equally feeling the smart of the whip.

And my good Master, without asking him said : Look at that huge ghost that is approaching, and doesn't appear to shed a tear of grief. What royal deportment he still retains ! He is Jason who, with heart and spirit deprived Chalcos of the golden fleece. He passed through the isle of Lemnos, when the

terest prevailed on his sister Ghisola to prostitute herself to Obizzo of Este, Marquis of Ferrara. Sipa, in the ancient language of that country, means yes.

unmercifully cruel women put all the men to death. There, by his pretensions, and graceful conversation, he beguiled the young damsel, Hypsipyle,(3) who had already betrayed all her sisters; then he left her there, pregnant and abandoned. Such crime condemns him to this punishment, and exposes him to Medea's vengeance too. Such as are guilty of the same crime of seduction, are with him. Now we know enough of the first cavity, and of those who are plagued therein.

We were then where the narrow passage meets the second bank, and forms the pillars of another bridge. Hence we heard the cries of ghosts, squatting in the other pit, blowing with swollen cheeks, and beating themselves furiously with their hands. The borders of the gulf were covered with a hazy, gluey moisture, from the exhalation of the pit, most disgusting to sight and smell. Its bottom is so deep that it could not be seen without going up on the arch of the rock that commands it. We got up there, and hence, looking down at the gulf, I saw souls wallowing in the mire, which seemed to be the privy of all the human race. And as I was looking down, I noticed one with his head covered with so much excrement, that I could not distinguish whether he was layman or clerk. He exclaimed: Why art thou so eager to look at me, rather than the other filthy ghosts?

And I replied: I remember, unless I be mistaken, to have seen thee before, when thy head was dry; thou art Alexis Interminelli, of Lucca, it is for that reason I remarked thee more than all the others.

And he said then, thumping his forehead: My flattery has plunged me here, of which my tongue was too flippant.

(3)— 92. For the story of Hypsipyle, see Valerius Flaccus, b. ii.

After that my guide said : Cast thine eyes a little further on, so that thou mayest clearly distinguish the face of that filthy dishevelled haired-wench below there, scratching herself with her dirty nails, and sometimes squatting, and sometimes standing upright. That is Thais,(4) the harlot, who answered her paramour, when he said : Am I in thy good graces ? To an excessive degree.

Now we have seen enough of horror and filth

#### ALLEGORY.

' By this ghost who in holding down his head strives to conceal himself from the poet, is denoted that there is no vice more disgraceful and abominable than that of seduction, or pimping for lucre's sake. Their punishment here is suitable to their base, infamous actions. By these flatterers plunged in this horrible gulf of filth and mire, is shown how contemptible are flattery and adulation, how pernicious to society, and capable of corrupting and beguiling the hearts of those who have influence by wealth or power.

(4)—133. See Terence in his *Eunuchus*, where he speaks of Thais.



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 CANTO XIX.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

The poets come to the third pit full of souls guilty of simony. Their punishment is to have their heads thrust down in holes, with their legs up, and burning flames applied to the soles of their feet. After that Dante finds Pope Nicholas III. in the bottom of the pit, and treats of a great variety of subjects on the occasion. Finally he is conducted by Virgil from this pit over the arch, that communicates with the fourth pit.



**SIMON** (1) Magus, and ye his miserable followers, who rapaciously prostitute for gold and silver the sacred things of God, the spouses of His charity, now I must sound the trumpet for you, since your station is in the third pit.

We now got over the succeeding grave to that part of the rock that directly hangs over the middle of the gulf. O Supreme Wisdom, how greatly Thy power manifests itself in heaven, on earth, and in hell; and how justice is the work of Thy omnipotence. I saw on both sides, and in the bottom of the pit, a black stone, full of round holes, and of the same dimensions. They appeared to be something like those made for the convenience of those who baptize in the splendid baptistery of St. John's, in my native city, one of which I had broken a few years ago to save an infant in danger of being drowned

(1)—1. From Simon Magus, in consequence of his sacrilegious attempt to bribe St. Peter, is derived the word simony.



there, and let this be my sealed attestation (2) to rectify people's judgment thereof.

Outside each of those holes appeared the feet of a guilty soul to the calf of the leg, all the rest was within. The fire applied to the soles of their feet, caused such agitation in their muscles, that it would have broken cords and chains. As flames glide on the surface of an oily substance, so did the fire from the heels to the top of their feet.

Master, said I, who is he that is tortured, agitating more vehemently than his companions, and burning from redder flames?

And he said: If thou wish me to convey thee down that sloping bank, he'll tell thee himself his name and crimes.

And I said: Thy will is mine, thou art my master, thou knowest my obedience, and even what my silence means.

Then coming over the fourth margin, we turned and descended on the left side to the narrow perforated gulf. And my good Master kept me close to his bosom until he brought me to his hole, who was in such painful agitation.

O miserable soul, whoever thou art, tossed upside down like a pail, speak to me, said I, if thou canst. I was like a friar (3) hearing the confession of a perfidious assassin, who being half buried alive, often calls for him in order to delay the awful moment.

And he cried out: Is that thou, is that thou,

(2)—21. The poet takes this occasion with remarkable wit and sagacity to justify himself of the act, for he was suspected of having done it through contempt, or impiety, especially through the malevolence of his enemies.

(3)—49. In the poet's time all murderers were sentenced to be buried alive with the head down and the feet up, and the poor criminal, in order to prolong life as much as possible, used to call for his confessor at different intervals, under pretence of having something more to tell him.

standing there, Boniface? The prediction has deceived me then for many years. Art thou so soon satiated of that gold for which thou wast not afraid to betray the fair spouse, and afterwards to illtreat her?

I was like one, who understanding nothing of what is said to him, remains as if confounded, and knows not what to answer.

Then Virgil said: Tell him at once, I am not, I am not he whom thou imaginest. And so I answered as I was ordered.

After that the ghost wreathed his legs, then sighing, and in words mixed with tears he said to me: What, then, dost thou require of me? If thou be so desirous to know who I am, as to have passed the precipice for that purpose, know that I was clad in the great purple mantle, and that I was truly the bear's son, (4) so anxious to enrich the cubs with gold above, that I am here put in a purse myself. All those who preceded me in the practice of simony, being pressed through the holes of this rock, are tormented here under my head. I shall fall down there too, as soon as he comes for whom I have taken thee to be, when I abruptly addressed thee. But I have been longer kicking with my feet turned up, than he shall remain with his burning here; for after him will come from the west a pastor of less faith and worse conduct, who will cover us both. He will be another Jason, of whom mention is made in the

(4)—70. The ghost of Pope Nicholas III. mistakes Dante for Boniface VIII., who was still alive. The poet here calls him *figliuol del'orsa*, son of the she-bear, punning on his name; for he was of the ancient Orsini family of Rome. By this pastor from the west is meant Clement V., who succeeded to the pontifical see in 1305, through the influence of Philip le Bel, king of France. He compares him to Jason, who, by fraud, intrigue, and bribery, obtained the high-priesthood under Antiochus, called Epiphanes. See *Machab. b. ii. c. iv. &c.*

Machabees, and as his king was too indulgent to him, so will the king of France be to that pastor.

I do not know if I had been too impertinent on this occasion, but however I answered him in the following style : Pray tell me what recompense did our Lord require of St. Peter, before He intrusted the keys to his supremacy ?

Certainly, He only said, Follow me. Neither did Peter, nor the other apostles, require gold or silver of Mathias, when he was chosen in place of Judas. Remain there, for thou art justly punished, and take good care of that ill-gotten treasure, which made thee so presumptuous against Charles. (5) And were it not for my respect for the pontifical keys, which thou heldest in the joyful world, I would have used harsher language, for thy avarice has afflicted the world in rejecting the worthy and promoting the profligate. To such parties as you the evangelist alluded, when he saw her who sits on the waters prostrate herself to the caprice of kings, she who was born with seven heads and ten horns ; so precious was virtue in the eyes of her spouse. Ye have made your god of gold and silver ; what difference is there between you and idolators, unless they adore but one, whereas ye adore a hundred ? Ah, Constantine, (6) what evils have originated, not from thy conversion, but from the donation, which the first rich Pope received from thee.

And whilst I was singing such verses for him, either through anger or remorse of conscience, he furiously danced with his two feet turned up. I

(5)—99. Charles II., king of Sicily, with whom Pope Nicholas was displeased for having refused an alliance he proposed between his niece and the king's nephew.

(6)—115. Constantine the Great, who bestowed considerable possessions on the church in the time of Silvester, who therefore was the first rich pope.



think, my conversation, conveying such forcible truth, was very pleasing to my master, for he listened to it with very great attention. He took me in his arms and squeezed me to his breast, whilst he was going up the way whence he descended, and did not cease to press me to his heart, until he brought me on the top of the arch, which serves as a passage from the fourth to the fifth abyss. Then he gently deposited his burden on that barren, craggy cliff, which would be even for goats a very difficult passage. Hence I perceived another declivity.

## ALLEGORY.

By the horrid position and punishment of these ghosts guilty of simony, is shown how offensive to the Almighty God is a sacrilegious act of any kind. Man is created with an upright body in shape and form, in order to direct his head and eyes to the throne of power and glory; but on turning them down to earthly things by fraud or simony, he forfeits the glorious privilege of heaven, affects and injures the Church of Christ, and gives scandal to the faithful. By the fair spouse is meant the Catholic Church; by her sitting on the waters, that she sounds the trumpet of faith and peace by land and sea to the extremities of the world; by the seven heads, the seven sacraments; by the ten horns, the ten commandments; by the adoring of a hundred gods is meant that simony is a hundred times worse than idolatry.



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**CANTO XX.**

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**ARGUMENT.**

In this Canto the poet treats of the punishment of those who had the presumption in their lifetime to predict futurity. Their torments are, to have their heads turned back on their shoulders, so as to be obliged to walk backwards. Among the guilty souls he finds Manto Tebano, from whom, he says, that the city of Mantua had taken its name and origin. In this fourth abyss are punished all guilty of sorcery, witchcraft, astrology, fortune-telling, and all such like superstitious practices.

**I** MUST now describe in verses a new sort of punishment, and supply matter to the twentieth Canto of the first comedy, which treats of the souls in hell. I was now fully disposed to contemplate the abyss flowing with tears of grief and anguish, and I beheld ghosts silent and weeping, going round the gulf, like the movement of a procession in our world. On looking down to the bottom, I saw that they were extraordinarily twisted from the chin to the thorax, as having the face turned to the back, they were obliged to walk backward, as it was impossible for them to look straight forward. It might have been perhaps that some of them had the neck dislocated from the effect of a palsy in their lifetime, but I have never seen the like, neither do I believe it.

O reader, if God grant thee to derive benefit from the reading of this Canto, think with thyself if I could refrain from shedding tears, when I clearly saw our fellow-creatures so much distorted, that

tears flowed in streams along their backs. I was weeping bitterly, leaning on one of the rocks of the precipice, when my guide said: Art thou, too, one of those simpletons? Here want of compassion is compassion; who is more uncharitable than he who takes compassion against divine judgment? Lift up thy head, and look at him under whose feet the earth opened in the sight of the Thebans, at which they exclaimed: Where art thou falling, Amphiaraus. (1) why dost thou abandon the field of battle? And he rolled from abyss to abyss, to the feet of Minos, who stops every soul. See how he has made a breast of his back, he now looks and walks backwards, because he wished to see too much before him. Behold Teresias who changed complexion when from man he became woman, in transforming all his members, and she was afterwards obliged to beat the two twisted serpents with a rod, before she could resume the form of man. He that has his back to the belly of the former, is Aruns, who on the mountains of Luni, cultivated by the people of Carrara, who dwell under them, made a white marble cavern for his habitation, where he could, without obstruction, view the stars and sea.

And she who with her long tresses covers her breast, which thou dost not see, was Manto, who wandering from place to place at last fixed her abode where I was born, wherefore I wish that thou mayest pay some attention. After her father's death, and the subjection of the city of Bacchus, (2) she rambled about for a long time. There is above, in the beautiful country of Italy, a lake called Benaco, at the foot of

(1)—34. Much celebrated in the art of divination and astrology. He was one of the seven kings who besieged Thebes, and is said whilst in battle to have been swallowed up alive in the earth.

(2)—59. Thebes, the birthplace of Bacchus.

the Alps, bordering on Germany near the Tyrol. A thousand fountains, and I think more, after having washed the Apennines between Garda and Val Camonica, falls into the same lake. There is a place in the middle of it where the bishops of Trent, Brescia, and Verona, could exercise their ministry, if they ever came the way. Where its bank is more sloping is situated Peschiera, a beautiful and strong citadel on the limits of Brescia and Bergama. All the water that cannot be contained in Benaco falls into it, and forms a river through the plains. So soon as the river takes its regular course, it is no longer called Benaco, but Mincio as far as Governo, where it falls into the Po. After a short course it meets level ground, where it spreads and forms a swamp, which is generally unwholesome in the summer season. The rustic girl passing by it, saw a little island in the middle of the swamp, without culture or inhabitants. There, in order to avoid any intercourse with man, she fixed herself with her attendants, to exercise her profession ; so she lived and died there.

The people dispersed all about the country, assembled by degrees at that place, which was well fortified on all sides by the swamp. They built a city over her remains, and in memory of her who had first chosen the place, they called it Mantua, without further ceremonies. Its inhabitants were formerly more numerous, before the foolish Casalodi (3) was deceived by Pinamonti. I, therefore, apprise thee of this fact, if ever thou hear that my native country had its origin from any other cause, so that falsehood should not beguile thee of the truth.

