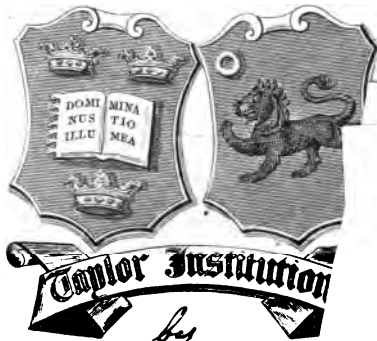


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A VISION OF HELL:

THE

INFERNO OF DANTE

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH TIERCE RHYME;

WITH AN

Introductory Essay on Dante and his Translators.

BY

CHARLES TOMLINSON, F.R.S.

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TO MY DEAR NIECE,
MARY TOMLINSON,
IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE
HAPPY TIME WE PASSED TOGETHER OVER DANTE,
AND IN GRATITUDE FOR HER LOVING HELP
IN THE REVISION AND EDITING OF THIS TRANSLATION,
THIS VOLUME
Is Inscribed
BY HER AFFECTIONATE UNCLE.

HIGHGATE, N.

27th October, 1877.

*O voi, ch' avete gl' intelletti sani,
Mirate la dottrina, che s' asconde
Sotto 'l velame degli versi strani.*

Canto ix. 61.

O ye in whom the intelligence is sane,
Do ye behold the doctrine hidden here,
Which mystic verses 'neath their veil contain.

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DANTE AND HIS TRANSLATORS.

THE interval between the publication, in 1805, of Mr. Cary's translation of Dante's *Inferno*, and that of Mr. W. M. Rossetti in 1865, is marked by a great change rather in the practice than in the canons of the translator's art, seeing that the latter have never been well defined. Attention had been drawn, more by examples than by any special reasoning on the subject, to the fact that it is the duty of the translator to convey the exact sense, and, as far as possible, the spirit of a poem from a foreign tongue into our own, so that it is not thought any longer necessary to adopt the elegant paraphrases of Dryden and Pope, but, on the contrary, to follow the author whether he deal with commonplace or noble objects. Dryden, in translating Virgil, was shocked that Venus should place Cupid on a bed of sweet marjoram, "for these village words, as I may call them, give us a mean idea of the thing;" and he does not hesitate to say, with respect to his translations, "Some things I have omitted, and sometimes have added, of my own." In particular he omits what he calls technical words, because the poet writes "to men and ladies of the first quality, who have been better bred than to be more nicely knowing in the terms." This practice did not long survive the wigs and ruffles of an artificial age, and the more natural style both of poetry and dress, which succeeded them. It could not be otherwise than that the natural style of Cowper's poetry should influence his rendering of Homer. Since Cowper's time the translations

of Homer have become more and more exact, and their success may be tested by the qualities which Matthew Arnold claims for Homer himself:—1. He is eminently rapid; 2. eminently plain and direct in thought and expression, as well as in matter and ideas; 3. eminently noble. These qualities may also be affirmed of Dante. His rapidity is such that there is no time for commonplace adjectives or ornamental work or sentimental expressions; and so plain and direct is he that the reader might be shocked did he not perceive that the resulting effect is something so real and distinct that, as Dante himself several times assures his reader, as it were upon his oath, he had been in hell and had seen the very things that he describes so vividly; so that we do not wonder at the people of Verona looking upon him with a kind of awe, and pointing him out as the man who had been in hell. And so real is the painting that even now the attentive reader becomes so absorbed that he believes in the things described and said, as the boy believes in *Robinson Crusoe*. He knows all the turnings and windings and distances of the infernal regions so well that he could thread its mazes without the guidance of Virgil, and is as well acquainted with the persons introduced as if he had stood by while Dante was talking with them. This realistic effect is perfectly marvellous, and is accomplished by so few touches, by such a singular economy and fitness of language, by such grasp of subject that the translator may well be content if he succeed in rendering his author with tolerable fidelity, without the addition of anything of his own. And as, according to Mr. Sellar, "the secret of Virgil's power lies in the insight and long-practised meditation through which he abstracts the single element of beauty from common sights and the ordinary operations of industry," so it is necessary to render Dante's familiar and even vulgar illustrations, without any attempt to make them polite. And with all this detail, dealing often with the most vulgar sinners and most commonplace details, the effect is noble; for, however coarse and shocking some of the descriptions are, and which would be ludicrous in a writer of less power, Dante makes use of them to

show up the grim horror and desolation of the place with greater force and variety, while at the same time he never lets go our sympathy, but retains it by the common voice of suffering humanity which is everywhere heard; still less does he cease to retain our reverence for the workings of Providence and the operations of law. Not the least remarkable characteristic of Dante is his tenderness. As, when occasion requires, he can be grim, stern, and unyielding, so, when his subject directs, he is as tender as a mother, as gentle as a child. It is necessary for the translator to understand all this, and vary his language accordingly; not plod on, as some have done, in the same dull style throughout, but work in the lights and shades, the bolder colours and the tender tints, after the manner of his grand original.

The best chance of success for the translator is to enter upon his task duly impressed with such notions as the above. If he feels himself on complacent or patronizing terms with his author, he must fail. If he is like one writer, who wishes to give his readers some idea of this "singular poem;" or like another, who omits whole passages because they strike him as being vulgar; or a third, who Bowdlerizes him throughout; or a fourth—the representative of a large class—who thinks to improve on his author; or, fifthly—a still larger class—who misread or misunderstand him, the result must be failure.

The only mode of translating Dante with any chance of success is to approach him in a spirit of humility, regarding him as a poet of the highest order, to be revered if not worshipped, to be interpreted and understood, his peculiar expressions to be translated as far as may be, or to be met by equivalent expressions; in short, his language must, as far as possible, be transmuted into English without the alloy of expletives or the tinsel of verbal decoration. But as the eleven syllables of the Italian verse do not always contain matter enough to fill up the ten syllables of the English line, there is a temptation to put in adjectives and other expletives, which serve the only purpose of adding water to the ink (as Göthe has it), and making the translation look pale and feeble by the

side of the original. To meet with any degree of success the translator must resolutely avoid the use of adjectives that Dante does not use, and he must not be tempted to expand a thought beyond its original limits, but must render everything honestly line for line. I say line for line, because any other mode is sure to produce a want of balance and proportion between the various parts, of which Dante must be a better judge than his translator. I have often seen, for example, a significant line of the original compressed into half a line of the translation, in some cases to make way for an expansion of the previous part of the text to the injury of the original thought.

It is not my intention to go into historical and other details which Longfellow has given in abundance; but it is necessary to say a few words as to the state of Italy at the time when this poem was written, if only to bring into greater relief the inappropriateness of an ornamental paraphrase instead of a close translation of Dante's *Inferno*.

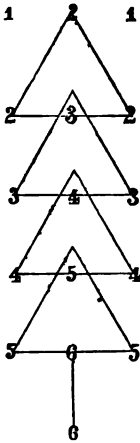
In Dante's time Europe was sunk in barbarism. There was a standing feud between the Papacy and the Empire, which split society into factions; the Guelfs, or papal adherents, and the Ghibellines, or Imperialists, which latter included the aristocratic as the former did the popular party. These factions occupied all men, because they touched all interests and disposed of the fortunes and even the lives of all. Dante, who had been a distinguished magistrate of his native city Florence, was mixed up in these quarrels, and became their victim. For many years he led the wandering life of an exile, and it was during this time that his great poem (with the exception, perhaps, of the first seven cantos of the *Inferno*) was composed and published under the modest title of *The Comedy*, to which an admiring and appreciative age afterwards attached the epithet "Divine."

In the midst of all this strife, religion was represented by a series of superstitious practices; the sale of pardons and indulgences was, as Ginguené remarks, "adjusted to every vice, and took the place of every virtue." Under these circumstances Dante, the prophet of his age, conceived

the idea of a poem that should strike the imagination by its boldness, and astonish by its grandeur. The increasing troubles of the times led men to think that the end of the world was at hand. The Church, which was interested in this belief, encouraged it, for the sake of those gifts which were to bring salvation to the givers. Thus, in the midst of the revolutions and agitations of the present life, men were led to regard the future with horror, and it is this future life which the poet undertook to describe. Dante sang to eager listeners; for in his day men no more doubted of the existence of hell than they did of their own. There were stories afloat of men who had been permitted to visit the dread abode, and to return to relate its horrors. Dante made himself one of these, and he knew that all his details and descriptions would not only be accepted, but serve to fill up the outline which was already in every one's mind. It was no absurdity that disembodied spirits should be capable of enduring bodily torments, for this was what the Church taught and the people believed. Hence there would be no difficulty about one in the flesh visiting the souls in prison, and witnessing torments such as could be understood on earth; and although Dante's presence in hell everywhere excites the astonishment of its inmates, and although many attempts are made to distinguish between him and the ghosts (such as, "See! whatever his feet touch moves—such are not wont to do the feet of the dead"), the distinction is never well made out. The shade or spirit, Virgil, "which was once a man," behaves exactly like one: he carries Dante in his arms, is exhausted, pants, turns pale, and so on. The various shades also in like manner suffer as in the flesh; they quarrel and pummel each other, and continue in hell much the same sort of existence, and have the same dispositions as on earth. Such objections as these would not occur to Dante's audience. The souls thus variously tormented, inhabiting variously graduated places in hell, according to the magnitude of the sins committed on earth, would all be received as so many stern realities, especially as related in Dante's powerful yet simple language, abhorring, as he says he does, flowers of speech. To complete

the grand work, hope is extended to the repentant sinner in the *Purgatorio*, and endless bliss to the good in *Paradiso*, but as my present purpose is with the *Inferno*, my remarks will be limited to that.

As I conceive it to be impossible to represent Dante with anything like truth unless the translator render him as literally as possible as to language, so with respect to form, it seems to be the duty of the faithful translator to regard this as much a part of the author as the sense, and to respect it accordingly. When in the growth of the modern tongues quantity was given up in favour of accent and rhyme, the objection of attempting to represent the ancient by the modern hexameter does not apply to the rendering of a modern rhymed accentuated poem into a similar rhymed accentuated translation. On the contrary, it becomes a duty for the sake of harmony and fidelity to adopt such a course.



A great part of the charm of Dante's poem is in the form, which if he did not actually invent, he made it what it had never been before, and has not been since, an instrument of the highest poetical power. The *terza rima*, or tierce rhyme, consists of tercets where the last word of the middle line of each tercet gives the rhyme to the first and third lines of the following tercet; so that all the tercets of each canto interpenetrate and continue the action.¹ The structure of the verse may be represented geometrically as in the figure where the three rhymes indicated by the like numerals form the angles of an equilateral triangle, and all these triangles interpenetrate throughout the canto. As the first tercet starts the rhymes by its middle line, it follows that the first and third lines of the first tercet stand out by themselves as a pair of rhymed lines, and there is also a similar pair at the end of each canto.

¹ This seems to me to be a reason against the practice of separating the tercets by means of spaces, which some translators adopt.

In adopting rhyme the English is at a disadvantage as compared with the Italian. Our rhymes are mostly monosyllabic, while the Italian are polysyllabic, and such is their extent and variety that there are only three examples in the whole of the *Inferno* in which the same triple rhyme is repeated a second time in the same canto (see Canto ii. 14, 89, and 23, 104, and Canto xxiii. 1, 116). As the Italian language was not settled in Dante's time, he introduces a number of variations to serve the purpose of rhyme or rhythm; he uses a multitude of contractions and has various modes of spelling; he also adopts Latin words and quantities. Thus among his contractions he has *ca* for *casa*, *rena* for *arena*, *trade* for *tradisce*, *sem* and *semo* for *siamo*; and among the variations in spelling *lome* for *lume*, *regge* for *riedi*, *sutto* for *sotto*, *soso* for *suso*, *fiere* for *ferisce*, *preco* for *prego*, *gio* for *ando*, *haja* for *abbia*, *allotta* for *allora*, and so on. He also uses *retro* for *dietro*, *este* for *queste*, *ita* for *si*, *decurio* for a corporal of *ten*, and so on.

The translations of Dante fall naturally under three heads, namely, (I.) those that are in blank verse, (II.) those that are in rhyme, and (III.) those that are in the tierce rhyme of the original.

I. One of the earliest attempts that I have met with to render the *Inferno* in blank verse is by "Charles Rogers, Esq., of the Custom House, London," 1782. Although unfettered by rhyme, it is by no means close to the original, and in some cases misrepresents it. The celebrated inscription over the gate at the beginning of Canto iii., which is the despair of translators, is not well done, although there is no apparent reason why it should not be literally rendered. Instead of

"All ye that enter in leave hope behind,"

this version has—

"Ye who here enter, to return despair."

In Canto v. the line,

"*E pajon si al vento esser leggieri,*"

("And seem to be so light upon the wind,")

is thus rendered—

"And seem to move far quicker than the wind."

And in the same canto, instead of,

“ O gracious and benignant Animal ! ”

“ O mortal Man, replete with grace divine ! ”

In 1807 a translation of the *Inferno* by Nathaniel Howard appeared. He says that “ a servile Anglo-Italian version has been avoided equally as much as too great a latitude from the original. A medium has been attempted.” Nevertheless he does not object to put in much that is not in the original, as for example :—

“ O ye who enter here,
Ye heirs of sin, leave every hope behind.”

In the celebrated passage, Canto i.,

“ *E come quei, che, con lena affannata,
Uscito fuor del pelago alla riva,
Si volge all' acqua perigliosa, e guata,*”

(“ And like him who with panting breath
Having issued from out the sea upon the shore
Turns to the perilous water and gazes, ”)

this translator has—

“ Like him I stood, who from the perilous sea
Emerg'd, looks round, again looks, panting, round,
To view the wrecking storm, and dangers dire.”

The translation by the Rev. H. F. Cary, assistant librarian in the British Museum, occupies an important place. The first part was published in 1805-6, and the completed work in 1814. During many years this was regarded as our standard translation, and it passed through several editions. At the time of its production Italian was a favourite study in this country, and many editions of the best known Italian writers were published in London and Edinburgh. Indeed, Cary gives as a reason for not continuing to publish the original text alongside of his version, that two complete editions of Dante's great poem had been published in this country.

There can be no doubt, I think, that Cary's is the work of a scholar. His version is enriched with copious notes which show considerable knowledge of his subject, and of Italian literature in general. My first acquaintance with Dante was through the medium of this translation, which

I compared with the original. As I became better acquainted with the language, and, with increasing years, became more capable of entering into the spirit of Dante, I began to feel that Cary often failed in the letter, and almost entirely in the spirit of his great original. He has not caught Dante's simplicity of style, his homely language, his use of the most commonplace similes, his power of conveying the terrible in language of the most ordinary kind, his tenderness, his earnestness. On the contrary, he has given him a grand epic air which is most remote from the *Inferno*, he has introduced adjectives and pompous elaborations which do not belong to him; in short, he fails in the power, sweetness, harmony, and homeliness which belong to this poem. For example, Dante describes in a few graphic words the sinking of a ship in a storm at sea, struck by a whirlwind (Canto xxvi.) :—"The poop rises up, and the prow goes down

As pleased Another
Till over us again the sea was closed."

But instead of this simple forcible mode of expression Cary has—

"So fate decreed,
And over us the booming billow closed."

At the end of Canto xxv. the original says :—

"Thus did I see the seventh bed of sand
Change and transmute, and here let my excuse
Be novelty, if flowers my tongue abhors."

Cary dilutes this passage thus :—

"So saw I fluctuate in successive change
The unsteady ballast of the seventh hold :
And here if aught my pen hath swerved, events
So strange may be its warrant."

In Canto xviii. Dante says :—"I've not kept fast till now in seeing him," which is another mode of saying "This is not the first time that I've seen him." But in paraphrasing this peculiar expression Cary falls into error. He says :—

"Of him, cried I, not yet
Mine eye hath had its fill."

So also in trying to improve on his author, he loses the homely simplicity which is so remarkable in the original. Thus in Canto xvii., "whiter than butter," is elaborated into "of whiter wing than curd," and "a gravid sow" is "a fat swine." The advice to avoid certain people, "but far from grass be beak" is amplified into—

"But be the fresh herb far
From the goat's tooth."

"The sound of beehives" (Canto xvi.), is made—

"Resounding like the hum of swarming bees."

In Canto xxxii., "I would express the juice of my conceit more fully" is converted into—

"Then might the vein
Of fancy rise full springing."

And where Dante says simply, "Not without fear do I proceed to speak," Cary says grandly—

"And with faltering awe I touch
The mighty theme."

"The gnat" (Canto xvi.), is "the shrill gnat," and "fire-flies down along the valley," is—

"Fire-flies innumerable spangling o'er the vale."

The treatment is everywhere like this, and consequently out of harmony with the spirit and diction of the *Inferno*. Mr. Cayley well remarks that Cary "being too careful to give his poem a uniformly dignified tone, has adulterated all its franker style with the pomp and stiffness of our traditional epic poems, and so incurs the fault attributed to our old translators, of uttering one man's thoughts in the phraseology proper to another confraternity; hence he has not represented with spirit the horrible grotesque of Dante in the punishments of meaner sinners, nor has he followed him in his bolder and quainter ways of coining words and phrases, so that the line in Canto vi.—

" 'Se'l ciel gli addolcia, o lo 'nferno gli attosca,'
(" 'If heaven doth sweeten, or hell poison them,")

is rendered—

" 'If heaven's sweet cup, or poisonous cup of hell
Be to their taste applied,'

in a tone less proper to the sudden emotion of the speaker."

Although not coming strictly into any one of the three divisions, it may be proper to notice in the order of date a prose translation of the *Inferno*, by Mr. J. A. Carlyle, M.D. (1st Edition, 1848, 2nd Edition, 1867). The author supposes that in this way can be produced "a closer and warmer version than any that has hitherto been published," he deeming it impossible to transfer into any other language the deep rhythmic force and beauty of the original. The Italian text runs side by side with the prose translation, and notes are added explanatory of the text in those parts where the literal rendering seems to require some helping out. This has been regarded as the chief defect of literal rendering, and condemnatory thereof, since if the meaning has to be eked out by means of foot-notes, why not adopt a more liberal mode, which, while following close upon the author, shall, as need requires, expand him somewhat so as to be intelligible? For example, in Canto iii., the sounds of woe are described as making a tumult which whirls—

"Sempre 'n quell'aria senza tempo tinta,"
("Continually in that air without time tinted.")

Now would this be intelligible to the general reader? Would he understand it to mean that the air is always dark, not relieved by changes of seasons, or by day and night? Should he so understand it there is the manifest advantage of retaining Dante's peculiar mode of expression; but if it is to be helped out by means of a foot-note, the translation admits its own failure. Cary has "that air with solid darkness stained," whatever that may mean; Rossetti has "that air without a season dyed," which is the best that I have seen among many, but then he has an explanatory foot-note.

In the literalness of Dr. Carlyle's work, there is a dryness and a hardness which does not seem to belong to any other version. A want is felt which the music of verse and poetical expression can alone supply. Take, for example, the opening passage of the second canto in prose:—

"The day was departing, and the brown air taking the animals that are on earth, from their toils; and I, one alone, was preparing myself

to bear the war both of the journey and the pity, which memory that errs not shall relate.:

“ O Muses, O high Genius, now help me ! O Memory, that hast inscribed what I saw, here will be shown thy nobleness.”

Now it seems to me to be quite easy to put this into verse with nearly the same closeness to the original, and with the advantage of retaining its poetical form :—

“ The day was departing, and the embrownèd air
Released the animals that on earth remain
From their fatigues ; while I alone prepare
Myself the war's encounter to sustain,
Whether it be of road, whether of woe,
Which mind that doth not err, will trace again.
O Muses, Genius high, assist me now !
O Mind that wrotest that which I described,
Here thy nobility itself will show ! ”

In 1854, Mr., afterwards Sir Frederick Pollock, published a translation of the *Divine Comedy* in blank verse, which presents a striking contrast to Cary's version in being plain and direct in its language, striving as it does, to reproduce the sense of the original. The blank verse is smooth and readable, seldom rising into eloquence, and seldom sinking into prose, although we occasionally meet with such lines as—

“ The very thinking on it renews fear.”

A translation that aims at being literal ought to cultivate Dante's style even if it fail to catch his spirit, and it seems so easy in many cases to adopt Dante's peculiar expressions. For example, in Canto i. *cose belle* is not properly rendered by “ shining ones,” nor—

“ *Chi, per lungo silenzio, pareo fioco,*”

by “ one who appeared as by long silence *dumb*.” The same word *fioco* occurs in Canto *xxi.*, where the sound of Nimrod's horn was such “ that it would have made all thunder *hoarse* ; ” this translation has “ faint.” In Canto *vi.*, “ the sack runs o'er ” is paraphrased into “ so that measure it exceeds.” In Canto *xxvi.*, “ a flame fatigued by the wind,” is “ troubled by the wind,” and in Canto *v.* “ to grant thee *peace* ” is “ to grant thee happiness,” and “ so light upon the wind ” is “ so swiftly upon the wind.”

So also in Canto xxv., "if flowers I abhor," is not only weak but wrong in "if somewhat roves my pen." In Canto xiii., for "I lost my pulse and veins," we read, "I gave sleep and all my life," and in Canto xiv., "are to his own breast worthiest ornaments," there is this unnecessary variation—

"Is in his breast a torment justly due."

In another case where the original simply says "iron," why say "iron of good proof" ? or for "air," Canto viii., why say "nimble air" ? This sort of paraphrase and amplification weakens the poetry, and sometimes leads to positive error. In the opening of Canto xxiv.,

*"In quella parte del giovinetto anno.
Che'l sole i crin sotto l'Aquario temprà,
E già le notti al mezzo dì sen' vanno,"*

("In that part of the youthful year wherein
The sun beneath Aquarius tempers his locks,
And now the nights go towards halving the day,"

the poetical expression is injured in the following:—

"In that division of the youthful year
When in Aquarius cools his rays the sun,
And when the nights approach the equinox."

Many other similar cases might be pointed out, which are the less excusable in blank verse, so that the intention of being "strictly literal," "regard being had to the idioms of the two languages and to the preservation of a metrical form," has not been well carried out. In Canto xxiv. for "bid him not shirk," we have "desire him to remain," and in the opening of Canto ix., the two lines—

*"Quel color, che riltà di fuor mi pinse,
Veggendo 'l Duca mio tornare in volta,"*

("That hue which cowardice painted on me
Seeing how my Leader turned back,")

are thus rendered—

"Soon as the colour which by fear was chased
My Leader saw returning to my cheeks."

In 1862, and again in 1866, Mr. P. Wilkie, Advocate of Edinburgh, published what he calls "a line for line

translation" of the *Inferno*. I quote from the beginning of the second edition, which differs from that of the first :—

“ When midway on the journey of our life,
I found myself within a darksome wood,
for I the path direct had lost from view.

Alas! how hard a thing it were to show
that savage wood—so harsh and perilous,
thinking of it renews my fear!

Yea! scarcely death its woefulness exceeds.”

The only excuse for such a form as this must be literal accuracy, and the above lines are not accurate. If a student with a scanty knowledge of Italian were to try to read the *Inferno* by the light of this version, he would often be puzzled. For example, the third line is not as given above, but simply—

“ For the right path had been lost.”

In the fifth line “perilous” should be “strong.” The seventh line should be—

“ So bitter 'tis, e'en death is little more.”

Mr. David Johnson (Bath, 1867) has published a translation of the *Inferno* in a similar style and with a like object to the last. It is liable to similar mistakes. His third line is—

“ Where the right path which guided me was lost.”

I now come to a translation which stands out preeminently from all the other attempts at literal rendering. In 1865 Mr. W. M. Rossetti published “Part. I. The Hell” of this great poem. He says in the first words of his preface :—“The aim of this translation of Dante may be summed up in one word—Literality.” That this claim may be acknowledged to the full I may safely aver, after a careful comparison of it with the original, and I know of no book in our language so capable of assisting the student to the proper appreciation of the *Inferno*. Mr. Rossetti with his profound knowledge of the original, and his reverence for its author, has caught his spirit and peculiar mode of expression, and prefers to follow him “sentence for sentence, line for line, word for word,”

also *Purg.* 1867
c. *Par.* 1868

although "various shortcomings in form, from a literary point of view, are the result."

The very quality that makes this translation so valuable for the student often leads to such discordant lines as these :—

"That I was many times turned to turn back."

"So did he put me, and made me enter so."

"Expecteth it will there be more than here."

"And more he said ; but I've it not in mind."

The fact is that this version, full of merit as it is, is not poetical ; it does not satisfy the poetical requirements of the original. Had Mr. Rossetti thought fit to add to the shackles of literality those of the triple rhyme, his version, though not so exact as the present, would have been more enjoyable for the general reader—it would have better satisfied the demands of such a work, and with his command both of Italian and of English, there would have been no room for another translation.

In 1867 Mr. Longfellow's translation was published in London. Its object seems to be the same as that by Mr. Rossetti, namely, to give a literal rendering of the poem in blank verse, but here, as in the former case, poetical expression is sacrificed to exactness of rendering, and we have such lines as these :—

"Speak will I of the other things I saw there."

"So that it seemed the air was afraid of him."

"As was the saying of them where I was."

And many similar cases, which read like not very good prose.

But as these two translations have the same object in common, namely, that of being literal, the comparison of them one with the other brings us to this singular result, namely, that translation under such conditions is to a great extent a determinate problem ; that is, any two competent scholars setting to work to translate Dante into English blank verse, as literally as possible, will produce versions that are very much alike, especially in certain passages.¹ Dante's

¹ A similar idea occurred to Dr. Whewell on comparing his translation of Göthe's *Hermann and Dorothea* with that by another hand which professed to follow the original closely. Professor Todhunter,

diction is for the most part so singularly clear and direct that not only single lines but whole passages often translate themselves as it were ; so that there is only one way in which such lines can be rendered, and any attempt at variation leads to paraphrase, if not perversion of meaning. I take one passage out of a large number that I had marked to illustrate this curious coincidence on the part of the authors, who doubtless never saw each other's work until it was published.¹ The following is from Canto ii., where Virgil encourages Dante :—

“ In order that thou free thee of this fear,
 I'll tell thee why I came, and what I heard
 At the first point when I was grieved for thee.
 I was among the spirits in suspense :
 A Lady called me, blest and beautiful,
 Such that I did beseech her to command,
 Her eyes were shining more than does the star,
 And she began to address me, soft and low,
 With voice angelic in her utterance.
 O courteous Spirit thou of Mantua,
 Of whom the fame yet in the world endures,
 And shall endure as far as motion does,—
 One that is mine and is not Fortune's friend
 Is so impeded on the desert slope,
 Upon his path, that he is turned for dread ;
 And he's so far already strayed, I fear,
 That to his help I may be risen late,
 By that which I in heaven have heard of him.”

Rossetti.

“ That thou may'st free thee from this apprehension,
 I'll tell thee why I came, and what I heard
 At the first moment when I grieved for thee.
 Among those was I who are in suspense,
 And a fair saintly Lady called to me
 In such wise, I besought her to command me.
 Her eyes were shining brighter than the star ;
 And she began to say, gentle and low,

in his *Life of Whewell*, questions the soundness of the remark, seeing that various translations of Homer which profess to be literal are yet sufficiently distinct from each other.

¹ Sir F. Pollock's version not being so literal as the other two, identical lines do not so frequently occur, but they are to be met with in all versions that aim at being literal.

With voice angelical, in her own language :
 ' O Spirit courteous of Mantua,
 Of whom the fame still in the world endures,
 And shall endure long lasting as the world ;
 A friend of mine, and not the friend of fortune,
 Upon the desert slope is so impeded
 Upon his way, that he has turned through terror,
 And may I fear already be so lost,
 That I too late have risen to his succour
 From that which I have heard of him in Heaven."
Longfellow.

But in order to show that this parallelism is not in this instance an accidental coincidence, I will take a passage farther on in the poem, from Canto xxvii.—

" But inasmuch as never from this depth
 Any, if I do hear the truth, returned,
 I answer without fear of infamy.
 I was a man of arms, then cordelier,
 Thinking, so girded, to have made amends ;
 And certes my belief had come fulfilled,
 Were't not for the Arch-priest, whom evil seize,
 Who put me back into my former wrongs :
 And how and wherefore I will have thee hark."
Rossetti.

" But inasmuch as never from this depth
 Did any one return, if I hear true,
 Without the fear of infamy I answer.
 I was a man of arms, then cordelier,
 Believing thus begirt to make amends ;
 And truly my belief had been fulfilled
 But for the High-Priest, whom may ill betide,
 Who put me back into my former sins ;
 And how and wherefore I will have thee hear."
Longfellow.

But notwithstanding resemblances which more or less affect the two translations throughout, there are striking differences between them ; there is a more Dantesque spirit, a more abiding sense of freedom, more spontaneity, more power over his materials pervading Rossetti's version ; but in Longfellow's there is a kind of constraint, as if the author were not quite familiar with the matter in hand, a kind of effort to be natural, while in the other version the natural is present without the effort. These differences are better felt after a comparison of the two versions with the

original, than from illustrations by examples that I could give within a reasonable space; nevertheless, I think it is impossible to read the following parallel passages without being as much struck by their differences as in the former cases by their resemblances:—

“Thou so bait'st me with sweet speech
I cannot hold my peace : nor be ye vexed
That I a little tangle me in talk.
I am the man who both the keys did hold
O' the heart of Frederick, and who turned the two
So softly, locking and unlocking it,
That from his secret I drew every man
Almost. I kept the glorious office faith,
So much that thence I lost my pulse and veins.”

Rossetti, Canto xiii.

“So thy sweet words allure me,
I cannot silent be; and you be vexed not,
That I a little to discourse am tempted.
I am the one who both keys had in keeping
Of Frederick's heart, and turned them to and fro
So softly in unlocking and in locking,
That from his secrets most men I withheld;
Fidelity I bore the glorious office
So great, I lost thereby my sleep and pulses.”

Longfellow.

“The poet said to me, ‘Lose not the now,
But speak and ask him if it please thee, more.’”

Rossetti, Canto xiii.

“The poet said to me, ‘Lose not the time,
But speak and question him, if more may please thee.’”

Longfellow.

“They into him who squatted set their teeth,
And him they rended into shreds and shreds;
And then they carried off those doleful limbs.”

Rossetti, Canto xiii.