(3)—95. He persuaded him to banish the nobility from the city, and then, at the head of the populace, he chased him and his party in turn, and became sole master of the place.

And I replied : Master, thy explanation is so palpable, and impresses such conviction on my mind, that all other words would be for me like burned charcoal. But tell me of all the other ghosts that are approaching, dost thou know any one remarkable among them? This is the only thing to which my mind now reverts.

He then answered : He whose beard hangs from his chin, over his black shoulders, was soothsayer at the time that the population of Greece was so much reduced, that scarcely a child remained in the cradle, and with Calchas gave the signal in Aulis, to cut the cables. His name was Eurypilus, according as my lofty tragedy(4) relates in some passage ; thou knowest it well, for thou hast it all by heart. The other so close to his flank was Michael(5) Scott, and well versed in the art of magic fraud. There is Guido Bonatti, and the other, Ardente, who would be glad to have stuck to his leather and awl, but repents too late. Behold those miserable females, who gave up their needle, spool, and spindle, to become fortune-tellers, and practised sorcery with herbs and images. But it is now time to be off, for Cain(6) with his bundle of briers is already at the confines of both hemispheres, and touches the sea under the walls of Seville. There was full moon last night, and thou oughtest to remember it well, for it was favourable

(4)—113. Dante calls the *Æneids* of Virgil tragedy, for their noble and sublime style.

(5)—116. A native of Scotland. He was well versed in judicial astrology and chiromancy, and master of several languages. He was a great favourite to the emperor Frederick II. He died at Melrose Abbey.

(6)—126. By this the poet denotes the moon. It is said principally among the common people of Italy, that Cain flew to the moon with a bundle of briers on his back. Hence has probably originated the common expression, *The Man in the Moon*.

to thee at times in the dreary wilderness. Such was his conversation, as we were going along.

#### ALLEGORY.

By these soothsayers, fortune-tellers, and false prophets, are shown the folly, presumption, and superstition of those silly creatures, who pretend to know, futurity contrary to the will and decrees of Divine Providence. They traffic on the ignorance and credulity of the people, and thereby become instruments of the demon to delude the vulgar. By such superstitious practices they worship hell, and insult and blaspheme the Divinity, and so they are represented here with their heads backwards, as a proof of their ignorance and punishment for their imposture.

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### CANTO XXI.

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#### ARGUMENT.

In this Canto the poet describes the fifth abyss, where impostures, cheats, and swindlers are punished in a lake of boiling pitch. They are watched by demons armed with prongs and pitchforks to keep them down. Dante conceals himself from them, but Virgil presents himself, and expostulates with them, so as to obtain permission to proceed. The two poets then continue their journey with an escort of frightful demons.

**N**O we came from bridge to bridge, talking of things not fit to be inserted in my comedy, and ascending the summit of the arch, we stopped to see the other abyss of Malebolge, and to hear other vain lamentations. As in the arsenal of Venice, gluey pitch is boiled in winter to caulk the chinky vessels unfit for sea, and at the same time some are employed in building new ships, some in repairing the sides of those damaged after long passages, some nailing the prow and stern,

whilst others are making oars, and twisting cables, and some more patching the sails of the fore and mizen masts—so, not from the effect of fire, but of Divine judgment, was boiling in this abyss thick pitch, which bedaubed its borders on all sides. I saw it, but could perceive on its surface only large boiling blisters, bubbling up and then disappearing.

Whilst I was looking down attentively, my guide said: Take care, take care, and he drew me to him from the place I was in. Then I turned back, like one anxious to see what he should escape, and is so suddenly terrified, that he loses no time to run away, still looking back. And I saw coming behind us a black devil, running up the rock. Ah! how horrible he was in aspect, and cruel in attitude, with outspread wings, and quick on foot. He had on his long, sharp-pointed back, a miserable sinner, and held him by the sinews of the feet.

He shouted out: O Malabranche, that guardest our bridge, here is one of the ancients (1) of Santa Zita, sink him to the bottom, for I am going to return to that station that is crowded with them; every man there is a corrupt villain, except Bonturo, (2) for money they say Yes for No. He threw him down, and bounced on the rock, as quick as a mastiff let loose at a robber. The wretched soul fell to the bottom, and returned up in convulsions, but the demons concealed behind the bridge, cried out: There is no holy image (3) here, people can't swim here as

(1)—38. The chief magistrate of Lucca, where Santa Zita was held in great veneration by the people.

(2)—41. This is said of him ironically, for he was the greatest ruffian of all.

(3)—48. This means the image of our Saviour's head, held in profound veneration in Lucca, called the Volto Santo, which is still seen there. The demon, through rage and contempt, tells this hypocrite that it is of no use to trim in hell.

in the Serchio, but if thou wish not to feel the point of our prongs, do not appear on the surface of the pitch. Then they stabbed him with more than a hundred prongs, shouting: Thou must dance here unmasked, and cheat in private if thou can. So they treated him as scullions do by the cook's orders, to keep down with their flesh-forks a piece of meat in the middle of the boiler.

My good Master then said: Go hide thyself behind a rock, that thou shouldst not be seen here, and do not be afraid for any annoyance that I may suffer, I know things well, for I have been before at the brunt of such squabbles. He then passed over the bridge, and when he came to the sixth boundary, he was obliged to show a resolute countenance. With the same rage and impetuosity as dogs fly at a mendicant that suddenly stops at a door to beg, so the demons started from under the bridge, and furiously pointed their crooks at him, but he said with a firm voice: Let none of you molest me. Before your prong touch me, let one of you come out and hear my claim, and then let him stab me if he dare.

They all together exclaimed: Malacoda, go out to him. Then the others remained quiet, but one advanced, saying: What does all this avail me? Dost thou imagine, Malacoda, that I am come here, said my master, to bid defiance to your attacks without divine power, without a propitious destiny? Let me proceed, for it is the will of heaven that I should conduct a certain individual through this dreary passage.

Then his haughty demeanour became so humble, that he let his prong fall on the ground, and said to the others: Alas! let none touch him.

And my guide called out to me: O thou, that hidest thyself, stuck under the rocks of the bridge, canst now return to me in safety. So I started up,



and was coming to him in full speed, when all the demons pounced at me, so that I was afraid they would not keep their promise. I trembled like those soldiers I once saw quitting Caprona, by capitulation, whilst they were surrounded by dangerous enemies. I stuck as close as possible to my guide, and kept my eyes fixed on them, as they were not to be trusted. They turned down their grapples, and one said to the other: Dost thou wish that I may touch him on the hip? And they all said: Yes, yes, give him a little prod. But the demon that had an interview with my master, turned about suddenly, and said: Be quiet, be quiet, Scarmigliane.

Then he told us that it was impossible to proceed any further on the rock, for the sixth arch fell shattered to the bottom; but if ye wish to continue your journey, go by this grotto, there is another rock, quite near, that serves for a bridge. Yesterday,<sup>(4)</sup> five hours later than the present, one thousand two hundred and sixty-six years elapsed since this bridge was broken down. I send some of my messengers there to see if any of the damned should peep out of the pitch; go with them, for they shall not molest you.

Come, to your post, Alichino, Calcabrina, and Cognazzo, said he, and let Barbariccia command the detachment. Let Libicoco march too, and Droghignazzo, Ciriatto with his long teeth, and Graffiacanæ, and Farfarello, and Rubicante the fool. Make your rounds about the boiling pitch, and escort them in

(4)—112. This indicates Dante's descent into hell, as it is supposed, on Good Friday, 1300. Our Saviour's age being added to the number mentioned in the text, corresponds with this date. Here allusion is made to the earthquake that occurred at our Redeemer's passion, whose convulsion was felt even in the regions of hell.

safety to the other bridge, which remains still solid over the gulf.

O master, said I, what horrible spectacle do I see before my eyes? Ah! let us go without escort, if thou know the way, as for me, I dont require it. If thou be as clear sighted as usual, dost not thou see how terribly they grin, and how they threaten us with their looks?

And he said: Do not be afraid, let them grin away, they only do it against the suffering souls.

They turned to the left margin, but before marching, each of them put out his tongue, squeezing it with the teeth, as a signal for their captain; and he sounded his natural trumpet for them.

#### ALLEGORY.

By this black boiling pitch is denoted the cheating, fraudulent designs and duplicity of those, who, in their public and private transactions, deceive all they deal with, and through excessive avarice and fraud, stick to everything they grasp at, as if glued with pitch. And as this composition is so thick and black, as not to be seen through, so they mysteriously practise their fraudulent schemes, and therefore their eternal punishment is to be plunged in this boiling gulf of pitch.



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**CANTO XXII.**

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**ARGUMENT.**

Dante having treated in the foregoing Canto of those who betrayed their trust and country, in this he relates the condition of those, who, being admitted to their masters' confidence, treacherously deceive them. He describes the nature of their punishment, and makes particular mention of one who out-witted the demons in craft and malice.

**I** HAVE hitherto seen generals decamping, entering the field of battle, and passing their armies in review, and sometimes retreating to save their lives; I have seen scouting couriers in your country, O Aretians, I have seen cavalcades, dangerous tournaments, and wrestling matches, at the sound of trumpets and bells, with drums and signals from castles, with instruments both native and foreign; but I have never seen either cavalry, or infantry, or fleet, by signals from land and stars, advance at the sound of such trumpet. We continued our journey with the demons. Ah! what infernal company! But in the Church with saints, and in the tavern with gluttons.

However, the boiling pitch attracted my attention, in order to see the condition of the gulf, and of the guilty souls burning therein. The same as dolphins, with bent backs, on the surface of the sea, indicate to sailors that it is time to save the vessel; in like manner, in order to alleviate their torments, some of the ghosts bent up their backs, and disappeared as quick as lightning. And as at the bor-

ders of a pond frogs put up their snouts, with the legs and body concealed in the mud ; such was the position of sinners, in all parts of the boiling pitch, and when Barbariccia appeared, they sunk to the bottom of the pit. I saw, and my heart still trembles at the thought, one of them delaying just as it sometimes happens that one frog remains with the head up, whilst the others plunge down. And Graf-fiacane being nearest to him, grappled at his gluey hair, and dragged him up like an otter. I already knew the names of all those demons, for I paid attention at their appointment, and whenever they called each other, I was able to distinguish them. All the cursed demons shouted together : Rubicante, stick thy prong in him and tear off his skin.

And I said : Master, strive to know who is that unfortunate wretch, who has fallen into the enemy's hands ?

My guide approached him, and asked him who he was, and he answered thus :—

I was born in the kingdom of Naverra, my father put me in the service of a nobleman ; I was the son of a scoundrel, who destroyed both himself and property. Afterwards I became servant to the good king Thebault, and whilst with him I practised all kinds of roguery, for which I now expiate eternally in the burning pit.

And Ciriatto, with his teeth like the tusks of a wild boar, made him feel the effects of one of them. Ah ! the poor mouse met with furious cats ; but Barbariccia took him in his arms, and said : Do ye stop there, whilst I grapple him. He then turned to my Master, and said : If thou wish to know any thing else from him ask him before he is exterminated.

My guide then said : Tell me if thou knowest

any Italian amongst thy fellow-sufferers under the pitch.

And he said: I have just quitted one who lived near that country, and to my grief that I am not still in his private company, for I would little care about claws or grapples.

And Libicoco screamed: This is intolerable; and he seized him by the arm with his crook, and, in dragging him, tore off a piece of his flesh. Draghignazzo too, wished to grapple him by the legs, but the decurion turned about with a sign of displeasure.

When they got a little quiet, my guide, without losing time, asked him, while he was still looking at his wound, Who is he whom thou sayest that thou art sorry to have left to come to this bank?

He answered: He was brother Gomita, (1) the famous rogue of Gallura, the type of all fraud, who, having his master's enemies in his power, treated them so well that they praised him for it; he took their money, and let them go at liberty, as he says himself; and in other employments too, he was not a trifling thief, but an arch plunderer. Don Michael Zanche, of Logodoro, is very intimate with him; they are incessantly speaking of Sardinia. Alas, you see how the other devil grins; I would tell more, but I am afraid he may scratch my head. And the chief leader, turning to Farfarello, impatient to attack him, said: Keep off, you cursed hawk.

If ye wish to see, or hear, some from Tuscany, or Lombardy, said the startled ghost, I'll make them

(1)—81. He was minister of Nino Visconti, lord of Gallura, and became guilty of bribery and treachery, for which he was sentenced to death. Sardinia, in 1117, was in possession of the republics of Pisa, and Genoa, and divided into four departments or jurisdictions, Gallura, Cagliari, Alborea, and Logodoro. Of the latter, Enzo, natural son of Frederic II., was lord and master. Michael Zanche, his high steward, by craft and fraud, became lord of that place, after his master's death.

come. But let them keep their hellish claws quiet for a time, so that the ghosts may not fear their vengeance, and though here single, I'll make some of them appear, when I whistle, as it is our custom to do so, when any of us happen to peep out of the pit.

At these words Cognazzo lifted his snout, and shook his head, saying: See what malice he has planned to plunge down.

And the other, who was full of schemes, answered: Yes, I am too malicious to expose my fellow sufferers to greater tortures.

Alichino could no longer contain himself, and in opposition to all, said to him: If thou escape, I'll not gallop after thee, but fly over the pitch to prevent thee. Let us leave this rock, and go under the bank, and see if thou alone be able for us all.

O reader, thou wilt just see another trick. Each looked to the other side, and he that was most severe, was the first to do the same. The Naverian ghost seized the opportunity, took a firm footing, and with one bounce escaped their wicked design. They were all in a moment startled with surprise, and more particularly he that had been the cause of it. Therefore, he plunged after him, and cried out: Thou art caught. But it was useless, for his wings did not outstrip the ghost in terror; one went down, and the other lifted up his breast, flapping with his wings; just as a duck plunges into the water at the approach of the falcon, that flies in the air displeased and angry.

Calcabrina, irritated by the trick, flew after him, delighted that the ghost escaped, to have a quarrel with his fellow demon. But the other, with his hawk-like talons, grappled him, and they both fell down in the middle of the boiling pool. The heat separated them instantly, but it was impossible for them to rise up, for their wings were stuck in the

pitch. Barbariccia, much afflicted at this, with all the rest, sent four of them to the other bank, with their prongs, and they rapidly descended to their post at each side. They held out their crooks to those that were stuck in the pitch, and nearly consumed in the boiling furnace.

And so we left them in their embarrassment.

#### ALLEGORY.

By this is still meant the same as in the former allegory, the dangerous conduct of those who betray their country, office, and employers. This is often the cause of innumerable evils to nations and families, and exposes them to eternal perdition.

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### CANTO XXIII.

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#### ARGUMENT.

In this Canto the poet treats of the sixth abyss, where he places hypocrites. Their punishment is to be vested with very heavy copes and hoods of lead, and of dazzling splendour, and to walk slowly and incessantly round the abyss. Among the guilty souls he meets two monks of Bologna. But he first describes how he was pursued by the demons, and saved by the skill and foresight of his faithful guide.

**W**E went on silent, singly, and without escort, he first, and I after him, like the minor friars when they go out to walk. The present quarrel reminded me of Æsop's Fable, where he speaks of the frog and rat. For the words now, and at present, have not a more synonymous resemblance to each other, than those quarrels had, by properly considering their cause and effect.

And as one thought springs from another, and soon in succession of ideas, so my first apprehension progressively increased. I thus reflected: Those demons on our account have been baffled, and with so much disadvantage and mockery, that I think they must be angry. If their anger excite their malignity, they will pursue us more furiously than a dog hunting a hare. I felt the hair of my head standing erect with terror; looking back I said: Master, if thou do not hide us both instantly, I fear something bad from those demons; we have them already at our heels, I so much imagine it that I even hear them.

And he said: Were I to be a mirror, I could not receive the reflection of thy image so quick, as my heart feels thy impression. At present thy thoughts are so blended with mine, under the same action and impulse, that I have taken one resolution for us both. If it happen that this declivity inclines to the right, so that we can descend to the other abyss, we'll escape the pursuit we fear. He had no sooner expressed that project, than I saw them coming close, with expanded wings, to attack us. My guide took me immediately in his arms, like a mother suddenly startled in her sleep, and seeing the flames all round her, takes her child and flies off, being more concerned for him than for herself, so that she does not wait to take a single garment.

From the hard margin he glided down the sloping precipice, which forms a side of the other gulf. The water pouring down from its channel to turn the wheel of a mill, never fell so rapidly on its wings, as my master glided down that declivity, keeping me close to his bosom, more like his son than companion. His feet were scarcely settled at the bottom of the abyss, when the demons appeared over our heads, on the bank, but I had no farther apprehension, for the All-wise Providence that appointed them sentinels,



of the fifth abyss, deprived them of the power of quitting its limits.

There below we found glittering souls, slowly walking about, they were weeping, and appeared overwhelmed from lassitude and grief. They wore copes, with hoods over their faces, of the same shape as those worn by the monks of Cologne. The outside of them was of dazzling gold, but the inside of lead, and so heavy, that those of Frederick's(1) were light as straw in comparison to them. O what tiresome dress for eternity! We turned also to the left, going along with them, and listening to their doleful lamentations; but these poor souls, fatigued from their burden, were going so slowly, that at each step we had new companions.

And I said to my guide: Strive to distinguish one of them, known by his actions or name, and cast an eye around whilst going along.

And one of them understanding the Tuscan language, cried out behind us: Stop ye that run so fast in this dark air, perhaps ye may know from me what ye require.

Then my guide said: Wait for him, and measure thy pace according to his. I stopped, and saw two, seemingly very desirous to approach us, but their burden and the narrow passage delayed them. When they came near us, they looked at me with - squint eyes, without uttering a word, then turning to each other, they said: This ghost, by the sound of lungs, seems to be alive, and if they be dead, by what privilege do they walk here without the burdensome stole?

After that they said to me: O Tuscan, thou that

(1)—66. The emperor Frederic II. ordered persons guilty of high treason to be wrapped in sheets of lead, and cast into a blazing furnace. A striking instance of the cruelty and barbarity of those days,

comest to the sorrowful college of hypocrites, do not disdain to tell us who thou art.

I answered them : I was born and bred in the great city, that lies over the beautiful Arno, and I am with the same body that I always had. But ye whose cheeks are covered with tears of anguish, as I see, tell me who ye are, and why is this dazzling ornament your punishment.

And one of them answered me : These splendid copes are of lead, and so heavy, that the balance bends under their weight. We were of the order of brothers,(2) called joyful, of Bologna ; my name was Catalana, and his, Loderingo; we two were selected by thy city, in place of one to preserve order, and what we were can be still seen near Gardingo.

I began to say : O brothers, your misfortune..... but I could say no more, for my attention was attracted by one ghost crucified, on three pales, lying on the ground. And when he saw me, his whole body trembled, blowing heavy sighs through his beard, and brother Catalano perceiving it, said to me : He(3) that thou seest here crucified, persuaded the Pharisees that it was necessary to sacrifice one for the safety of the people. He lieth naked across the passage as thou seest, and he must feel the weight of each as he passes over him. And his father-in-law, and the others, whose sentence brought

(2)—103. The order of the knights of St. Mary of Bologna, was originally instituted for the protection of widows and orphans, but afterwards, through pride and opulence, degenerated; hence they were called joyous friars. The two above-mentioned were invited to Florence as means of reconciliation between the Ghibelline and Guelph parties. But by self-interest, political intrigues, and hypocrisy, they only embarrassed the commonwealth, and caused great annoyance to the first families of the city. They ordered the splendid palaces of the Uberti, principal leaders of the Ghibelline party, to be demolished in the quarter of the city, called Gardingo.

(3)—115. Caiaphas and his father-in-law, with the other judges who condemned our Saviour, are crucified in this gulf.

innumerable calamities on the Jews, suffer the same punishment in this abyss.

I then saw Virgil looking with astonishment at him who was so ignominiously extended on the cross in eternal exile. Then he accosted the brother in these terms: Pray tell us if you can, if there be any passage to the right, where we both may go out without the assistance of the black angels to conduct us from the gulf.

He answered: There is a rock nearer than thou imaginest, which leads from the great circle, and communicates with all the other dreary cavities, except that which is broken and cannot form an arch; ye can ascend by its ruins, which fall along its side, and fill the bottom of the abyss.

My guide stopped for a time with his head bent down, and then said: He that grapples the souls at the other side, has badly explained the matter.

And the brother said: At Bologna I often heard speak of the devil's wickedness, and heard among other things, that he is a liar, and the father of lies. My guide then went off in quick pace, and seemed a little displeased, so I left the oppressed souls, and followed the trace of his cherished feet.

#### ALLEGORY.

By this apprehension felt by Dante from the demons in pursuit of him, is denoted how man should be always on his guard against all sorts of temptation; and as he was relieved from that fear and danger by Virgil, so man should have recourse to reason and religion in time of affliction and temptation. By the weight and pressure of these copes and hoods splendidly gilt outside, is shown the conduct of hypocrites, who, in all stations of life, assume an exterior of rectitude and sanctimony, whilst the heart is corrupted, and the conscience laden with guilt and crime.

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CANTO XXIV.

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## ARGUMENT.

Dante, with much difficulty, extricates himself from the sixth abyss under the guidance of his faithful master. He enters the seventh, where he sees the souls of highway-robbers and thieves, punished by poisonous and pestiferous serpents. Among them he finds Vanni Fucci, of Pistoia, who foretells some misfortunes of that town and Florence.

**A**S, in that season of the commencement of the year, when the sun enters Aquarius with his refreshing rays, and the night and day begin to be of equal length,—when the frost of the country fields resembles its white-mantled sister, but of shorter duration; the peasant, whose provisions begin to fail, gets up, looks about and sees the country all covered with snow, he lets fall his arms in despair, he returns home, goes up and down in tears, like a miserable man, not knowing what to do; he again returns to his fields, and his hopes are re-animated, seeing the complexion of the country already changed, he takes his crook, and leads his flock to the pasture,—so my master made me tremble when I saw him troubled in countenance, and so he soon applied a balm of consolation to my afflicted heart. As soon as we came to the broken bridge, my guide turned to me with the same amiable countenance which he had, when first I saw him at the foot of the mountain. After a short reflection he opened out his arms, and first diligently observing the ruins, he seized me, and like a man who acts and

deliberates, always foreseeing the result of his action, he lifted me up on the top of a large rock, pointing out another crag, saying : Cling to that, and first try if it be able to bear thee up.

It was not a passage for those ghosts vested in copes, but he being light, and I pushed forward, we with difficulty ascended from cliff to cliff. And if the declivity had not been shorter at this side than the other, I cannot account for him, but as for me, I should have been overwhelmed. But as Malebolge, leading to the entrance of the deepest abyss, must gradually slope, the situation of each gulf requires that one side must be higher than the other. We finally came to the extremity, whence the last rock projects. I was in such a state of palpitation when I reached there, that I could go no further, so I sat down the moment I arrived. Thou must henceforth banish all cowardice, said my master, for he who lies on a bed of down, or on silk embroidery, can never attain to glory, without which man's life on earth is like a shadow, that evaporates as smoke in the air, or scum on the water. Therefore, rise up, overcome thy weariness, with the spirit that is invincible in every battle, unless it succumb under the weight of the body. We have to ascend a higher ladder, it is not sufficient to leave this ; if thou comprehend me, avail thyself of my counsel.

I then rose up, appearing more refreshed than I really was, and said : Proceed, for I am strong and courageous. We directed our course on a more craggy, narrow, impracticable, and steeper rock than the former one. I spoke as I went along, in order not to appear out of breath, when all on a sudden I heard a voice from the other abyss, expressing inarticulate sounds. I do not know what it said, though I was on the top of the arch which leads to the pit, but whoever spoke, he seemed excited with

anger. I stooped down my head, but living eyes could not penetrate to the obscure bottom, so I said: Master, strive to go to the other side, and let us descend the precipice, because from this I only hear without understanding, and see without distinguishing.

My only answer to thee, said he, is immediate compliance, for a suitable request ought to be accomplished in silence.

We descended the rock at the side where it joins the eighth border, and then I discovered the abyss, where I beheld a frightful collection of serpents, and of such different shapes, that the very remembrance of them still congeals my heart's blood. Let Libya,(1) with her barren sands, no longer boast of producing her Chelyders, Jaculi, Pareases, Chencrises, and Amphisbœnæ, no, nor did Ethiopia, and all the borders of the Red Sea, ever produce so many or so horrible a brood of serpents as I have seen here. Amidst this horrid and frightful multitude of serpents, were mingled the guilty souls, all naked, and startled without hopes of refuge or heliotrope.(2) They had their hands tied behind their backs by these serpents, with their heads and tails along their backs, and folding their bodies in knots along their breasts.

And behold, a serpent sprang at a ghost that was near us, and bit him in the back of the neck. O, or I, could not be written so quickly as it was inflamed, burned, and fell in a heap of cinders. And after it

(1)—85. Libya, Ethiopia, and Egypt never produced such reptiles as the venomous, monstrous serpents the poet saw in this abyss. Lucan in his *Pharsalia*, b. ix., describes the different species of those serpents.

(2)—93. A precious stone fictitiously imagined to possess the extraordinary power of concealing the bearer of it from the sight of all others.

was thus destroyed on the ground, its cinders collected themselves together of their own accord, and at the same time it resumed its former shape. So great wits relate that the phenix<sup>(3)</sup> perishes and revives at the lapse of five hundred years. During life he eats neither grass nor corn, but tears of frankincense and amomum are his only food, and spike-nard and myrrh his last dress. And as one that falls, and knows not how, either by the artifice of a demon that knocks him down, or by some suffocation that stuns him, when he gets up, looks about him, confounded by the agony he suffered, and sighs, staring around—such was the state of the ghost after it stood up. Oh! how severe is the justice of God, to punish guilty souls with such vengeance.

My guide then asked him who he was, and he answered: I have lately fallen from Tuscany, into this frightful gulf. I led the life of a beast, and not that of a man, like a mule as I was. I am Vanni Fucci,<sup>(4)</sup> a brute, and Pistoia was my worthy den.

And I said to my guide: Tell him not to stir, and ask him what crime plunged him down here, for I knew him to be a quarrelsome fellow. And the sinner hearing me did not conceal himself, but in shame and confusion turned his attention and face towards me. Then he spoke thus:—

I am more grieved to be seen by thee in this miserable plight, than I was the day I parted life. I cannot refuse to tell what thou requirest; the reason that I am sunk so deep here, is, for having robbed the sacred vestments in the sacristy, and that another

(3)—107. He alludes to the Arabian phenix in Ovid's *Metam.* b. xv.

(4)—125. He was a bastard child, for which he calls himself a mule. He was guilty of sacrilegious robbery in St. James' church of Pistoia, and maliciously charged Vanni della Nona of it, for which he innocently suffered death by burning.

was falsely accused of the crime. But that thou shouldst not be rejoiced to have seen me here, if ever thou return from these gloomy regions, hear and pay attention to my prediction : Pistoia first gets dis-embarrassed of the Neri ; then Florence renews the population and laws. Mars(5) raises a storm from Valdi Magra, accompanied with heavy clouds, and boisterous hurricane, which will terminate in a furious battle on the plains of Picene. He will suddenly break open the clouds, and all the Bianchi will be fulminated. And this I have said in order to mortify thee.