“On him who had crouched down they set their teeth,
And him they lacerated piece by piece,
Thereafter bore away those aching members.”

Longfellow.

“And he, who had his fancies and small sense,
Wished I would show the art to him, and only
Because I made him not a Dædalus,
By him whose son he was he got me burned.”

Rossetti, Canto xxix.

“ And he who had conceit, but little wit,
 Would have me show to him the art ; and only
 Because no Dædalus I made him, made me
 Be burned by one who held him as his son.”

Longfellow.

There is another point on which these two translations differ essentially, and that is with respect to the notes. While Mr. Rossetti adds no more than are absolutely necessary for the proper understanding of the text, Mr. Longfellow has ransacked the literature of Europe for critical, historical, and other illustrations of Dante, and the result is a vast body, for so small a space, of instructive and entertaining matter which may well possess charms for the general reader, and which is also of great value for the student.

II. The translators who have adopted rhyme, but not that of the original, are fewer in number than those who make use of blank verse.

In 1785 a translation of the *Inferno* was published in London, by subscription, by Henry Boyd, A.M., in stanzas of six lines each. The author calls this “a singular poem,” and his translation is not less so. It opens in the following manner :—

“ When life had laboured up her midmost stage,
 And weary with her mortal pilgrimage
 Stood in suspense upon the point of prime :
 Far in a pathless grove I chanc'd to stray,
 Where scarce imagination dares display
 The gloomy scenery of the savage clime.”

The inscription over the gates in Canto iii. is a wonderful specimen of diluted paraphrase. The lines immediately following are about as unlike the original as it is possible to make them.

“ This salutation sad, mine eyes amaz'd
 As on the high Plutonian arch I gaz'd
 In dark and dreadful characters pourtray'd
 How dire the menace of the Stygian scroll !”

In 1804, Richard Wharton, Esq., M.P., published some selections under the title of *Fables from Dante*. His translation of the inscription is a more respectable performance

than Mr. Boyd's, but still a long way off from the original. The elder Pugin was accustomed to distinguish between the true and the false in architecture by the terms "ornamented construction," and "constructed ornamentation." The latter mode may be illustrated by the following example of piling ornament on Dante's simple structure. This is what the original says :—

" As in autumn the leaves fall off
One after the other, until the branch
Renders to the earth all its spoils."

And this is the ornamented version :—

" As in the autumnal hour,
Fall the light leaves in one continued shower,
Till the rough trunk, with branches bare and wide,
Yield the last honours of its vernal pride."

In 1843 Mr. Parsons published at Boston, U.S., a translation of the first ten cantos of the *Inferno*, and later the whole of it, in an elegant form, illustrated by reduced copies of Doré's sketches. The translation is in elegiac quatrains, one of which will be a sufficient specimen—

" Midway through our life's journey, in a wood
Obscure and wild, I found myself astray.
Ah! to describe how rough it was—how rude
That savage forest chills me to this day."

A translation by Patrick Bannerman, Esq., was published at Edinburgh in 1850. It is impossible to say to what species of metre this version belongs. We have couplets and triple rhymes and blank verse mingled in a strange way ; and in one instance there are six consecutive rhymes—namely, *fire, inspire, choir, desire, retire, require*. Such lines as the following occur :—

" Whose speech long silence had in part congealed."
" But thou why thus return where cares annoy,
Nor climb delightful hill without alloy ?"
" Of that humble Italy the safety he."

A translation of considerable pretension, which passed into a third edition in 1854, is by J. C. Wright, M.A., late Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. The writer claims

for it the patronage and assistance of Lord Brougham, Archbishop Howley, Lord Denman, Lady Dacre, Mr. Panizzi, Count Marioni, whose knowledge of Dante is said to be marvellous, and others. Hence it would be supposed that this would be of all others a standard translation. But in the first place it offends in form, and this is the more offensive from the circumstance that although the rhymes are only double, not triple, the lines are arranged in tercets, so as to have the appearance of *terza rima*. Moreover, the rendering is singularly loose and verbose, and often inaccurate. For instance, in Canto v., where Dante says, with his usual simplicity of style—

“ *Galeotto fu il libro, e chi lo scrisse.*”

(“ Galeotto was the book and he who writ.”)

Mr. Wright has—

“ That book was Galeot—Galeot he who fired
Its baneful page.”

Or to take this simple and forcible expression—

“ *Queste parole di colore oscuro
Vid'io scritte al sommo d'una porta :
Perch'io, Maestro, il senso lor m'e duro.*”

(“ These words in obscure colour
I saw written on the summit of a portal :
Whence I, Master, their sense is hard to me ! ”)

Mr. Wright has—

“ These words, inscribed in colour dark, I saw
High on the summit of a portal vast,
Whereat I cried : ‘ O Master ! with deep awe
Their sense I mark.’ ”

In Canto xiv. (I take instances widely separated to show that the same habit of injurious expansion prevails throughout), the simple statement,

“ *Che dal suo letto ogni pianta rimuove,*”
(“ Which from its bed removes every plant,”)

is expanded into—

“ That spurns each plant from its ungenial breast.”

In Canto xxii., this tercet as given by Rossetti and Longfellow in almost the same words—

“ Like as the dolphins when they make a sign
To mariners, by arching of the back,
That they should think of how to save their ship—”

is thus given by Wright—

“ As dolphins heave their backs above the wave,
Prognosticating angry tempests black—
Signal to mariners their ship to save.”

In Canto xv. the line,

“ *Mi 'nsegnavate come l' uom s' eterna.*”
 (“ You taught me how man becomes eternal.”)

Wright has—

“ How man may best immortalize his name.”

In Canto xxiv.,

“ *E gia le notti al mezzo di sen 'vanno.*”
 (“ And now the nights go on towards halving the day.”
That is, the equinox is at hand.)

Wright has—

“ And into midday night begins to run.”

Wright often completes his length of line by means of commonplace adjectives; as, for example, where Dante is content to say “with rage,” this translator has “with mighty rage,” “the valley” is “the humble valley,” “the fig” “the pleasant fig,” “a sharp tail” “a sharpened tail acute,” and so on. Another feature this translation has, in common with Bowdler's Shakspeare, namely, nothing common or unclean is allowed to pollute its pages; a woman's shift is “a garment of the night,” “a gravid sow” “a swine of ample size,” dogs tormented by flies and fleas, the flies are allowed, but not the fleas. Some of the alterations in this direction are quite marvellous, as at the end of Canto xxi., and some of the details of Canto xxix.

III. There have been a good many attempts to translate

the *Inferno* into *terza rima*, with what success I come now to examine. It is difficult in our language to supply the constant demand for three rhymes, so that they shall fall naturally into the structure of the verse, and not appear to be dragged in for the rhyme's sake. This seems to be one of the chief causes of failure in adopting tierce rhyme in English. The rhymes are too much for the translator; they often have a forced, strained effect, and although in some versions free use is made of male and female rhymes, the mixture produces an unpleasant, inharmonious effect.

In 1836 a translation was published at Dublin, by Odoardo Volpi. It may be sufficient to give the first two tercets, remarking that the words in italics are not in the original:—

“ Midway upon the journey of our life
 I found myself within a darksome wood
 For the true way was lost, *mid perils rife*.
 And hard it were to tell how drear *it stood*
 That savage mighty *wild of shade imbrowned*
 Which still renews the fear *that chill'd my blood*
 So bitter it is, death little more *can wound*.”

In this example, the real or supposed necessities of rhyme have led the translator away from the original, or have imposed so awkward a form as to spoil a large amount of meritorious work. This may be seen in many passages of a spirited, and, on the whole, an accurate translation, by Mr. C. B. Cayley, B.A. (London, 1851), as, for example, in the pathetic story of Ugolino in Canto xxxiii.

“ Then did I both my hands for fury gnaw,
 But they perceiving me, rose up amain
 Believing I had done so for my maw,
 And said, ‘O father,’” &c.

Such treatment as this offends against the pathos of the narration, as a line in Canto v. offends against the delicacy of treatment required for Francesca's story—

“ The book, the author, Pander's trade was plying.”

In the description of Cerberus, Canto vi., we have one

among many cases in which the translator is overpowered by the rhymes—

“ His eyes vermilion are, his hands with claws,
His belly large, and black and greased his beard,
He rends the ghosts, and quarters them and chaws,
The showers make them howl, like dogs afeared.”

Mr. Cayley has translated the line,

“ *Non avea membro, che tenesse fermo,*

in this way—

“ No fibre in my body rested firm ;”

whereas it refers to Cerberus,

“ He had no limb that he could keep at rest.”

This is probably a slip, but in other cases alterations are made by the translator without the consent of the author. Thus, in the description of the fire-flakes on the sand in Canto xiv. :—

“ *Tale scendeva l' eternale ardore :
Onde la rena s' accendea, com' esca
Sotto focile.*”

(“ Thus was descending the eternal heat
Whereby the sand was set on fire, like tinder
Beneath the flint.”)

Mr. Cayley has—

“ So fell that scorching shower eternally,
By which the sands were kindled at their feet
As coals by wind.”

In Canto xxv. the line,

“ *Livido e nero come gran di pepe.*”
 (“Livid and black as is a peppercorn,”)

Mr. Cayley writes—

“ All black and livid, like a mildewed ear.”

I give one more instance to show how Mr. Cayley is o'ermastered by the rhymes :—

“ As when a mother, wakened by the rout,
Beholds the flames her neighbourhood invade,
She taketh up her child, and rusheth out,
Nor tarries, paying him far more regard
Than self, to don a single shift or clout.”

Canto xxiii.

In fact, the rhymes are the weak point of this translation. At page 25 “king” is made to rhyme with “win;” “aspire” with “leave thee by her,” page 7. He also uses obsolete words and inappropriate English, as, for example—

“ My mind returned that had to cover fled,” p. 37.

“ My tongue seems oft before its talk to freeze,” p. 29.

“ As well they meet,” p. 42; “now chew the verdict,” p. 46; “the blast remaineth whist,” p. 34; “sāns favouring fate, and sāns design of God,” p. 145; “nor could ever pick my face from theirs,” p. 145; “pullulate,” p. 156; “not cark,” p. 141; “mammoaked,” p. 201; “to moil,” p. 46; “surquedry,” p. 219, and so on. The frequent use of female rhymes also does not fit in well with the more usual male rhymes.

Mr. Thomas Brooksbank, M.A., has also translated the *Inferno* (Cambridge, 1854). He says, “I have chosen the metre of the original—a selection which, I think, in almost every case the best way of preserving the spirit of a poem; for it seems to me that in metre there is almost as much soul as in language.”

“ Midway upon the journey of my days
I found myself within a wood so drear,
That the direct path nowhere met my gaze.
Alas ! how hard the task to make it clear,
How thick and rough and savage was this wood,
To fancy which alone renews the fear.
So bitter was it death is scarce more rude—
But I will mention all that there befell
That I may thoroughly declare the good.”

The passage, the original of which is given at p. 8, is thus rendered :—

“ And as a man with harassed breathing fares
Who having 'scaped from ocean to the shore,
Turns back towards the dangerous deep—and stares.”

Mr. Bruce Whyte, advocate, gives what he calls a free translation of the *Inferno* (London, 1859) :—

“ When life's mid-journey I had scarcely made,
I found me in a wood's obscure recess,
Whither in devious folly I had stray'd—
But who shall venture justly to express
The horrors of that scene ?—e'en now dismay'd
I tremble to recall its savageness.”

Mr. Whyte says that it is “both the privilege and the duty of a translator to rectify any mistakes and to explain palpable ellipses, to neglect or curtail passages of mere verbiage, and to omit altogether descriptions or allusions of an obscure or revolting character.” In other words the translator, knowing better than the author, ought to be a greater man. But no one, I think, can compare Mr. Whyte's work with the original without a feeling of regret that translators are not in some way bound to give a faithful account of their author as they are to make their verses scan properly. In the following passage from Canto v. it must be admitted that unwarrantable liberties have been taken with it.

Dante says :—

“ And as their wings convey the starlings on,
In the cold time, in a large and full flock,
So doth the blast the wicked spirits,
Leading them hither and thither, up and down ;
No hope may ever comfort them
Of rest I say not but of lesser pain.”

Mr. Whyte says—

“ As staves when winter frosts are imminent
In widely scattered groups prepare to quit
In quest of some more genial continent,
So by the whirlwind tossed these spirits fit
East, west, north, south, or up in air or low,
No hopes have they their torments will remit,
None that the Fates will mitigate their woe.”

The Rev. John Wesley Thomas has published a translation of the *Inferno*, which professes “to unite with a version almost literal the form and beauty and the spirit of the original” (Penrith, 1859). It is, perhaps, too

severe a test of a translator's powers to give Mr. Thomas's version of the famous inscription, but the lines immediately following it may well illustrate his style:—

“ These words tremendous, writ in lines obscure,
I on the summit of a portal spied.
' Ah, Sir,' said I, ' to me their meaning sure
Is hard.' Then he as one informed replied," &c.

If the translator makes Dante thus polite to his Master Virgil, he is equally just to the demons who ask, " Pray, who is he ? " &c. ; and the haughty Farinata asks, " Who, pr'ythee, were thine ancestors ? "

Mr. Thomas's claim to be literal cannot, we fear, be allowed. Almost any passage will show this ; but take the opening of the second canto :—

“ The evening shadows, now the day was done,
Embrown'd the air, and brought repose to all
With labour wearied.”

Some of the rhymes are wonderful, as in Canto xviii.—

“ There is a place in hell called *Malebolge*
All rocky and of dark ferruginous stain,
Like the surrounding steep of which I told ye.”

Mrs. Ramsay's version (1862) professes, as far as possible, to have " kept the same words, the same rhymes as in the original, and even its occasionally almost grotesque peculiarities." I am sorry to have to dissent from this statement, seeing that the force and vigour of Dante I find replaced by a ladylike prettiness ; as, for example :—

“ About the middle of life's onward way,
I found myself within a darksome dell,
Because from the true path I went astray.
Alas ! how hard a thing it is to tell
Of that dark wood, so rugged and so bare ;
Anew I fear when there in thought I dwell.
Scarce death itself more bitterness doth wear ;
Yet to make known the good which there I found,
Now all its sorrows shall my tale declare.”

In 1865 a translation was published by " James Ford, A.M., Prebendary of Exeter, dedicated to the memory of Dante on the occasion of the sixth centenary of his birth."

The author has printed the Italian by the side of his own version—a bold proceeding, unless he had intended to be literal, and anything more remote from literality it would be difficult to imagine. The author has some misgiving on this point, for he says that, with the trammels of rhyme, “we are often obliged to dilute the sense; it may be, at times, to come short of it altogether.” The translation opens in the following manner:—

“ At the mid-stage of human life estray'd
I found me in a wood obscure; the way
Guiding aright was lost; and all was shade.
Ah! what it was 'tis hard—how hard—to say,
This woodland waste, so piercing sharp and strong,
It haunts me still, renewing the dismay.”

In Canto i. the panther,

“ Which with a spotted skin was covered ”

is, in this translation,

“ Dappled all o'er with spots in comely guise.”¹

And again, a few lines further on, where the original refers to

“ That wild beast with the variegated skin,”

Mr. Ford has—

“ The panther blithe, in gaudy coat attired.”

In 1865 also appeared the translation, accompanied by the original text, of the Rev. John Dayman, M.A., Rector of Skelton, Cumberland. This translation does not open more happily than the former:—

“ Midway the journey of our life along
I found me in a gloomy woodland dell,
The right road all confounded with the wrong.
Ah me! how hard a thing it were to tell
How rough and stern and savage showed the wood
Which yet remembered, yet is terrible!”

¹ Mrs. Ramsay's version is:—

“ And fair it was, with brightly spotted skin.”

There are so many things put in and altered that the original, if recognizable at all, is so distorted as not to reflect it with anything like fairness. The expressive line,

“ Che nel lago del cuor m’ era durata,”
 (“ Which in my heart’s lake had endured,”)

is thus spoiled by turgidity :—

“ Which chilled my ponded heart’s blood round the core.”

And the striking image of which the original is given at p. 8 is thus rendered :—

“ And like to him that struggling late for shore
 With gasped breath, now on the perilous surge
 Turneth him round, and dreamily doth pore.”

And the panther, “ which,” as already noted, “ with a spotted skin was covered,” with the Italian line standing on the opposite page, is thus rendered :—

“ In radiant coat of many colours glowed.”

In the introduction to the story of Francesca, Dante thus addresses Virgil :—

“ Poet, I would fain
 Speak to those two who go together
 And seem to be so light upon the wind.”

Mr. Dayman has—

“ Poet, I fain would speak
 To yonder pair that buoyant as the feather,
 Float undivided down the gusty reek.”¹

This version has been reviewed so favourably, and the author is said to improve so much as he proceeds, that it may be said that I have selected exceptional examples

¹ The following is Mr. Whyte’s translation of these lines :—

“ Illustrious Poet, I would fain confer
 With yonder couple who together speed
 By the fell blast impelled like gossamer.”

from the beginning before the author had warmed to his work. But I find the same loose rendering to prevail throughout the *Inferno*. Mr. Dayman is said to have done the *Purgatorio* in better style; but my business is, on the present occasion, limited to the *Inferno*. Canto xv. opens with this line:—

“ *Ora cen’ porta l’un de duri margini,*
 (“ Now one of those hard margins bears us.”)

Mr. Dayman has—

“ Now as one margent adamantine proof
 Bears us.”

Dante’s *ville* and *castelli*, a few lines lower down, become “the lowly grange or castled hall;” and in Canto xxxiii. the pathetic narration of Count Ugolino is disfigured by unwarranted variations from the text.

A translation of the first ten cantos of the *Inferno* was published in 1871 by “Ernest Ridsdale Ellaby, M.A., Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, and of Lincoln’s Inn, Barrister-at-Law.” It opens thus:—

“ On life’s midway—e’er half my days were o’er—
 All in a darksome wood I roved astray
 Whersin the way of truth was seen no more.
 Ah me ! ’twere a sad task, and hard to say
 How wild that woodland was, how sharp, how strong
 Its growth, which e’en in thought renews dismay.
 Does there to Death such bitterness belong?
 Yet wondrous things athwart my path that lay,
 And good which there I found shall wake my song.”

Dante says, Canto v. :—

“ *Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
 Esser baciato da cotanto amante,
 Questi, che mai da me non sia diviso
 La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante.*”

(“ Whenas we read about the longed-for smile,
 How by so great a lover it was kissed,
 This one who ne’er from me shall be divided
 Kissed me upon the mouth, trembling all over.”)

Mr. Ellaby has—

“ For when we came
To where it was narrated how that fair
Enchanting face was kissed, by one so fond,
So dear, he who from me henceforth will ne'er
Be severed, kissed my lips all tremblingly.”¹

In addition to the numerous translators of the *Inferno*, certain well-known names are connected with detached passages. I have met with a translation of the Ugolino story by Mr. Gladstone, dated 1837, in a volume of Translations by Lord Lyttelton and Mr. Gladstone (second edition, 4to, 1863). This translation seems to me to fail in expressing the peculiar pathos of the original, which a more close attention to Dante's language might have afforded. When, for example, the father's look of horror is met by the child's simple inquiry, as short and abrupt as suited the occasion—

“ *Tu guardi sì, padre : che hai ?* ”

this loses its effect in—

“ What ails thee, Father ? such thy look is grown.”

A child would not talk in this way.

In the Count's narration there is not a superfluous word. He says that the narrow opening in his prison-wall had shown him several moons when he had that ill dream which rent the veil of the future. The translator has :—

“ Had shown me many moons both *wax and fail*
Through its *dim* passage, when I slept the sleep
That rent *in twain* the future's darksome veil.”

This peculiar vice of the translator of putting in too much has a sadly weakening effect, as in these lines :—

¹ Mrs. Ramsay's version is :—

“ When we had read within that ancient tale
How sweet of such a loving one the kiss,
Then he, who from my side shall never fail
His lips to mine all tremblingly did press.”

“ *Pianger sentt fra ’l sonno i miei figliuoli
Ch’ eran con meco, e dimandar del pane.*”

(“ I heard my children who were with me weeping in their sleep and asking for bread.”)

“ I heard my sons moan faintly in their sleep
That with me dwelt, and bread for life invoke.”

The opening tercet is perhaps the most faulty of all.
The original is :—

“ That sinner raised his mouth from the fierce repast, wiping it upon
the hair of the head that he had wasted behind.”

“ The grim offender from his savage feast
Lifted his mouth, and wiped it with the hair
Of th’ head unseemly mauled that he released.”

A translator who is remarkable more for the easy flow
of his verses than for accurate rendering—J. Herman
Merivale (Poems, &c., 1838)—has several passages from
the *Inferno*. The following example from Canto v. may
suffice :—

“ And now the accents of despair resound.
Already have I journeyed on my way
To where loud wailings rend the welkin round—
A place unhallowed by the voice of day
Bellowing as ocean’s waves, by tempest curl’d
When warring winds dispute his tyrant sway.”

The fault, as it seems to me, in this and many other
renderings, lies in its turgidity, arising from the want of
due appreciation of the great power exerted by Dante by
the use of very simple language. The original of the
passage just quoted runs in this strain :—

“ Now do the dolent notes begin to make themselves heard by me ;
now am I come there where much plaining doth encounter me. I
came into a place mute of all light, which belloweth as the sea doth in
a tempest if it is combated by contrary winds.”

Leigh Hunt, in his *Stories from the Italian Poets*, 1846,
has given a version of the Story of Francesca, of which
the most ardent admirers of this agreeable writer may
well be ashamed. One extract will be sufficient :—

" But since thy wish be great to hear us tell
 How we lost all but love, tell it I will
 As well as tears will let me. It befell
 One day, we read how Lancelot gazed his fill
 At her he loved and what his lady said.
 We were alone, thinking of nothing ill.
 'Twas where the lover, moth-like in his flame,
 Drawn by her sweet smile, kissed it. O then he
 Whose lot and mine are now for aye the same
 All in a tremble on the mouth kissed *me*.
 The book did all. Our hearts within us burn'd
 Through that alone. That day no more read we."

I do not give the original, because the reader would not be able to recognize it through the medium of this version, but I append Longfellow's almost literal rendering :—

" But if to recognize the earliest root
 Of love in us, thou hast so great desire,
 I will do even as he who weeps and speaks.
 One day we reading were for our delight
 Of Lancelot, how Love did him enthral.
 Alone we were, and without any fear.
 Full many a time our eyes together drew
 That reading, and drove the colour from our faces ;
 But one point only was it that o'ercame us.
 When as we read of the much longed-for smile
 Being by such a noble lover kissed,
 This one, who ne'er from me shall be divided,
 Kissed me upon the mouth all palpitating.
 Galeotto was the book, and he who wrote it.
 That day no further did we read therein."

From this examination of the various translations of the *Inferno*, I conclude that there is no version in our language that represents this great poem in the three essential properties of form, literalness, and spirit. I have already admitted the great value of Rossetti, Longfellow, and Carlyle for the second of these properties, and also, in some degree, of Pollock ; also the merit of Cayley as to form and often as to spirit, although I do not consider his version as being literal. I have also stated with great freedom what I consider to be its defects. The other numerous versions seem to me to be inexact paraphrases, but ill adapted to represent the poem in our language.

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Indeed, I have been as much astonished in comparing these versions with the original as I was in the case of Petrarch's sonnets. In both cases I find myself in the company of educated men, many of them trained at public schools and at the university, and some of them in the enjoyment of dignified preferment, and yet producing no better results than those which I have cited in this Essay and in my book on the Sonnet. I do not think this is creditable to our scholarship, or to the literary tastes of the age. It is to be lamented that our youth are not better taught at school, or that some attempt should not be made to teach the difference between a good style and a bad one in our own language; that the models of ancient classic, as well as those of modern poetry, should not be made the subject of metrical translation and study, and be expounded by the master, so as to show what may be adopted and what avoided in rendering a poem from a foreign tongue into our own. Surely it could be impressed upon the mind of an intelligent boy that a great writer is a better judge of what is fit and proper to be said than he is; so that, when he came to be fellow of his college, or rector of his parish, he should be incapable of producing such specimens as those I have been examining. Is it not possible to teach translators that tinsel ornaments do not show off Dante's or Petrarch's verse to advantage? that badly-selected adjectives weaken the sense? that "the valley" is much better than "the humble valley"? that "the air" is a more manly expression than "the nimble air"? and that we can quite well understand what is meant by "a youth" without being told that he is "gentle"? How can it be impressed upon these gentlemen that they should forget themselves in their author? that they should lay aside their ornaments, and not think of the juvenile Prize Poem, but strive to be in their translations what they are so eminently in all the other relations of life, namely, truthful? Now, I will put it to any one whether there is not a species of dishonesty in calling that a translation which contains as much of the translator as of his author? which adulterates the gold of true poetry with its showy counterfeit, and gives the

reader a series of false ideas respecting the original, which he knows only through the so-called translation?

Coleridge owed much of his refined taste in poetry and in criticism to the happy circumstance that, in his time, the Head Master of Christ's Hospital, the Rev. James Bowyer, not only strove to make the boys good classical, but also good English scholars, by setting them to work to read Shakspeare and Milton as lessons; "and they were lessons, too, which required most time and trouble to *bring up*, so as to escape his censure. I learnt from him," continues Coleridge, "that poetry—even that of the loftiest, and seemingly that of the wildest odes—had a logic of its own as severe as that of science, and more difficult because more subtle, more complex and dependent on more and more fugitive causes. In the truly great poets, he would say, there is a reason assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word; and I well remember that, availing himself of the synonyms to the Homer of Didymus, he made us attempt to show, with regard to each, why it could not have answered the same purpose, and wherein consisted the peculiar fitness of the word in the original text. In our own English compositions he showed no mercy to phrase, metaphor, or image, unsupported by a sound sense, or where the same sense might have been covered with equal force and dignity in plainer words. Lute, harp, and lyre, muse, muses, and inspirations, Pegasus, Parnassus, and Hippocrene, were all an abomination to him."—*Biograph. Lit.*, chap. i.

I suppose it is too much to expect that the sixth form boys in our public schools should be subjected to similar discipline, seeing that the head masters are not all of them Bowyers. They may be good scholars, as they are earnest, conscientious men, and yet not possess that gift which is so rare, namely, the critical faculty. It is like the sense of beauty: if it does not already exist it cannot well be produced by any amount of tillage. The study of classics and mathematics tends to sound intellectual habits; but, unless there is a love of the things studied for their own sake, they will not be spontaneously resumed

when the object for which they were taken up has been attained. Men who have taken honours in classics do not always love classical literature, and may not spontaneously recur to it unless they have to teach it, in which case they may fail to impart to their pupils a sense of those beauties which have rendered their authors immortal.

Among the multitude of boys and girls that are taught there must be some born poets and born critics, who, being taught in a more or less mechanical manner, never become conscious of their gift, or they exercise it in so inefficient a manner as to lose its advantages, not the least among which is that cultured influence which a well-trained superior mind insensibly exerts upon all who come within its influence. It is for want of such training as that which Coleridge so well describes that the general public is lacking in discrimination. I have inquired among publishers as to the demand for translations of Dante, and am informed that Cary is still in request, and a reprint of him, dated 1876, has just been put into my hands. I am told that Cary is pleasanter reading than either Rossetti or Longfellow, on the same ground, I suppose, that Pope's Homer is more elegant than Lord Derby's. I am further informed that, if a rhymed version is wanted, Wright's is one of established reputation. Nevertheless, in spite of these discouragements, I have made a new translation of the *Inferno*, and the foregoing details contain the excuse for, if not the justification of, it. In this translation an attempt is made to combine the three essential properties of literalness, form, and spirit, in which respects it differs from all other translations; for, if some are literal, they do not preserve the form, and, if others have the form, they are not literal; and it seems to me impossible to catch the spirit by any system of paraphrase that has hitherto been adopted.

A rhymed translation, from the very necessities of the case, cannot be as literal as one in blank verse; but where the intention of the former is to be as literal as possible, there will be a certain resemblance to the latter at least as regards particular passages or lines which can only be properly rendered in one way. This coincidence is less

likely to happen when the translator infuses his own style into his version, and alters the letter of the original at will, in order, as he supposes, to catch the spirit. But when the translator is willing to sink himself in his author, and to prefer a bad line which retains the sense to a better line which warps it, he is more likely to reflect his author without distortion than by the adoption of a freer method. And if at the same time he retain the form of the original, he has a better chance of producing a poetical effect than one who trusts to the literal baldness of blank verse.

Such views have guided me in my translation of the *Inferno*, which I now submit to the candid critic and reader. I am fully aware that it is more easy to point out faults in the work of others than to avoid them in one's own; yet I venture to hope that this version is free from the more obvious defects of paraphrase, and especially from the grave error of making Dante appear to indulge in the vice of fine writing, which afflicts so many of his translators.¹

¹ The text that I have followed in this translation is that of the Venice Edition of 1760 of Dante's works in 5 vols. 8vos, which contains the copious notes of Venturi and Volpi. In doubtful passages I have referred to the Padua Edition of 1822. My notes, which, with very few exceptions, are strictly exegetical, are derived from the above sources, occasionally assisted by the brief and judicious notes of Rossetti and those of the latest German translator, Karl Bartsch (Leipzig, 1877).

HIGHGATE, N.
1877.

A VISION OF HELL.

CANTO I.

Having strayed in a dark forest, and being impeded by some wild beasts from mounting a hill, Dante is joined by Virgil : who promises him the sight of the pains of Hell, then Purgatory, and that at last he should be conducted by Beatrice into Paradise : and he follows Virgil.

Upon the journey of our life midway,¹
I found myself in a dark forest,² where
The beaten path direct had gone astray.
Ah me ! how hard it were to make it clear
What was this strong rough forest tangled o'er ;
Which only in the thought renews the fear.³
So bitter 'tis, e'en Death is little more :
But to describe the good there found by me,
I'll tell of other things I saw before.
I cannot say how there I chanced to be,
So full of slumber was I at that time⁴
When the true path I left unwittingly.

¹ "The days of our years are threescore years and ten."—Ps. xc. 10. At the time when the poet's vision began, namely, on Good Friday, A. D. 1300, he had attained the "midway" age of thirty-five.

² The dark forest implies life full of error, with particular reference to the disturbed political condition of Italy at the time, and especially the Florentine factions of the Guelf and Ghibelline.