#### ALLEGORY.

By Dante's embarrassment to get out of the gulf of hypocrites, is denoted with what difficulty man can get rid of his hypocritical habits, as he is naturally false in principle and action. By these robbers and thieves entwined and bitten by serpents is meant the poignant remorse of a guilty conscience. By their running naked is denoted the contrary practice of thieves, for when they rob, they go slow and easy, and are often disguised in a different dress, and are at last exposed to shame and infamy.

(5)—145. By these storms and tempests of Mars, the ghost indicates a bloody engagement that took place in 1301, between the Neri and Bianchi parties, in which the latter was conquered by the valour of the Marquis Malapina. This was the cause of the poet's exile from Florence.





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 CANTO XXV.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

The poet mentions the vindictive and impious temper of Pucci, who, after having received a most horrible treatment from the serpents for his sacrilege and blasphemy, disappears. He then sees Cacus in the form of a Centaur with a great number of serpents on his back, and a furious dragon on his shoulders. At the conclusion he meets with three Florentine ghosts, two of which are most wonderfully transformed in his presence.

**T**HE robber, after expressing these words, lifted up his hands in the shape of two figs, exclaiming: Take them, God, I make them for thee.(1) Since that time I liked the serpents better, for one of them grasped him round the neck, as if to say, I don't wish thee to speak a word more. Another seized him by the arms, and tied them fast, rolling and winding before him, so that he could not move a single step.

Ah! Pistoia, Pistoia, why dost not thou resolve to reduce thyself to cinders, whereas thy generation is increasing in perversity? In all the dreary regions of hell I have not seen a ghost more impious against God, no, not even him that fell from the walls of Thebes. He fled off without saying a word more, and I saw advancing a Centaur, full of rage, and screaming: Where is he, where is he that impudent wretch? I think Maremma does not contain such a

(1)—2. This means to thrust out the two thumbs between the two first fingers of the hands. It is a visible indication of great insult and contempt.

number of serpents as he had on his back to that part where the human form begins. A dragon, with broad spread wings, was crawling along his back, and darting flames of fire at all he met.

My Master said: This is Cacus, that often made a lake of blood, under the rocks of Mount Aventine. He does not go the same way with his companions, for he had fraudulently plundered the cattle of his neighbourhood. But his villanous deeds ceased under Hercules' mace, who perhaps gave him a hundred blows, and he did not feel the tenth.

Whilst he thus spoke, the ghost passed away, and three more(2) came under us, which neither I nor my guide perceived, till they cried out: Who are ye?

We ceased our conversation, and directed our attention to them. I did not know them, but it happened, as is often the case, that one named the other, saying, What is become of Cianfa?(3) And I, to make my guide attentive, put my hand from my chin to the nose.

Now reader, if thou be reluctant to believe what I am going to relate, it is not surprising, for I myself, though an eye-witness, can hardly conceive it.

Whilst I had my eyes fixed on the ghosts, a serpent with six legs bounded at one of them, and entwined him all round the body. With his two middle legs, he grasped him round the belly, and with his two foremost he seized his arms, and sunk his teeth in both his cheeks. He extended the hindmost along his thighs, and hanging his tail

(2)—35. These three notorious highway-robbers were natives of Florence, called Agnello Brunelleschi, Buoso degli Abati, and Puccio Sciancato.

(3)—43. Cianfa. He was of the Donati family. He is here the ghost in the shape of the little serpent with six feet. He was also of the city that sends so many to hell.

between them, he lashed his loins with its top. Ivy never stuck so close to a tree, as the furious reptile entwined all his members. Then they both dissolved into one body, as if they were of molten wax, and mixed the colour of their skin, so that neither retained its natural complexion; the same as from burned paper proceeds brown colour, which does not appear black nor white.

The two others were looking at them, and exclaimed: Alas! Agnel, how thou art transformed, thou art now neither one nor two.

Their two heads were now compassed in one, and their lineaments appeared confused in one face, where two lost their natural form. In place of four arms, they had but two; the thighs, legs, belly, and breast became such members as were never seen the like. All their original aspect disappeared; their disfigured countenance seemed like two faces, and still there was not one, and in that state they went off in slow movement.

As a lizard, leaving his shelter in the intense heat of the dog-days, runs across the way as quick as lightning; so appeared running to the two other ghosts a venomous little serpent, livid and black like a grain of pepper. It stung one of them in that part where man receives his first nutriment, and the ghost dropped down stretched before him; and thus wounded he turned his eyes at the serpent in silence; his feet got stiff, and he yawned as if seized by sleep, or a feverish fit. They remained looking at each other, one fumigating from the wound, and the other from the mouth, so as to form a thick vapour by their contact.

Let Lucan say no more about the unfortunate Sabellus and Nassidus, let him listen to what I am going to relate. Let Ovid be silent about his Cadmus and Arethusa, though in his poetic fancy he

metamorphosed one into a serpent, and the other into a fountain; I envy him not for that, for he never transformed two natures one into the other, the same as those two forms were ready to change their substance. They cemented together in this manner; the serpent split his tail in two, and the poisoned ghost closed his feet together. His thighs and legs were so pasted together, that, in a moment there appeared no sign of their conjunction. The split tail assumed the form the ghost lost, and the skin of one became pliant, whilst that of the other became hard. I saw his two arms sink into his side, and the two short legs of the serpent lengthen out in proportion as the arms of the other got short. Then the serpent's hind legs entwined together, formed the member which every one conceals, and the miserable ghost had his separated in two.

While the vapour covers both with a different colour, and gives to one the skin which the other lost, one rises up and the other falls on the ground without alteration in their horrible eyes, under which each changed snout. He that was standing up turned his to the temples, and from the exuberance of its matter grew ears out of its lank cheeks. The part not turning back, and remaining superfluous, became the nose, and formed the lips to their natural size. He that was lying, lengthened out his snout, and withdrew his ears into his head, as a snail draws in his horns. And his tongue, before solid, and ready to speak, is split in two, and the other's, before split, becomes compact, and the vapour ceases. The soul that became a serpent ran off hissing into the abyss, and the other, muttering something, spit after him. He then turned his new fashioned shoulders to the other, saying: I wish that Buoso too may run crawling as I do, in this valley.

Thus I saw the souls of the seventh gulf change

and transform themselves, and let the novelty of the case excuse me, if my pen be extravagant on this occasion. And though my sight was somewhat confused, and my mind distracted, still the ghosts could not escape, ever so privately, without clearly recognizing Puccio Sciancato ; he was the only one of the three companions that first came, who was not transformed. The other was he on whose account, thou still weepest, Gaville.(4)

## ALLEGORY.

By Cacus, this monstrous animal, is shown the ferocious disposition of a thief, who, by his perverse nature, is half man and brute. He is devoid of every sentiment of honour and justice, and degrades and vilifies humanity. By these serpents are meant the artifices and stratagems he employs to succeed in his villany ; and by this dragon with outspread wings, his promptitude to plunder and pilfer, without any scruple of conscience. This propensity in man is disgraceful beyond description ; by it he forfeits heaven, and makes himself equal to the demons in hell.

(4)—151. Guercio Cavalcanti, who appears above in the shape of a little fiery serpent, was killed at Gaville, and his parents and friends, in revenge of his death, massacred several inhabitants of that village in the vicinity of Florence.




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 CANTO XXVI.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

The poets come to the eighth abyss, where they see innumerable flames of fire. Virgil informs Dante that in these flames are punished deceitful counsellors, and that each flame contains a guilty soul, except one, from which issue two flames, and in that are contained the ghosts of Diomedes and Ulysses, the latter of whom relates his adventurous navigation and death.

 FLORENCE, rejoice, since thou art so powerful as to extend thy wings by land and sea, and even to disseminate thy fame in hell. I found five of thy notorious citizens among the robbers there, for which I am ashamed, and which does not do thee much honour. But if, at the approach of morning, dreams be true, (1) thou shalt soon feel, what Prato and other places too, ardently wish thee; and had the misfortune happened heretofore, it would not be too soon, and whereas it is to be, I wish it were so, for the longer I live the more it will affect me.

We left the abyss, and my guide ascended the steps which had served us before as a ladder to descend, and he pulled me with him. And to continue

(1)—7. The poet here relates that Florence was held in hatred even by her neighbouring towns, and predicts in his vision some awful calamities that were to befall her; such as the fall of a bridge over the Arno in 1304, by which a great many lost their lives; a destructive fire, which, in the following month, consumed to ashes several hundred houses; and the renewal of civil dissensions between the Bianchi and Neri parties.

our solitary passage among the crags and cliffs of the rock, we had to employ both hands and feet. I was then grieved, and am so still, when I remember what I have seen, and more than usual I check my propensity that I should not fall in error, but be guided by virtue, and if my benign star, or a more powerful cause has granted me that favour, I must not grudge myself the gift. As many glowworms as the countryman sees, when the larger fly gives way to its lesser species, in the valley whilst reposing under a little hill near his vineyard and corn-fields, in that season when he, (2) who illuminates the world, less conceals his face from mortals—so many flames of fire have I seen blazing in the eighth gulf, so soon as I was there when its bottom appeared. And as he who was avenged by the bear's interposition, saw Elias's chariot disappear when the horses rose in flight to heaven, so that, looking up, he could see nothing but the flames rise like a cloud; so flashed the flames of fire through the abyss, and though each containing a sinner, it indicated not his theft.

I stood over the bridge to look down, and had I not grasped the splinter of a rock, I should have fallen down without being pushed.

And my guide seeing me so attentive, said: Within these flames are ghosts, and each is covered with a sheet of fire.

Master, said I, in hearing thy words I am more certain, but I was in doubt what it might be, and was going to ask thee who is in that flame coming up so divided that it appears rising up from the funeral pile, on which were put Eteocles and his brother.

He answered: Within that are tortured Ulysses and Diomedé; thus they run together in the fire of

(2)—26. The Sun. For Elias and Eliseus, see Kings, b. iv. c. 2-

Divine vengeance, as they formerly did to wrath and crime. Within this fire is punished the stratagem of the wooden horse,(3) that opened the door through which passed the noble progenitors of the Romans. In it groans the artifice for which Deidamia, even after death, still complains of Achilles, and there too is punished the stealing of the Palladium.

Master, said I, if they can possibly speak from the flames, I pray and supplicate thee once for a thousand, not to refuse me to remain here until the horned flame arise; thou seest with what anxiety I bend to see it.

And he said: Thy request is laudable, and therefore, acceptable, but hold thy tongue for a time. Let me speak, for I have anticipated thy desire; as being Greeks, they might not listen to thy language. As soon as the flame approached us, and that time and place seemed fit to my guide, I heard him speak in the following terms:—

O ye who are two in one flame, if I deserved your esteem in my lifetime, if I had much or little merit in your eyes, when I wrote sublime verses in the world; do not move, but let one of you tell us where he went in search of death.

Then the higher horn of the ancient flame began to mutter something, shaking as if it were agitated by a breeze. Wagging its top here and there like a tongue preparing to speak, it gave utterance to voice, and said:

When I left Circe, who detained me more than a year near Gaëta, before it was thus called by Æneas, neither affection for my son, nor compassion for my old father, nor mutual love capable of making Penelope happy, could overcome my ardent desire to know the

(3)—59. Which was the cause of Troy's destruction, after which Æneas fled to Italy, where his descendants established the Roman Empire.



world, with the virtues and vices of mankind; and so I set out on the open sea, with a single vessel and a few companions, who remained faithful to me. I coasted along both shores as far as Spain, Morocco, and Sardinia, and other islands surrounded by that sea. I and my companions were then old and weary when we arrived at the narrow strait,(4) where Hercules placed his boundaries to caution man not to sail beyond it. I left Seville to the right, after having passed Ceuta at the left.

O brothers, said I, ye who are come to the West through a hundred thousand dangers, considering the short span of life that yet remains for us, do not refuse to make an experiment in exploring that uninhabited region of the world behind the sun's course. Consider your origin; ye are not created to live like brutes, but to acquire virtue and knowledge. I animated my companions so much by these few words, that with difficulty I could check their ardent desire for the voyage. And turning the poop towards the east, we made sails of our oars for our foolish navigation, always directing our course along the left coast. During the night I saw all the stars of the other pole, and ours was so low that it scarcely rose on a level with the sea. The light of the moon appeared and disappeared five times on the new horizon, since we entered the dangerous passage, when we came in sight of a mountain,(5) that appeared dim and gloomy at a distance, and so high that I have never seen the like. We were rejoiced; but our joy was of short duration, for a hurricane

(4)—107. The Straits of Gibraltar.

(5)—133. Some take this to be the mountain of Purgatory. Still the best commentators do not agree thereon. Everything is possible to poetic imagination. I am of opinion with some that perhaps by this voyage Dante predicted the future discovery of America.

arose from the newly discovered land, and violently struck the foremost part of the vessel. Thrice it made her reel with all the waves, and the fourth time it lifted up the poop, and sunk the prow so low until the ocean became our grave, as it was the decree of heaven.

#### ALLEGORY.

By the solitary passage in the midst of dangers, is meant an idle indolent life amidst the difficulties of the world, for an idle life opens the door to vice and crimes. By employing his hands and feet to surmount the difficult passage, shows the necessity of an industrious life, and the best means to avoid danger and misfortune, and secure one's happiness. By the deceitful counsellors burning in these flames, is shown the just punishment of those who, by their evil counsel, expose the life and property of others, and thereby do an irreparable injury to the commonwealth.