³ The poet is thinking of the errors of his youth.

⁴ The beclouding of spiritual light which leads to error.

But coming where a mountain 'gins to climb,¹
 Just at the spot that shuts the valley in,
 That pierced my heart with fear, its height sublime,
 I gazed upon, and saw its shoulders shine
 Already with that planet's² rays, which lead
 All men aright, what road soe'er they join.
 Then was the fear a little quieted,
 That in my heart's lake had endured all through
 The night that I had passed in so much dread.
 And then as one with troubled breathings, who,
 Forth issuing from ocean to the shore,
 Turns him about the perilous waves to view ;
 Thus did my spirit, fleeing still before,
 Turn backward to con o'er the pass again,
 From which no living soul escaped more.³
 When that my weary body rest did gain,
 Upon the desert slope I onward sped,
 Making the firm foot aye below remain.⁴
 And lo ! just where my pathway upward led,
 A panther,⁵ nimble, fleet exceedingly ;
 Which with a spotted skin was covered.
 And never moved she from before mine eye ;
 But so much hindered me upon my way,
 That oft I turned, that I might backward fly.
 The time was the beginning of the day :
 The sun was rising up, and on his wings
 Were those same stars, the which with him did stay,
 When Love Divine first moved those beauteous things,⁶
 So that to me good cause for hope and cheer
 Rose from that wild beast's hide with chequerings,
 The hour as well, and the sweet time of year :
 But not so much so, but the sight to me
 Of a Lion⁷ that appeared, renewed my fear.

¹ The steep path of virtue.

² In accordance with the Ptolemaic system, the sun was a planet.

³ Moral death. See Jeremiah ii. 6.

⁴ In climbing a hill slowly the body rests longest on the hinder foot.

⁵ The panther is the figure for sensual pleasure.

⁶ There is a tradition that the world was created on the 25th of March.

⁷ Pride, or ambition, and, politically, the Court of France. (See Jeremiah v. 6.)

This one 'gainst me seemed coming visibly
 With head upraised, by furious hunger led,
 The very air seemed terror-fraught to be ;
 Also a she-wolf,¹ who seemed burdened
 With all desires, with her own meagreness,
 Who many folks to sorrow hath misled.
 This one brought on me so much heaviness
 Through dread, proceeding from her very mien,
 That to ascend the height seemed hopelessness.
 And like to him, who, eager for some gain,
 Comes to the time when he must surely lose,
 When every thought brings tears and saddening pain :
 So worked on me that beast without repose,
 Who coming 'gainst me, by degrees constrained
 Me to fall back there where the sun ne'er shows.²
 As to the lowland I swift pace maintained,
 I came aware of one before my face,
 Who hoarse appeared through silence long sustained.³
 And seeing him in that great desert place,
 I cried to him, "Oh ! pity take on me,
 Whate'er thou art, shade or of human race."
 He said : "Not man : I was man formerly,
 My parents erst belonged to Lombard's state,
 For country Mantuans both in verity.
Sub Julio was I born, though somewhat late ;
 At Rome, 'neath good Augustus, lived I long,
 When false and lying gods maintained their state.
 Poet was I ; the object of my song
 Anchises' son, the just, who came from Troy,
 When Ilion proud had fallen the flames among.
 But thou, why turn'st thou back to such annoy ?
 Why not to the delectable mount ascend,
 The source and cause alike of every joy ?"

¹ Avarice, and, politically, the Court of Rome, and the temporal power.

² Dante being a Ghibelline, and in favour with the Emperor, is opposed to the Guelfs, to Pope Boniface VIII. and King Philip the Fair of France. He is banished from the sunshine of Florence.

³ Referring to the neglect of the study of Virgil. At a later period. Petrarch was held to be a sorcerer because he read Virgil.

I answer while with bashful front I bend :
 " Art thou that Virgil, then, and that same spring
 Whence so great stream of language did expand ?
 O light and pride of all the Bards that sing !
 May the great love, long study profit me,
 Which to explore thy volume me did bring.
 In thee, my master, author too, I see,
 For thou art he alone, from whom I won
 The beauteous style that made me honour'd be.
 But lo ! the beast, that made me backward run :
 Protect me, O thou famous sage ! from her
 Who makes veins, pulses, tremble every one."
 "'Tis fit some other pathway thou prefer,"
 Beholding me in tears, he made reply,
 " If thou wouldst 'scape this savage place and drear.
 Because the beast, that wrung from thee that cry,
 Allows no one to travel by her way,
 But worries him so much that he must die.
 Nature so black and fell doth she display,
 That never can she satisfy her greed,
 But after eating hungrier is alway.
 Already many animals hath she wed,
 And will wed many more, till the swift hound¹
 Who will inflict her death-pangs, hither speed.
 In land or pelf his food will not be found,
 In wisdom, virtue rather, and in love,
 And the two Feltros will his nation bound :
 Saviour of that poor Italy he'll prove,
 For whom Camilla, Virgin, Turnus bled,
 Nisus, Euryalus alike death-wounded strove :
 Through every city after her he'll speed,
 Till he hath thrust her back to that same hell,
 Whence she by Envy first was loosenèd.
 Therefore I think and counsel for thy weal,
 That thou shouldst follow me ; I'll guide thee hence,
 And though an eternal place the way reveal,
 Where thou shalt hear the desperate utterance,
 The antique spirits all lamenting see,

¹ Can Grande della Scala, Lord of Verona, who was born between Felтро and Montefeltro.

Each crying for second death's deliverance.
 Then thou shalt see those who contentedly
 Endure the fire, because they hope to join
 The blessed people, whensoever it be.
 Then if ascent to them be thy design,
 A soul¹ shall come, worthier for that than I,
 I'll place thee 'neath her guidance, quitting mine ;
 Since the great Emperor, who rules on high,
 Because I rebel, did His laws disdain,
 Allows no one, through me, His city nigh.
 His rule is universal ; there His reign,
 There is His city, and His lofty throne ;
 How blest, whom He elects there to remain."

And I to him : " Poet, I ask this boon
 By that same God, whom thou didst never know
 So that I 'scape this ill, and heavier one,
 That to the place thou'st told of, I may go ;
 So that Saint Peter's gate I may but find,
 And those thou mak'st to dwell in so much woe."

Then moved he on, and I kept pace behind.

CANTO II.

The Poet doubts whether his strength is sufficient for the journey
 into Hell, as proposed by Virgil, but being comforted by him,
 he takes courage, and follows him as Leader and Master.

Day was departing, and the grey brown air
 Released the animals that on earth remain
 From their fatigues ; while I alone prepare
 Myself the war's encounter to sustain,
 Whether it be of road, whether of woe,
 Which mind, that doth not err, will trace again.
 O Muses, Genius high, assist me now !
 O Mind, that wrotest that which I descried,
 Here thy nobility itself will show !

¹ Beatrice.

I thus began : " O Poet, thou who'rt guide,
 Regard my manhood, if it powerful be,
 Ere to the arduous pass thou me confide.
 Thou say'st that Silvius' parent¹ while still he
 Corruptible remained, did surely go
 To the immortal kingdom bodily.
 If He, of every wickedness the foe,
 Was courteous, thinking of the high effect
 That would proceed from him, and what and who,
 He worthy seems to men of intellect,
 Since of great Rome, and of her empire, he
 In the empyreal heaven was Sire elect.
 Both which (I wish to speak in verity)
 Were established as the holy place, wherein
 We the successor of the greater Peter see.
 And on that journey, which thy praise doth win
 He heard of things which of his victory were
 And of the papal stole the origin.
 Thither the Chosen Vessel¹ did repair,
 To bring back comfort, and that faith sustain
 Which opes salvation's way : but there
 Why should I go ? from whom concession gain ?
 I'm not Æneas, and not Paul am I :
 Nor I, nor others, worthy would me deign.
 If to the coming then I now comply,
 I fear that coming may but folly prove :
 Thou'rt wise, and know'st more than my words supply."
 Like one who unwill's what he willed, when move
 New thoughts that come to alter his intent,
 And him from his first purpose to remove,
 So on that darksome hill did I repent :
 Because in thinking I consumed th' emprise,
 Whose first steps so impetuously went.
 That shade of the magnanimous one replies,
 " If I thy words have rightly understood,
 Thy soul with cowardice infected lies,
 Which many a time a man doth so delude,
 As from an honoured deed him to repel,
 As false sight doth at dusk a beast illude.

¹ Æneas.² St. Paul.

That thou the dread thou feelest mayst expel,
 Why here I came, and what was said to me,
 When pity for thee first I felt, I'll tell.
 I was 'mong those who in suspension be,¹
 A saintly Lady called me, one so fair,
 I begged her to command my service free.
 Her eyes shone brighter than the star ;² and clear
 And soft her angel voice, when she began
 In her own tongue, thus to address mine ear.
 'O courteous spirit of the Mantuan !
 Whose fame yet in the world hath known no end,
 Fame that will last as long as motion can :
 A friend of mine, of Fortune not a friend,
 Now on the desert slope, upon his way
 Is hindered, and through dread would backward wend :
 He may, I fear, be so much gone astray,
 That I have risen to his aid too late,
 From that which I of him in Heaven heard say.
 Now hasten thou, and with thy speech ornate,
 And with what else it needs for his release,
 Assist him so, that I be console.
 I, who now bid thee go, am Beatrice :
 I come from thence, whither I back would be :
 Love moved me, so that I my wish express.
 When I shall be before my Lord, of thee
 I'll often speak to Him, thy praises own ; '
 She ceased, and then to her I made reply :—
 'O virtuous Lady ! thou, through whom alone
 The human race excelleth all who dwell
 Within that heaven by lesser circles known ;
 So grateful thy command, that could I tell
 'Twere now obeyed, I'd deem it all too late ;
 Thou needst not further ope to me thy will.
 But tell me why thou dost not hesitate
 To seek this centre, from that ample space
 To which thou wouldst so eagerly retreat ? '
 ' Since thou desir'st my inward thoughts to trace,

¹ Suspended in Limbo, that is, neither blessed in glory, nor tormented with punishment ; neither saved nor lost.

² The planet Venus.

I'll tell thee briefly,' she replied to me,
 'Why I fear not to come within this place.
 Of those things only should we fearful be
 Which powerful are in doing others ill,
 Not of the rest; in them no fear we see.
 I was created, by God's merciful will,
 Such, that your misery doth not me attain,
 Nor flame of this same burning me assail.
 A gentle Lady¹ doth in heaven complain
 Of this impediment, to which thou'rt sent;
 So there stern judgment broken doth remain.
 With her request to Lucia² she went
 And said: 'Thy faithful one needs aid from thee,
 I recommend him unto thy intent.'
 Lucia, the foe of every cruelty,
 Bestirred herself, and came to the place where I
 With ancient Rachel³ sat in company.
 And said, 'True praise of God, O Beatrice, why
 Dost thou not succour him who loved thee so,
 That he, for thee, the vulgar herd did fly?
 Dost thou not hear his piteous cries of woe?
 Nor see death combat him that flood beside,
 O'er which the ocean can no boasting know?'
 Never did persons in the world abide,
 More swift to fly their ill, their gain to meet,
 Than I after such speech as this. I hied
 Me downward from my blessed seat,
 Confiding in thy speech ingenuous,
 Which honours thee, and those who've heard thee yet.'
 When she had finished speaking to me thus,
 Her beaming eyes in tears she turned away,
 Whereby she made me swifter on my course.
 And so I came to thee, as she did pray;
 From that wild beast have I delivered thee,
 Which to yon mountain bright, barred the short way.
 What is it then? and why, why tardy be?
 Why doth such baseness nestle in thy heart?
 Why hast not ardour, intrepidity?

¹ Divine Mercy.² Enlightening Grace.³ The Contemplative Life.*straightway/*

Seeing that in the Court of Heaven thy part
 Is ta'en by three such Ladies benedite :
 Such promise too, of good my words impart."
 E'en as the flowers, by the cold of night,
 Are bowed and closed, but, whitened by the sun,
 All lift them, open, on their stems upright,
 Such I became, with forces all outrun :
 And so much courage then my heart possessed
 That I began, like one to boldness won :
 "O she, compassionate, that aided best !
 And courteous thou, who hast so soon obeyed
 The words of truth which she to thee addressed !
 Thou dost my heart with such desire persuade
 To come with thee, and so thy words have won,
 That I resume what I at first essayed.
 Therefore proceed, thy will and mine are one :
 Thee Leader, Lord, and Master, I obey."
 Thus I to him, and when he movèd on,
 I entered on the deep and wooded way.

CANTO III.

Virgil leads Dante to the gate of Hell : after having read its fearful inscription, they enter. There he hears from Virgil that the Worthless are punished : they arrive at the river Acheron, where they find Charon, who conveys the souls to the other bank : the fearful appearances cause Dante to swoon.

THROUGH ME THE WAY IS TO THE CITY OF WOE :
 THROUGH ME THE WAY WHERE PAINS ETERNAL PROVE :
 THROUGH ME THE WAY 'MONG THE LOST FOLK DOTH GO.
 JUSTICE MY GREAT CREATOR FIRST DID MOVE :
 DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE CREATED ME,
 THE HIGHEST WISDOM, AND THE PRIMAL LOVE.
 BEFORE ME NO CREATED THINGS COULD BE
 IF NOT ETERNE, AND I ETERNE ENDURE :
 WHO ENTER, EVERY HOPE ABANDON YE.

These words I saw in colouring obscure,
 Upon the summit of a portal writ :
 "Master," said I, "their sense is hard to secure."
 Then he to me, like one to counsel fit :
 "Here all suspicion must abandoned be,
 And of all cowardice it needs be quit.
 We're come to that place, where I said to thee
 That thou the dolorous people shalt behold,
 Who've lost the intellect's felicity."
 And after having of my hand ta'en hold,
 With cheerful face, which comforted somewise,
 He placed me mid the secret things untold.
 Here sighs and lamentations, howling cries,
 Resounded through the starless atmosphere,
 Which at the first brought tears into mine eyes.
 What diverse tongues, what horrid speeches here,
 What raging accents, dolorous words of woe,
 Shrill and hoarse voices, sounds of hands were there,
 Making a tumult, that doth whirling go
 For ever in that air of timeless night,
 Like sand uplifted when the whirlwinds blow.
 And I who had my head bound with affright,
 Said, "Master! tell me what is this I hear?
 What folk, who seem by torment vanquished quite."
 Then he : "The mournful souls thou seest here
 In miserable mode, to those belong
 Whose lives nor infamy nor praises share.
 And they that caitiff choir are placed among
 Of angels, who rebellèd not, but were
 To God not faithful, selfishness their wrong.
 Heaven turned them out, that it be not less fair ;
 Nor does the deeper hell receive, lest they,
 The guilty ones, should have some glory there."
 "Master," said I, "what grief doth on them weigh,
 That maketh them such loud laments outpour?"
 And he : "What 'tis, in brief to thee I'll say.
 These people have the hope of death no more :
 And their blind life is so debased and low,
 That every other lot they envy sore.
 No fame of them the world will e'er allow :

Mercy and justice them alike disdain :
 Speak we not of them, look and pass on now."
 Looking again, I saw a flag maintain
 A whirling motion, it so swiftly sped,
 It seemed unworthy any pause to gain :
 And after it so long a train was led
 Of people, that I never had believed
 That Death so many of them had unmade.
 When some known ones among them I'd perceived,
 I look'd, and I beheld of him¹ the shade,
 Whose great renouncement cowardice achieved.
 Forthwith I understood, was certain made,
 That this was that same sect of caitiffs, who
 To God are hateful, whom God's foes upbraid.
 These wretches, who to be alive ne'er knew,
 Were naked, and were stung exceedingly
 By flies and wasps that round about them flew,
 So that their faces were bathed bloodily,
 Blood mixed with tears went trickling to their feet,
 And was devoured by worms loathsome to see.
 Then looking further onward than as yet,
 I saw folk by a mighty river's side :
 Wherefore I said, "Master, I pray thee let
 Me know who these are, by what custom tied,
 That makes them seem so ready to pass o'er,
 As through the dusky light I have descried."
 Then he :—"These things shall be accounted for
 At the same time that we our footsteps rest
 On Acheron's so melancholy shore."
 Then with mine eyes ashamed and downward cast,
 Fearing my speech might irksome to him seem,
 Far as the river I from parlance ceased.
 And lo ! towards us in a ship there came
 An old man grey with hair of antique mien,
 "Woe's you, depravèd souls," did he exclaim :
 "Hope nevermore to see the heavens again :
 I come to take you to the other shore,

¹ According to Boccaccio, this was Celestin V., who, by the cunning advice of him who afterwards became Boniface VIII., resigned the papacy.

To the shades eterne, of heat and cold the scene :
 And thou, a living soul, here me before,
 Depart from such as these, for they are dead ;”
 But when he saw that I to go forebore,
 “By other ways, by other ports,” he said,
 “Thou’lt come ashore, but not here, passage find ;
 To thee needs a lighter vessel’s aid.”
 “Charon ! vex not thyself,” my Guide rejoined,
 “’Tis so willed there, where there is power to claim
 Doing what’s willed : no further needs’t thou mind.”
 Then quieted the woolly cheeks became
 Of him, the Pilot of that livid fen,
 Who circled round his eyes had wheels of flame.
 But all those souls, weary and naked, then
 Gnashing their teeth, to change in colour seemed,
 Soon as those pitiless words had reached their ken.
 They blasphemed God, their parents they blasphemed,
 The human race, the place, the time, the seed
 From them upsprung ; their birth they hateful deemed.
 And then together they all backward speed
 Weeping convulsively, to that cursed shore
 Which waits for all, who God’s fear never heed.
 The Demon Charon, with eyes kindled o’er,
 Beckons them on, and so collects them all,
 And those who lag behind strikes with his oar.
 As when the autumn makes the leaves to fall,
 First one and then another, till the bough
 Yields to the earth again its spoils withal,
 So do the evil seed of Adam go,
 Cast from that beach, at signals, one by one,
 As when a bird its own recall doth know.
 So they depart upon the water dun,
 And ere upon the other bank they be,
 This side already a new troop hath won.
 “My Son,” the courteous Master said to me,
 “All these who perish in God’s wrath, and here
 Together meet, from every land are they.
 Ready to cross the river they appear,
 Since heavenly justice urges them suchwise,
 And makes desire change places with their fear.

A righteous soul by this way never hies :
 And hence if Charon doth at thee complain,
 Well thou may'st know what his complaint implies."
 This being finished, all that dusky plain
 Trembled convulsively, which caused such dread,
 That sweat drops bathe me, thinking on it again.
 And that same tearful land a wind-blast bred
 From which vermilion lightnings flashed as well,
 And so o'erpowered me that my senses fled,
 And like a man o'ercome with sleep, I fell.

 CANTO IV.

The Poet is awakened by thunder, and follows his guide into Limbo, the First Circle of Hell, where he finds the souls of those who, although they lived virtuously, had not been baptized, and therefore do not merit Paradise. Thence he is led by Virgil to the Second Circle.

The lethargy that so oppressed my head
 A heavy thunder broke : I starting rose
 Like one who by some force is wakened :
 Standing erect, my eyes by brief repose
 Refreshed, I gazed intently all-around,
 If haply, where I was, I might disclose.
 'Tis certain on the edge myself I found
 Of the valley of the dolorous abyss
 Whose endless woes gather in thunder's sound.
 Obscure, profound and nebulous was this,
 So that though fixedly I gazed below,
 No object could be seen within that place.
 "Descend we here into the blind world now,"
 Began the poet, who was pallid quite :
 "I will be first, and thou shalt second go."
 And I, who marked his colour with quick sight,
 Said "How shall I go, if thou art afraid
 Who'rt wont to comfort me in doubt, aright ?"

"The anguish of these folk down here," he said
 To me, "depicts already on my face
 That pity which thou deem'st of terror made :
 Let's on, for the long way urges our pace."
 So he went in, and made me enter where
 The first circle engirts the abysmal place.
 Here as by listening I became aware,
 There was no lamentation, save of sighs,
 Which caused a trembling in the eternal air :
 From sorrow without pangs did this arise
 From out the crowds which numerous were and great,
 Of infants, women, and of men likewise.
 "Thou dost not ask," said the good Master straight,
 "Who are these spirits that thou dost behold ?
 I'd have thee know, ere further on we get,
 That they sinned not ; what good of them is told,
 Is not enough ; baptism they've not received,
 Which is the door of the faith that thou dost hold :
 And if before the Christian time they lived,
 They did not duly worship God aright :
 And among such as these was I conceived.
 For such defects, not other sinful plight
 We're lost, but only this our punishment,
 To have no hope, while yet desires incite."
 Great sorrow seized my heart at this intent :
 Since people of much virtue knew I well
 Suspended in that limbo's languishment.
 "My Lord and Master, tell, I pray thee, tell,"
 Began I, so that I might certain be
 About that faith which error must dispel :
 "E'er scaped one hence, by his own probity,
 Or that of other, who thence blessed was owned ?"
 He, seeing that I questioned covertly,
 "When in this state," he said, "I first was found,
 I saw a powerful One come hither, who
 With victory's insignia was crowned :
 He the first parent's shade from us withdrew,
 Abel his son's, and Noh's hence did bring,
 Moses, lawgiver, who obedience knew,
 The Patriarch Abraham, and David king,

Israel, his sire, his children, and not least
 Was Rachel, for whose sake his suffering :
 And many others, and he made them blest ;
 And earlier than these I'd have thee know
 No human spirits had salvation's rest."

Talking the while, we onward still did go
 With pace continuous through that forest there,
 Forest, I say, of spirits crowded so.
 Not far the way we had as yet gone, here
 This side the summit, lo ! a fire in view,
 Which quenched the darkness of a hemisphere.
 Though some short distance from us, yet I knew
 T'was not so far, but I could partly see
 The place was held by honoured folk not few.
 "O thou who honourest art and science, say
 Who these may be, who've so much honour found
 That they from the others' mode departed be ?"

Then he to me "The fame that doth resound
 Up in thy world, of each one's honoured name
 Gains grace in heaven, which with them doth abound."

Meanwhile, I heard a voice aloud proclaim
 "All honour to the illustrious Poet be,
 Whose shade departed we again may claim !"
 When ceased the voice, and all went quietly,
 I saw four mighty shades to us draw near,
 Whose mien nor sadness had, nor gaiety.
 Then my good Master thus addressed mine ear :
 "Look well at him who comes with sword in hand
 Before the three ; as Lord he would appear :
 'Tis Homer, who all poets doth command,
 Then Horace thou may'st see, the satirist,
 Ovid the third, Lucan last in the band.
 And since for them, with me, doth still subsist
 The title which that single voice proclaimed,
 They do me honour, which for them is best."

Assembled thus I saw that school so famed
 Of the Master of the most illustrious song,
 Who o'er the rest a flight like eagles claimed.
 In mutual talk they passed some time, not long,
 Then turned to me with marks of greeting, when

The Master smiled that to me should belong
 Such honour ; much more honour gave they then,
 Seeing they made me one of their own band ;
 So I was sixth, 'mong such illustrious men.
 Thus we went on up to the luminous land,
 Speaking of things 'twere prudent not to proclaim,
 As was their talk while with them I remained.
 To the foot of a noble castle then we came,
 Seven times with lofty walls 'twas girt around,
 Defended by a fair streamlet round the same.¹
 This we passed o'er, as though 'twere solid ground,
 And with these sages through seven portals went
 Far as a meadow with fresh verdure crowned.
 And folk were there, with dim eyes gravely bent,
 And great authority was in each face :
 Soft-voiced were they, with seldom speech content.
 Thus we withdrew aside, into a place
 Open, and high, and luminous, I ween,
 So that all could be seen within that space.
 There, o'er against us, on the enamelled green,
 Were pointed out to me the spirits high ;
 I felt a pride them only to have seen.
 I saw Electra, with much company,
 'Mongst whom both Hector and Æneas I knew,
 Cæsar, in arms, with the rapacious eye.
 I saw Camilla, Penthesilea too
 On the other side, Latinus King, there placed,
 Lavinia, his daughter, sat with him in view.
 I saw that Brutus, who the Tarquin chased,
 Lucrece, Cornelia, Julia, Marcia there,
 The Saladin, seated apart from the rest.
 Raising my eyelids more, I saw appear
 The Master of those who knowledge cultivate,
 Seated with philosophic family near.
 All gaze with rapture, pay him honour great.
 Both Socrates and Plato near advance
 Before the rest, who at some distance wait.
 Democritus, who puts the world on chance,

¹ The Castle is said to represent abstract Virtue, and the seven walls the seven virtues, and the seven gates the seven sciences.

Diogenes, Anaxagoras, and Thales,
 Zeno, Empedocles, Heraclitus, the band enhance.
 The good collector of the qualities,
 I mean Dioscorides, Orpheus saw I,
 The moral Seneca, Tully, Livy, with these,
 Euclid, geometer, and Ptolemy,
 Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna
 Averroes of the great commentary.
 I cannot all of them in full pourtray,
 Since the long theme doth me so onward press,
 That oft the facts exceed what I can say.
 The sixfold band is made by two the less :
 By another way my wise Guide me inclines
 To the trembling air from out the quietness :
 I come to a place, where nothing is that shines.

 CANTO V.

Minos sits in judgment at the entrance of the Second Circle. There
 are punished the Lustful. Story of Francesca da Rimini.

From the first circle thus I passèd down
 Unto the second, which begirts less space,
 And so much greater pain, that's pricked to groan.
 Minos stands there, with horrid snarling face :
 At the entrance he examines all misdeeds,
 Judges and sends, as his own coils embrace.
 I say that when the ill-born soul he heeds
 Standing before him, and confessing all,
 And he, the assessor of all evil deeds,
 Sees to what place in hell that soul shall fall,
 He round his body girds so oft his tail
 As grades he wills it be thrust down withal.
 The crowds before him standing never fail ;
 And each in turn to judgment surely goes ;
 They speak, they hear, then down without avail.

"O thou who com'st to this hostelry of woes,
 Beware!" said Minos, when he me descried,
 (And ceased of his high functions to dispose)
 "How thou dost enter, and in whom confide;
 Let not the entry's amplitude deceive."
 "Why dost complain?" said unto him my Guide;
 "His fated going hinder not, I crave;
 It is so willed where there is power to do
 That which is willed—all further question leave."
 And now the notes of wailing 'gin to grow
 Unto my hearing; for I now am come
 Where I the sounds of much lamenting know.
 I came to a place where every light is dumb,
 Which bellows as in a tempest doth the sea,
 When winds opposing lash it into foam.
 The infernal hurricane incessantly
 Urges the spirits by its virulence on,
 Whirling and smiting them molestingly.
 No sooner they the precipice have won,
 There the complainings, shrieks, and the lament,
 Virtue Divine blaspheming every one.
 I understood that 'neath such chastisement,
 The carnal sinners were condemned to be,
 Whose reason unto appetite is bent.
 And as their wings the starlings on convey
 In the cold time, in a large flock replete,
 So doth the blast these cursèd spirits sway
 Hither and thither, up and down them beat;
 No hope can evermore their minds upraise
 Of rest I say not, but less pain to meet.
 And as the cranes keep pouring forth their lays,
 Making themselves a long line in the air,
 So saw I coming, wailing on always,
 Shades carried on by the said torment there.
 Whence I, "O Master, what folk these, I pray,
 By the black air so scourged, that now appear?"
 "The first of those of whom thou'dst have me say
 Some news," he thereupon to me replied—
 "Empress of many languages was she:
 To sensual vices was she so much tied

She passed a law that lust might sanction plead,
 To remove the blame that did with her abide.
 She is Semiramis, of whom we read
 That she succeeded Ninus—was his wife,
 And ruled where now the Soldan is the head.
 Next she¹ who for love's sake took her own life,
 And to Sichæus' ashes broke her faith :
 Then Cleopatra, she with luxury rife."
 Helen I saw, for whom revolved there hath
 So much fell time. I saw Achilles great,
 Who combated with Love unto the death.
 Paris, Tristram, and more than a thousand yet
 He named, and with his finger showed to me,
 Whom love from this our life made separate.
 After my Teacher had thus wittingly
 The Dames and Chevaliers of old defined,
 I, whelmed by pity, almost ceased to be,
 And said, "O Poet, much am I inclined
 To address those two, who both together go
 And seem to be so light upon the wind."
 And he to me : "Thou shalt behold when so
 They nearer are to us ; do thou them pray
 By the love moving them ; they'll come, I know."
 Soon as the wind inclined them toward our way,
 Did I my voice upraise, "O souls distressed !
 Come speak to us if no one say ye nay."
 As turtle-doves for the belovèd nest
 Led by desire on firm-spread wing along,
 Fly through the air by one same will possessed ;
 So from the band that Dido is among,
 Came they approaching through the air malign,
 Such force did to the loving appeal belong.
 "O animal so gracious, and benign,
 Who through the black-blue air thy way dost wend
 To us, who've dyed the world incarnadine,
 Were but the King of the universe our friend
 We would make prayer to Him to give thee peace,
 Since with our woe perverse thy ruth doth blend.
 Say what to hear and speak it best may please ;

¹ Dido.

And we will hear and speak to you likewise,
 While the now silent winds from tumult cease.
 The territory I was born in, lies
 Upon the sea-coast where the Po descends
 To rest in peace, he and his tributaries.
 Love, that on gentle heart swiftly attends,
 Seized him by reason of the person fair
 Ta'en from me in a mode that still offends.
 Love, that lets no beloved 'scape loving care,
 Seized me ; so strong my love of him became
 That as thou seest, it quitteth me not here.
 Love brought us unto death, one and the same ;
 Caina waits for him, who took our life."
 Such were the words from them to us that came.
 When I had heard those souls oppressed with grief,
 I bent my head, so long held down my face,
 Till "What dost think ?" was the Poet's question brief.
 When I replied, I thus began, "Alas !
 How many dulcet thoughts, how much desire
 Conducted them unto the dolorous pass !"
 Then unto them I turned me to inquire
 And spake ; "Francesca, all thine agonies
 Make me to weep sad tears, and ruth inspire.
 But tell me : at the time of the sweet sighs,
 By what, and in what way, did love concede
 That dubious longings you should recognize ?"
 And she to me : "No greater grief we heed,
 Than to be minded of the happy time
 In misery ; and such thy Teacher's creed.
 But if to know our love's root in its prime
 The wish so strong a hold on thee doth take,
 Like one who weeps and speaks, I'll do like him.
 We read one day, for delectation's sake
 Of Lancelot, how love did him compel :
 Alone were we ; nought made suspicion wake.
 Full many a time that reading did impel
 Our eyes to meet, and paled each face the while :
 What conquered us, one point alone can tell.
 When we were reading of the longed for smile
 Which such a noble lover kissed of yore,

This one, who ne'er from me is separable,
 Kissed me upon the mouth, trembling all o'er :
 Galeotto was the book, and he who writ :
 That day we read within that book no more."
 And all the while one spirit uttered it,
 The other wept, and pity did so plead,
 I fainted quite, as in a dying fit,
 And fell, as falls a body that is dead.