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### CANTO XXVII.

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#### ARGUMENT.

The poet still continues in this Canto to treat of the guilty souls punished in these burning flames. He sees one in which is contained the ghost of Count Guido of Montefeltro, to whom he gives some information concerning his native country. Guido then relates his condition and profession of life, and why he is condemned to this horrible punishment.

**T**HE flame now became upright and steady, without saying a word more, and parted from us with our poet's graceful permission, when another flame coming after it, attracted our attention to its top, by a confused sound, issuing

forth therefrom. As the Sicilian bull,(1) that bel-  
lowed from the agonies of him who first invented  
it, (as he well deserved) groaned in such mournful  
cries from its victim, which, though all of brass,  
seemed pierced through by his lamentations; so the  
dismal words of the ghost, having no issue or passage  
from the flame, were confounded with its language;  
but so soon as they found a passage through the  
point, giving it a certain vibrating impulsion, which  
the tongue expressed at their coming forth, we heard  
it say: O thou who hast just spoken in Lombard  
accent, saying: Now, go off, I'll detain thee no longer,  
though I may have come somewhat late, be pleased  
to remain and converse with me—thou seest I am not  
displeased to stop, though burning in flames.

If thou have lately fallen into this blind world,  
from that beautiful country of Italy, from which I  
am come here for my crimes, tell me if the people  
of Romagna be in peace or war, for I was of the  
mountains between Urbino, and the height whence  
the Tiber takes its source. I was beat down, looking  
attentively, when my guide touched me in the side,  
saying: Speak thou now, he is an Italian.

And having my answer in readiness, I began to  
speak thus, without a moment's delay: O soul, here  
enveloped in flames, thy Romagna is not, nor ever  
was, without war in the heart of its tyrants, but  
when I left, it was not in open war. Ravenna is  
what it has been for many years; the eagle of Polenta  
broods there, and covers Cervia with his wings. The

(1)—7. The brazen Bull, an engine of torture, invented by  
Perillus for Phalaris, the tyrant of Sicily. The ghost tortured in  
this flame was Count Guido of Montefeltro. The mastiffs of Ve-  
recchio were Malatesta and Malatestino, the father and son. The  
towns are Forli, Faenza, and Imola. The high priest and prince  
of the new Pharisees, Boniface VIII. He alludes to the renegade  
Christians, who assisted the Saracens in 1291 to recover St. John  
d' Acre. Boniface's predecessor, Clement V.

country that has given long proofs of its valour, and made a bloody havoc of the French, is still under the paws of the green lion, and the old and young mastiffs of Verruccio, that tyrannically oppressed Montagna, devour their prey as usual.

The towns of Lamone and Santerno are domineered by the young lion of the white den, that changes sides summer and winter, and that town whose walls are washed by the Savio, as being situated between mountain and plain, so it lives between tyranny and liberty. Now I pray thee to tell me who thou art, and to be as complaisant as I have been to thee, and may thy fame be lasting on earth.

When the flame became red for a time, according to its nature, and moved its slender top here and there, it then puffed out these words: If I thought to have directed my answer to a person, who is likely one day to return to the living world, the flame would have remained calm; but whereas no living being has ever returned from this abyss, if what I hear be true, I therefore answer thee without fear of shame.

I was first in the military career, and afterwards joined the Franciscan order, thinking by taking the girdle I might make amendment, and certainly my hopes would have been realized, had it not been for the high priest (bad luck attend him), who made me return to my former crimes, and I wish to tell thee how and why. Whilst I had the form of skin and bones, which my mother gave me, my works were not of a generous lion, but of a crafty fox. I was well versed in every kind of artifice and intrigue, and managed them so artfully, that my character was well known all over the world. When I arrived at that stage of life in which every man ought to begin to furl his sails, and fold up his cables, I began to

dislike what pleased me before, and gave myself up to repentance and confession, and alas ! miserable as I was, that would have saved me.

But the prince of the new Pharisees waging war near the Lateran, (not against the Saracens or Jews, for all Christians were his enemies, but none of those that had been to recover St. John of Acre, or to traffic in the land of Saldan) had no regard for the pontifical authority, nor for the holy orders by which he was invested, nor for the girdle I wore, which was an emblem of penance and mortification for all who wore it in former days—but as Constantine invited Silvester to Soracte to heal him of his leprosy, so he invited me as counsellor to heal him of his feverish pride. He asked my advice, but I made no reply, for he spoke like a drunken man.

And then he said : Banish all scruples from thy heart, of all thou hast done hitherto I absolve thee, if thou suggest me a plan whereby I can supplant Pellestrino. I can shut and open the gates of heaven, as thou knowest ; for that purpose there are two keys, of which my predecessor knew not the value.

These strong arguments made me think that longer silence would be worse, and so I said : Father, whereas thou absolvest me of this sin into which I am going to fall :—protracted promises with no intention to perform will make thee triumph in thy powerful see. When I died, St. Francis came for me, but one of the powers of darkness said to him : Do not take him, do not injure me. He must come down among my portion of the damned, for he has given a fraudulent counsel, and since then I held him by the hair of the head ; for one cannot be absolved without repentance, for repentance and self-will at the same time imply a contradiction which is not admissible.

Oh, how miserable I was ! Oh, how I trembled

when he seized me, saying: Perhaps thou little thoughtest that I was a logican.

He dragged me down to Minos, who, after folding his tail eight times round his callous back, and biting it with horrible rage, said: He is to be sent among the damned of the burning flames.

Such is the cause of my damnation, and of going covered with these devouring flames, as thou seest.

When he had finished these words, the flame went off in mournful cries, shaking and wagging its pointed top. I and my guide passed on along the rock to the other arch that overhangs the abyss in which are punished the crimes of those who are guilty of disseminating discord.

#### ALLEGORY.

By Count Guido's resolution to enter a religious order without observing its obligations, is shown how repentance, amendment, and perseverance are necessary to lead a holy life in conformity to faith and strict justice. His committing a crime under the influence of another, in hopes of obtaining pardon, is denoted how man endangers his salvation by deviating from the true principles of faith, justice, and charity, and how foolishly he exposes himself to the snares and temptations of the devil by such motives.



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 CANTO XXVIII.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

The poets come to the ninth abyss, where the souls guilty of discord, scandal, schism, heresy, and treachery are tormented. Their punishment is to have their limbs horribly mutilated, and their bodies mangled and torn asunder. Among the ghosts Dante sees Mahomet, Piero de Medicina, Curio, Mosca, and Bertrand de Born.

**W**HO could in prose even by frequent repetitions describe the bloody wounds and horrible mutilations that I have now seen? Certainly no tongue could be sufficient to do so, considering our language and understanding, which are totally incapable of comprehending such things.

If all the people that had been slaughtered by the Romans on the unfortunate(1) plains of Apulia, or in the long war(2) in which there was collected such

(1)—8. Fortunata. This word does not signify here the beauty or fertility of the plain, it means the result of the sanguinary battle. We often see an example of this in the best Latin and Greek authors. And it is so explained in the Vocabulary della Crusca, which is a competent authority.

(2)—10. The poet here alludes to the long and bloody war between the Romans and Carthaginians, and principally to the memorable battle of Cannæ. To the defeat of the Saracens, who were chased from Sicily by Robert Guiscard, brother of Richard, duke of Normandy. To the bloody battle fought at Ceppano between Manfred and Charles of Anjou. And, finally, to the sanguinary engagement near Tagliacozzo between Charles of Anjou and Conradine, where Alard of Valeri, a French knight, most eminently distinguished himself.

a considerable booty of rings, according to Livy, an authentic historian, with those that were wounded and slain for having opposed Robert Guiscard, and others, whose bones are still scattered at Caperano, where the Apulians violated their treaty, and those of Tagliacozzo, where the brave old Alardo conquered without arms; I say if all those slain with their broken and mutilated limbs could be seen, it would be nothing in comparison to the hideous spectacle of the ninth abyss. A puncheon with the side or bottom stave out, does not gape so wide as a ghost I saw split open from the chin to the fundament. His bowels were hanging down along his legs, his lungs and stomach were all exposed.

Whilst my eyes were attentively bent on him, he looked at me, and with his hand he opened out his breast, saying: Behold how I butcher myself, see how Mahomet is mangled. Ali(3) is going on before me in tears of blood, with his face split from the chin to the crown of his head. And the others thou seest here were, whilst living, propagators of schism and scandal, for which they are thus lacerated. There is a devil here behind us that lashes us most cruelly, making each of this crowd repass at the point of his sword, when we go round this baleful passage; for our wounds are closed when we repass before him. But who art thou who loiterest on this bridge, delaying perhaps to go to the punishment to which the avowal of thy crimes has condemned thee at the entrance?

Death has not overtaken him yet, neither does his crime bring him here to be tormented, said my Master; but in order to give him full knowledge of this place, I who am dead must conduct him from circle

(3)—32. Ali, Mahommet's disciple.



to circle down here to hell ; and this is as true as that I speak to thee.

More than a hundred ghosts that heard him speak so, stopped still in the gulf to look at me, forgetting their agony through astonishment.

Thou who art perhaps to see the sun shortly, tell brother Dolcino(4) if he do not wish to follow me in a short time, to secure provisions, as the next falling snow may afford an easy victory to his enemy of Novara, who otherwise would have some difficulty to conquer.

Mahomet, after lifting up his foot to go, spoke these words, and then laid it on the ground to depart.

Another, with his throat all mangled, his nose torn off to his eye-brows, and one ear cut off, was the first of them to open his mouth all besplashed with blood, and said : O thou who art not punished for crime, and whom I have before seen in Italy, if I be not mistaken by the resemblance, remember Peter of Medicina,(5) if ever thou return to the beautiful plain, that lies between Vercelli and Mercabo. Apprize both Guido and Angiobello, the two best citizens of Fano, that unless our foresight here of things be vain, they will be thrown from their vessel, and drowned hood-winked near Chatholica by the treachery of a perjured tyrant. Neptune never witnessed between the islands of Cyprus and Majorca, such a treacherous action either from pirates or Greeks. That half-blind traitor, who governs a country which a certain ghost here with me would not be over-anxious to see, will invite them to an interview, and

(4)—45. A friar called Dolcino, a notorious renegade. He was chief of a dangerous sect of communism in Lombardy, in 1305, and was condemned to be burned alive with his concubine Margaret.

(5)—75. Peter of Medicina. He was a firebrand of discord in Romagna. His ghost here foretells the treacherous conduct of Malatesta of Rimini towards those above-mentioned in the Canto.

then will manage so well, that they'll want neither vows nor prayers to appease the storm at Focara.

And I said: If thou wish me to bring some news from thee to the living world, tell and show me who is he that has such bitter recollection of that place.

Then he put his hand on the face of one of his companions, and opened his mouth, crying out: Here he is; he cannot speak; it is he when in exile dissipated Cæsar's doubts, assuring him that delays are always dangerous for man prepared for action.

Oh, how frightful he appeared to me with his tongue cut in his throat, this Curio,(6) who was so forward to speak.

And another, with his two hands cut off, lifting up his stumps in the dark air, exclaimed: Remember, Mosca,(7) also, it is I, alas! who said: The job being done all is finished, which brought great calamity on the Tuscan people.

I subjoined: Yes, and destruction on thy race.

He then went off overwhelmed in grief, like one mad with desperation.

I remained looking at the crowd, and saw a thing which I dare not mention, without stronger proof. But I rely on my conscience, that faithful companion, which always secures a man of honour under its impenetrable buckler. I certainly saw, I think I see it still, a body without the head, going along with the rest of the woful company. He held his head by the hair, suspended in his hand like a lantern, and it looked at us, and said: Oh, miserable am I.

He made for himself a lamp of his head; there

(6)—102. Curio. It is he that advised Cæsar to pass the Rubicon on his way to Rome.

(7)—106. Mosca. He advised to assassinate Buondelmonte, in consequence of violating a marriage promise to a young lady of the Anadei family. That was the original cause of the Guelph and Ghibelline parties in Florence.

were two in one, and one in two ; how that can be,  
He alone knows who judges all.

When he got up near the foot of the bridge, he lifted up his head as high as he could with his arm, in order to make us better hear his words, which were : Thou who comest alive to see the dead, witness my cruel punishment, see if there be any so great as mine. And that thou mayest bring back some news from me, know that I am Bertrand de Born,(8) who gave king John a wicked counsel. I excited animosity between the father and son, as Abithophel did between Absalom and David by his perfidious insinuations. And as I separated persons so near akin, so, alas ! I bring my skull separated from its source, which is in this trunk. Thus the law of retaliation is observed with me.

#### ALLEGORY.

By those who are split open from the neck to the waist, are such as have propagated violent heresy, and divided and perverted the children of the church, and by those who have the face split and cut, they who fomented and encouraged schism and heresy. By those with the ears and nostrils cut off, they who caused scandal and sowed discord among kings, princes, and families ; and they whose hands are cut off, are they who caused discord and animosity between friends and neighbours. He who holds his head severed from the body, like a lantern in his hand, is the perfidious traitor who set the father and son at variance. This punishment is an awful example of heresy, schism, discord, and treachery.

(8)—134. Bertrand de Born. He was lord and vicomte of Hautefort in France, and preceptor to John Sans-terre, son of Henry II. of England, and instigated the son to revolt against his father.



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 CANTO XXIX.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

Dante proceeds to the bridge of the tenth abyss, where he hears the doleful groans and lamentations of the souls guilty of forgery and alchymical fraud. But not being able to distinguish any of the ghosts on account of the darkness, he descends the rock, and then sees the spirits that are most horribly tormented by plagues and diseases of every kind. Among the number he sees Griffolino of Arezzo, and Capecchio of Sienna, who tell him the cause of their punishment.

**T**HE vast multitude of ghosts and their mutilated limbs so swelled my eyes with tears, that I was inclined to remain and weep, but Virgil said: What art thou looking at? why dost thou keep thy eyes still fixed on those miserably mangled spirits? Thou hast not done so in the other gulfs, consider, if thou have a mind to reckon them, that the abyss is twenty-two miles in circumference, and the moon is under our feet, the time allowed us is but short, and we have other things to see that thou hast not yet seen.

Hadst thou known, said I, the cause why I was looking on, thou wouldst perhaps have allowed me to remain a while.

My guide was now going off, and I following close behind, replied thus: I think there is within that abyss at which I was looking so fixedly, a spirit of my family lamenting the crime that is so bitterly expiated there.

Then my Master said: Do not trouble thy mind

any longer about him, at'end to something else, and let him remain where he is ; for I saw him at the foot of the bridge, pointing at thee with his finger in a threatening attitude, and I heard him named Geri del Bello. Thy attention was so much taken up with him that was once lord of Hautefort, that before thou didst look to the other side he disappeared.

My guide, said I, his violent death that has not yet been avenged by any of those who took part in his disgrace, has made him indignant, for which, as I suppose, he went off without speaking to me, and for that reason I feel more compassion for him.

So we conversed along to the first place, where, had there been more light, the abyss could be seen from the rock to the bottom. When we came over the last circle of Malebolge, and saw all its guilty prisoners, mournful groans pierced my heart, as if with steel arrows, and I covered my ears with my hands. If all the pestilential diseases in the hospitals of Valdichina, of Maremma, and Sardinia, in the mouths of July and September, could be all contained together in one pit, their torments could not be such as were here, and the infectious exhalations arising from their pestiferous members. We descended to the right along the last verge of the long rock, and there I saw more clearly the bottom of the gulf, where infallible justice, the minister of the omnipotent Lord, punishes forgers already registered in the book of judgment. I think there could not be greater grief in seeing all the population mortally sick in Egina,(1) where the air was so pregnant with pestilence, that all the animals, even to the little grub, perished—or where the ancient people, according to the poets, were replenished from the seed of

(1)—59. He alludes to the fable of the ants transformed into Myrmidons by Jupiter. Ovid, *Met.* b. vii.

ants, as there was to see the spirits languishing in heaps over each other throughout this loathsome abyss. One lay on the belly, another on the back of his neighbour, and others went crawling along the dismal path.

We proceeded step by step in silence, looking at, and listening to the afflicted souls that were not able to lift up their bodies. I saw two propped against each other, like two baking pans put to be heated, and covered with tetter from head to foot. I never saw a stable-boy for whom his master was waiting, or another in bad humour for want of sleep, use the curry-comb, as they did their nails to tear themselves through horrid rage of itch, for which there was no other remedy. They tore off the crust with their nails, like a knife that scrapes off the scales of a bream, or of some other fish of a harder skin.

O thou that laceratest thyself with thy fingers, and that makest pincers of them sometimes, said my guide to one of them, tell me if there be any Italian here among you, and may thy nails last thee eternally for that work.

We two whom thou seest here so disfigured are Italians, said one of them, shedding tears, but who art thou that askest us this question?

And my guide replied: I am one who descend from rock to rock with this living being, and my object is to show him hell.

Then having separated from each other, they turned trembling towards me with others who heard him by the reverberation of his voice. My Master came quite close to me, and said: Ask them whatever thou wishest.

And with his permission, I thus began: May your fame be never effaced from the memory of man, and may it flourish for many ages; but tell me who are ye, and from what country; let not your shameful

and disgusting punishment prevent you from making yourselves known.

I was native of Arezzo,(2) said one of them, and was committed to the flames by Albero of Sienna, but it was not the cause of my death that brought me here. It is true I told him one day by way of joke, that I knew how to fly in the air; and he, having more curiosity than wit, wished me to teach him the art; and merely because I could not make a Dedalus of him, he ordered me to be burned by a certain personage who was supposed to be his son. But Minos, whom none can deceive, condemned me to the last of the ten abysses for having practised alchemy in the world above.

And I said to the poet: Now was there ever a race of people so vainglorious as those of Sienna! No, certainly, not even the French, though they are much so.

The other leprous ghost who heard me, said: Except Stricca, who knew how to regulate his expenses, and Nicholas, who first made the rich discovery of cloves in the garden where that seed grows; except the joyous troop with which Caccia of Asciano lavished his vineyards and woods, and with which Abbagliato displayed his knowledge. But that thou mayest know who seconds thee against those worthies of Sienna, fix thine eyes attentively on my face, and thou wilt see that I am the ghost of Capocchio,(3)

(2)—109. Girfolino of Arezzo. He was accused of sorcery by Albero, and condemned to be burned through the influence of his supposed father, the bishop of Sienna.

(3)—136. This part of the Canto is full of wit, satire, and irony. He alludes to a parcel of young spendthrifts then in Sienna, called Brigata Godereccia, who for their peculiar system of exquisite cookery, were designated by the term *Costuma ricca*. By the cloves is meant their extravagant mode of living, and by the garden, the town of Sienna. Capocchio was one of Dante's fellow-students in physic and natural history.

who coined false money by means of alchemy, and if thou be the man I know, thou oughtest to remember how well I aped nature.

ALLEGORY.

By those here tormented with pestilence, leprosy, and all sorts of diseases, are meant all who coin false money by alchemical process, and forgers of every description. As by forgery and fraudulent means they plague and impoverish others, so they are given here as an example how they generally die in poverty, misery, and disgrace, and are eternally plagued in this horrible manner for such crimes.

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CANTO XXX.

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ARGUMENT.

In this Canto the poet treats of three different sorts of impostures. Their punishment varies according to their respective crimes. The first run about biting each other in raging madness, the second are bloated with frightful dropsy, and the third are burning in unabating fever. He then introduces Adam of Brescia, and Simon of Troy, reproaching each other in bitter sarcasm, with their different impostures.

**A**T the time that Juno was enraged, as she often was, on Semele's account against the Theban race, Athamas(1) became so furious, that seeing his wife coming with his two children one on each arm, he exclaimed: Let us unfold the net, that I may take the lioness with her cubs at the passage.

Then opening out his cruel claws, and taking one of his children called Learchus, he swung him around his head, and dashed him against a rock,

(1)—4. For the story of Juno and Athamas, see Ovid, *Metam.* b. iv.



and she drowned herself with the other child. And when fortune humbled the haughty Trojans daring to every enterprise, and their king and kingdom were overthrown, Hecuba,(2) after seeing Polyxena dead, and to her heart's grief perceiving her son Polydorus's body stretched on the shore, becoming inconsolable, miserable, and captive, barked in rage like a dog, her soul was in such agony of affliction. But neither the furies of Thebes nor Troy were ever seen to display such cruel ferocity either against man or beast, as I saw two livid, naked ghosts do, running about snapping at each other, like swine when they leave their sty. One of them attacked Capocchio, and grappled him by the neck, and dragging him along, made him harrow the ground with his belly. And the other of Arezzo, who remained all trembling, said to me : This furious ghost is Gianni Schicchi,(3) that goes about enraged, thus tearing the others.

Oh ! may he not tear thee with his teeth, said I, if thou freely tell me who he is before he disappears.

And he said : That is the ancient soul of the profligate Mirra,(4) who became enamoured of her father, contrary to the natural order of love. She used to come to transgress with him, counterfeiting the shape of another, the same as the other that is going off counterfeited Buoso Donati, in order to get the finest mare of the stud, by making a false will, and giving it a legal form.

(2)—16. Hecuba, wife to Priam, king of Troy, was taken captive by the Greeks, and seeing her daughter Polyxena sacrificed on the tomb of Achilles, and the body of her son Polydorus lying dead on the shore, barked through excessive grief. *Latravit conata loqui*

(3)—32. Gianni Schicchi. He had extraordinary talent to imitate and counterfeit others. Simon Donati promised him the finest mare in his stud as recompense for personating Buoso Donati recently dead, and making Simon his heir by dictating a false will.

(4)—38. Myrra. See her story in Ovid, *Met. b. x.*

When the two furious ghosts on which I kept my eyes fixed, had passed off, and turned back to look at the other miserable group, I saw one resembling a lute, if he had the groin severed at the waist. A swollen dropsy, which, by its corrupt humours, so disfigures the members, that the face does not correspond with the body, made him keep his lips open, one turned up and the other down, like a hectic patient does from raging thirst.

O ye that are free from torments, and I know not why, in this miserable world, said he to us, look and see the sorrowful condition of Master Adam ;(5) when alive I had everything I wished in abundance, and now, alas ! I have not a drop of water. The streams that roll down from the green hills of Casentino to the Arno in soft refreshing channels, are always in my thoughts, and not in vain, for my remembrance of them parches me more than the dropsy, which emaciates my face. The rigorous justice that punishes me makes use of the place where I transgressed, to increase my heart-rent sighs. There Romena lies, where I falsified the money that was legally sealed with the Baptist's stamp, for which I left my body committed to the flames above. But if I could see the wretched souls of Guido, of Alexander, and of their brother here, I would not exchange the sight for Fonte Branda. (6) One of them is already within the gulf, if these mad, wandering souls tell truth ; but what does that avail me with my limbs fettered ? Were I light enough to go even one inch

(5)—61. Adamo. He, through the instigation of the three above-mentioned brothers, lords of Romena, counterfeited the gold coin of Florence, stamped with the image of John the Baptist, patron saint of that city.

(6)—78. Fonte Branda. A fountain of limpid, salubrious water in Sienna, near which is built a splendid chapel, dedicated to St. Catherine, whose memory and sanctity are held in great veneration

in a hundred years, I would have undertaken the journey to make him out among those disgusting ghosts, though the gulf might be eleven miles round, and a half mile wide. It is on their account I am in such company ; it is they that induced me to coin crowns of three carats of alloy.

And I asked him : Who are those miserable pair that lie close to thy right side, fuming like a hand in winter steeped in cold water ?

I have found them here, and they have not moved a foot, said he, since I fell into this abyss, and I think they will not stir for all eternity. One of them is the lady(7) that falsely accused Joseph, and the other is Simon, the deceitful Greek of Troy ; a burning fever makes them blow out this vapour.

One of them, that was perhaps mortified to be called by such contemptible name, gave him a thump in the swollen belly, which sounded like a drum ; and then Mr. Adam in turn gave him a blow in the face, which was not of less effect, saying : Though I cannot stir with my limbs shackled, I have an arm active enough for that exercise.

Then the other answered : When thou wast going to be burned, thou hadst it not so active, but thou hadst it as active and more so, when thou wast coining false money.

And the dropsical ghost said : For this time thou tellest truth, but thou didst not give such true evidence, when it was required of thee in Troy.

If I gave false witness, thou didst coin false

by the good, industrious, and religious people of that curious and picturesque city, where I have spent, in the beautiful and pious monastery of the Benedictines, some months in joy, comfort, and peace, free from the cares and troubles of life, and often in admiration of my favourite poet.

(7)—97. The lady, Putiphar's wife. See Genesis, ch. 39. The mirror of Narcissus is water.

money, said Simon, and if I be here for one crime, thou art here for more felony than any other demon.

O perjurer, remember the horse, said he with the dropsical paunch, and may it be punishment enough for thee that the world knows it.

May the thirst that splits thy tongue, and the corrupted water that makes thy belly swell up to thine eyes, said the Greek, be punishment for thee.

Then the forger said : Thy mouth is open as usual to say evil things, and if I be thirsty and swollen from dropsy, thou hast a burning fever, and thy head is split from pain, and thou wouldst not require a pressing invitation to lick Narcissus's mirror.

My attention was so much taken up listening to them, that my Master said : Now take care, I am almost inclined to quarrel with thee.

When I heard him speak to me in an angry tone, I turned to him so much ashamed that I still blush when I think of it. As one who dreams of some misfortune, and in his dream wishes to dream what he fears should not be ; so was I, not being able to speak, for I wished to excuse myself, and did so completely, without thinking how.

Less shame excuses a greater fault than thine, said my Master, therefore console thyself, and remember that I am always by thy side, if chance should ever bring thee where there may be similar altercations, for it is a vulgar curiosity to listen to such things.

#### ALLEGORY.

By these impostors biting and devouring each other like raging furies, are denoted the evil and dangerous effects of counterfeit and fraud. As they bite others, as it were, with their false tongues and infamous inventions, so they tear each other here eternally with their teeth, as if mad. By these forgers tormented with eternal dropsy, is meant their insatiable thirst to enrich themselves to the detriment of others. By those punished and tormented with burning fever, are meant those who counterfeit the speech or person of others by fraudulent and perverse designs.

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**CANTO XXXI.**

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**ARGUMENT.**

The poets are led by a loud sounding horn to the ninth circle, divided into four compartments, each containing a particular description of traitors. In this Canto Dante shows only that the circle is encompassed with giants of enormous size, among whom Nimrod, Ephialtes, and Antæus are the most conspicuous. The giant Antæus having the power of speech and liberty, condescends to take them both in his arms, and convey them to the bottom of the circle.

**T**HE same tongue that mortified me a little before, and covered both my cheeks with blush and shame, afterwards afforded me full consolation. The same as Achilles' and his father's javelin had the faculty of first wounding and then of healing, according to what I have heard. We left the miserable abyss, passing in silence along the borders that encircle it. There it was neither day nor night, so that I could not see far, but I heard the sound of a loud blowing horn, so strong, that it would smother the rattling peals of thunder; and so I directed my sight to the place whence issued the sound. Orlando(1) did not sound his trumpet so dreadfully after the deplorable defeat of Charlemagne, when he abandoned his glorious enterprise.