 CANTO VI.

The Third Circle, where the Gluttons are punished under the guardianship of Cerberus. Ciacco the Hog.

When I to sense returned, which had been closed
 For pity's sake to that related pair,
 Which so with sadness wholly me confused,
 New torments, new tormented see I here,
 On all sides round, what path soe'er I gain,
 What way soe'er I turn, or gaze on there.
 In the third circle am I of the rain,
 Which endless, maledict, and dense, and cold,
 In kind or measure nought can new obtain.
 Great hail, stained water, and the snow behold,
 Down pouring through the darksome atmosphere,
 Making to stink the earth, which this doth hold.
 See Cerberus, cruel monstrous beast appear !
 From out three throats, bark like a dog doth he
 Over the people who are submerged here.
 Vermilion-eyed, black beard smeared greasily,
 Capacious belly, armed with claws each hand,
 The ghosts he rends, flays, quarters, cruelly.
 The rain brings dog-like howlings from the band ;
 One side they make for the other side a screen :
 And oft they turn, these miserable profaned.
 When Cerberus, great worm, us two had seen,

He oped his mouths, his fangs to us displayed :
 No limb had he, that he could still maintain.
 Whereon my Leader both hands open made,
 Took up some earth, and with his fists well filled
 Threw it within those throats of ravenous greed.
 Like as the dog craves food with barkings wild,
 And quiet is, soon as he bites the food,
 Since but to devour it he's fought and willed,
 Such like became the muzzles, filth imbued,
 Of demon Cerberus, who stunneth so
 The spirits, that if deaf they'd deem it good.
 Now treading on the shades we onward go,
 That the dense rain doth quell, our feet upon
 Their vanity, which substance seemed to know.
 They all were lying on the ground, save one
 Who quickly raised himself to sit upright
 When he saw us in front of him pass on.
 "O thou! that through this Hell art led aright,"
 He said to me, "if canst, me recognize :
 Before I was undone, thou saw'st the light."
 Then I, "It may be these thine agonies
 Withdraw thee altogether from my mind,
 So that I ne'er have seen thee I surmise.
 But tell me who thou art, and why consigned
 To such sad place, and to such punishment,
 That if some's greater, none's so foul to find."
 "Thy City which is full," he answer sent,
 "Of envy, so that now the sack runs o'er,
 Held me within, when life serenely went.
 You citizens, me Ciacco¹ named of yore.
 I, for the damnèd sin of gluttony,
 Am, as thou seest, worn by the rain's downpour.
 And I, sad soul, not doom'd alone to be,
 For all of these like punishments requite
 For the like sin"—and word no more spake he.
 And I replied :—"Ciacco! thy wretched plight
 Weighs on me so, I fain would weep thy fate.
 But tell to what shall come, if know'st aright,
 The citizens of that divided state ;

¹ That is, Hog.

If any there be just, and tell me why
 So much of discord her doth agitate ?”
 “After a contest long,” was his reply,
 “They’ll come to blood ; the rustic party ¹ then
 Will drive the other ² out with contumely.
 Then it behoves that this will fall again
 Within three suns, ³ the other rise once more
 By force of him ⁴ who now doth close remain.
 Long will it hold its forehead high, and sore
 Oppress the other one with many a weight,
 Howe’er it weep thereat, its shame deplore.
 Two just ⁵ there are, unheeded what they state,
 While envy, arrogance and avarice
 Are the three sparks that kindled hearts create.”
 He put an end to the tearful sound with this,
 And I to him ; “Instruct me yet again,
 And of thy further speech make benefice.
 Farinata, and Tegghiaio, once worthy men,
 Jacobo Rusticucci, Mosca, Arrigo,
 And those who of good deeds were mindful then,
 Say where they are, and cause me them to know,
 For strong desire would make me learn if they
 Sweetened in heaven, or hell-poisoned go.”
 And he : — “Among the blacker souls they stay,
 Weighed to the bottom down by many a sin :
 Thou may’st behold them, if so deep thy way. ⁶
 But when once more yonder sweet world thou’rt in,
 Prithee recall me unto others’ mind :
 I tell no more, no more thou’lt answer win.”
 Then his straightforward eyes asquint disjoined,
 Just looking at me, he with head bowed o’er,
 Fell flat therewith, like to the other blind.
 And the Guide said to me : “He’ll wake no more

¹ The Bianchi. } These were factions of Pistoja, the one supported

² The Neri. } by the Ghibellines, the other by the Guelfs.

³ That is, within three solar years.

⁴ Charles, brother of Philip the Fair, of France.

⁵ Various suggestions have been made as to who are here intended ;
 but nothing has been settled.

⁶ All these, with the exception of Arrigo, appear in later Cantos.

This side of the angelic trumpet's sound,
 When unto them shall come the hostile Power :
 When each again his sad tomb shall have found,
 His flesh retake, his figure reassume,
 He'll hear what shall through eternity resound."
 So passed we on through this foul mixture's gloom
 Of spirits and of rain, our tardy way,
 Touching a little on the life to come.
 Wherefore I said : " Master ! these torments, say
 Will they increase with the great sentence passed,
 Or lesser be, or burn on thus alway ?"
 And he to me, " Hold to thy science fast,
 Which teaches, the more perfect is the thing
 It more of pleasure or of pain can taste.
 Yet for this cursed people this the sting,
 Though they to true perfection ne'er attain,
 Yet to be greater there than here they cling."
 Round by a circle we our progress gain,
 Speaking much more than I can here repeat,
 Up to a point where we descent obtain,
 Where Plutus the great enemy we meet.

 CANTO VII.

The Fourth Circle, ruled by Plutus. Prodigals and Misers. The Fifth Circle, which contains the Wrathful and the Sullen in the Styx.

" Papè Satan, Papè Satan, Aleppè ! " ¹
 Thus Plutus with his clucking voice began,
 And my kind Sage, to comfort me, did say
 (He knowing all things) " This thy fear is vain,
 Because whate'er of power in him be owned,
 T'will stay thee not this crag's descent to gain."

¹ This gibberish is variously interpreted. It is evidently a cry of alarm from Plutus on seeing a human form ; and may be taken as an invocation to Satan.

Then to that swollen lip he turned him round
 And said, "Accursèd wolf, be still! do thou
 Consume thee with thy rage within thee found.
 Not causeless is it to the abyss to go:
 'Tis so willed there on high, where Michael wrought
 Vengeance upon the proud adulterous foe."¹
 Like as the wind-inflated sails are brought
 Low and involved, soon as the mast doth break,
 So fell to earth this beast with malice fraught.
 To the fourth chasm down our way we make,
 Further advancing on the dolorous shore,
 Which seems the universe's woes to ensack.
 Justice of God! alas, who thus heaps o'er
 New toils and sufferings here seen by me?
 Why doth our guilt cause us miscarriage sore?
 As doth the wave upon Charybdis sea,
 Which breaks on that which it encounters there,
 So here the folk break up in roundelay.
 Here saw I more of people than elsewhere,
 On one side and the other, with howlings great,
 By strength of chest, huge weights they're rolling here.
 They smote together; when at one point they met
 They turned with taunt, rolling them back again,
 "Why hold'st so fast?" and these, "Why squanderest
 yet?"
 They by the horrid round their place regain
 At the opposing point, on either hand,
 Still howling forth their shameful metric strain.
 And when arrived, turned them about each band,
 The joust in each half circle to renew.
 I could my heart's compunction not withstand,
 And said, "O Master, make it clear to view
 What folk are those that on the left are seen,
 If all were clerics, as their tonsures show?"
 And he to me, "They all of them have been
 In the first life so much asquint in mind,
 That nought to spend they measured as their gain.
 Clearly enough they bark it forth when joined
 They reach the two points of the circle, where

¹ This refers to the Archangel's punishment of the fallen Angels.

They from the opposing fault a barrier find.
 Clerics were they, who on the head no hair
 Have covering, Popes and Cardinals were they,
 On whom excess of avarice did bear."
 And I, "O Master, I might surely say
 'Mong such as these some few I ought to know,
 Who were polluted by such sinful way."
 And he to me—"In vain thou thinkest so ;
 Deformed by their so undiscerning life,
 They're dark become to all discernment now.
 They'll be for aye at this two buttings' strife :
 These from the sepulchre will rise again,
 With closed fists, and those with hair clipped brief.
 Ill-giving and ill-keeping lost them gain
 Of yon fair world, and brought them to this brawl,
 Which to describe, my ornate words were vain.
 Thou now canst see, my Son, how transient all
 The goods that are consigned as Fortune's boon,
 For which the human race themselves enthrall.
 For all the gold that is beneath the moon,
 Or ever was, a pause could never bring
 'Mong those o'erwearied souls to any one."
 "Master," said I, "I'd still be questioning ;
 What is this Fortune, whereof thou dost speak,
 That of the world's goods clutcheth everything ?"
 And he :—"O creatures imbecile and weak,
 How great that ignorance which you offends !
 My judgment of her now I bid thee take.
 He, whose omniscience everything transcends,
 The heavens made, appointed who should guide,
 So that each part to each part radiance sends,
 And doth the light co-equally divide :
 So to the mundane splendours did ordain
 A general mistress, and ruling guide,
 That she might change, at times, the treasures vain,
 From race to race, from one to another blood,
 Beyond the power of reason to restrain :
 Hence one folk rules, one pines in servitude,
 According to the judgments of this one,
 Which, like a snake in the grass, doth sense elude.

Your science her to thwart, you vain must own :
 She makes provision, judges, and pursues
 Her reign, as do the other gods their own.
 Her permutations have not any truce :
 Necessity compels her swift to be,
 So oft on men vicissitude ensues.
 And yet so often crucified is she,
 Even by those who ought to give her praise,
 But wrongly give her blame and calumny.
 She hears not this, for blessed is she always :
 She with the other primal creatures glad,
 Revolves her sphere, and blessed enjoys her ways.
 Descend we now to the greater woe," he said,
 "Each star already sinks that did ascend
 When I set out : to loiter we're forebade."
 Across the round to the other shore we wend,
 Over a boiling fountain that o'erflows
 In a fosse to which it doth its waters lend.
 More dark than purple, on the water flows,
 And we, in company with the waves obscure,
 Made entry down where a rough pathway goes.
 A marsh named Styx is formed by the downpour
 Of this sad rivulet, when its force is spent
 At foot of each malignant grizzled shore.
 And I, who stood on gazing thus intent,
 Saw mud-smear'd folk in the waters thick and dun,
 Who all were naked, and on anger bent.
 They smote each other, not with hands alone,
 But with the head, and with the chest and feet ;
 Tearing with teeth to shreds and shreds each one.
 Said the good Master,—“ Son, thou here dost meet
 The souls of those o'ercome by anger high :
 I would that thou believe for certain yet
 That 'neath the water there are folks who sigh
 And make those bubbles on the surface grow,
 As thou wilt find where'er thou turn'st thine eye.
 They say, thus mud-merged, 'Sullen did we go
 In the sweet air, all gladdened by the sun,
 Distempered fumes within us bearing so :
 Now sullen are we in this mixture dun.'

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This hymn they keep up with throat-gurgling sound,
 Because express it in plain words, can none."
 So by this filthy fen we circled round
 A great arc, twixt the dry and wet bank placed,
 Looking at those who gulp the miry pond,
 Till to the foot of a tower we came at last.

CANTO VIII.

The Fifth Circle continued. Phlegyas conveys them across the marsh, in which they see Philip Argenti; they arrive at the city of Dis, the entrance to which is closed to them by the Demons.

I say continuing, that much before
 We to the foot of yon high tower came,
 Our eyes began the summit to explore,
 Seeing there placed two signals small of flame,
 And from afar a third to them made sign,
 So far, the eye could scarcely reach the same.
 To the sea of all discerning I incline,
 And ask, "What doth this say, and what reply
 The other fire, and who did this design?"
 And he to me said—"What thou would'st descry,
 Across the filthy wave thou now may'st see,
 Unless the pool's smoke hide it from thine eye."
 Cord never shot an arrow which could be
 So swift upon its passage through the air,
 As I beheld a tiny vessel flee
 Across the water toward us then and there,
 Under the guidance of one pilot who
 Exclaimed, "Now, felon spirit, art thou here?"
 "Phlegyas, Phlegyas! in vain exclaimest thou,"
 Replied my Lord, "for once thou'lt no more get
 Of us than needs the passage of the slough."
 Like one who listening to a great deceit
 That hath been made on him, doth it resent,
 Such Phlegyas became, with rage replete.
 My Leader to the vessel made descent,

And bade me enter after him also ;
 It only laden seemed when in I went.
 Soon as my Guide and I therein did go,
 The antique prow went cleaving on before
 More water than such barks are wont to do.
 While through the dead canal our swift course bore,
 One got before me drenched with muddy stain,
 Who said, "Who'rt thou that com'st before the hour?"
 Then I, "And if I come, 'tis not to remain.
 But who art thou, thyself thus brutal made?"
 He said, "Thou seest I'm one whose tears complain."
 And I to him, "In weeping, wailing sad,
 Accursèd spirit, let thy portion be,
 For through thy filth I see thyself betrayed."
 Then to the boat both hands extended he,
 Whereat the Master, skilful, thrust him back,
 Saying, "Away! to the other dogs hence flee!"
 He then with both his arms embraced my neck,
 He kissed my face, and said: "Disdainful soul!
 Blest be thy mother's womb for thy dear sake.
 In the world this man of arrogance was full;
 No goodness doth his memory upraise,
 So here in fury must his spirit toil.
 How many mighty kings the world displays,
 Who here, like pigs, will wallow in the mire,
 Leaving behind them horrible dispraise!"
 "Master," said I, "I greatly should desire
 To see him smothered in this broth, before
 That we shall haply from the lake retire."
 And he to me:—"Ere unto thee the shore
 Make itself plain, thou shalt be satisfied:
 'Tis meet that thou enjoy the thing wished for."
 Soon after saw I what did him betide;
 On him the miry people outrage made,
 For which my thanks and praise to God abide.
 "Philip Argenti, at him!" all upbraid,
 And that enraged spirit Florentine
 Turned round and on himself his teeth essayed.
 We left him there, no notice more to win.
 But now a lamentation smote mine ears;

Whence forward I my eyes intent incline,
 And the good Master said : " Lo ! now there nears
 My Son, the city which hath Dis for name ;
 Full of grave folk, and there the throng appears."
 " Master," said I, " I clearly note the same ;
 Its mosques in yonder valley, like a pyre
 Vermilion, as if issuing from the flame."
 And he to me replied ; " The eternal fire,
 That conflagrates within, makes them look red :
 As thou beholdest in this low hell dire."
 We, on our way, within the deep moats sped,
 Which compass round this city full of woe,
 Whose walls appeared to me of iron made.
 But first along a circuit wide we go,
 Ere came we where the Pilot loudly cried
 To us, " Get out ! this for the entrance know."
 More than a thousand on the gates I spied
 Of those who 'd been rained down from Heaven ; they said,
 Enraged, " Who's this, that without death hath hied
 Hither unto the kingdom of the dead ?"
 Then my wise Master made to them a sign,
 As if to secret parlance he'd be led ;
 Then they to less of high disdain incline,
 And said, " Come thou alone ; let him be gone
 Who dares to this our kingdom enter in.
 Let him by the mad road depart alone ;
 Try if he can : for thou remainest here,
 Who hast escorted him through land so dun."
 Think, reader, if discomfited I were,
 Hearing these cursed words from them outpour,
 For never to get back was then my fear.
 " Oh, my dear Guide ! who seven times, and more,
 Hast rendered me security, and won
 Me from great danger, which stood out before,
 Do not desert me," said I, " thus undone :
 And if our going further is denied,
 The way we came let's hasten to be gone."
 That Lord who hitherto had been my guide,
 Said to me, " Fear not thou, because our way
 None can take from us, when by Such 'tis bid.

But wait me here ; thy weary spirit stay
 And comfort with what food good hope may bring ;
 In this low world I'll not abandon thee.”
 So he departs, me here abandoning,
 He, my sweet Father, leaving me in doubt,
 For Yes and No in my head contending ring.
 What he proposed, mine ear could not make out,
 But with them there he did not long time wait,
 Ere each raced back with speed and inside got ;
 Those adversaries of ours then closed the gate
 'Gainst my Lord's breast, and he remained outside,
 And turned to me, with slowly-measured gait,
 His eyes downcast, his brow, as I espied,
 Shorn of its boldness ; and he, sighing, said :—
 “The dolorous houses who hath me denied ?”
 And then to me :—“But be not thou afraid
 Because I'm wroth ; my purpose I'll fulfil,
 Whate'er defences there within be made.
 Not new to me this arrogance of will :
 Ere now they've shown it at a less secret gate
 Which was unfastened, so remaineth still.
 O'er it the dead inscription¹ thine eye met :
 And hither from it now descends the slope,
 Guideless, across the circles passing straight,
 One who to us yon city's gate will ope.”

 CANTO IX.

After the Poets have seen the Furies, and other Monsters, an Ange comes and opens the gate of the City of Dis ; where they find the Heretics punished within burning tombs.

The hue which cowardice on me did paint,
 Seeing my leader back return to me,
 More quickly gave his new aspect restraint.

¹ This refers to the words written over the Gate of Hell (see Canto iii.) and to the attempt of the Demons to close the gate against our Lord when “he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” See 1 Peter iii. 19.

He stopped like one who harks attentively,
 Because the eye could not conduct him far
 Through the black air and turbid fog, to see.
 "Still it behoves we conquer in this war,"
 Began he, "Else—and one hath proffered aid—
 O how I wish another would appear!"
 I plainly saw that what he first had said
 Was covered by the after words he spoke,
 And these with those a diverse meaning made.
 But none the less his speech my fear awoke,
 Since from his broken phrase I drew, may be,
 A worse intent than his own words would brook.
 "To the bottom of this conch of misery
 Doth any e'er descend from the first grade,
 Where loss of hope is the sole penalty?"
 This question put I, and he answer made,
 "It rarely comes to pass 'mong us that one
 E'er makes a journey such as I have had.
 'Tis true that once before I here came down,
 Conjured by that so cruel Erictho,¹
 Who made the souls their bodies once more own.
 My flesh short time my spirit ceased to know,
 When she compelled me enter through that wall,
 To make a ghost from Judas' circle go.
 That is the lowest, darkest place of all,
 Furthest from heaven which all around prevails:
 I know the road, therefore let nought appal.
 This marsh from which a mighty stench exhales,
 The dolent city round about doth wind,
 To which we go not now, but rage assails."
 And more he said, which is not in my mind,
 Because mine eye had now withdrawn me quite
 To the high tower, with top to flames consigned,
 Where in a moment, there uprose to sight
 The three infernal Furies all blood-stained,
 With women's limbs and women's actions dight.
 The greenest hydras round them were enchained,
 And asps and serpents small their tresses made,
 Which were about their savage temples trained.

¹ A Thessalian sorceress, mentioned by Lucan.

And he who knew each one to be handmaid
 To her the Queen of everlasting woe,
 "Behold the fierce Erinnyes," to me said :
 "She on the left hand side Megæra know,
 Alecto on the right, who weeps distressed,
 Tisiphone between ;" he ceased now.
 Each one her nails employed to tear her breast,
 Smote palms together, uttered so loud a cry,
 That I for fear close to the Poet pressed.
 "Medusa, come ; and him we'll petrify !"
 All shouted looking down, "'twas ill disposed
 That Theseus' outrage 'scaped the penalty."¹
 "Turn thyself round, and keep thine eyelids closed,
 For if the Gorgon come, and thou should's't see,
 Thy going back will ever be foreclosed."
 Thus spake the Master : he himself turned me
 About, and trusting not my hands, was fain
 Make both his own a further screen to be.
 O ye in whom the intelligence is sane,
 Do ye behold the doctrine hidden here,
 Which mystic verses 'neath their veil contain ?²
 And now across the troubled waves we hear
 The throbbings of a sound replete with dread,
 Which made to tremble both the margins there :
 Not otherwise than when a wind doth spread
 Impetuous, when adverse heats prevail,
 And smites the forest, nothing hinderèd,
 Rends branches, levels, makes them onward sail,
 Onward, dust-laden it superbly goes,
 And makes both beast and shepherds fleeing quail.
 "Direct," he said (mine eyes he did uncloze),

¹ Theseus attempted to carry off Proserpine, and was on that account kept prisoner in Hell until released by Hercules. The Furies regretted that they had not given him to Cerberus to be devoured. Some commentators have a different reading, namely, "On Theseus we revenged the assault not ill."

² These three parenthetical lines do not seem to belong especially to the matter in hand, or to the Canto, but rather to the whole poem. A less original writer than Dante would probably have placed them at the beginning of Canto i. by way of exordium.

"The nerve of vision 'long that ancient foam,
 Whose smoke doth more acerbity disclose."
 E'en as the frogs when the hostile snake is come,
 Scatter themselves across the pool beset,
 Till each one huddles in an earthy home—
 I saw a thousand lost souls, and more yet,
 Flee before one who o'er the ford thus passed
 Across the Styx, and came with soles not wet.
 He from his face the heavy air displaced,
 Waving the left hand oftentimes before,
 In which sole fret could weariness be traced.
 I saw that he was sent by heavenly power,
 And to the Master turned, and he made sign
 To stand in silence, and him bow before.
 Ah! how he seemed to me full of disdain!
 He reached the gate, and with a little wand
 Opened it, so that no hindrance did remain.
 "O ye outcasts of heaven, contemnèd band!"
 Began he on the threshold horrible,
 "Whence doth this arrogance in you expand?
 Wherefore recalcitrant against that Will
 Whose purpose never can be ta'en away,
 And oft your weight of pain made weightier still?
 Butting against the fates, what profit, say?
 Your Cerberus, if you remember well,
 Still has raw chin and throat from such affray."¹
 Back by the miry way his footsteps fell;
 He spake no word to us, but had the mien
 Of one whom other cares bind and impel
 Than care of him who 'fore his face is seen.
 And we toward the City moved our feet,
 After such holy words, with mind serene.
 We entered in, and nought opposing met;
 And I, who much desired to descry
 'Neath what condition such stronghold were set,
 Soon as I enter and cast round mine eye,
 Wide plains I see, on every side is one,

¹ According to Ovid, Hercules passed a chain round the neck of Cerberus and dragged him out of Hell, whereby the skin of his chin and throat was peeled off.

Of sorrow full, and direst agony.
 E'en as at Arlès, where stagnates the Rhone,
 E'en as at Pola, the Quarnaro near,
 Which Italy shuts, her boundaries washes on,
 The sepulchres make all diverse appear ;—
 So also did they here on every side,
 Save that the manner was more bitter here ;
 For flames between the sepulchres did glide,
 By which they all acquired so strong a heat,
 That iron from no art seeks more beside.
 O'er all, the coverings were suspended straight,
 And forth from them came such lamentings dire,
 That wretched, grievous, well appeared their fate.
 "Master ! who these folk are may I inquire,
 Who being sepulchred in these tombs," I said,
 "Are heard by doleful sighs that they respire ?"
 "The Heresiarchs are here," he answerèd,
 "Their followers too of every sect, and here
 Much more the tombs are charged, than thou'dst give
 creed ;
 Here like with like have common sepulchre,
 In monuments made hot, some less, some more."
 When to the left he turned, we passed on there
 'Twixt the high parapets and torments sore.

CANTO X.

Sixth Circle continued. Dante speaks with Farinata degli Uberti,
 who foretells his exile.

Now onward by a secret path inclined,
 Betwixt the torments and the city wall,
 My Master goes, and I proceed behind.
 "O Power supreme, through circles impious all,
 Who lead'st me," I began, "as pleaseth thee,
 Speak to me, and my longings meet withal.

The people who in sepulchres thus be,
 Could they be seen? already raised we find
 The coverings all, and none keeps guard we see."
 And he to me, "They'll all be close confined,
 When from Jehoshaphat¹ they shall return
 Here with the bodies they have left behind.
 On this side they their cemetery's sojourn
 Will have, with Epicurus and his set,
 Who soul and body both would mortal turn."²
 But of the question thou to me dost state,
 Within here thou wilt soon be satisfied,
 As well of the wish on which thou'rt silent yet."
 And I, "Good Leader! I would only hide
 From thee my heart, that I the less might speak,
 And to such wish thou only now dost guide."
 "O Tuscan! who the city of fire dost seek,
 And goest alive, whom gentle words invest,
 Be pleased here in this place some pause to make.
 Thy speech doth surely make thee manifest
 As one born in that noble native land,
 Which I perchance did but too much molest."
 This sound forth issued from a tomb at hand
 Quite suddenly, and made me somewhat fear,
 Hence nearer to my guide I took my stand.
 And he to me, "Turn thee, what doest here?
 See Farinata³ there, who now doth rise,
 And 'bove the waist will all to thee appear."
 I had already fixed on his mine eyes
 While he stood up erect, with breast and brow,
 As if this hell he greatly did despise.

¹ According to tradition, the last judgment will be held in the valley of Jehoshaphat. The tombs remain open in order to receive more heretics.

² Epicurus appears among the heretics, because his doctrine opposes the Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

³ Farinata was a Florentine noble, a disciple of Epicurus; hence Dante had already inquired after him (Canto vi. 79). In 1260, as Chief of the Ghibellines, he routed the Guelfs at Monte Aperto on the Arbia. When it was resolved to destroy Florence, he alone opposed the resolution, and with success.

With prompt courageous hands my Leader now
 Thrust me between the sepulchres to him,
 Saying, "Say on, and be explicit thou."
 As soon as to the foot of his tomb I came,
 He eyed me somewhat, then as with disdain,
 He asked, "Who were thine ancestors by name?"
 And I, who to obedience was fain,
 Nothing concealed, but told him all I knew,
 When he, his brows with somewhat upward strain,
 Replied to me; "Fierce adversaries too
 To me, my fathers, and my party they;
 Through me they two dispersions had to rue."
 "If banished, they on all sides back made way
 Both first and second times," to him I said;
 "But your side did not well such art display."
 Then there arose, but only to sight appeared
 Far as the chin, another shade beside;
 I think he rose upon his knees; he peered
 About me, as if anxious to decide
 Whether another with me he could find,
 But when his wish in disappointment died,
 He, weeping, said: "If through this prison blind
 Thou goest by the might of intellect,
 Where is my son? and why with thee not joined?"¹
 "Not of myself to come did I elect,"
 I said. "Who yonder waits conducts me here,
 Whom, chance, your Guido held in scorned neglect."
 His speech and mode of suffering made it clear
 Who this must be, so that I'd read his name,
 And hence so full my answer did appear.
 Upstarting suddenly, he did exclaim,
 "How said'st he *held*? is he not living still?
 Doth the sweet light not strike his eyes the same?"
 When he of some delay was sensible
 That I had made ere answering his quest,
 Supine he fell, nor more was visible.

¹ The father of Dante's friend, the poet Guido Cavalcante, who also was a heretic. He disliked the practice of writing in Latin, preferring the vulgar tongue. At his instance Dante wrote his *Vita Nuova* in Italian.

But the other magnanimous shade, at whose request
 I here remained, his mien unaltering,
 Moved not his neck, nor bent his side the least.
 "And if," the former speech continuing,
 He said, "they have not learnt this art aright,
 That brings more torment than this bed doth bring.
 But mark! not fifty times shall be relit
 The face of the Lady who down here doth reign,¹
 Ere of that art thou'lt know full well the weight.
 Or ere to the sweet world thou goest again,
 Say why this people is so pitiless
 Against my race, as all their laws make plain?"
 And I to him :—"The slaughter, I confess,
 And carnage which the Arbia coloured red,
 Make them in our temple such a prayer express."
 Whereat he shook his head, and sighing said,
 "In that I surely did not stand alone,
 But had just cause to move as others led.
 But there I was indeed the only one
 Who spoke for Florence with an open face,
 While all the rest her ruin were set on."
 "Oh, as your seed may ever rest in peace,"
 I thus implore, "do thou this knot untie,
 Which in its coils my reason both embrace.
 It seems thou can'st, if I on my ear rely,
 Beforehand see what time revolving brings,
 And in the present, other mode hold by."
 "We see like those who have had light the things,"
 He said, "that from us far off stand,
 Such light to us from the Lord Supreme still clings.
 When they draw near, or are, our mind's command
 Is wholly vain, and if no one disclose,
 Nought of your human state we understand.
 Hence wholly dead, as thou canst well suppose,
 Will be our knowledge from that moment when
 The portal of the future they shall close."
 As in compunction for my fault, I then

¹ Proserpina, the Queen of Hell, who in Heaven is called Luna. The prediction is that in fifty moons, or months, Dante would be in exile.

Thus spoke : " Now thou wilt tell that fallen one
 His son is still conjoined with living men :
 And if in answering I was dumb foregone,
 It was that I was thinking, let him see,
 Of that same error thou hast solved so soon."
 And now my Master was recalling me,
 When quickly I the spirit did request
 To tell what others there with him might be.
 " More than a thousand here," he thus confessed,
 " I lie with ; Frederick the Second's here,
 And the Cardinal ; I speak not of the rest."
 Thereat he hid himself, and I drew near
 The ancient Poet, still with thoughts intent
 Upon that speech which gave me cause for fear.
 He movèd on, and after, as we went
 He said to me : " Why art bewildered so ?"
 And I to satisfy his question bent.
 " What thou hast heard against thyself do thou
 Keep well in mind," that Sage gave counsel meet ;
 And said with upraised finger, " Mark well now
 When thou shalt come before the radiance sweet
 Of her ¹ whose beauteous eyes all things behold,
 From her the journey of thy life thou'lt get."
 Then to the left his footsteps he controlled ;
 Leaving the wall, towards the midst we went,
 By a road that in a valley doth unfold,
 Which e'en up there its noisome stench sent.