(1)-18. Orlando's trumpet is said to have sounded so loud, as to have been heard twenty miles distant, after the bloody battle fought near Fontarabia, where Charlemagne lost thirty thousand men, with all his peerage, commanding his best troops in person to chase the Saracens from Spain.

I turned my head a little towards that quarter, and saw something like lofty towers, and said : Master, tell me what country is this ?

And he said : Thy imagination blindfolds thee, for thou art over-anxious to encompass too much with the eye through the darkness. When thou comest to that place, thou wilt easily perceive how the distance baffles the sight, but hasten thy pace a little.

Then, taking me affectionately by the hand, he said : I wish to inform thee before we go any further, so thou mayest not be surprised by the extraordinary spectacle, that they are not towers, but giants standing in the pit, up to their navel, with the rest of the body over the bank.

The same as a person after a fog gradually perceives the objects concealed by the cloudy atmosphere ; so looking sharp through the thick obscure air, the more I approached the bank, the more my error vanished, and my fear increased. And like the lofty towers that surround Montereggione ; (2) so over the borders that encompass the gulf, appeared to the middle like towers these horrible giants, whom Jupiter still threatens from heaven, when he makes his thunder roar. I already perceived the face, shoulders, breast, and a part of the belly of one of them, with his two arms hanging by his side.

Certainly nature has acted very wisely, when she ceased to create such animals, in depriving Mars of such means of destruction. And if she does not repent of the existence of elephants and whales. whoever considers with a rational mind, must acknowledge both her justice and discernment ; for if mental refinement had been joined to malevolence and animal strength, there would be no further protection for mankind.

(2)—41. A well fortified castle near Sienna.

His face was as long and broad as the pine-shaped statue<sup>(3)</sup> at St. Peter's in Rome, and all his members were in proportion, so that from the bank which covered him from the middle down, he appeared so tall above it, that three Friezlanders one standing on the other could not touch his hair, for I saw thirty palms clear above the waist.

He began to brawl: *Raphel mai amech zabi almi*,<sup>(4)</sup> from his hideous mouth, not being able to sing sweeter psalms.

My guide advanced towards him, saying: Foolish soul, take thy horn, and amuse thyself with it, when anger or any other passion affect thee. O, soul of confusion, put a hand to thy neck, and thou wilt find the belt that binds it on, and see how it sinks a hollow in thy breast.

He then said to me: He accuses himself, that is Nimrod, by whose rash enterprise there is a confusion of languages in the world. Let us leave him there, we speak to him in vain, for every language is for him the same as his is for all others, unintelligible.

We advanced further on, turning to the left, and at the distance of a sling's throw, we found another giant much more horrible, and of larger stature. I cannot tell what artizan bound him, but he had his left hand tied to his breast, and the right to his back by a chain, which fastened him from the neck down, and rolled five times around that part of his body that was to be seen.

(3)—59. A large ornamental monument of bronze in the shape of a pine, at first placed on Adrian's mole, and afterwards on St. Peter's belfry. A part of it can be still seen at the Vatican, near the Belvedere.

(4)—67. These words merely denote the confusion of tongues at the time of building the tower of Babel. The English Doctor, as in Canto VII., heard nothing like it in the courts of justice at Paris.

This presumptuous giant wished to display his prowess against sovereign Jupiter, said my guide; now he has his reward for it. His name is Ephialtes, he did wonderful exploits when the giants frightened the gods; he can no longer stir the arm which he wielded so powerfully.

And I said: Were it possible, I would be glad to have a full view of the huge giant Briareus.

And he replied: Thou wilt see Antæus quite near, who can speak and is at liberty; he'll convey us to the depths of hell. He whom thou desirest to see is much further off, and bound; he resembles Antæus, but is much more ferocious in countenance.

The most tremendous earthquake never shook a tower with such violence as Ephialtes did in shaking himself. Then I feared death more than ever, and fear alone would be sufficient to knock me down, if I had not seen him bound in chains. We proceeded a little further on, and came near Antæus, who appeared five ells above the brim, not including the head.

O thou who hadst formerly carried off a booty of a hundred lions in the fortunate plain, where Scipio acquired eternal fame by the defeat of Hannibal and his army; thou by whom, as it is still supposed, the sons of earth would have conquered, if thou hadst been present at the formidable battle of thy brothers, do not refuse to bring us down, where Cocytus is hemmed in by the frozen region. Do not oblige us to ask such a favour of Tityus, or Typhon, my companion can give thee whatever thou requirest: stoop down then, and do not put on a grim countenance. He can even add renown to thy name in the world, for he is alive, and expects to prolong his days, unless destiny calls him before his time.

Thus spoke my master, and the giant instantly took my guide in his open arms, which before made



Hercules feel their muscular strength. When Virgil felt himself seized by him, he said to me: Come here, let me take a hold of thee, and so managed, that he and I were but one burden.

As the tower of Cariscenda(5) appears to one that looks at it from underneath, when a cloud passes over it, so that it seems to bend towards him; so Antæus appeared to me whilst I was waiting to see him bend, and for the moment I would have preferred to descend some other way; but he let us down very gently at the bottom of the abyss, which torments Lucifer and Judas; then he remained no longer bent, but got up as straight as the mast of a ship.

#### ALLEGORY.

By these giants standing in the gulf are meant their arrogance and impiety; and being placed in the centre of hell, in the circle next to Lucifer, they still bid defiance to heaven. By this wild language of theirs is denoted the impious doctrines of those who pretend to be, as it were, the giants of all knowledge in the world, and by their pride and incredulity, blaspheme the Divinity, and corrupt the heart of man. The confusion of Babel, the thunderbolts of Jupiter, and Divine judgment are here alluded to.

(5)—136. The remarkable tower at Bologna. The magnificent Duomo of Pisa is of the same wonderful form.



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 CANTO XXXII.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

In this Canto the poet treats of the first and a part of the four small circles into which the ninth and last large circle is divided, all of which is a frozen gulf. In the first called *Caina*, Dante finds Albert *Camiccione de' Pazzi*, who gives him an account of the other ghosts who are therein tormented. In the second, called *Antenora*, he sees *Bocca degli Abati*, who also gives him an account of his fellow-sufferers. In *Caina* are punished those who betray their parents and friends, in *Antenora*, those who betray their country.

**I**F I had to write rough and uncouth verses in a style suitable to the horrible gulf, over which are placed like bridges all the other rocks of hell, I should squeeze the juice of my conception in greater abundance; but as not having such faculty, it is not without timidity I commence my theme, for it is not an enterprise of frivolous amusement to describe the depth of the whole universe; childish language is not fit for such a subject. But may the graceful maidens, by whose assistance *Amphion* built the noble city of *Thebes*, inspire my tongue with verses in harmony with the object.

O human race, the most miserable of all creatures, it were better for thee, who art condemned to this place, whose tortures are indescribable, to have lived, and died like sheep and goats. As we got down to the black pit under the giants' feet, and still lower, and whilst I was looking up at the high rock, I heard some one say: Take care how thou walkest, do not trample on the heads of thy miserable and abandoned fellow-creatures.

I then turned about and saw before me and under my feet a lake covered with ice, more like glass than water. Neither the Danube in Germany, in the winter, nor the Tanais(1) under the frozen region had ever been covered with such sheets of ice, as this lake was ; so that if the mountains Tabernich, and Pietrapana(2) had fallen on it, they would not have cracked its surface. And as a frog fixes itself to croak with his snout above the water, in the season that the countrywoman often dreams of gleaning in the cornfields ; so the ghosts in the agony and paleness of death were sunk in the frozen gulf up to the face, shivering and clashing with their teeth like a stork's shrill cry. They all kept their heads down, with their lips frozen, and their eyes bleeding from the agonizing torture of the heart, as it appeared from their posture.

After having cast an eye all round for a time, I looked down and saw at my feet two of them so closely joined, that their hairs were mixed together. Ye that have the breasts so close together, said I, tell me who ye are ; and they turned back their necks, and looked at me, and their eyes already full of tears, let them drop to the lips, and the frost condensing them, kept the two ghosts bound together. A cramp of iron never squeezed two planks of timber so close together. So in fits of madness they knocked their heads one against the other like two goats. And one whose ears were frozen off, and with his head down, said : Why dost thou look at us so eagerly ? If thou wishest to know who these two(3)

(1)—27. A river that separates Europe from Asia.

(2)—28. The one a lofty mountain in Slavonia, and the other near Lucca.

(3)—55—70. These two were lords of Falterona, and murdered each other after their father's death.

—Mordrec, son of king Arthur, attempted to kill his father, but in

are, the valley into which the Bisenzio falls, belonged to them, and their father Alberto. They were of the same mother, and if thou hadst traversed all Caïna, thou couldst not find a soul that more deserves to be plunged in the frozen gulf; not even his whose body and shadow were cut through with one blow by Arthur's hand, nor Focaccia's, nor that which with its head intercepts my view, whose name was Sassal Mascheroni; if thou be a Tuscan, thou oughtest to know him. And in order to avoid further inquiries, let me tell thee that I am Camicione de' Pazzi, and I expect Carlino, whose culpability will excuse me.

I afterwards saw a thousand visages wrinkled and livid from cold, which makes me shiver, and will for ever when I think of the frozen gulf. And whilst we were advancing to the centre of the world, where all earthly substance comes to a point, and I was trembling on the eternal ice; I cannot tell whether by free-will, or chance, or destiny, but, however, walking among the heads, I accidentally kicked one of them in the face.

The poor ghost dolefully screamed, crying: Why dost thou plague me? if thou art not come to increase Mont-Aperti's vengeance, why dost thou torment me?

And I said: Master, wait for me a little, till I satisfy my doubt with regard to this ghost, and then thou canst make me go on as quickly as thou pleasest.

the attack his father pierced him through the body, and the wound was so large, that it intercepted his shadow on the ground.

—Focaccia of Pistoia maimed his cousin, and killed his uncle.

—Sassal murdered his nephew in order to become master of his property.

—Carlino, through bribery, betrayed the castle of Piano, in Valdarno, to the enemies.

122. Ganellon, by whose treachery Charlemagne's army were slaughtered near the Pyrennees by Marcellinus, king of Spain.

My guide stopped, and I said to him who was still horribly blaspheming : Who art thou, thus railing at others ?

Who art thou thyself, said he, that art roving through Antenora, and trampling on our heads so unmercifully, that it would be insufferable, were thou even alive ?

I am alive, said I, and it may be agreeable to thee, if thou desire to increase thy fame, that I may insert thy name with others in my verses.

And he said to me : It is quite the contrary I wish ; go off, and do not pester me any longer, for thou payest us a very bad compliment on this lake.

I then took him by the hair, and said : Thou must tell me thy name, or I'll not leave a single hair on thy head.

And he said : Wert thou to pull off all my hair, I'd neither tell thee nor show thee who I am, even if thou hadst plucked my head a thousand times.

I had his hair already twisted in my hand, and pulled off more than one lock of it, and he turned down his eyes barking furiously, when another exclaimed : What is the matter, Bocca ? is it not enough for thee to clash thy teeth without barking ? What the devil torments thee ?

Now said I : I don't want thee to speak, cursed traitor, for to thy shame I'll bring back positive news about thee.

Be off, then, said he, and report whatever thou wishest, but if thou chance to get out of this place, don't forget to mention him whose tongue has been so flippant. He is punished here for the Frenchmen's money, thou canst say : I have seen the gentleman of Duera, where the guilty souls have no stoves.

If thou be asked who else was there, thou hast here by thy side Beccaria, whose head was cut off in Florence. John of Saldanieri, I think, is a little

further off, with Ganellone et Tebaldello, who opened the gates of Faenza, while the people were asleep.

When we left him, I saw two more frozen in one hole, so that the head of one served the other for a hat. And as a hungry man devours a piece of bread, so one stuck his teeth in him that was under, where the brain is joined to the spine. The same as Tydeus in a fit of rage gnawed Menalippus's temples, so he was gnawing and devouring the skull and brains of the other.

O thou who with the ferocity of a wild beast, dost exhibit so much hatred against him thou art devouring, tell me, said I, the cause of such treatment, for if thou have any just reason to complain of him, knowing who ye are, and his crime, I will plead thy cause in the upper world, if the tongue with which I promise it, become not mute.

#### ALLEGORY.

By these traitors and murderers plunged in the frozen gulf, are meant those who are devoid of sympathy and charity, and whose hearts are as it were frozen with obduracy and cruelty; therefore this punishment is allotted them in hell. They are represented with their face turned downwards, to denote that a treacherous, wicked, evil-minded man never looks straight in the face of another nor towards heaven.



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 CANTO XXXIII.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

In this Canto the poet relates the cruel death of Count Ugolino and his children, who were famished in a tower at Pisa, by the orders and intrigues of Ruggieri. He then treats of the third part of the ninth circle, called Ptolomea, in which are punished those who have betrayed their benefactors and confidential friends. Among the ghosts he finds the friar Alberigo, who tells him that the soul of Branca d'Orta is punished in this gulf, whilst his body appeared still living in the world.

**T**HE furious ghost lifted up his mouth from the horrible repast, wiping it with the hairs of the head, which he had already half devoured.