 CANTO XI.

The Seventh Circle. Virgil explains that in the three next circles are punished the sins of Violence, Fraud, and Usury ; and also shows what is the structure of Hell.

Upon a lofty bank's extremity,
 Which great rocks broken in a circle made,
 We found a crueller throng than yet there be.

¹ Beatrice.

Such horrid stench o'erwhelming did invade
 The place, thrown out from the abyss profound,
 That we withdrew behind the cover's shade
 Of a large tomb, where I a writing found,
 Which said ;—" Pope Anastasius I guard,
 Whom Photinus had lured from doctrine sound."
 " In going down, our steps we must retard,
 That first the sense somewhat accustomed be
 To the sad blast ; which then we'll not regard."
 Thus spake the Master, and I made reply ;—
 " That time not idly pass, some means contrive."
 Then he, " Of that I'm thinking, as thou'lt see.
 My Son," he thus began his narrative,
 " Within these rocks, there are three circles small,
 From grade to grade, like those which thou dost leave.
 Quite full of cursed spirits are they all :
 But since it must suffice of them the sight,
 Learn how and why they 'neath constraint do fall.
 Of every sin that Heaven holds in despite
 Some injury is the end, and each such end
 Doth force or fraud to some one's hurt incite.
 But fraud, man's proper vice, doth most offend
 The Sovereign Ruler ; so the fraudulent
 Are lowest placed ; 'neath greater woe they bend.
 All the first round contains the violent ;
 Since violence is done to persons three,
 In three divided rounds the structure's pent.
 To God, to self and fellow men, can we
 Do violence, on them and on their things,
 I say, as with clear reason thou shalt see.
 A violent death, with wounds and sufferings,
 Our fellow man receives ; and ruin, fire,
 And cruel raids, one on his substance brings ;
 Whence homicides, who wrongly smite in ire,
 Marauders, and freebooters, diverse bands,
 Doth the first circle hold in torment dire.
 Upon himself can man lay violent hands
 And on his goods ; so in the second ring
 With unavailing penitence he stands
 Who in your world himself to death doth bring ;

Who gambles, squandereth his property,
 And weepeth there where he should rather sing.
 Force can be used against the Deity,
 Who in his heart denies Him, who blasphemes,
 Who Nature scorns, her bounty will not see :
 Therefore the smallest round, as fitting seems,
 Seals with its signet Sodom and Cahors,¹
 And him whose heart speaks God-despising themes.
 Man can use fraud, which every conscience gnaws,
 Against the man who doth in him confide,
 And him who not to imburse his trust sees cause.
 This latter method kills, as is implied,
 Only the bond of love, which Nature makes ;
 Hence in the second circle nestling hide
 Flattery, hypocrisy, who to magic takes,
 Falsification, theft, and simony,
 Barterers, panders, all where like filth outbreaks.
 By the other method all that love doth flee
 Which Nature makes, by which increase we gain,
 Whereby a special trust there comes to be :
 Hence in the smallest round, where we obtain
 The point of the Universe o'er which stands Dis,
 Whoe'er betrays, consumes in lasting pain."
 Then I :—" O Master, clear enough in this
 Proceeds thy reasoning ; thou dost well divide
 The place and all who dwell in this abyss.
 But say, those in the fat lagoon who bide,
 Whom the wind drives, and whom the rain doth beat,
 And those who with sharp tongues do so incide,
 Why do they not in the red City meet
 Their punishment, if God hold them in wrath,
 If He doth not, why them in such mode treat ?"
 And he to me :—" Why from its wonted path
 Wanders thine intellect, or it may be
 Thy wandering mind some other object hath ?
 Of those same words dost not remember thee,
 Which in thine Ethics a full handling gain,
 Which Heaven abhors, the dispositions three,
 Incontinence, malice, and insane

¹ A city in Provence, infamous for usurers.

Bestiality ? and how incontinence
 Provokes God less, doth less of blame obtain ?
 If of this argument thou gain'st the sense,
 And thou recall'st to mind who they may be
 Who up above sustain their penitence,
 Why they from these below, thou'lt clearly see
 Are separate, and why the Power divine
 Smites with its hammer them less potently."
 "O Sun with rays to troubled sight benign !
 Thou dost content me so when thou dost solve,
 That doubt and knowledge equal charms combine.
 Once more, I pray thee, somewhat back revolve,
 To where thou saidst that usury offends
 God's bounty ; and the knot for me resolve."
 "Philosophy, to him who well attends,
 Takes note, not only in one place," he said,
 "After what manner Nature's progress wends,
 By Mind Divine and by its Art so led :
 And if thy Physics thou dost note with care,
 Thou'lt find, ere many pages thou hast read,
 That your own Art, so far as it can bear,
 But follows that, as the taught the Teacher doth ;
 So that your Art God's grandchild is, as it were.
 From these two, if thy memory bring forth
 The opening page of Genesis, it needs
 The race must take its life, and grow in worth.
 But the usurer by another way proceeds ;
 Nature herself, and her in her follower
 Disdains he ; for elsewhere his hope him leads.
 But come ! our going I would not defer ;
 For Pisces up through the horizon glide,
 The Wain right over Caurus¹ now doth veer,
 And far beyond, descend we the crag's side."

¹ Caurus is the north-west wind.

CANTO XII.

Seventh Circle, guarded by the Minotaur, where the Violent are punished in a river of boiling blood, presided over by the Centaurs.

The place, where to descend the bank, we came,
 Was alpine, and what too was there beside,
 Was such, that every eye would loathe the same.
 Such is that ruin which, on the hither side
 Of Trent, the flank of Adige smote, by might
 Of earthquake, or its buttresses did slide ;
 Hence from the mountain's top, from whence its flight
 Down to the plain, the rock is shattered so,
 That he no path might find, who stood on the height.
 Such a descent that same ravine did know,
 And on the angle of that broken steep,
 Crete's infamy, conceived of a false cow,¹
 Was lying, and stretched out itself did keep ;
 Which, seeing us, began itself to bite,
 Like one assailed by rage within him deep.
 "Thou think'st, may be," my Sage cried out to it,
 "The Duke of Athens is in company,
 Who, in the world, thee unto death did smite.
 Now get thee gone, thou beast ! this is not he
 Who comes instructed by thy Sister here,
 But here he comes your punishments to see."
 E'en as the bull himself his bonds doth tear,
 Just when he hath received the mortal blow,
 Who cannot walk, but rushes here and there,
 This Minotaur I saw behave him so.
 Then cried my wary Guide ; "To the passage straight ;
 While it thus rages, well 'tis thou should'st go."

¹ The Minotaur was the offspring of Pasiphae, wife of Minos, King of Crete, and a bull. She disguised herself under the form of a cow. The Minotaur was slain by Theseus, under the guidance of his sister Ariadne. Dante makes Theseus Duke of Athens, as did also Shakspeare.

Thus down we went over the upturned freight
 Of those same stones, which often over rolled
 Beneath my feet from the unwonted weight.
 Thoughtful I went ; when he, " Thy mind doth hold
 Thee, may be, on this ruin, presided o'er
 By that brute fury, which I just controlled.
 But I would have thee know, the time before,
 When I descended to the lower hell,
 That rock had not downfallen to its floor.
 But just before, if I distinguish well,
 The coming of HIM who took the mighty prey
 From Dis,¹ that did in the first circle dwell,
 The deep and fetid valley every way
 So trembled, that the universe, I thought
 Felt of that love, by which, there are who say,
 The world has oft gone back, and chaos sought :
 And at that moment, this old rock, both here
 And rocks elsewhere, o'ertoppling, down were brought.²
 But fix thine eyes below ; for we come near
 The river of blood³ which them in boiling hath,
 Whose violence makes others injury bear."
 O blind cupidity ! O senseless wrath !
 That in our short life spurs us onward so,
 And, in the eternal, steeps in this horrid bath.
 I saw an ample fosse, bent like a bow,
 Like such one as embraces all the plain,
 According as my Guide made me to know.
 And 'twixt this and the bank's foot, was a train
 Of Centaurs,⁴ arrow-armed, who ran in file,
 As, in the world, folk still the chase maintain.
 And seeing us descend, each one stood still,
 And then, from out the band, departed three,
 With bows and arrows, chosen out erewhile.
 And from afar one cried : " What agony

¹ See note (1) to Canto viii.

² This refers to the earthquake at the time of our Lord's crucifixion.
 See Matthew xxvii. 51.

³ The Phlegethon.

⁴ The Centaurs, half men and half horses, appear here as symbols of power.

Seek ye, who now descend the mountain's side,
 Tell us from thence, or the bow I draw on ye."
 "We'll answer give," my Master thus replied,
 "To Chiron, who is near you, as I heed;
 Thy will was aye in wrongful haste applied."
 He touched me then, "Nessus is that,"¹ he said,
 "Who for the fair Dejanira had to die,
 And for himself, himself his vengeance made.
 He in the midst, on his breast his downcast eye,
 Brought up Achilles, Chiron his name of note,
 The other Pholus, erst so rageful he."
 Thousands and thousands go around the moat,
 With arrows shoot each soul that riseth more
 From out the blood than doth his crime connote.
 Near to those monsters fleet, our steps we bore;
 Chiron an arrow took, its notch to use
 To comb back on his jaws the beard he wore.
 And when his ample mouth he did disclose,
 "Are ye aware," he to his company said,
 "What the hinder one doth touch, in motion goes?
 Thus are not wont to do the feet of the dead."
 And my good Guide, who stood now at his breast,
 Where the two natures are together led,
 Replied, "He lives indeed; on me the behest
 Is laid to show him the dark valley through:
 Necessity, not pleasure, guides his quest.
 From singing hallelujahs one withdrew,
 Who this new duty trusted unto me:
 No thief nor thieving soul in us ye view.
 But for that virtue's sake, by which, thus free,
 I move my steps along this savage road,
 Name one of thine, in whom our trust may be;
 And who may show us where to pass the ford.
 Let this one too upon his crupper ride,
 For he goes not through air, in spirit mode."

¹ Nessus, in attempting to carry off Dejanira, was shot by Hercules with a poisoned arrow. Before he died he gave to Dejanira a poisoned shirt as a means of preserving to her the love of Hercules, by which the latter sustained a painful death. Pholus was accidentally killed by Hercules.

Chiron turned round upon his right breast's side
 And said to Nessus: "Turn and guide them so;
 If other band you meet, warn them aside."
 We forward with the faithful escort go,
 By the vermilion boiling on the shore,
 And there the boiled were shrieking loud for woe.
 Far as the brow, folk saw I, covered o'er;
 And the great Centaur said; "Tyrants are they,
 Who made their havoc on men's goods and gore.
 Here they must weep each pitiless affray:
 Lo Alexander! fierce Dionysius see!
 Who brought on Sicily years of dismay.
 Yon forehead, with the hair so black, is he
 Hight Azzolin,¹ and the other, who is blond,
 Obizzo d'Estè,² who, in verity,
 Was by his stepson slain in the world up yond."
 Then turned I to the Poet, and he said:—
 "I'm second now to thee, him first be owned."
 A little further on, the Centaur stayed
 Above a people who, far as the throat,
 Seemed from that boiling stream to lift the head.
 One shade in a corner lone, he bade us note,
 Saying, "Within God's lap, the heart he clove
 Which still on Thames to honour they promote."³
 Then folk I saw, who lifted up above
 The stream their head, and also all the chest;
 And many 'mong them did acquaintance prove.
 Thus more and more the blood became depressed,
 So that it hardly covered o'er the feet,
 And, at this point, across the fosse we passed.
 "E'en as on this side, as thou seest, we meet
 The boiling stream, which more and more doth fail,"
 The Centaur said, "thou must believe, that yet,

¹ A Ghibelline noble, infamous for cruelty; he died in 1260.

² A Guelf leader, slain 1293.

³ Guy of Montfort, whose father, Simon, had fallen in the rebellion against Henry III. of England in 1265. Out of revenge Guy pierced the heart of Henry, the King's nephew, in the church of Viterbo, before the high altar during mass. The heart of the murdered man was sent to London, and placed in a golden vessel on London Bridge.

On the other side, its weight doth more prevail
 Upon its bed, 'till it rejoineth there,
 Where it behoveth tyranny to wail.
 Justice Divine is goading over here
 That Attila, who was the scourge on earth ;
 Pyrrhus and Sextus ; the tears are milked out where
 The boiling ever gives them painful birth,
 From Rimier da Corneto, Rimier Pazzo,
 Who made the highways often feel war's dearth."
 He turned, and back over the ford did go.

 CANTO XIII.

Second round of the Seventh Circle, where are punished Suicides, and Destroyers of their own property. They are changed into trees, in which the Harpies make their nests. The mode of transformation explained.

Nessus had not yet gained the other side,
 When we began a wood to journey through,
 In which no path or track could be descried.
 Not green the foliage, but of blackish hue,
 Not smooth the boughs, but gnarled, entangled, quite,
 Not apples there, but thorns poisoned grew.
 Such tangled thickets dense meet not the sight
 Of those wild savage beasts, who, hateful, hold
 Tilled lands 'twixt Cecin and Corneto's site.
 There make their nests the Harpies loathed of old,
 Who drove the Trojans from the Strophades,
 With tidings sad of future loss foretold.
 Broad wings, and human necks and faces these,
 Feet armed with talons, fledged the belly wide,
 They make laments on top of those strange trees.
 And the good Master :—" Ere thou'rt more inside,
 Know that thou art within the second round,"
 He thus began ; " and there thou wilt abide
 'Till out upon the horrid sand thou'rt found ;
 Therefore look well about, and thou shalt see

Things that might prove faith in my speech, unsound."
 Moanings on every side were heard by me,
 But none who made lamentings I perceived ;
 Wherefore I stopped, bewildered utterly.
 I believe that he believed that I believed
 Those many voices from the trunks came there
 From folk who hid themselves, by us aggrieved.
 Therefore the Master said, " If thou dost tear
 Some little twig from one of these same trees,
 The thoughts thou hast will all as maimed appear."
 Then I stretched forth my hand to one of these,
 And plucked a branchlet of a tall thorn's wood ;
 And the trunk cried, " Why me thus mangling seize ?"
 Then after it had gotten brown with blood,
 It 'gan again to cry, " Why dost tear me ?
 Hast thou no spirit of compassionate mood ?
 We once were men, now changed to trees are we ;
 Thy hand indeed ought more of ruth to know,
 Were we the souls of serpents judged to be."
 As in a log, yet green, one end may glow
 In the fire, while the other end distilleth tears,
 And hisses from the wind that off doth go ;
 So from that trunk a twofold plaint appears,
 In words and blood ; wherefore did I let fall
 The twig, and stood as 'twere a man that fears.
 " Had he before been able to recall
 Believing " said my Sage, " O wounded Soul !
 What in my rhyme he hath but seen withal,
 His hand he'd not stretched forward to thy dole :
 But so incredible a thing led me
 To prompt that deed, whose weight doth me enthrall.
 But tell him who thou wast, that haply he,
 In place of recompense may help thy fame
 Up in the world, which he again may see."
 And the trunk said : " So sweet thy enticing theme
 That I cannot be mute ; and if controlled
 By tangled speaking, vex not at the same.
 I am that one who both the keys did hold
 Of the heart of Frederick, and them I turned,
 To lock it or unlock, with subtle hold,

So that, as 'twere, no man his secrets learned.
 I to the glorious office kept such faith
 That veins and pulses scarcely I discerned.
 The strumpet¹ who from Cæsar's house ne'er hath
 The will to turn away her harlot eyes,
 Of every court the common vice and death,
 Inflamed 'gainst me all hearts with enmities ;
 And the inflamed inflamed Augustus so
 That the glad honours turned to miseries.
 My mind into disdainful mood did go ;
 The thought of dying to escape disdain
 Made me injustice 'gainst me just to shew.
 By the new roots of this same tree, I fain
 Would swear to you I ne'er did faith betray
 To him my Lord, so worthy honour's gain.
 If one of you back to the world make way,
 Comfort my memory which still doth lie
 Beneath the blow that Envy struck at me."
 He stayed some time ; and then " Since mute is he,"
 The Poet said to me, " Lose not the *now*,
 But speak and question if more pleaseth thee."
 Whence I to him, " Inquire again do thou
 Of what thou think'st from him I fain would hear ;
 I cannot, my heart's ruth o'ercomes me so."
 Once more he said, " May this man truly bear
 His part in doing what thy words implore,
 Imprisoned Spirit ! let it please thee here
 To tell us how the soul is tangled o'er
 Within these knots, and if thou canst, to say
 If from such limbs one e'er escapeth more ?"
 Thereat the trunk blew hard ; after some stay,
 The wind, converted to a voice, thus spake :—
 " In brief it shall be answered as ye pray.
 When the ferocious spirit doth forsake
 The body, which itself has cast aside,
 Minos bids it the seventh abyss to take.
 It falls into the wood, as chance betide
 It to be hurled, on no appointed place ;
 There like a grain of spelt, 'tis vivified.

¹ Envy.

It grows to a sapling of a wilding race ;
 Then feeding on its leaves, the Harpy crew
 Give pain, and outlet for the pain some space
 We, like the rest, our spoils shall seek anew,
 But not therein can any one be clad,
 For 'tis not just to have what off he threw.
 Here we must drag them ; in this forest sad,
 All of our bodies will suspended be,
 Each to the thorn of his molested shade."
 Still by the trunk we paused attentively,
 Thinking it something more might tell us there,
 When a great noise surprised us suddenly.
 It took us as it takes one who doth hear
 The boar and chase upon his track e'en now,
 With crashing of the beasts and branches near.
 Lo ! on our left hand side appeared two,
 Naked and scratched, fleeing so hard away,
 They all the fan-work of the wood broke through.
 The one before, " Come Death, hasten I pray !"
 The other, as if he deemed himself had stayed,
 Was shouting, " Lano ! not to such swift way
 At Toppo's joustings were thy legs betrayed !"¹
 And then, perchance for that his breath did wane,
 He and a bush one clump together made.
 In rear of them the forest full was seen
 Of ravenous black bitches, running fleet,
 Like hounds that may have gotten from the chain.
 On him who had crouched down their teeth they set,
 And him to shreds and shreds they quickly rend,
 Then with those piteous limbs away they get.
 Thereat my escort took me by the hand,
 And led me to the bush which, all in vain,
 For those such bleeding hurts in tears remained.
 " O Jacop da Sant Andrea !² what gain,"

¹ Lano of Siena, a Guelf, who in 1288 was surprised by an ambuscade of the hostile party in Pieve del Toppo, and although he might have escaped, he allowed himself to be killed because he had squandered all his property.

² A Paduan nobleman, who, among other freaks, burnt down one of his villas for the amusement of his guests.

It said, "to thee to make thy screen of me?
 What blame in thy dark life do I obtain?"
 When near to it stayed the Master's steps, spake he,
 "Say, who wast thou, that through so many a wound
 Dost blow out blood and words of agony?"
 And it to us: "O souls, who here are found
 To witness this dishonest outrage sore,
 Which thus has torn my leaves, and scattered round,
 Collect them 'neath the sad bush, I implore.
 Of the City I, whose earliest patron¹ they
 For the Baptist set aside; for this therefore
 He, with his art, will make it sad for aye:
 And were it not that upon Arno's pass,
 Some show of him there doth remain alway,
 Those citizens, by whom the refounding was,
 Upon the ashes left in Attila's wake,
 Would have but vainly laboured. I alas!
 Did of my proper house a gibbet make."

CANTO XIV.

Third round of the Seventh Circle, which is a plain of burning sand, where are punished Blasphemers, Usurers, and Sodomites. Virgil explains the course of the three infernal rivers.

The charity of my own native place
 Moved me to gather up the scattered leaves,
 And give them back to him, grown hoarse apace.
 Then came we to the confine, where it leaves
 The second from the third round parted, where
 A horrible kind of justice one perceives.
 Rightly to manifest the new things here,
 I say that we arrived upon a lande

¹ In heathen times Mars was the Patron of Florence, but was afterwards set aside in favour of John the Baptist. In the time of Dante a statue of Mars was still standing on the bridge of the Arno; but for which, it is said, the Florentines, not being warlike, would not have been able to rebuild their city after it had been laid waste by Attila.

Which from its bed all plants rejecteth there.
 The dolorous forest this, on every hand,
 Garlands about, as that the dismal moat :
 Our feet we stayed close, as may be, to the sand,
 Which dense and arid, forms the soil throughout,
 Nor made in other fashion than was made
 That which from Cato's feet its pressure got.¹
 Vengeance of God ! how much should be afraid
 Each one of Thee, who only reads aright,
 What now before my eyes was here displayed.
 Herds many of nude spirits met my sight
 Who all so very miserably wept ;
 And ruled they seemed by laws of diverse might.
 Some lying on the ground supinely kept,
 And some all huddled up were seated there,
 And others in continual motion stept.
 Those who went round were the more numerous far,
 And fewer those who to their pangs laid down,
 But to the pain their tongues more loosened were.
 And over all the sand, with falling slow,
 Were raining down dilated flakes of fire,
 As in the Alps, when wind is still, the snow.
 As Alexander, where those parts acquire
 Great heat, in Inde, saw on his host down fall,
 E'en to the ground, flames, as it were, entire ;
 Hence he commanded his battalions all,
 Each flame, in the soil, to trample 'neath the feet,
 Since while alone, 'twere easier quenched withal :
 Thus was descending the eternal heat,
 Which made the sand, like kindled tinder, glow,
 Beneath the steel, for double anguish meet.
 Without repose, for ever dancing, go
 The miserable hands, now here, now there,
 To dash off from them each new burning foe.
 Then I :—" O Master, who dost conquer here
 All things, except perhaps the demons hard,
 That 'gainst us at the gates' entry did appear ;
 Who is that great one, who seems not to regard
 The fire, but lowers, as if disdain him led,
 ¹ Cato led the remains of Pompey's army through the Libyan desert.

As he from the rain's ripening power were barred ?”
 And that same one, aware that I had made
 Some question of him to my Guide, then cried,
 “Such as I living was, so am I dead.¹
 If Jove his smith² outweary, who supplied
 Sharp thunderbolt, and took it, while rage did burn,
 To smite me on the last day when I died ;
 Or if he weary out the rest³ in turn
 In Mongibel⁴ by the black forge's side,
 Exclaiming “Help, good Vulcan, help me, turn !”
 So as at Phlægra's⁵ fight did him betide,
 And shot his bolts with all his might at me,—
 No glad revenge with him would thus abide.”
 My Master spoke then with such energy
 That ne'er so loud had I heard him before,
 “O Capaneus, since thou dost not flee
 Thine arrogance, thou'rt punished but the more :
 No martyrdom, excepting thine own rage,
 Would to that rage completed pain restore.”
 With better lip turned round to me the Sage,
 And said : “Of the seven Kings that man was one
 Who Thebes besieged, and waged, still seems to wage
 'Gainst God disdain, Him little seems to own ;
 But his own spites, as I to him just said,
 As fittest ornaments his breast adorn.
 Now follow me, and be sure thou do not tread
 By any means upon the burning sand,
 But by the forest let thy steps be led.”
 We, keeping silence, came where close at hand
 From out the wood springs a small rivulet,
 Whose redness still makes my hair on end to stand.
 As springs from the Bulicame⁶ the runnelet,
 Which the loose women 'mong them there divide,

¹ Capaneus, one of the seven heroes against Thebes, whom Jupiter killed with a thunderbolt for defying the gods.

² Vulcan, who forged Jupiter's thunderbolts.

³ The Cyclops, who worked under Vulcan.

⁴ Where the forge was situated in the side of Etna.

⁵ The valley where the battle was fought between the gods and the giants.

⁶ A boiling stream near Viterbo.

So downward through the sand its course was set.
 The bottom of it, and each sloping side
 Had stone become, the margins too were stone,
 Whence I perceived the passage there did bide.
 "Mong all the rest which I to thee have shewn,
 Since we our entry made by that same gate
 Whose threshold is not locked to any one,
 There's nothing which thy searching eyes have met
 That may such wonder as this rill inspire,
 Which quenches all the flamelets o'er it set."
 My Leader's words then led me to inquire
 If he would give me largess of the food,
 As he had given largess of the desire.
 "Mid seas, a wasted country long hath stood,"
 Thus he began, "called Crete, beneath whose King¹
 The world erewhile maintained a chasteful mood.
 A mountain's there whence gladness forth did spring
 From waters and from fronds, and Ida named ;
 'Tis desert now, like some polluted thing.
 This, Rhea erst, as faithful cradle claimed
 For him her son,² and better him to hide
 While crying, therein shoutings had proclaimed.
 A grand old man³ erect in the mount doth bide,
 Who towards Damiett his shoulders turned doth hold,
 And looks to Rome,⁴ as 'twere his mirror's guide.
 The head of him is fashioned of fine gold,
 And of pure silver are the arms and breast ;
 Far as the fork him copper doth enfold ;
 Downward therefrom choice iron is the rest,
 Save that the right foot is of baken clay ;⁵

¹ Saturn, under whose rule the Golden Age prevailed.

² Jupiter, whom his father Saturn wished to devour, as he had done his other children, was carried to Crete by his mother Rhea, and his cries were drowned by the noise of cymbals and shoutings.

³ This allegory of the source of the infernal rivers is taken from Daniel ii. 32, but the application belongs to Dante.

⁴ He turns his back to the East, and his face towards Rome, because from Rome the world's fate proceeds.

⁵ The gradual deterioration of the metals from the top downwards indicates the deterioration of the Ages. Cast-iron and clay indicate the present ; the clay foot probably the degenerate Church.

On that he most stands straight, on the other least.
 All parts are cracked, except the gold we may,
 By a fissure, which is dripping still with tears,¹
 Which when collected, pierce to this grot their way :
 From rock to rock their course in this valley bears,
 To form the Acheron, Styx, and Phlegethon ;
 Then down this narrow sluice their progress wears,
 Until no more dismounting can be done.
 They form Cocytus ;² what that pool may be
 Thou'lt witness, so I tell not of this one.”
 And I to him ; “ If the stream which here we see,
 Hath, in this way, its source in our world found,
 Why only at this brink appears it free ? ”
 And he to me ; “ Thou know'st the place is round,
 And though thou hast so long a journey made,
 Still to the left it tends, to the bottom ground :
 To turn the whole circle round thou'st not essayed,
 Wherefore that something new to us appear
 Needs not the wonder on thy face pourtrayed.”
 And I again :—“ But Master, tell me where
 Are Phlegethon and Lethe ? one thou'st missed,
 And say'st 'tis from this rain the other's there.”
 “ To all thy questions I with pleasure list,”
 He answered : “ but the water's boiling red
 One that thou makest will have solved the best.
 Lethe thou'lt see when'yond the fosse thou'rt led,
 There where to wash themselves the Spirits go
 When sin repented of from them is fled.”
 He further spake : “ 'Tis time we parted now
 From out the wood ; see thou come after me ;
 The margin's path is free from burning glow,
 And o'er it every vapour quenched we see.”

¹ The tears produced by sin form the rivers of hell ; but as in the age of gold there were no tears, the gold in the figure is not cracked.

² A tributary of the Acheron.

CANTO XV.

Seventh Circle ; third round continued ; punishment of the Sodomites, amongst whom Dante meets his teacher Brunetto Latini, who foretells to him his exile.

Now one of those hard margins bears us on,
 And the steam's smoke above forming a screen,
 No fire the dikes and water rains upon.
 E'en as the Flemings, Ghent and Bruges between,
 Fearing the hurling flood against them sent,
 Form dikes, whereby the sea held back is seen ;
 And as the Paduans along the Brent,
 To give their towns and fortresses some aid
 Ere Chiarentura¹ feel the heat's intent ;
 On such a model were these margins stayed,
 Albeit not so high or broad they be,
 Whoever made them, 'twas the Master made.
 Already from the wood removed were we
 So far, that where it was I ne'er had seen,
 Though I had turned me round the same to see ;
 When there encountered us of souls a train
 Down by the bank, and all as they passed by
 Looked at us as we look, at eve serene,
 One on the other when the new moon we spy :
 So they peered at us with o'ersharpener brow,
 Like an old tailor at his needle's eye.
 By such a family examined so,
 One recognized 'me, and he straightway took
 Me by the hem and cried "What a marvel now !"
 When he stretched out his arm to me, my look
 I fixed on his aspect, baked as it were,
 So that the burnt-up face could not but brook
 My knowledge of him, which my mind made clear ;
 And lowering my hand upon his face,
 "Are you," I answered, "Ser Brunetto, here ?"

¹ The dikes are for protection against the sudden melting of the snow on the mountains in spring.

Then he ; " My Son, O let it not displease
 If Brunetto Latini some short while
 Turn back with thee, while the trail pursues its pace."
 " Much as I can, I pray you so awhile,
 And if you will," I said, " here with me sit,
 I'll do it if him I go with hath the will."
 " O Son," he said, " who of this herd doth wait
 One moment must a hundred years lie down,
 And then he may not stir while the fire doth smite.
 Thy clothes I'll follow, if thou but lead on ;
 Then to rejoin my fellowship I'll wend,
 Which o'er its endless losses aye makes moan."
 I did not dare from off the path descend
 To walk beside him ; but behavèd me
 As one who reverently his head doth bend.
 Then he ; " What fortune or what destiny
 Before the final day brings thee down here,
 And who is this that shows the road to thee ?"
 " While in the life serene, in the world up there,
 I lost me in a vale," I thus did say,
 " Ere yet mine age had touched the maturer year :
 But yesternorn I turned from it away,
 When him I met, just as I backward sped,
 And now he leads me homeward by this way."
 Then he, " If thou dost follow thy star's lead,
 Thou canst not of a glorious harbour fail ;
 If life's fair book I have discreetly read.
 But that too soon o'er me did Death prevail,
 Seeing that Heaven to thee is so benign,
 I could make comfort to thy work avail.
 But that ungrateful people and malign
 Who their old source to Fæsulæ did owe,
 And still to the mountain and the rock incline,¹
 Will for thy good deeds make themselves thy foe :
 And reason is ; for acrid crabs among
 The sweet fig doth but ill its fruit to grow.
 In the world old rumour calls them a biind throng,
 Envious and avaricious, bit with pride ;
 Take heed thou cleanse thee of their customs wrong.

¹ The Florentines, who still retain marks of their rude origin.

Fortune for thee such honour will provide,
 That either party ¹ will with hunger seek
 To get thee ; but let beak from grass far bide.
 Let those Fæsulan beasts e'en fodder make
 Of their own persons, and the plant not touch,
 If any on their dungheap root doth take,
 In whom revives the sacred seed, and such
 As of those Romans who remained there when
 'Twas made the nest of malice, O how much."
 "If my completed prayer," replied I then,
 "Were met in full, you surely would not be
 Banished from all of human nature's ken.
 For in my mind is fixed and touches me
 At heart, that good paternal image dear
 Of you, whom hour by hour in the world I see,
 Teaching me how man gets immortal here.
 And how much I am grateful, while I live,
 Behoves it in my tongue still to appear.
 I write down what of my career you give,
 And keep with other text the gloss to await
 Of one ² who'll know it, if I to her arrive.
 Thus much I would to you all plainly state,
 If on my conscience nought of blame is laid,
 That I am ready for whatever fate.
 Not new such earnest doth mine ears invade ;
 Therefore let Fortune cause her wheel to make
 What turns it please her, and the clown his spade."
 My Master thereupon on his right cheek
 Did backward turn himself, and looked at me ;
 Then said, "He listens well who heed doth take."
 This hindered not our steps or converse free.
 I asked of Ser Brunetto if he'd tell
 The better known and chief of his company.
 And he to me, "To know of some is well,
 But of the others, silence would be praise,
 Since short the time for so much sound to swell.
 As clerics know them all, in briefest phrase,
 Distinguished literati, famous too,
 Befouled in the world by the same sinful ways.

¹ The Whites and the Blacks.

² Beatrice.

Priscian goes by with that unhappy crew,
 Francis d'Accorso too; and thou might'st have seen
 If thou hadst had a wish such scab to view,
 Him who by the Servant of Servants¹ erst had been
 Translated from the Arno to Bacchiglion,
 Where he has left his ill-stretched nerves unclean.
 I'd tell of more, but talk and going on
 May not be longer, for that now I see
 A new smoke yonder from the sand upgone:
 A people comes with whom I must not be.
 Let my Tesoro² be to thee in care,
 Which still I live in: I ask no more of thee."
 He turned him, and of those did he appear
 Who at Verona race for the mantle green
 Along the plain; and 'mong them his career
 Was as the winner's, not the loser's, seen.

CANTO XVI.

Third and last round. On the border between the Seventh and Eighth Circles, the Poets meet three shades of Florentines. They arrive at the precipice down which falls Phlegethon, where Virgil summons Geryon to convey them down.

I came where a reverberating sound
 Was heard, like that of beehives' lengthened hum,
 Of water falling to the other round;
 When three together running out did come
 From the brigade of shades that then passed by,
 Beneath the rain of their sharp martyrdom.
 They came toward us, uttering each a cry,
 "Stop thou, who by thy habit seem'st to be
 One of our land that's sunk in depravity."
 Ah me! what wounds upon their limbs I see,
 Some new, some old, all by the flames burnt in;
 It grieves me still, recalling memory.

¹ Pope Boniface VIII.

² An Encyclopedia, written in French by Brunetto.

Their cryings did my Guide's attention win ;
 He turned his face to me, and said, " Now wait,
 'Tis fit we courteously to them incline :
 And but that the place's nature doth create
 This arrowy fire darting, I should say
 'Twere better thou than they on haste were set." ¹
 As soon as we stood still, they the old lay
 Commenced again, and when they'd come to us,
 They formed themselves like a wheel, all three such way.
 The stripped and oiled champions are wont thus,
 While watching their advantage and their hold,
 Or ere they close, and stabs and blows discuss ;
 So wheeling round, each one did me behold
 With face turned to me, so that contrarywise,
 The neck to the feet a constant journey told.
 " And if this shifting place's miseries,"
 Said one, " bring scorn on us, and on our prayer,
 And on our aspect sad and burnt likewise,
 Our fame may make thy spirit yet forbear,
 And tell us who thou art, whose living feet
 Can in security through hell thus fare.
 The man whose footprints thou seest mine repeat,
 For all that he doth naked go and flayed,
 Was of a higher rank than thou'dst think yet.
 The good Gualdrada's grandson he, and had
 The name of Guidoguerra ; while alive
 He much by wit, much with his sword essayed :
 And he behind, who scraping the sand doth strive,
 Is Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, he
 Whose voice should in the world above survive.
 I who to bear the cross with them must be
 Was Jacob Rusticucci, and indeed
 My too proud wife, more than aught else, harms me."
 If from the fire's burning I'd been freed,
 I would have thrown myself among them down,
 And I think my Teacher would have allowed the deed.
 But as I should have burnt and baked, I own
 My terror overmastered my good will,

¹ That is, they being of higher rank than Dante, he should rather hasten to meet them than they him.

Which made me hunger to embrace each one.
 Then I began ; " Not scorn, but sorrow still,
 Hath your condition fixed within me, so
 That long 'twill be ere I forget your ill.
 As soon as this my Lord deigned to bestow
 Some speech on me, it stirred my inner thought,
 That people such as you near us did go.
 Your land and mine are one, and what you 've wrought
 And your well honoured names I ever yet
 Have heard, retraced, and with affection sought.
 I quit the gall, and go the sweet fruits to meet
 To me bespoken by the truthful guide ;
 But to the centre first I plunge my feet."
 " So may the soul long time with thee abide
 To lead thy limbs," that man made answer straight,
 " So may thy fame shine after thee beside,
 Say whether Courtesy and Valour wait
 Within our city, as they're wont to do,
 Or whether from it they've wholly made retreat ?
 For Guglielmo Borsier with us in woe
 Short while, who goes with his companions there,
 Tells us of things it grieveth us to know."
 " New comers, and the sudden riches' care,
 Florence ! have thy excess and pride brought forth,
 That thou of tears already hast thy share."
 Thus with my face upraised I cried in sooth,
 And the three who knew this must their answer be,
 Looked each on each as one doth look on truth.
 " If other times with such small cost to thee,"
 They said, " thou canst another satisfy,
 Thou'rt happy, who thus speak'st thy mind so free.
 Therefore if thou from these murk places hie,
 And come to see the beauteous stars once more,
 When saying, ' I was there,' will gratify,
 Then yonder people bring our names before."
 They then broke up the wheel, and in their speed
 Their rapid legs seemed as if wings they bore.
 An Amen could not sooner have been said
 Than they so rapidly had disappeared,
 Wherefore the Master thought it best we sped.

I followed, and but short space had we fared,
 Ere sounds of water near us so combined,
 That speaking, we could scarcely have been heard.
 Like as that stream which in its channel's line
 From Monte Viso first toward the East
 Upon the left-hand ridge of Apennine
 The name of Acquacheta doth invest,—
 Down rushing then into its lower bed,
 At Forli doth itself of that name divest,
 Resounding there is o'er St. Benedict led
 From off the Alp in a single leap to fall,
 Where for a thousand room enough were made,—
 Thus, downward from a bank shattered withal,
 Did we that water dark, resounding find,
 So that it quickly would the ear appal.
 I had a cord¹ which round my waist did wind,
 And with it I had thought, occasion fit,
 The panther with the painted skin to bind ;
 When I from off me had quite loosened it,
 So as the Leader had commanded me,
 I reached it to him in a coil well knit ;
 And thereupon to the right side turned he,
 And from the edge, distant a little space,
 He cast it into the profundity.
 And here some novelty must needs have place,
 I said within myself, at this new sign,
 Which with his eye the Master seems to trace.
 Ah, with what caution should all men incline
 To those, who can not only see the deed,
 But in their wisdom read the thoughts within.
 He said to me, "Soon that will upward speed,
 Which I expect, and thy thought's dream doth spy,
 And soon must be discovered to thy heed."
 Still to that truth which has the face of lie,
 A man should close his lips, far as he can,

¹ There has been a good deal of discussion as to the meaning of this passage. The most probable explanation is by Lombardi, namely, that Dante still wore the Franciscan cord as a Tertiary of the Order, and that he endeavoured thereby to restrain his sensual appetites, as indicated by the panther in Canto i.

Since void of fault, he shame may thus come by.
 But this I cannot hide, and by the strain
 Of this same Comedy, I, Reader, swear
 To you, so may it lasting favour gain,
 That through that selfsame gross and murky air
 I saw a figure swimming upwards wend,
 To each brave heart a wonder and a fear ;
 Like as the man returns, who doth descend
 Sometimes to clear the anchor, who hold doth get
 On rock or aught in the shutting sea contained,
 And upwards stretches, and draws in his feet.

 CANTO XVII.

Same division continued.—Dante describes the form of Geryon, and is allowed to talk with some of the Usurers punished in this Circle.
 —Virgil and Dante mount Geryon and descend to the Eighth Circle.

“Behold the monster with the pointed tail,¹
 Which passes mountains, walls and arms doth break ;
 Behold whose stench doth all the world assail ! ”
 My Leader thus began to me to speak,
 And to it signalled it should come ashore
 Nigh where the trodden marble end doth make.
 And that foul symbol of deceit came o'er,
 And landed with its head and breast so far,
 But on the edge to drag its tail forbore.
 Its face was as the face that just men wear,
 Benignant so its skin to outward ken,
 And like a serpent's did the trunk appear.
 It had two claws haired to the armpits seen ;
 The back and breast and either flank also,
 Had knots and small wheels painted on the skin.
 More tints the Turks and Tartars ne'er bestow

¹ Fraud is represented by a monster named Geryon, after an ancient king of Thrace, who defrauded Hercules of his cattle.

On lower and upper garments¹ which they wear,
 Nor did Arachne of such weavings know.
 As barges may at times in-shore appear,
 And part in water be, and part on land,
 And as among the guzzling Germans there,
 The beaver sits his hunting to command,—
 This wickedest of beasts was resting so
 Upon the edge where the stone shuts in the sand.
 In empty air its tail did swishing go,
 And wriggling up the envenomed fork did slide
 With which 'twas tipped like as the scorpions show.
 My Leader said, "'Tis fit to turn aside
 From out our way somewhat, till we come where
 Yon beast malignant, stretched along, doth bide."
 Down to the right-hand breast we therefore fare,
 And made ten paces at the extremity,
 That sand and flamelets cease on us to bear.
 And when we had come up to it, I see
 A little more beyond, upon the sand,
 Folk sitting close unto the cavity.
 Thereat the Master; "That thou understand
 Quite fully what pertaineth to this round,
 Now go, and note the state of these at hand.
 But there thy speech must in brief terms be bound,
 And 'till thou'rt back, I will to this one speak,
 That its strong shoulders may to our aid be found."
 And thus once more did I myself betake
 Alone to that seventh circle's head extreme,
 Where the sad people sit, and sojourn make.
 Forth from their eyes their woes did gushing stream,
 This way and that their hands they used for aid,
 'Gainst now the vapours, now the hot soil the same.
 So with the dogs, when summer heats invade,
 Now of the muzzle, now of the foot, when they
 Are bit by fleas or flies, such use is made.

¹ The passage

*Con piu color sommesse e soprapposte
 Non fer ma' in drappo.*

has been variously translated : some suppose that it refers to embroidery work ; Daniello thinks it alludes to lower and upper garments.

When I the face of some did well survey,
 Whom the so dolorous fire was falling among,
 Not one of them I knew, but I could see
 That from the neck of each a pouch there hung,
 Which had a certain colour, certain sign,
 And to it it seems their eyes' food doth belong.
 And looking round, as nearer them I join,
 I saw a yellow purse, with azure blent,
 With which a lion's face and port combine.¹
 Then as my glance proceeding onward went,
 I saw one which, more red than blood in glow,
 A goose than butter whiter did present.
 And one who with a gravid azure sow
 Had got his small white bag emblazonèd,
 Said to me, "What in this fosse hast thou to do?
 Now get thee gone, and since thou art not dead,
 Know that Vitalian, my neighbour, he
 Will have his seat here on my left side made.
 They're Florentines, though I a Paduan be,
 And oft 'tis dinned into mine ears by those
 Who shout, 'Let us the sovereign knight but see,
 Who'll bring the pouch which the three he-goats shows.'"

Then twisted he his mouth, and out he threw
 His tongue as 'twere an ox that licks its nose.
 Fearing my longer stay might vex him, who
 To a brief tarrying had admonished me,
 I back from these same weary souls withdrew.
 I sought my guide, and found already he
 The crupper of that savage beast bestrode :
 He said, "Now strong and bold I'd have thee be :
 We must descend by this sort of stairs the road.
 Mount thou in front, for I will be midway,
 So that the tail no hurtful action bode."
 Like him, whose coming shiverings betray
 The quartan ague, ashy white his nails,
 Who quakes if but a shadow pass his way ;
 O'er me, at those same words, such fear prevails ;
 And yet his threatenings wrought within me shame,

¹ The purses or bags have worked on them the armorial bearings of different noble Italian families.

As in brave churl whom worthy Lord assails.
 Those monstrous shoulders then my seat became :
 I fain would say, "See that thou clasp me round."
 But voice came not, although I meant the same.
 But he, whose succour I before had found
 In other danger, soon as I took my place
 Sustained me with his arms securely bound.
 "Geryon," he said, "now onward move thy pace,
 Make wide thy wheelings, let the fall be slow,
 Think what a novel burden in this case."
 As the small vessel from its place doth go
 Backing and backing, so thence started he,
 And when he felt he might full play allow,
 His tail he twisted where the breast might be,
 And that being stretched, he moved it like an eel,
 Gathering the air with paws worked rapidly.
 A greater fear I think there not befell
 When Phaeton abandonèd the reins,
 Whereby the sky was scorched, as witness still ;¹
 Nor when poor Icarus felt despoiled his reins
 Of feathers, by the melting wax, when cried
 His father, "Such thy course but ill obtains!"—
 Than mine, when I beheld on every side,
 Nothing but air, and prospect there was none,
 Nor object, saving of the beast we ride,
 Which goeth swimming slowly, slowly on,
 Wheels and descends ; but I perceive it not,
 Save for the wind below, and my face upon.
 Now near the whirlpool on the right we got ;
 A horrible splashing 'neath us met mine ear,
 I thrust my head with downcast eyes to note.
 Then the descent gave greater cause for fear ;
 For fires I saw, and heard lamenting cries,
 Whence trembling I drew up all huddled there.
 I saw what not before I'd seen suchwise,
 The wheeling downwards through the horror's might,
 Which from all quarters near did swelling rise.
 Like as the wing-tired falcon when no sight
 Of any lure or bird appears, makes say

¹ The Milky Way.

The falconer, "Aha, dost thou alight?"
 Descends outwearied on his rapid way
 In hundred wheelings, and from his master far
 Settles in peevish sullen disarray;
 So at the bottom Geryon placed us there,
 Against the foot of a rock, rough hewn and high;
 Him disencumbering of us the care,
 Like arrow from the string, he off did fly.

CANTO XVIII.

Eighth Circle, named Evilpits, of which there are ten, where are punished ten sorts of Fraudulent people. This Canto treats of the first, containing Panders and Seducers; and the second, containing Flatterers.

A place in Hell, hight Evilpits, is found,
 Wholly of stone, and of an iron stain,
 As is the circle that involves it round.
 Right in the midst of the malignant plain
 Yawns a large empty well, both deep and wide,
 Whose ordering will the proper place explain.¹
 Hence round in shape that rim which doth abide
 Betwixt the well, and the lofty hard bank's base,
 And in ten valleys doth its bed divide.
 And for the guarding of the place, there pass
 More and more moats these towers all around,
 And give security unto the place.
 Such sort of image made by these was found;
 And as such strongholds from their thresholds bear
 Portcullises to the outer sloping ground,
 So from the lowest of the rock appear
 Crags, which the fosses and the banks cut through
 Up to the well, which severs and heaps them there.

¹ See Cantos xxxi. and xxxiv.

In such a place when Geryon shaking, threw
 Us from his back, we found us, and my Guide
 Held to the left, I after him in view.
 At the right hand I a new anguish spied,
 New torturings, and scourgings new to me,
 With which the foremost pit was full supplied.
 In the depth the sinners naked were to see :
 This side the midst, they came toward our face,
 Beyond it, with us, but more speedily.
 Like as the Romans, that the throng have place,
 The year of jubilee the bridge upon,
 Have ta'en this mode to let the people pass :
 On one side all must move with faces on,
 Towards the Castle, and to St. Peter's speed ;
 On the other bank, towards the mount each one.
 This way and that, as the dark stone they tread,
 I saw horned Demons, with great scourges all,
 Who lashed them hindwards cruelly indeed.
 Ah ! how they made them at the first blow's fall
 Lift up the legs, and no one was there yet
 To await the second or the third downfall.
 While still proceeding on, mine eyes there met
 Some one who caused me all at once to cry
 " I've not kept fast till I to him could get."¹
 So to decipher him I fixed mine eye,
 And my sweet Leader with me then did bide,
 Agreeing that I someward back should hie.
 And he, the scourged one, thought himself to hide,
 But him his downcast face did not avail,
 For I, " Thou who so eyest the ground," then cried,
 " If that the looks thou bear'st no lie entail,
 Thou Caccianimico sure must be ;
 But why doth such sharp pickle thee assail ?"
 And he to me, " I speak unwillingly,
 But thy clear utterance doth speech compel,
 Since of the ancient world it mindeth me.
 I was the man fair Ghisola to impel

¹ *Già di veder costui non son digiuno*—a mode of saying, "It is not the first time that I have seen him."

The wishes of the Marquis to concede,¹
 Howe'er may sound the shameless tale I tell.
 Not I alone weep of Bologna's seed :
 But in this place so great of them the store,
 That fewer tongues are taught to-day indeed
Sipa to say 'twixt Savenna and Reno's shore :²
 And if thereof thou pledge or proof would'st note,
 The heart of avarice we bear, think o'er."
 While he was speaking thus, a demon smote
 Him with his thong, and said, "Thou pimp, away !
 There are no women here whence coin be got."
 To join mine Escort then I took my way ;
 And after making some few steps, we came
 Where issuing from the bank a crag there lay.
 With easy paces we ascend the same,
 And on its ridge, turning us to the right,
 From those eternal rounds we quit became.
 Then coming where below 'tis hollowed quite
 To give a passage to the scourged ones there,
 The Leader said, "Attend, and let the sight
 Of these the other ill-born, have thy care,
 Of whom as yet the face thou hast not seen,
 Because with us the same way they did fare."
 From the old bridge we looked upon the train
 Which came towards us from the other end,
 And whom the scourges bruise in the same strain.
 Said my good Guide, though I no question tend,
 "Look at that great one, who is coming now,
 And seems he'll shed no tear, though the pain rend.
 How royal still the aspect he doth show !
 Jason is he, who by his heart and wit,
 Compelled the Colchians they the ram forego.
 When by the Isle of Lemnos, passing it,
 After the daring women pitiless
 To give up all their males to death thought fit,
 There with his shows and words of ornate dress

¹ Caccianimico, a Bolognese, sold his sister, Ghisola, to the Marquis Obizzo d'Este, Lord of Ferrara.

² The Bolognese use *Sipa* instead of *Si*, "Yes"—and Caccianimico means that there are more Bolognese below than above.

He led astray the maid Hypsipyle,
 Who first the others had deceived no less :¹
 He left her pregnant here and lone to be,
 Such sin condemns him to such punishment ;
 And for Medea too we vengeance see.
 With him go those who on like frauds are bent :
 Let this suffice of the first vale to know,
 Of them likewise who to its jaws are sent."
 We came now where the straightened path doth go
 Crossing athwart the second bank, and there
 It forms of another arc the shoulders so.
 From hence a people's groanings we could hear
 From the other pit, their muzzle's puff likewise,
 And palms, which for their owners blows prepare.
 Upon the banks a coating crust there lies
 From lower exhalations clotting on,
 Which were at war against the nose and eyes.
 The bottom is so deep that place is none
 From which to see, save on the back's ascent
 Of the same arc where hangs the crag more prone.
 Here came we ; and thence down in the moat's descent
 I saw a people smothered in a cess
 Which seemed as if from human privies sent.
 And whilst I bend my eyes to view the place,
 I noted one, so filth befouled his head,
 If clerk or laic he, I could not guess.
 At me he screamed, " Why hast thy look such greed
 For me, more than the others loathsome here ?"
 And I to him, " Because if I well heed,
 Already have I seen thee with dry hair,
 Thou must Interminei of Lucca be,
 And hence I eye thee more than the others there."
 Whereat to batter his own sconce 'gan he :
 " The flatteries have sunk me here below
 Of which my tongue ne'er knew satiety."
 My Leader then to me, " I'd have thee now
 Extend a little in advance thy head,

¹ The women of Lemnos from jealousy of their husbands killed all the men ; Thoas alone being saved by the stratagem of his daughter Hypsipyle.

That with thine eyes thou well the face may'st know
 Of that so filthy drab dishevellèd,
 Who her foul nails to scratch her hath applied,
 Who's crouching now, and now on foot doth tread.
 Thais the harlot is it, who replied
 When asked her paramour 'Do I obtain
 Great thanks from thee?' 'Nay, marvellous!' she
 cried.¹
 And here our eyes may satisfied remain."

 CANTO XIX.

Third Pit of the Eighth Circle.—The² Simonical.—Dante meets Pope
 Nicholas III., and utters a declamation against Simony.

O Simon Magus!² O, his wretched sect!
 Ye who the things of God, which ought to be
 Spouses of goodness, greedily collect
 And adulterate for gold and silver; ye
 Will fitly hear for you the trumpet sound,
 Seeing the third pit now ye occupy.
 The next succeeding tomb already found
 We of the rock by mounting up that part
 Which hangs plumb o'er the middle fosse's ground.
 O Wisdom all supreme! how much of art
 Dost thou in heaven, on earth, in hell display;
 And how thy virtue justice doth impart!
 Along the sides, and on the bottom way,
 I saw the livid stone with holes replete,
 All of one breadth and circular were they.
 They did not seem less ample, or more great,

¹ Not the famous Thais of Corinth who accompanied Alexander into Asia, but the Thais of Terence's play, *Eunuchus*, whose lover Thraso, having sent her a present, asks by his servant, *Magnas vero gratias agere Thais mihi?* to which she replied, *Ingentes*, intending thereby mighty thanks for the gift, but not gratitude to the giver, seeing she was all the while receiving the addresses of another man.

² Acts viii. 18.

Than those which in my beautiful St. John
 Serve for the place where the baptizers meet ;¹
 One among which, not many years agone,
 I broke, because of one who drowned inside :
 Be this a seal to undeceive each one !
 Protruding from the mouth of each, I spied
 The feet of a transgressor, legs also,
 Far as the calf, the rest within did bide.
 In all of them both soles were flaming so,
 That, with the joints, their kickings were so strong,
 They would have broken ropes and withes, each blow.
 As flame is wont, when unctuous things among,
 To move but up the outer surface there,
 So was it here from heels to point along.
 " Who is he, Master, who enraged doth share
 More kickings than his mates in suffering,
 And who a redder sucking flame doth bear ?"
 And he to me, " If thou wouldst have me bring
 Thee downward where the bank doth most incline,
 Thou'lt learn from him, and what misdeeds thus sting."
 Then I, " Thy will to please but pleases mine ;
 Thou'rt Lord, and know'st from thy good will ne'er yet
 I part ; and thoughts untold thou canst define."
 Unto the fourth ridge thereupon we get ;
 We turned, and on the left-hand side we go
 Down to the bottom pierced with holes and strait.
 Nor did the Master from his haunch e'en now
 Depose me, till he'd brought me to the hole
 Of him, who with his shank lamented so.
 " Whoe'er thou art, thou melancholy soul,
 That hold'st thine upside down, set like a stake,"
 I said, " Speak if thou canst thy speech control."
 I stood like friar who doth confession take

¹ Formerly at Florence, baptism was administered only on the Eve of Easter and Pentecost in the Baptistery of Saint John, where Dante was baptized. On this account the numbers at the ceremony were great, and in order to protect the priests from the crowd, holes were made of masonry round the font for them to stand in. On one occasion a child at play fell into one of these, and would have died but for the intervention of Dante, who broke the masonry for its release ; hence he was accused of sacrilege.

From foul assassin, stuck in the ground to die,
 Who calls him back, whereby death pause doth make.
 And he exclaimed, "Already set so high,
 Art thou set up already, Boniface?
 By many years the scrip to me doth lie.¹
 Didst thou with that same pelf get cloyed apace
 For which thou didst not fear by fraud to win
 The beauteous Lady,² and then her deface?"
 Such I became as those are, who remain
 Not understanding what's to them replied,
 As mocked, and know not what to say again.
 "Tell him immediately," then Virgil cried
 "'I am not he thou think'st, I am not he!'"
 And I made answer as I thus was bid.
 Whereat the soul writhed both feet grievously,
 And after, sighing, said with voice distressed
 Unto me, "What then wantest thou of me?
 If to know who I am, thy eager quest
 Has o'er the bank thy passage thus beguiled,
 Know, the great mantle, erst, did me invest.
 And verily was I the she-bear's child;³
 And for the cubs' advancement had such greed,
 There purse with pelf, and here this hole I filled.
 Down are the others dragged beneath my head,
 Who have preceded me in simony,
 Throughout the fissures of the stonework hid.
 Down thither I shall fall likewise when he
 Shall here arrive for whom I thee mistook,
 When as I made the quick demand of thee.
 But more's the time already that I cook
 My feet, and upside down have thus been here,
 Than planted he with reddened feet will brook:
 For after him shall fouler work prepare
 A lawless pastor⁴ who from the west shall speed,

¹ The speaker is Pope Nicholas III.; he mistakes Dante for Boniface VIII., who, according to astrological prediction (or "the scrip"), was to have reigned yet many years.

² The Church, whose spouse is the Pope.

³ Nicholas was of the family of the Orsini (*Orso*, a "bear").

⁴ Clement V., a Gascon, who under favour of Philip le Bel, King of France, obtained the Pontificate.

Such that to cover him and me bids fair.
 New Jason¹ will he be, of whom we read
 In Maccabees ; and as to him his King
 Was pliant, so 'll be this, of France the head."
 I know not if too bold the ordering
 Of my reply, which ran e'en in this strain :—
 "I pray thee tell me now, what costly thing
 Our Lord first of Saint Peter sought to gain,
 Ere he into his keeping put the keys ?
 Truly he nought but 'Follow me,' was fain :
 Nor Peter nor the rest, of Matthias, these
 Asked gold or silver, when he won by lot
 The place the guilty soul lost by surcease.
 Therefore stay here : fit punishment thou'st got ;
 And let the ill-got money well be told,
 Which made thy valour against Charles² so hot.
 And but that some restraint doth me withhold,
 I mean the reverence for the keys supreme,
 Which in the joyous life 'twas thine to hold,
 In still more grievous speech I'd dress the theme,
 Because the world you by your avarice grind,
 Tread down the good, the vile raise to esteem.
 The Evangelist³ you Pastors had in mind,
 When that one who the waters sits upon,
 A-whoring with the kings so did he find.
 And she who with the seven heads⁴ was born,
 And from the ten horns⁵ had her argument,
 While virtue still her spouse's⁶ pleasure won.
 With gods of gold and silver you're content ;
 And from the idolater how differ ye,
 Save for his one, you've to a hundred bent ?
 Ah Constantine ! of how much ill we see
 Was dam, not thy conversion, but that dower

¹ Jason shared with King Antiochus a large sum of money in order to obtain the office of high priest to the deprivation of his brother. See 2 Maccabees iv. 7, 8.

² Charles II. was deprived of his kingdom of Sicily by Pope Nicholas for having indignantly refused to marry one of his daughters to a nephew of the Pope.

³ Revelation xvii. 1.

⁵ The Ten Commandments.

⁴ The seven sacraments.

⁶ See Note (2), p. 111.

The first rich Father did accept of thee ! " ¹
 And while to him such notes I did outpour,
 By rage or conscience he was stung quite through,
 That with both feet he struggled but the more.
 I well believe it pleased my Leader, who
 Listened the while with lip full of content
 The sound of words which but expressed the true.
 Therefore to take me up, both arms he bent,
 And when he had me all up to his breast,
 Remounted by the way he made descent.
 Nor tired of holding me thus closely pressed,
 Till o'er the arches' head he bore me on,
 And from the fourth to bank the fifth we passed.
 Here tenderly the tender load put down
 Did he upon the rock deformed and high,
 Which e'en the goats a passage hard would own ;
 From hence another valley met mine eye.

 CANTO XX.

Fourth Pit of the Eighth Circle.—Diviners and Sorcerers.—Virgil tells
 Dante the story of Manto, the foundress of Mantua, and points
 out others who are punished here.

To a new pain 'tis fit my verse I frame,
 The matter for the twentieth chaunt to find
 Of the first song, which the submerged doth claim.
 I was already well prepared in mind
 To look into the new discovered deep,
 Which all to anguished weeping was consigned.
 And through that rounded valley, folk who weep
 I saw advance, in silence, at the pace
 Which in this world, the Litanies do keep.

¹ Constantine, it is said, having been cured of leprosy and converted
 to Christianity by Pope Sylvester endowed the Pontificate with the
 city of Rome, and some of the surrounding provinces.

And gazing on them lower down, I trace
 What seemed distortion marvellous to see,
 In each from chin to where the trunk hath place :
 For from the reins the face was turned, such way
 That backward it behoved them to come on,
 For forward sight was ta'en from them away.
 Perchance, by paralytic force, some one
 May have been thus completely turned awry :
 But I've not seen, nor credit it, I own.
 So may God let thee, Reader, fruit come by,
 From this thy reading, but for thyself think now
 How was I able to keep my visage dry,
 When, close at hand I saw our image so
 Distorted, that the weeping from the eyes
 Bathèd behind, and down the cleft did flow.
 I wept while leaning where a peak doth rise
 From the hard rock, so that my escort said,
 "Must thou too be among the rest unwise?
 Here pity lives when it is wholly dead ;
 For who can be more wicked than the man
 Who feels displeasure at God's judgment dread ?
 Lift up thy head ! lift up ! and see the one
 For whom, before the Thebans, earth did ope ;
 Wherefore all cried, ' Where art thou plunging gone,
 Amphiaraus ! wherefore the war give up ?'
 And valley-ward he fell, nor falling ceased
 Till he reached Minos, who keeps all in cope.
 See, of his shoulders he has made his breast ;
 Because he wished to see too much before,¹
 He looks behind, and backward walks at best.
 Tiresias see !² who changed the shape he wore
 When from a male, a female he became,
 His members one and all the change came o'er :
 It needed first that he restrike the same
 Two serpents, so entangled, with his wand,

¹ Amphiaraus was a reputed prophet.