Then he began thus : Thou wishest me to renew the desperate grief, whose very thought oppresses my heart, even before I express its cause. But if my recital can prevail to cast eternal infamy on the traitor I devour, thou shalt be witness both of my words and tears. I do not know who thou art, nor how thou hast come down here, but I am positively certain by thy accent that thou art a Florentine. Thou must know that I was Count Ugolino,(1) and

(1)—13. Count Ugolino, through the instigation of the Archbishop Ruggieri, supplanted his nephew, Nino Visconte, in the sovereignty of Pisa, in 1288. When the Count was invested with full power in the city, the archbishop through jealousy at the head of his party, excited the population to revolt against him, under pretence of having betrayed Pisa and all its castles to their enemies of Florence and Lucca. He was then arrested with his children, and locked up in a dungeon, where they were all famished.\*

\* I have heard Modena, one of the first tragedians of Italy, recite this. The deep impression, the soul-startling sensation, the whole auditory felt on the occasion was extraordinary, and which I shall never forget.

he the Archbishop Ruggieri, and now I'll tell thee why I am his neighbour here. What! I reposed confidence in him, but on account of his malicious suspicions, I was arrested, and afterwards suffered death: to tell is useless. But not being possible for thee to know how cruel my death was, thou shalt now hear and learn how he persecuted me. There was a little air-hole in the dungeon, which in consequence of my death, was called the tower of famine, and in which others too will be confined, through which I often saw the moonlight, when once I chanced to have a frightful dream, in which I foresaw the course of future events.

He appeared to me as a lord and master, chasing the wolf and his cubs to the mountain which separates Pisa from Lucca. In front of the chase he ranged the Gualandi, Sismondi, and Lanfranchi, with a pack of lean, well-scented, voracious hounds, in pursuit of them. After a short course, the sire and cubs seemed quite exhausted, and I thought to have seen their flanks torn with the hounds' sharp teeth.

When I awoke, before the dawn of day, I heard my poor children, who were near me, cry in their sleep, and asking for something to eat. Thou art of a cruel disposition if thou feel no compassion for me, thinking what must have been the painful presentiment of my heart; and if thou do not weep through pity for me, what is capable of exciting thy sympathy? They were now wakened, and the usual hour to get something to eat in the morning was approaching, and each of us was in hesitation with regard to his dream, when I heard some one underneath nailing the door of our horrible tower. Then I looked with anxiety at my children, without saying a word. I could not weep; my heart became hard as a rock.



They were all weeping, and my little boy Anselm said: Thou lookest dismal, Father, what ails thee?

Still I did not shed a tear, but was silent all that day and night, till the sun appeared the following morning. When a feeble gleam of light penetrated our gloomy melancholy dungeon, and I saw my very image in four visages, I bit both my hands in raging grief, and they, thinking I did it through hunger, suddenly rose up, and said: Father, it would grieve us much less, if thou wouldst eat of us, thou hast given us the flesh of these miserable bodies, and hast full right to take it of us.

I then checked my grief, in order not to make them more inconsolable. We all passed that and the following day in complete silence. Ah, obdurate earth! why hast not thou opened under us? After the fourth day, Gaddo lay stretched at my feet, saying: Father, why dost not thou help me?

In that state he died: and, as sure as thou seest me, I saw the other three drop dead between the fifth and sixth day; then, blind from grief and hunger, I began to grope in search of them one after another, and called them constantly, though being two days dead. Then famine silenced my grief by death.

When he had finished these words, with furious eyes he recommenced devouring the miserable scull, and with his teeth cracked the bones like a hungry dog. O Pisa, the disgrace of the people of that beautiful country, where *si* is so often repeated; whereas thy neighbours are so dilatory in punishing thee, may the mountains Capraia and Gorgona roll down and fill up the mouth of the Arno with lofty mounds, so that thy whole population may be engulfed within thy walls! for if Count Ugolino had been suspected of having betrayed thy citadels, thou hadst no right to expose his children to such tortures. Their tender age, O new Thebes, was a testimony of

their innocence for Ugucione and Brigata, and the other two just mentioned in my verses.

We advanced further on, where the frozen gulf renders the condition of the spirits still more horrible, being not with their faces downward, but turned back. There weeping even prevents them from shedding tears, for grief, finding no relief from the eyes, concentrates in the heart and increases their anguish, because the first tears form balls of ice, and like crystal vizors, fill up the sockets of their eyes. And though all sensibility, becoming, as it were, callous from the excessive cold, had vanished from my face, still methought I felt a slight breeze, and so I said: Master, what is it that breathes? is not all vapour extinguished here?

And then he said to me: Thou wilt be shortly where thine eye will make an answer to thy enquiry, on seeing the cause that produces this breeze.

And one of the miserable souls sunk in the ice shouted out to us: O souls so eminently guilty as to be condemned to the last circle, take this hard cover off my eyes, that I may alleviate the agony which oppresses my heart, before my tears may be congealed anew.

And I answered: If thou wish me to relieve thee, tell me who thou art, and if I do not disentangle thee, may I descend to the bottom of this icy gulf.

Then he said: I am the friar Alberigo (2), it was I that collected the fruit in the fatal garden, and here I receive dates for figs.

What, said I, art thou also dead?

(2)—118. Alberigo. He was of the order of the Joyous Friars, and being in enmity with some of his brotherhood, he invited them to a sumptuous dinner, under pretext of reconciliation, and to renew friendship. When dinner was finished, he ordered in the fruit, saying: *Fuori le frutte*, which was a signal for a gang of hired assassins, who rushed forth and massacred them all at table.

And he replied: How my body lives in the upper world, I cannot account for. This Ptolomea has such privilege, that oftentimes the soul descends here, before Atropos cuts the thread of life.

And that thou mayest more willingly drag off these old icicles of tears from my eyes, I wish to inform thee, that as soon as the soul is guilty of treachery, as I have been, it is separated from the body by a demon, who then keeps it in motion until its due time be elapsed, and the soul is plunged into this infernal cistern. And perhaps the body of this ghost, that takes its winter quarters here behind me, appears still on earth. Thou oughtest to know so, if thou be lately come here from above; he is Mr. Branca d'Oria (3) and his spirit has been imprisoned here these many years past.

I think, said I, thou deceivest me, for Branca d'Oria is not anything like being dead, he eats, drinks, sleeps, and dresses like every man.

Michael Zanchi, said he, was not yet engulfed in the boiling pitchy abyss of Malebrance, when my neighbour here left a devil in place of himself, in his body, and of one of his relatives, who was guilty of the same treachery with him. But it is now time to lift up thy hand and disengage my eyes.

But I did not do so, for courtesy towards him would be incivility.

Ah, people of Genoa! perverse and profligate race of men, stained with every species of depravity, why are not ye extirpated from the face of the earth? In company with the most infamous ghost from Romagna, I found a certain citizen of yours, whose

(3)—137. Branca d'Oria. He was of Genoa, and got Michael Zanchi, his father-in-law, assassinated, in order to get possession of Logodoro in Sardinia.

soul, on account of his crimes, is plunged in Cocytus, whilst his body is still alive on earth.

#### ALLEGORY.

The tears flowing from the eyes of these miserable souls, who betrayed their benefactors, are frozen on their eye-lids, to denote treachery, false sympathy and dissimulation in life. By the soul placed in hell while the body is still on earth, is shown there is no intention of repentance, or reconciliation with God, and therefore according to the poet, the soul of an impenitent sinner is in hell before his death.

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### CANTO XXXIV.

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#### ARGUMENT.

The poet is now in the fourth and last round of the great circle, called Gue-decca, where he still sees the souls of those guilty of treachery to their benefactors, completely covered with ice. Lucifer stands in the middle of the gulf, along his back Dante and Virgil come to the centre of the earth, and then, arrive at the opposite hemisphere, by a private path, which brings them in sight of the stars.

**T**HE banners of the monarch of hell advance towards us, but look forwards, said my Master, if thou canst distinguish him.

As when a thick fog covers the air, or when night approaches our hemisphere, a windmill is perceived turning at a distance; so methought I saw then some huge engine of that kind. Then, to shade myself from the wind, I withdrew behind my Master's back, as there was no other refuge. I was then, and with trembling I insert it in my verses, where all the ghosts were covered with ice, and transparent as a fetus in glass. Some were lying

flat, some standing up, more with their heads down, some on the soles of their feet, and others with their heads bent to their feet in the form of a bow.

When we were so far advanced, that it pleased my Master to show me the creature once of preeminent beauty, he turned back before me, and made me stop, saying: Behold Dite! behold the place where thou must summon all thy courage.

How I then became chilly in blood and distracted in mind, be not inquisitive, kind reader, I cannot pen it down, for no language is sufficient to describe it. I was neither dead, nor alive, think then with thyself, if thou have an atom of intelligence, what must have been my condition, without life or death. The monarch who rules the empire of eternal anguish, appeared to the middle of his breast from the frozen gulf, and I am no more in comparison to a giant, than giants are to his arms: now see what must be his full size, which corresponds with that enormous part. If he had been so beautiful, as he is now hideous, and dared to lift up his haughty visage against his Creator, little wonder that he is become the source of all evil.

Oh, how great was my astonishment, when I saw three faces on his head; one in front, and that as red as blood; the other two were joined to it from the middle of each shoulder, and stuck together at his cresty forehead; that on the right seemed swarthy, and the other on the left to be of the same colour as those who inhabit along the Nile. Under each head were expanded two large wings, suitable to such a monstrous bird; I have never seen such wide-spread sails on the open sea. They had no fea-

(1)—20. Dite from Dis in Latin means Pluto in Virgil, but here by our poet means Lucifer, I have therefore retained the word in Italian.

thers, but in texture like a bat, and flapping them so strongly in the air, that he puffed forth three blasts of wind, wherewith Cocytus was frozen to the bottom. He shed tears from six eyes, and being mixed with bloody foam, fell in torrents along three chins. With the teeth of each mouth, like the working of a flax-pounder, he bruised a guilty soul, so that he tormented three all at the same time. As to him in the middle, his teeth were nothing in comparison to his destructive claws, by which he sometimes tore off the skin of a sinner's back.

That soul which is most tortured there, said my Master, is Judas Iscariot; he has his head in Lucifer's mouth, and his legs hanging outside. He that hangs from the smutty jaw of one of those heads is Brutus; (2) see how he shakes and twists himself without saying a word; and the other, who seems so muscular, is Cassius. But night is now advancing, and it is time to depart, as we have seen all.

According to his orders, I clung close to his neck, and seizing a favourable opportunity of time and place, when the wings of the arch-fiend were largely expanded, he grasped his shaggy sides; then from lock to lock of his bristly hair he descended between his fleecy side and the borders of the icy gulf. When we got down as low as his hips, my guide, with much difficulty and embarrassment, turned up his head where he had his feet before, and grappled at the fur, like one who climbs, so that I thought I was returning to hell again.

Keep a fast hold, said my Master, palpitating like a wearied man, for it is by such a ladder we must depart from the regions of endless misery.

Then he got out through the orifice of a rock, and

(2)—65. Brutus and Cassius are here exposed to the greatest tortures next to Judas, as being traitors and regicides.

made me sit on its brink, and instantly turned towards me with a cautious step. I looked up, and thought to have seen Lucifer in the position I left him, with his feet turned upward. And if I had then reason to be perplexed in doubt, let common people judge, who cannot conceive what difficult point I had to pass.

Stand up, said my master, the journey is long, and the passage is rough, and the sun is now in the middle of his third (3) course.

It was not an avenue leading to a palace where we were now, but a craggy obscure precipice formed by nature.

Master, said I, when I stood up, before I leave this abyss, I pray thee to relieve my mind in a few words from this error: Where is the frozen gulf? and how is that monster turned upside down? and how has the sun made his transit so suddenly from evening to morning?

And he said: Thou imaginest thou art still beyond the centre, where I grasped the fur of the cursed serpent that pierces the world through. Thou wast on the other side whilst I was descending, but when I turned down, thou didst pass the point towards which all ponderous substance is attracted. And now thou art come under the opposite hemisphere of the other, by which the extensive continent is covered, and under whose canopy was crucified the Man who was born and lived without sin: thou art now standing on a small circle different to that of Giudecca. It is morning here when it is evening there, and he whose bristly hair served us for a ladder, is still in the same position as he was before. At this side he fell down from heaven, and the earth

(3)—96. It was then half-past ten, according to Hebrew computation, here used by the poet.

that was prominent here before, through fear of him, made a veil for herself of the sea, and retired to our hemisphere ; and that which thou art to see again, has, perhaps, to escape his hellish fury, left this place empty, and is risen into a mountain.

There is a place beneath as far remote from Belzebub, as his infernal tomb extends upwards, invisible to the sight, but perceptible from the noise of a rivulet, which descends through the opening of a rock, excavated by the falling of its waters, and is of a gentle declivity. I and my guide entered by that solitary passage to return to the luminous world, and careless of any repose, we struggled up, he going first, and I following him, till I perceived through a round aperture the glittering ornaments of the firmament, and thence we came forth to see once more the bright stars of heaven.

#### ALLEGORY.

By these souls plunged in a gulf of ice in the bottom of hell, is shown the variety of torments to which they are condemned for their sins, and from the first to the last circle are represented according to the nature and enormity of their crimes. Lucifer stands in the middle of the gulf with three heads, denoting pride, anger, and envy. But with much probability these three different colours indicate Europe, Asia, and Africa, the three parts of the world then known. Europe is red, to denote that her crimes are more bloody and offensive to heaven than all others. Belzebub is in the centre of the earth, with full power in all the infernal regions, and as he who once stood next to God in power and glory, was banished from heaven for his pride, so all souls that rebel against God through pride, impiety, and wickedness, are eternally banished by Divine justice to his infernal empire to suffer for their crimes.