² A renowned Theban soothsayer of antiquity, who seeing two serpents struck at them, and killed the female, when he became changed into a woman. Seven years afterwards he saw a similar two, and killed the male, whence he resumed his male form.

Ere his male plumage back again there came.
 Who turns him back to belly is Aruns¹ yond,
 Who in the hills of Luni, (where we have
 Weed-grubbing Carrarese, who're underground,)

Had there among white marbles chosen his cave
 For dwelling; whence to look upon the sea
 And on the stars, the view to him it gave.
 And yonder one whose breasts thou dost not see,
 So covered are they by her loosened hair,
 Whose hairy skin must all on that side be,
 Was Manto² who through many lands did fare
 Searching, and settled there where I was born,
 Whereof I pray thou'lt heed me with some care.
 After her father out of life had gone
 And Bacchus city³ sank in slavery,
 Long time she went about the world, this one.
 There is a lake in beauteous Italy
 At the Alps' foot, which Germany doth close
 O'er Tyrol, named Benacus; there must be
 A thousand springs and more, whose water flows
 From Apennine, 'twixt Garda and Carmonic's vale,
 And settling in that lake, there stagnant grows.
 A spot midway Trent's pastor might avail,
 And him of Brescia, and the Veronese,
 To give their blessing, if they there should hail.⁴
 Peschiera sits, and her strong fort surveys
 In front the Brescians, Bergomasques also,
 Where most the encircling shore's descent one sees.
 Hither behoves that there should wholly flow
 What cannot in Benacus' lap abide,
 And swells a stream, down pastures green to go.
 Soon as for flow the waters head provide,
 No more Benacus, but 'tis Mincio hight
 Far as Governo, then in the Po to glide.
 It runs not far, ere on a plain it light,

¹ An Etruscan soothsayer, mentioned by Lucan.

² Daughter of Tiresias. Her face being turned the opposite way, her back hair ("the hairy skin") would naturally cover the breast.

³ Thebes.

⁴ At the spot referred to, the three dioceses of Trent, Brescia and Verona meet.

Wherein it spreads and makes it marshy there,
 And wont in summer to form a harmful site.
 That way the Virgin pitiless did fare,
 And saw some land in the middle of the fen,
 Untilled and which of habitants was bare :
 Therein, because she'd fly all human ken,
 She, with her servants, lived, her arts to play,
 And dying, left her empty body then.
 The men who scattered round about did stay,
 Collected on the spot, the which was strong
 From the morass which girt it every way.
 They made their city those dead bones among,
 And for her sake who first chose out the place,
 'Twas " Mantua " called, no omens else belong.
 Already were the folk grown dense apace
 Within, ere Casalodi's madness had
 Encountered Pinamonti's cunning base.
 Therefore I charge, if e'er to thee 'tis said
 My land had any other origin,
 No falsehood may the truth with fraud invade."
 " Master," said I, " thy reasonings for me win
 Such certainty, and so command my faith,
 That others would as burnt out coals remain.
 But tell me of the passing folk beneath ;
 If any worthy note are there to seek,
 For upon this my mind sole interest hath."
 Then he replied : " That one who from the cheek,
 Thrusts back his beard upon his shoulders brown,
 What time that Greece was of her males so weak,
 That hardly any cradle one could own,
 Was augur, and with Calchas gave the sign,
 In Aulis, for the first rope's cutting down.
 Eurypylus his name ; him I assign
 In my so lofty tragedy¹ a place ;
 Thou know'st it well, who knowest every line.
 That other who with such small flanks doth pace,

¹ When the Greeks were about to sail for Troy the Augurs had to decide upon the fortunate moment for cutting the ropes which held the ship. See *Æneid* ii. 114.

Was Michael Scott,¹ who, in all verity,
 Drove on the game of magic frauds apace.
 Guido Bonatti² see ; see Asdente³
 Who to have stuck to his leather and his thread
 Would now have wished ; too late repenteth he.
 Behold the sorry ones who needle fled,
 Shuttle and spindle, sorceries to weave,
 And spells, with herbs and image, muttered.
 But come ! for Cain with thorns⁴ we already have
 Keeping the bounds of either hemisphere,
 And under Seville toucheth he the wave.
 Last night, as well, the moon did round appear ;
 Thou should'st remember that it harmed thee not
 In the thick wood, what time that thou wast there."
 Thus he to me ; meanwhile we left the spot.

 CANTO XXI.

Fifth Pit of the Eighth Circle, in which Barraters, or sellers of justice, are punished in a lake of boiling pitch, guarded by demons, ten of whom guide Virgil and Dante through the pit.

From bridge to bridge engaged in other talk,
 Of which my Comedy cares not to sing,
 We came and held the summit, when our walk
 We stayed to see where Evilpits did bring
 Another fissure, other lamentings vain,
 And very dark I saw it, marvelling.
 As in the Venetian arsenal is seen
 In winter, the tenacious pitch to boil,
 To tar the unsound vessels o'er again
 They cannot navigate, and the meanwhile,
 One makes a vessel new, one recaulks now
 Ribs that have known much of sea-voyage toil ;
 One hammers at the stern, one at the prow,

¹ He was physician and astrologer to the Emperor Frederick II.

² Astrologer to Count Guido of Montefeltro. See Canto xxvii.

³ A shoemaker of Parma in the time of Frederick II.

⁴ According to popular tradition the Man in the Moon is Cain, who is condemned to carry a bundle of thorns.

This one makes oars, and that one twists the twine,
 And one doth mainsail or the mizzen sew ;
 Thus not by fire, but by an art divine,
 A dense pitch down below was boiling here
 Which made the bank on all sides viscid shine.
 This did I see, but in it I saw there
 Nought but the bubbles which the boiling raised,
 How all did swell, then falling compressed appear.
 Whilst I with transfixed eye thus downward gazed,
 My Leader suddenly cried out, "Look ! look !"
 And drew me toward him from where I was placed.
 Then did I turn me like the man o'ertook
 By longing to see what it behoves him flee,
 And whom, for sudden fear, his strength forsook,
 Yet while he looks, his flight delays not he :
 And a black devil running up behind
 Along the crag, coming to us, I see.
 Ah ! how ferociously his look inclined,
 And how in action, seemed he pitiless,
 With open wings, and feet so light to find.
 On his high-pointed shoulder there did press
 A sinner with both haunches ; as he sped
 He gripped him where the nerve of the feet has place.
 "O Evilclaws !" ¹ from off our bridge he said,
 "One of the Ancients of Saint Zita ² see :
 Just put him under ; for again I tread
 That land where the supply of them's so free :
 All save Bonturo, ³ are barraters there
 Where *No* for *Yes* is bartered for a fee."
 He hurled him down, and then did disappear
 O'er the hard crag ; no mastiff showed such haste,
 When slipped, to follow up a thief in rear.
 The man ducked in, and up returned, reversed,

¹ *Malebranche*, the generic name of this band of devils, has been translated by Mr. Rossetti into the expressive name of "Evilclaws." The names of the other devils are also so admirably rendered by the same authority that I have not hesitated to adopt them.

² St. Zita, Patroness of Lucca, of which the Ancients were the magistrates.

³ This is said ironically, he being the most notorious Barrater of all.

But from the bridge's covert, the Demons cried,
 "No room have we where the Sacred Face¹ be placed ;
 One swims not here as in the Serchio's² tide ;
 Therefore if thou'dst not feel our scratchings sore,
 None of thy surplus 'bove the pitch must bide."
 They seized him with a hundred hooks and more :
 "'Tis meet that covered here thou dance," said they,
 "And so extort unseen, if hast the power."
 The cooks their scullions make, in the same way,
 Souse in the middle of the pot, the meat
 With hooks, so that it not afloat may stay.
 Said the good Master to me ; "It is meet
 That thou appear not here ; therefore crouch low
 Behind some jutting peak where screen thou'lt get ;
 And no offence that I may shortly know
 Need cause thee fear, for of these things I'm ware ;
 To meet such scuffle I before did go."
 Beyond the bridge's head he then did bear,
 And when upon the sixth bank he had come,
 Need was for him a hardy front to wear :
 With such like fury, and with such a storm,
 As dogs leap out upon the pauper, who
 Asks sudden alms, ceasing awhile to roam,
 From 'neath the little bridge they swarmed in view,
 And turned their hooks against him every one,
 But he cried out, "Vicious be none of you !
 Ere to take hold of me, your hook you turn,
 Let one of you to hear me draw him near,
 And then think how his hook 'gainst me be borne."
 "Let Badtail go !" they one and all cried there :
 Wherefore one moved, while firmly stood the rest,
 And coming to him said, "What brings you here ?"
 "Dost thou suppose, Badtail, that here in quest
 Thou seest me come," replied my Master straight,
 "From all your arms already safe confessed,
 Without the Will Divine and favouring fate ?

¹ The *Santo Volto* is a much revered portrait of our Lord in the Cathedral of Lucca. The sinner who is thrown into the pitch emerges in a somewhat praying attitude ; hence the joke of the demon.

² A river near Lucca.

Let me proceed : in heaven 'tis counselled well,
 That I to another show this savage gate."
 Thereat his pride so humbled in him fell,
 That he his hook let tumble to his feet,
 And "Strike him not," he to the rest did tell.
 And then my Guide to me, "Thou who dost sit
 Among the bridge's shivers squatting so,
 Thou canst return to me in safety meet."
 Wherefore I quickly unto him did go,
 And all the devils trooping forward came,
 So that I feared their pledge they would forego.
 Thus have I seen those soldiers fear the same,
 Who under compact from Caprona¹ went,
 Seeing how strong around the foes became.
 With all my person close I myself bent
 Longside of him my Lord, nor turned mine eyes
 From sight of them who had no good intent.
 They bent their prongs, while one to another cried,
 "Let's touch him up upon the crupper, eh?"
 "Yes, make him show some sport" each one replies.
 But the same demon who in speech did stay
 In my Lord's company, turned quickly round
 And said, "Stop, stop, Elflocks!" Then did he say
 To us, "No further progress can be found
 Along this rock, because 'tis shattered so,
 That all the sixth arc's base lies ruin-bound.
 But if it please you that you onward go,
 By climbing up this cavern, soon one nears
 Another rock, which hath a pathway through.
 There are twelve hundred six and sixty years²
 Completed yesterday, five hours more late
 Than now, that this same broken path appears.
 In that direction some of mine shall get,

¹ A fortress of Pisa which was taken by capitulation in 1289 by the Florentine Guefs. When the besieged were led through the enemy's camp, cries were raised of "Hang them! Kill them!" Dante was present.

² Another reference to the earthquake which occurred at the crucifixion of our Lord, A. D. 34; and as Dante's vision took place in 1300, this gives the 1266 years mentioned by the demon. (See Canto xii. 45.)

To see if any cools himself thereon :
 Go with them ; they'll not be in vicious state.
 Now Droopingwing, and Tramplebrine, come on,"
 Began he then to say, "and Dogtooth, thou,
 And Bristlebeard shall guide the ten anon.
 Let Play-the-trick, and Grinning-mouth too, go,
 And tusky Wriggle-eel ; Scratching-dog, out !
 Colt's-foot and frantic Ruddyflare also.
 Search ye the boiling birdlime roundabout :
 Let these in safety to the next ledge be,
 Which all entire goes o'er the pits throughout."
 "Ah me ! my Master ! what is't that I see ?"
 Said I, "Let us all guideless go, alone,
 If thou know'st how ; I ask no guide for me.
 If thou art so acute as wont I know,
 Dost thou not see how they their teeth do grind.
 And woe betides us on each threatening brow ?"
 And he to me : "I'd have thee firm of mind ;
 Let them so grind as suits their fancy best,
 For this they do for that poor boiling kind."
 They wheeled about along the left-hand crest,
 But each one to his Lord, as sign known there,
 First thrust his tongue out, with his teeth compressed,
 And he a trumpet made from out his rear.

 CANTO XXII.

Fifth Pit continued.—Ciampolo is allowed to come out of the pitch to talk to Dante.—The demons give him chase, and he succeeds in escaping their prongs.—Quarrel of the demons, during which the Poets proceed on their journey.

Erst cavaliers I've seen raising their camp,
 Begin the battle, hold their mustering,
 And sometimes in retreat I've seen them tramp :
 Over your land seen couriers hastening,
 O Aretines ! seen foragers forth go,
 And fighting tournaments, jousts in the ring :

And now with trumpets, now with bells the show,
 With drums, with signals from the castle wall ;
 With our own things, with foreign things also :
 But never with a pipe of such strange call,
 Have I seen horsemen moved, or infantry,
 Nor ships when signal land or star let fall.
 With the ten demons now proceeded we,
 Fierce company ! but in the church we bide
 With saints, and in the tavern with gluttons be.
 But from the pitch I could not turn aside,
 I wished to see the condition of the pit,
 And also of the folk that burned inside.
 Like dolphins, when a signal they transmit
 To mariners, by arching of the back,
 That they, to save their ship, take counsel fit,
 So sometimes to assuage of pain the rack,
 One of the sinners showed his back outside
 And hid it in less time than lightnings take.
 As in a ditch, at water's brink abide
 The frogs, with only just the muzzle out,
 So that the feet and other bulk they hide,
 'Twas thus the sinners held them all about,
 But soon as Bristlebeard to them came near,
 Beneath the boilings they withdrew in rout.
 I saw, and still my heart doth quake for fear,
 One waiting thus, as it may chance to be,
 That one frog stays, another jumps off clear :
 And Scratching-dog, who stood opposingly,
 Soon hooked him by the hair, with pitch all smeared,
 And drew him up as 'twere an otter he.
 The names of all, already had I heard,
 As they were chosen, them I noted down,
 And when each called to each, their names appeared.
 " O Ruddyflare, thy clawings see well done,
 So that thou have him most completely flayed,"
 Joined in a chorus each accursed one.
 " My Master ! art thou able ? " then I said,
 " To find out who is that so luckless pate
 Who thus a prey in the foe's hands is made ? "
 Near to his side then went my Leader straight,

And asked him whence he was ; then answered he,
 " I'm from Navarre, a native of that state.
 My mother servant to a lord placed me,
 Having conceived me of a ribald, who
 Himself destroyed, his substance wasted he.
 Then I the good king Thibault's ¹ favour knew,
 And there on barratry was I intent,
 Whence, in this heat, must I the reckoning rue."
 And Wriggle-eel, out of whose mouth there went
 A tusk, as 'twere a hog's, on either side,
 Now made him feel it was for ripping meant.
 Among malicious cats the mouse had hied :
 But Bristlebeard him with his arms did lace,
 And said, " You, while I fork him there abide."
 And to my Master he turned round his face,
 And said, " Ask him again, if you wish more
 To know of him, ere the rest him débase."
 The Guide : " The other sinners now tell o'er :
 Know'st thou of any Latian, who may be
 Below the pitch ?" And he : " But just before
 I quitted one from ~~that~~ vicinity ;
 Would that I now with him were covered there,
 From fear of nail or hook I should be free."
 Said Play-the-trick, " Too much do we forbear :"
 And with his fork he seized him by the arm,
 So that a tendon ² he away did tear.
 And Grinning-mouth, he too intended harm
 Down on the legs : whereat their corporal turned
 Him round and round about, with ill look warm.
 When they with somewhat less of anger burned,
 My Leader asked, not further to delay,
 Of him, who still was looking at his wound,
 " Who was the man from whom, as thou did'st say,

¹ King Thibault of Navarre was a poet, and the patron of poets.

² The word *lacerto* (Latin, *lacertus*) is rendered "fore-arm" by most translators. According to Volpi, Alberti, and others, it is also used for the collection of nerves or muscles in any part of the arm. This seems to be the more likely rendering, from the fact that Ciampolo is afterwards represented (line 77) as looking at his wound ; had the fore-arm been taken off, it would rather have been a stump.

Thou mad'st bad parting, here to come awhile?"
 He said, "From Friar Gomita¹ I came away:
 He of Gallura, vessel of all guile,
 Who had the enemies of his lord in hand,
 And used them so, that each had cause to smile.
 Money he took, and made things for them bland,
 As he affirms: in other posts also
 Not mean, but sovereign barrater, did he stand.
 With him Don Michael Zanche² too doth go,
 Of Logodoro: of Sardinia they
 So talk, their tongues, it seems, ne'er weary grow.
 Ah me! that one who grinds his teeth but see!
 I'd further speak, but have of him such fear
 Lest he prepare to scratch the scab on me."
 And the great chieftain turned to Coltsfoot near,
 Who rolled his eyes as if to strike he meant,
 And said, "Foul bird! stand off, forbear."
 "If more to see or hear be your intent,"
 Began again the terror-stricken one,
 "Tuscans or Lombards, I can them present.
 But let the Evilclaws awhile have done,
 So that their vengeance they have not to dread,
 And I that sit in this very place alone,
 Reckoning but one, will make seven hither speed,
 If I but whistle, as we're wont to do,
 When one above the surface lifts his head."
 This Dogtooth heard, up did his muzzle go,
 Head-shaking while he said, "The trick now hear,
 Which he has thought of to 'scape downward so."
 Whence he who of devices had good share,
 Replied, "Too cunning I indeed should be
 Were I to make my mates more sadly fare."
 Droopwing could not contain himself, for he
 The rest opposing, to him said, "If thou
 Make off, I will not gallop after thee,
 But o'er the pitch I'll beat my wings; and now

¹ Gomita was minister of Nino Visconti, judge of Gallura, in Sardinia; he took bribes from his master's enemies, and was hanged.

² Zanche was Seneschal of Enzo, natural son of Frederick II.; through whom he obtained the jurisdiction of Logodoro in Sardinia.

Let's leave the ridge, and be the bank a shield,
To see if thou alone canst us outdo."
O Reader, thou shalt have new sport afield !
Each turned his eye toward the other side,
He first, who'd been reluctant most to yield.
The Navarrese well his occasion spied :
He placed his soles on earth, and instantly
Leaped, and himself from their intent did hide.
Whereat each was with shame stung suddenly,
But mostly he, the cause of their defeat,
Therefore he moved and cried, " Now I catch thee ! "
But little it availed his wings to beat :
They could not outstrip fear ; this dived below,
And that one flew, with his breast upward, fleet.
Not otherwise the duck behaveth so,
When near the falcon comes, it down doth dive,
While upward he, in ruffled rage, doth go.
Irate was Tramplebrine ; he, to the jeers alive,
Kept flying close behind him, well content,
In his escape, a quarrel to contrive :
And as the barterer out of sight was pent,
His clawings 'gan he on his mate to wreak,
And 'bove the fosse a grappling with him went.
But quite as good a hawk did the other make,
To claw him soundly, and it so fell out,
That both fell plump in the midst of the boiling lake.
The heat quick separation brought about ;
But to rise up again, nought could they do,
Their wings had such complete bird-liming got.
Then Bristlebeard, lamenting with his crew,
Bade four of them fly to the other side
With all their prongs, and they with swift ado,
Descended here and there, their posts beside,
And stretched their hooks towards the pitch-ensnared,
Who, cooked, already in the crust did bide ;
And from them, hampered thus, away we fared.

CANTO XXIII.

The Demons pursue the Poets, who escape into the Sixth Pit, which contains Hypocrites, who are made to wear capes of lead. Amongst these Dante finds two Bolognese friars.

Silent, alone, and without company,
 We went on, one before, and one behind,
 As go the Minor Friars on their way.
 Upon that Æsop's fable I inclined
 My thought, as this same quarrel I conned o'er,
 Where frog and mouse¹ in company are joined ;
 For *now* and *at present* not resemble more
 Than these do those, if coupling well we bring
 End and beginning the firm mind before.
 And as from one thought doth another spring,
 So was from that another then inbred,
 Which my first fear endued with double sting.
 I pondered thus :—These fiends for us are led
 To scorn, with scoffing and much injury,
 Such that I think they've great annoy bested.
 If anger with ill will conjoined be,
 They after us more cruelly will wend
 Than doth the dog the hare that moutheth he.
 I felt my-hair already stand on end
 For dread, and stood intently on the rear.
 "Master," I said, "if aid not prompt thou lend
 To hide thyself and me, I stand in fear
 Of Evilclaws ; behind us now they speed :
 I so imagine them, I feel they're here."
 And he : "If I of leaded glass were made,
 Thine outward shape I could not draw to me
 More swiftly than the inner one I read.
 E'en now to join mine own, thy thoughts did flee,
 With the like attitude, and the like face,
 So that, of both, one counsel sole there be.

¹ According to the fable the frog offered to take the mouse across the stream, intending to drown him, when they both became the prey of a hawk.

If so it be the right hand slope is the place,
 By which we get us down to the other pit,
 We shall escape from the imagined chase."
 Thus gave he such advice, nor ended it
 When them I saw not far behind, wing-spread,
 Coming to seize us, with such will they flit.
 My Leader snatched me up with sudden speed,
 As 'twere a mother, wakened by the affray,
 Who sees close by the kindled flames make head,
 And takes her son and flees, nor stops on the way,
 Having for him, than for herself, more care,
 Though but a single shift her whole array.
 And downward from the neck of the hard rock there,
 He gave him to the hanging crag supine,
 Which walls one side of the other fosse's lair.
 Ne'er water ran so swift in sluice's line,
 To turn the wheel round of a land-built mill,
 When nearest to the paddles it doth join,
 As did my Master along that slip of hill ;
 With me upon his breast he onward sped,
 As 'twere not comrade, but his son the while.
 And scarcely were his feet upon the bed
 Down in the depth, when *they* the slope attained
 Above us ; but he held them not in dread,—
 For the High Providence which had ordained
 To place them ministers of the fifth pit,
 Had all of them from parting thence restrained.
 A painted folk we found there dwell in it,
 Who went around the slope exceeding slow,
 Weeping, and tired in mien, and vanquished quite ;
 And capes they wore, with hoods descending low
 Before the eyes, and fashioned in such wise
 As in Cologne for the monks 'tis ordered so.
 Outside they're gilt, and dazzling to the eyes,
 But inside all of lead, and of such weight,
 As 'twere that Frederick did but straw devise.¹
 Oh, weary mantle of eternal fate !
 We turned again, and still to the left our road

¹ Frederick the Second is said to have caused traitors to be clad in capes of lead, and then placed in an oven to melt.

With them, while yet on their sad plaint we wait.
 But that o'erwearied folk, with such a load,
 Came on so slowly, that new company
 We ever met, as each new step we trod.
 Whence to my Leader I :—" See if there be
 Some one who may be known by name or deed,
 And scan them o'er while thus in motion we."
 And one who to the Tuscan tongue gave heed,
 Cried from behind to us, " Your footsteps hold,
 Who through the dusky air run with such speed.
 Perchance thou'lt hear from me what thou'dst be told."
 Wherefore the Leader turned and said, " Let's stay,
 And then our pace by his pace be controlled."
 I stopped, and two I saw in face betray
 The eager mind they had me to be nigh,
 But the weight held them back, and the straitened way.
 When they came up, long time with side-long eye
 They gazed upon me, and no word did give,
 Then each to other turned, and made reply :
 " By the throat's action, this one seems alive,
 And by what privilege, if they are dead,
 Do they beneath the heavy stole not strive ?"
 Then said to me, " O Tuscan ! who hast sped
 To the College of the sad hypocrites thy way,
 Scorn not to tell us who thou art indeed."
 Then I, " My birth-place, where I grew alway,
 Is the great city on fair Arno's stream,
 And with the body *am* I've had for aye.
 But who are ye who thus distil such stream
 Of grief adown your cheeks, as I behold,
 And what the doom on you with sparkling beam ?"
 And one replied, " The orange hoods enfold
 Much lead, so heavy, that such weights as these
 Their balances from creaking cannot hold.
 We were Godenti Friars,¹ and Bolognese,

¹ An order founded by Urban IV. in 1261 under the title of "Knights of Santa Maria," but as they became celebrated for free living they were called *Frati Godenti*, or "Jolly Friars. The two mentioned were guilty of peculation and hypocrisy while employed in the public service.

I Catalano, and Lodringo he :
 To take us both together, it did please
 Your land, as men take one for arbitrary,
 So to preserve her peace ; such course we led
 As still about Gardingo you may see.”
 Then I, “ Oh Friars ! your ills ”—no more I said,
 For on mine eyes there-rushed one crucified,
 With three stakes to the ground thus pinionèd :
 When, seeing me, all quivering he did bide,
 And blew into his beard with sighs out-pressed :
 And Catalano, who had this espied,
 Explained to me, “ This nailed one that thou seest
 Counsellèd the Pharisees it expedient were
 To make one man a martyr for the rest.¹
 Crosswise he’s fixed upon the path, and bare,
 As thou dost see, and he must needs first find
 The weight of each one as he passes there.
 And in like mode his father-in-law² is strained
 Within this fosse, and they of the Council too,
 Which for the Jews was but an ill seed gained.”
 Then saw I Virgil stand and marvelling view
 Him who extended on the cross thus lay
 So vilely, and an eternal exile knew :
 Then to the Friar he turned, and thus did say,
 “ Be not displeased, if lawful ’tis, to tell
 If on the right hand lies a downward way
 By which we two, from hence, may come forth well,
 Without constraining the black angel’s aid
 To disengage us from this depth so fell ? ”
 “ More than thou hopest for,” he therefore said,
 “ A rock is near, which from the greater round,
 Proceeds and crosses all these vales of dread,
 Save this one rent, and hence the path’s not crowned ;
 But ye can climb, and along the ruin go
 Which lies aslope, and swells at the bottom ground.”
 The Leader stood short while, with head bent low,
 Then said :—“ Our business he advisèd ill,
 Who there beyond inforks the sinners so.”

¹ John xi. 49, 50.² Annas.

And the Friar, " I at Bologna have heard tell
 Enough of the devil's sins, 'mong which this one
 That he's a liar, and father of lies as well."
 Thereat my Leader went with great strides on,
 With somewhat in his mien of angry heat :
 Soon from the laden ones I too was gone
 After the steps of the beloved feet.

 CANTO XXIV.

The two Poets arrive with difficulty at the Seventh Pit, where Thieves are punished by different kinds of serpents.—Vanni Fucci foretells evils for Pistoja and Florence.

In that part of the youthful year wherein
 Sol 'neath Aquarius cooling his locks is found,
 And nights draw near the half of day to win ;
 ¶When the hoar-frost doth copy, on the ground,
 The image of her sister clothed in white,
 Though fleeting her pen's temper must be owned ;
 The countryman with failing food in sight;
 Rises, and looks, and all the country sees
 A-whitening, whereat he his flank doth smite,
 Goes home, and here and there 'plains, ill at ease,
 Like one cast down, who knows not what to do ;
 Then he returns, fresh hope again to seize,
 Seeing the world hath changed its face to view
 Within a little while ; and takes his crook,
 And drives the sheep their pasture to renew :
 So made my master me astonished look,
 When I beheld him with such turbid brow,
 But soon the plaster that same hurt o'ertook,
 For to the ruined bridge, as we came now,
 My leader turned with that sweet look on me
 Which, at the mountain's foot, I first did know.
 He oped his arms, after some arbitry.

With his own mind, but first 'gan he explore
 Ere he took me, the ruin attentively.
 And like to him who works, and conneth o'er,
 And aye beforehand seemeth to provide,
 So, raising me to boulder's top afore,
 To scan another rock he there did bide,
 And said, "To that one grapple, but first try
 If it will bear thee safely on its side."
 No one who wore a cape could come thereby,
 For hardly we, he light and I thrust on,
 From hold to hold could mount us steadily.
 And were it not that that precinct upon,
 The slope was shorter than on the other yet,
 I know not he, but I had been undone.
 But because Evilpits, towards the gate
 Of the profoundest well doth all incline,
 The structure of each valley so is set,
 That one bank mounts, and the other doth decline :
 But we at length that very point had gained
 Wherefrom impends the last stone of the line.
 The breath from out my lungs was so much strained,
 When I was up, I could no further go,
 But took the nearest seat, and there remained.
 "Thee it behoves that thou unsloth thee now,"
 The Master said ; "for upon down to sit,
 Or under quilt, not fame one getteth so ;
 And wanting that, who spends a life unfit,
 Such vestige of him doth to earth bequeath
 As smoke in air, or foam on water writ.
 Therefore arise, and conquer panting breath
 By strength of soul, that wins in every fight,
 If the gross body sink it not beneath.
 It needs to mount a longer stairway's flight,¹
 'Tis not enough to have escaped from these :
 If thou dost mark, let it avail thee right."
 Then I uprose, and showed me more at ease
 For breath, than I in verity could own,
 And said "Go on ! I'm strong and bold not less."
 Upward along the crag we journeyed on,

¹ That is, to Purgatory.

Which jagged was, and difficult and strait,
 And greatly steeper than the former one.
 Not to seem spent, I still on converse wait,
 When a voice issued from the other pit,
 Not fitted well words to articulate.
 I know not what it said, though over it
 I was, on the back of the arch that just there lies ;
 But he who spoke seemed in an angry fit.
 I was bent downwards, but no living eyes
 Could, for the darkness, to the bottom wend,
 When I, " See, Master, if the other round supplies
 A path, and let us from the wall descend :
 From hence I understand not, though I hear,
 And nothing see, though down my eyes I bend."
 " Other response," he said, " I make not here
 Save in the doing ; since a fair request
 Should fitly in the silent deed appear."
 We from the bridge descended by its crest,
 Where the eighth bank adjoineth it along,
 And then the pit to me was manifest.
 And I within it saw a dreadful throng
 Of serpents, and so various in kind
 That curdling blood doth still to the thought belong.
 Not Libya's sands can aught of boasting find,
 For if she broods of snakes and adders have,
 Vipers and amphisbœnas, aspics blind,¹
 She ne'er with all that Ethiopia gave,
 Showed pests so many, so intent on harm,
 Nor yet with that which scans the Red Sea's wave.²
 Amid this cruel and most dismal swarm
 There ran a naked people, struck with fear,
 Without the hope of hole or jasper's charm :³

¹ The names of the serpents given by Dante are taken from Lucan (Phars. ix.). Many attempts have been made to identify them with existing species ; but rather than do this, or adopt unintelligible names, I have preferred to follow Mr. Rossetti in giving those of recognisable species.

² Egypt.

³ The ancients had a superstition concerning the jasper, or heliotrope, that it rendered its wearer invisible.

Their hands were tied with serpents to their rear,
 Which stuck unto their reins the tail and head,
 And knotted up in front of them appear.
 And lo! on one who to our side had sped,
 A serpent darted with transfixing bite,
 Where neck with shoulders hath its junction made.
 Nor *O* nor *I* was e'er so quickly writ,
 As he took fire and burned, and falling down
 Behoved it he resolved to ashes quite.
 When he was thus destroyed the ground upon,
 The ashes drew together, of their own will,
 And at a stroke, reformed that fallen one.
 By the great sages 'tis admitted still,
 The Phoenix dies, and then is born again,
 When near five hundred years he doth fulfil.
 Nor herb nor blade can e'er his life maintain,
 But tears of incense and amomum sole;
 Of nard and myrrh are his last swathings fain.
 As he who falls and knoweth no control,
 By Demon's might which drags him to the ground,
 Or other seizure of constraining dole,
 When he gets up, he gazes all around,
 By the great anguish quite bewildered
 That he has suffered; gazing, his sighs resound:
 Such was the sinner when he raised his head.
 Justice of God! severe in verity
 Such vengeful blows with such downpouring speed!
 My Leader asked him then who he might be?
 Wherefore, "To this fierce pit short while ago,"
 He said, "I was rained down from Tuscany.
 A bestial life pleased me, not human so,
 But as the mule, was Vanni Fucci, I,
 A beast, and Pistoja worthy den to know."
 And I to my Guide, "Bid him shirk not reply,
 And ask what crime propelled him here adown?
 Violent and bloody deeds I'd known him by."
 The Sinner, who had heard, did nought disown,
 But turned to me his mind and face as well,
 The which the hue of mournful shame did own.
 Then he, "It grieves me more it so befel

Thee thus to see me in this misery,
 Than in the other life to cease to dwell :
 I can't deny what thou demand'st of me :
 Because I robbed, I here thus low am placed,
 Of its fair ornaments the Sacristy ;
 And another was thereby falsely disgraced :
 But that thou may'st not gladden at such sight,
 If out of the dark places e'er thou haste,
 Open thine ears, and hear what I recite :—
 First is Pistoja meagre of Blacks to grow ;
 Then Florence renews her men and modes by right ;¹
 Through Mars a mist² from Magra's vale doth go,
 Which is with turbid clouds involved about,
 And with a storm, bitter and fierce to know.
 There'll be on the Picene field the battle's rout,
 When of a sudden he the fog shall cleave,
 So that each White be smitten without doubt :
 And this I've said that thou thereat may'st grieve."

CANTO XXV.

Fucci blasphemes and flees pursued by the Centaur Cacus.—The Poets meet three Florentine shades, two of whom are marvellously transformed before them.

Whenas the thief his words had ended, he
 Upraised his hands with both the figs,³ and cried,
 "Take that, O God ! for them I ajm at Thee !"

¹ The *Neri* were banished from Pistoja in 1301, and the *Bianchi* from Florence in 1302.

² The "mist," or storm, refers to the Marquis Malaspina, the General of the *Neri*, whose possessions were in the *Val di Magra*. The "turbid clouds" refer to the banished *Neri* of Pistoja who defeated the *Bianchi* in the Picene field. Dante was of the *Bianchi* party, and this explains the taunt in the last line.

³ A vulgar sign of contempt made by closing the fist with the thumb thrust out between the fore and middle fingers. Biting the thumb, as in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, was probably a similar insult to that conveyed by the fig.

Henceforth the serpents as my friends abide,
 For thereupon, about his neck, one twined,
 As though "I'll have thee speak no more," it said.
 And by his arms another so did bind,
 And so in front did clench and circumscribe,
 That he with them no power to jog could find.
 Pistoja! ah Pistoja! why not prescribe
 To incinerate thyself, and no more dwell,
 Since in ill deeds thou dost outdo thy tribe!
 Throughout the girths obscure of that same hell,
 I saw no spirit towards God so proud;
 Not he at Thebes, who from the walls down fell.¹
 He fled away and spake no further word;
 And I a Centaur saw, coming in wrath,
 "Where is the scoffer, where?" he cried aloud.
 I do not think Maremma could bring forth
 So many snakes, as he had on his back,
 Stretched far as where the face beginning hath;
 Upon his shoulders, just behind the neck,
 With wings outspread, a dragon on him lay,
 And he sets fire to all who cross his track.
 "Cacus² is that," thus did my Master say,
 "Who 'neath the rock of the Mount Aventine,
 Did oftentimes a lake of blood display:
 He on one road his brothers doth not join,
 By reason of his fraudulent thieving, when
 He found him near the mighty herd of kine.
 Hence from his crooked actions ceased he then,
 'Neath mace of Hercules, which it may be,
 Gave him a hundred, and he felt not ten."
 While he was speaking thus, he had passed by;
 And underneath us did three spirits³ come,
 Whom I was not aware of, nor my Guide he,

¹ See Canto xiv.

² Cacus is placed here with the thieves instead of in the Seventh Circle with the other Centaurs (see Canto xii.) because he stole the cattle of Hercules.

³ Three Florentine noblemen, guilty of peculation while in office. Their names were Agnolo, Buoso, and Puccio. The serpent with six legs was Cianfa: the little black serpent Francesco Guercio Cavalcanti.

Until they shouted, "Who are ye?" wherefrom
 Our story telling came to halting pace,
 And then intent on them did we become.
 I did not know them, but it came to pass
 By accident, as it is wont to do,
 That one the other's name had need to express,
 By saying, "Where can Cianfa be stopping now?"
 Whence I, so that my Leader might attend,
 From chin to nose my finger planted so.
 If credence, Reader, thou art slow to lend
 To what I now shall say, I marvel not,
 For I who saw it, scant admission tend.
 As I, with lifted brows, to con them sought,
 Behold a serpent with six feet forth dart,
 In front of one, and seized him all about :
 With the mid feet it gripped his belly's part,
 And with the fore feet, of the arms took hold,
 And then on both the cheeks it biting caught :
 With the hinder ones it did the thighs enfold,
 And made its tail pass in between the two,
 And back along the reins it there unrolled.
 Ivy did never cling more closely so
 To tree, than did that horrid reptile here
 Its own, with others' limbs, entwining go.
 Close stuck, as heated wax, they would appear
 To have been made ; each mixed with each its hue,
 Nor one nor other what it was seemed there.
 As up before the flame there starts to view
 Along the papyrus a brown-coloured stain,
 Which not yet black, doth yet the white subdue,
 Thus, looking on, exclaimed the other twain,
 " Ah me ! Agnello, what a change for thee,
 Thou art not two, and dost not one remain !"
 Already of two heads, but one we see,
 And of the same, two figures seemed to blend
 Into one face where two had ceased to be :
 Two arms, two forefeet, but two members send ;¹

¹ The original is—"The two arms were made of four bands," that is, the two arms of the man and the two fore feet of the serpent made the two arms of the compound monster.

The thighs, the legs, the belly, and the chest
 Became such members as were never kened :
 Each pristine aspect therein was erased ;
 Two and yet none seemed that perverted thing ;
 Such as it was, away it slowly paced.
 Like as the lizard, 'neath the mighty sting
 Of dog-days, quitting one hedge for another one,
 Seems lightning, if across the road it spring,
 Thus seemed, as towards the paunch, it movèd on
 To the other two, a fiery serpent small,
 Livid and black as 'twere a peppercorn ;
 And that part by which is taken first of all
 Our food,¹ to one it so transfixing sped,
 That down before him it distent must fall :
 And the transfixed gazed on, but nothing said,
 But rather, holding firm foot, yawned, as though
 Assailed by sleep, or fever in him bred :
 He gazed on the serpent, that on him also :
 One by the wound, by the mouth the other one
 Exhaled dense smoke, and the smokes commingling go.
 Let Lucan mute remain, where he hath shown
 Of poor Sabellus' and Nasidius'² wrong,
 And wait to hear what will be quickly known.
 Of Cadmus, Arethuse, let Ovid's³ song
 Be mute : if poetising, he them made
 Serpent and fount, no envy doth belong ;
 Because two natures, front to front displayed,
 Ne'er hath he metamorphosed, so that of both
 The stuff of both prompt change should so invade.
 By rules responding each one hath his growth ;
 The serpent to a fork next clove his tail,
 He wounded, strained his feet and one brought forth :
 The legs and thighs adhere of their own will,
 So closely, that but little time had flown,
 Ere sign of junction of the parts did fail :
 The cloven tail that shape was taking on

¹ The navel.

² Two soldiers of Cato's army who were stung to death by serpents in the Libyan desert. (Phars. ix. 763.)

³ *Metamor.* iv. 563 ; v. 572.

The feet were losing, and of that, the skin
 Made itself soft, and hard the other one.
 I saw the arms, the shoulder-blades go in,
 Also the beast's two feet which had been short,
 Grow long, as much, as those in length decline :
 The feet then intertwined, behind were brought,
 And formed the member which a man conceals,
 And from this wretch's own now two came out :
 While that the smoke both one and other veils
 With novel hue, and an upper skin puts on
 On one part, on the other off it peels,—
 The one uprose as the other one fell down,
 Still were their impious lamps¹ not shifted yet,
 'Neath which each one an altered face did own.
 He standing, strained, till face and temples met,
 And from the excess of matter that came there,
 The ears from out of the bare cheeks were set :
 The part now left, which went not to the rear,
 Made from that surplus, to the face a nose,
 And the lips thickened as was fitting here.
 He fallen, doth his muzzle forth expose,
 And backward draws the ears along the head,
 As wont the snail its horns so to dispose.
 The tongue, which was entire and aptly led
 To speech, is cloven, and the biforked one
 Shuts in the other, and the smokings fade.
 The soul, which into reptile's form had gone,
 Takes flight, and hissing goes the valley through,
 And the other after moves speech-spluttering on.
 Then did he turn on him his shoulders new,
 And said to the other, "I will that Buoso run
 Along here, crawling, as I had wont to do."
 Thus of these beds of sand, the seventh one
 Saw I transmute and change ; but novelty
 Be my excuse, if flowers my tongue disown.
 And though my eyes were in perplexity
 Somewhat, and with my soul likewise dismayed,
 They were not able, so disguised, to flee,

¹ Their eyes.

But that Sciancato's form was well displayed :
 And he it was, of three companions sole,
 Who came at first, in whom no change was made,
 The last was he that caused, Gaville, thy dole.¹

 CANTO XXVI.

The Eighth Pit ; where Evil Counsellors are punished, wrapped each in a flame ; except a two-horned flame, which holds Ulysses and Diomedes, who are inseparable here as they were in life.

Florence, rejoice ! because thou art so great,
 That thou dost beat thy wings o'er land and sea,
 And that through hell thy name doth circulate.
 Among the thieves I found that five there be,
 Thy citizens, whence unto me comes shame,
 And no great honour cometh unto thee.
 But if when morn is near, we truly dream,
 Then thou shalt feel, in a short time from now,
 What Prato,² if not others, for thee would claim.
 And if 'twere now, it were not now too slow ;
 Would that it were, seeing it thus must fare,
 For more 'twill grieve me as more years I know.
 We parted thence, and up the rocky stair
 The stones had made before for our descent,
 My Lord remounted and he helped me there.
 As on the solitary way we went
 Between the crags, and the rock's boulders gain,
 The foot sped not, if aid the hand not lent.
 I grieved me then, and now grieve o'er again
 When I recall to mind what then I spied,
 And more rein in my thought than I would fain,
 Lest it may run where virtue doth not guide ;

¹ Guercio Cavalcanti having been murdered by the peasants of Gaville in the Val d'Arno, his family revenged his death, which caused Gaville to weep.

² The town of Prato, near Florence, desired her ill, to say nothing of other towns farther off.

That if good star, or something better still,
 Hath given me good, I turn it not aside.
 As many as the hind, who rests on the hill,
 What time when he that floods the world with light
 Holdeth his face to us most visible;
 What time the fly yields to the gnat its flight—
 Sees glowworms¹ down along the vale where he
 May plough, or where his vintage is in sight;
 With flames so many shone resplendently
 The eighth recess, which I discerned as soon
 As I came where the bottom I could see.
 As he² whose vengeance by the bears was done,
 Elijah's chariot saw³ departing rise,
 As moved erect the horses heavenward on,
 That he could not so follow with his eyes
 As to see anything, except the flame,
 As 'twere a cloudlet rising to the skies,—
 So 'long the fosse's gully 'twas the same:
 Each moving flame showed nought of theft to be
 Though each a sinner's hiding place became.
 I stood upon the bridge uprisen to see,
 So that had I not held a crag's point there
 Without a push I'd fallen certainly.
 My Guide, who noted how intent my care,
 Explained, "Within these fires the spirits dwell;
 Each with his swathing doth his burning share."
 "Master," I said, "in hearing thee, full well
 I surer know; already my surmise
 Had made it so, already wished to tell
 Who's in that coming fire that cleft doth rise
 Atop, it seems to mount up from the pyre
 Where Eteocles⁴ with his brother lies."
 He answered me, "Martyred within that fire

¹ The word *luciole* is rendered by some translators "fire-flies;" but the fire-fly was not known in Europe until the time of Columbus, who brought it from America.

² Elisha; 2 Kings ii. 23.

³ 2 Kings ii. 2.

⁴ Eteocles and Polynices were hostile brothers divided in life, and when they were burnt at one common pyre, the flame divided.—Statius, *Thebaid* xii.

Ulysses and Diomedes are, the twain
 Together run in vengeance as in ire.
 And there within their flame is wept amain,
 The ambush of the horse, which the door made
 Whence gentle seed of Rome might passage gain.¹
 Therein is wept the craft for which, being dead,
 Doth Deidamia² Achilles still lament ;
 And there the pains for the palladium fled.”
 “ If they can speak within these flames thus pent,
 Master,” I said, “ I pray and pray again,
 A thousand fold the prayer's worth to augment,
 That thou deny me not here to remain
 Until the hornèd flame shall have come here :
 How with desire to it I bend, is plain.”
 And he to me : “ Full worthy is thy prayer
 Of commendation ; which I grant also :
 But take thou heed thy speech doth not appear.
 Leave me to speak, because in thought I know
 What thou would'st have, seeing it might offend,
 Them, being Greeks, to hear thy language flow.”
 Whenas the flame unto that point did wend,
 Where to my guide it seemed fit time and place,
 To speech somewhat like this did I attend.
 “ Oh ye ! who are two, that one fire doth embrace,
 If I deserved of you while I did live,
 If I deserved of you much or small grace
 When I to the world the lofty verse did give,
 Do not move on, but tell of you two one,
 To what lost place he went, death to receive ! ”
 Of that so ancient flame the greater horn
 Began to wave about in murmuring,
 As by a flame, when wind-fatigued, is done.

¹ The wooden horse by which Troy was conquered, or, in a poetical sense, the door by which Æneas went forth to establish the Roman empire.

² Deidamia was daughter of Lycomedes of Scyros, beloved of Achilles. Ulysses finding him at her father's court lured him to the siege of Troy on the ground that, according to the oracle, the city could not be taken without his aid, but concealing from him that it would cost him his life. Ulysses and Diomedes stole the palladium, or statue of Pallas from Troy.

Its top then to and fro went wavering,
 As if it were the tongue that speech revealed,
 Whenas the sound came forth, voice uttering :
 ‘ From Circe I departed who concealed
 Me, for above a year, Gaeta near,
 Ere from Æneas the name that place had held.¹
 Not my son’s sweetness, nor compassion there
 For my old father, nor the love so due
 Which to Penelope should have brought cheer,
 Could in my breast the ardour yet subdue
 In worldly knowledge all expert to be,
 In human vices, human virtues too.
 But I set out on the deep open sea,
 With one sole ship, and with that little band
 Which never never had deserted me.
 As far as Spain’s, far as Morocco’s strand
 Did I adventure ; the isle of Sardis I know,
 And others, of which that sea doth bathe the sand.
 I and my company were old and slow :
 When we had come unto the narrow strait
 Where Hercules his cautionings doth show²
 That no one further on adventure wait,
 On my right hand ’twas Seville I passed by,
 And on the other did from Ceuta get. .
 ‘ Brothers,’ I said, ‘ who have arrived hereby,
 Mid a hundred thousand perils, to the west,
 Ye surely are not willing to deny
 To the short waking time that may invest
 Your senses still, that ye experience win
 Of the lone world that ’hind the sun doth rest.
 Consider now what is your origin ;
 Ye were not made like to the beasts to live,
 In virtue rather and in truth to shine.’
 This my oration did such ardour give
 To my companions for the voyage on,
 Scarce to hold back would they commands receive.
 And having turned our poop towards the morn,
 Our oars we made as wings to our mad flight,

¹ Gaeta was so named by Æneas after his nurse, who died there.

² The Pillars of Hercules.

Our course to larboard evermore we won.
 Already all the stars we saw at night
 Of the other pole, and ours so very low,
 They rose not 'bove the ocean's floor to sight.
 Five times rekindled, quenched as oft the glow,
 Of that same light from underneath the moon,
 Since we on that deep pass had entered so,
 When there appeared to us a mountain,¹ dun
 Through distance, and it seemed to me so high
 As I have never any gazed upon.
 Much joy it gave, but soon brought tearful eye ;
 For the new land to us a whirlwind sent
 Which smote the ship's forepart vehemently :
 So she and the water all thrice wheeling went,
 At the fourth time it made the poop upstrain,
 And prow go down as pleased Another's intent,
 Till over us the sea was closed again."

 CANTO XXVII.

Eighth Pit continued.—Story of Count Guido da Montefeltro.

Now standing straight, and of all motion quit,
 No more to speak, parted from us the flame,
 Whenas the gentle Poet did permit.
 When lo ! another, which behind it came,
 Caused us towards its top our eyes to bear,
 By a sound confused that issued from the same.
 As the Sicilian bull,² whose bellowings were
 At first with his lament (and this was right)
 Who with his file had tempered it with care,

¹ The Mountain of Purgatory.

² Perillus prepared for the tyrant Phalaris a brazen bull capable of holding a man. A fire being kindled under it, the cries of the victim were said to resemble the bellowing of a bull. The Tyrant ordered that the inventor should be its first victim.

Bellowed with voice of the afflicted wight,
 So that for all it was of copper made,
 It seemed as still transfixed with suffering's might ;
 So for not having pass or issue's aid,
 The melancholy words within the fire
 Were first into its proper language led ;
 But after, when a passage to acquire,
 Along the point they make vibrate the flame
 With the tongue's motion as the words transpire,
 This heard we say : " O thou at whom I aim
 My voice, who spakest Lombard even now,
 Saying, ' Depart, of thee no more I claim,'
 Though I in coming may be somewhat slow,
 Let it not vex to stay and speak with me ;
 Thou seest I vex not though I'm burning so.
 If to this blinded world, as it may be,
 Thou'rt lately fallen from that sweet Latian land
 Whence I derive all my iniquity,
 Say hath Romagna peace or war in hand ?
 For I was of the mountain there between
 Urbin and the ridge whence Tiber bursts its band.'"
 Down bent and listening I'd attentive been,
 Whenas my Leader touched me on the side,
 Saying, " Speak thou, this is a Latian man."
 And I who ready had my words, replied
 Without delaying, and began to say,
 " O Spirit ! thou that yonder down dost hide,
 Thy Romagna is not, nor ever may
 Be free from war her tyrants' hearts within,
 But there I left no manifest affray.
 Ravenna stands as many years she's been :
 The Eagle from Polenta¹ broodeth there,
 And covering Cervia with her wings is seen.
 The land which erst that long defence did bear,
 And that so bloody heap of French up-threw,
 Finds herself 'neath the talons vert² in care.

¹ The crest of Guido da Polenta, whose dominion extended to the little town of Cervia.

² The green lion of the Ordellaffi. In 1282 Guido da Montefeltro defeated the French at Forli with great slaughter.

Verucchio's elder mastiff and the new,
 Who wrought Montagna's ill disposal so,
 Of their teeth make augers, where they're wont to do.¹
 Lamone's City, that of Santerno,
 'Neath Lion Cub from the white nest doth bide,
 'Twixt summer and winter changing sides he'll go ;²
 And that of which the Savio bathes the side,
 E'en as it lies between the mount and plain,
 'Twixt tyranny and freedom lives thus tried.³
 And who thou art I pray thee now explain,
 Nor do thou be more stubborn than the rest,
 So may thy name its place in the world maintain."
 After the fire had waved its sharpened crest,
 After its fashion, hither and thither, then
 Its breathings gave a voice which this expressed :
 "If I but thought my answer met the ken
 Of one who ever should to earth return,
 This flame would stay without a shake again.
 But inasmuch as never from this bourne
 Any returned, if I the truth do hear,
 My answer need no fear of infamy earn.
 I was a man of arms ; then Cordelier,⁴
 Believing thus begirt amends to make,
 And truly my belief fulfilled were
 But for the High Priest,⁵ whom may evil take,
 Who to old sins made me again conform ;
 And how and why I will that thou me hark.
 While I was still of bones and pulp the form
 My mother gave me, all the deeds of mine
 Not from the lion, but the fox came from.
 Clandestine ways, and machinations fine
 I knew them all, and managed so their art,

¹ Malatesta, father and son, tyrants, of Rimini, near which was their castle Verucchio. Montagna, a Ghibelline chief in Rimini, was taken by Malatesta and cruelly executed.

² The rivers are named from the towns Faenza and Imola, governed by Mainardo de' Pagani, whose arms were a blue lion on a white ground : he was notorious for changing sides.

³ The town of Cesena, on the Savio, which was sometimes free, and sometimes under the rule of the Guelfs or of the Ghibellines.

⁴ Franciscan Friar.

⁵ Boniface VIII.

The fame of them the ends of the world did join.
 When I had found that I had reached that part
 Of life, when it behoves that every one
 Lower the sails, coil in the ropes apart,
 My former pleasure then to pain had gone,
 And penitent, I sought confession's ease ;
 Ah ! wretched me, success it would have won.
 The Prince of all the modern Pharisees,
 Having a war near Lateran to wage,¹
 Nor Saracens nor Jews his enemies,
 (For all were Christians that he would engage,
 And none to Acre's conquest e'er had been,
 Nor to the Soldan's land for merchant's wage)
 Nor office high, nor holy orders then
 Did he in himself regard, nor cord in me,
 Which went to make the men it girt more lean.
 But as within Soracte his leprosy
 Did Constantine ask Sylvester to cure,
 This one prayed me, as though his Doctor I,
 Him from his prideful fever to assure.
 He asked my counsel, and I nothing said,
 Since his words seemed by drunkenness obscure.
 Then he to me, ' Let not thy heart be afraid :
 Henceforth I thee absolve, so teach me thou
 How Penestrino² to the ground be laid.
 To lock or unlock Heaven, this can I do,
 As well thou knowest, for the keys are twain ;
 Not dear my Predecessor held them so.'
 The weighty arguments impelled me then,
 Where silent to remain I thought unfit ;
 ' Father, since thou dost wash me,' I began,
 ' From this my sin which now I must commit,
 Long promise, short fulfilment, thou wilt see,
 Will make thee triumph in the lofty seat.'
 After my death did Francis³ come for me,
 When said to him of the black cherubim one :

¹ Boniface in 1297 issued a Bull for a crusade against the hated Colonna family, who lived near the Church of St. John Lateran at Rome.

² The Fortress of the Colonnas.

³ St. Francis of Assisi.

'Him take not; nor with me deal wrongfully,
 Among my servitors must he come down,
 Because the fraudulent advice he gave,
 For which till now I have to his hair held on.
 Who not repents must absolution leave:
 "No one, at once, can both repent and will,
 Seeing the contradiction 'twill not have.'
 Ah, woeful me! how shuddered I the while:
 He seized on me, and said; 'Thou, it may be,
 Didst not imagine I had logic skill!'
 He carried me to Minos: eight times he
 Entwined his tail about his stubborn back,
 And said, when he had bit it ragefully,
 'A culprit this, the thieving fire must sack.'
 Whence I am lost, as here thou dost behold,
 Thus clad I move, and my lamentings make."
 When all he had to say, he so had told,
 The flame lamenting went from us away,
 Its sharp horn twisting in wavings manifold.
 My Lord and I passed further on our way
 To the other arc, along the craggy road,
 Which roofs the fosse, where they the fine must pay
 Who, bent on sowing discord, gather load.

 CANTO XXVIII.

Ninth Pit.—Sowers of Scandal, Schism, and Heresy, who are punished by being maimed.

Who even with unfettered words, could e'er
 Of the blood and of the wounds give full detail,
 Which now I saw, though oft he speaking were?
 'Tis certain, every tongue in this would fail,
 Seeing our language and our mind doth hold
 Small space, to comprehend so much withal.
 If all the folk regathered as of old
 Upon Apulia's so fertile land,
 Mourning its bloody losses manifold

For the Trojans' sake and the long war in hand,
 Which of the rings made up the high spoil's gain,
 As he who errs not, Livy, so hath penned :¹
 Along with that which felt of blows the pain,
 Opposing Robert Guiscard² in the fight,
 And the rest whose bones upgathered still remain
 At Ceperano where a liar hight
 Was each Apulian ;³ and at Tagliacozzo there
 When old unarmed Alardo conquered quite :⁴
 And one with limbs transpierced, one maimed appear,—
 All this for equalling would nothing show
 'Gainst the disgusting mode of the ninth pit here.
 No cask from which mid stave or end doth go,
 Is riven so as now a man was seen
 Rent from the chin to where the wind doth blow.
 With bowels hanging out his legs between,
 The midriff and the doleful sack protend,
 Which maketh ordure of what food had been.
 While I, in seeing him, absorbed attend,
 He looked at me, with hands he oped his breast,
 Saying, " See now how I myself do rend.
 How crippled now doth Mahomet exist ;
 Before me weeping, Ali⁵ goes along,
 Face cleft from forelock to the chin, thou seest.
 And all the rest thou notest these among,
 Were scandal-sowers, schismatics, when alive ;
 Hence to be cloven doth to them belong.
 A devil is here behind us, us to rive
 Thus cruelly, to the edge of the sword doth he
 Of this our ream in turns each member give,

¹ The battle of Cannæ, after which Hannibal's soldiers gathered some bushels of rings from the fingers of the Roman knights slain there. Liv. xxiii. 12.

² Brother of Richard Duke of Normandy: he fought many battles in Italy.

³ At the battle of Ceperano, 1265, between Charles of Anjou and Manfred King of Apulia and Sicily, the Apulians deserted to the enemy on seeing the battle go against them.

⁴ An old knight, named Alardo, gave wise counsel to Charles of Anjou which enabled him to gain the battle of Tagliacozzo, 1268.

⁵ Son-in-law of Mahomet.

When round the doleful road a turn make we ;
 For that the wounds to close again so use,
 Ere we in front of him again pass by.
 But who art thou that on this crag dost muse,
 As if to pause ere going to suffering
 Adjudged for things of which they thee accuse ?”
 “ Death hath not reached him yet, nor guilt doth bring, ’
 Replied my Master, “ him to the torments there :
 But that to him may full experience spring,
 Do I, who am dead, my part as leader bear
 Down here through hell with him from gyre to gyre :
 And this is true as that I speak thee here.”
 More than a hundred there heard this transpire,
 And in the fosse stood still to look at me,
 Forgetful of their pain while they admire.
 “ Now Fra Dolcino ¹ tell that he armed be—
 Thou who in brief to see the sun mayst go,
 If me he would not follow speedily—
 So with provisions, that not stress of snow
 May let the Navarrese win in the fray,
 Else easy victory they would fail to know.”
 After one foot he’d raised to go away,
 This word was spoke to me by Mahomet,
 Then placed it on the earth and went his way.
 Another one with throat transpierced we met,
 And nose cut off just underneath the brow,
 And but a single ear was on him set,
 Staying to gaze for very marvel now
 With the rest, before the rest his throat displayed,
 Which all outside vermilion tint did show.
 “ O thou, whom guilt doth not condemn,” he said,
 “ Whom erst I up in Latian land did find,
 Unless by too great likeness I’m misled,
 Pier da Medicina ² call to mind

¹ Fra Dolcino wishing to reform the corruptions of the Church was pursued by the Papal party. In 1305 he and his followers withdrew to Val Sesia in Piedmont, where he was besieged and at length defeated by stress of snow and famine, and afterwards burnt.

² Pier fomented the discord between Polenta and Malatesta. Marcabo is a castle at the mouth of the Po, which the Polentas detoyed in 1308.

Shouldst thou return the lovely land to see
 Which from Vercell to Marcabo is inclined.
 Let the two best of Fano conscious be,
 Messere Guido and Angiolell,¹
 If here it be not vain so to foresee,
 That they'll be thrown from out their ship, this tell,
 And sunk near Cattolica, weighted and bound,
 By the betrayal of a tyrant fell.
 'Twixt Cyprus and Majorca's Isles around,
 Neptune ne'er saw so foul an action done,
 'Mong pirates, Argol folk, it were disowned.
 That traitor who doth see with only one,
 And holds the land which one who's with me here
 Had rather fasted from the looking on,²
 Will make them come to parley with him there ;
 Then he'll so do, that at Forcara's wind³
 They will not stand in need of vow or prayer."
 And I to him, "Declare to me thy mind,
 If thou wouldst have me take up news of thee,
 Who's he, who did that sight so bitter find ?"
 Then on the jaw of a comrade standing by,
 He placed his hand the open mouth to display,
 Crying, "Behold him, but no speech hath he.
 This man exiled drove every doubt away
 From Cæsar, saying that one well-armed for fight
 Must always lose if he wait on delay."⁴
 Oh ! how he seemed to me astounded quite,
 He with his tongue cut in his gullet through,
 This Curio, in speech with boldness dight !
 And one whose hands had been lopped off e'en now,
 Raising the stumps into the murky air,
 So that the blood made foul his face to view,

¹ Malatestino, the one-eyed, invited Guido and Angiolello from Fano to a parley at Cattolica in the Adriatic ; but the sailors, bribed by him, put them into a sack, and threw them into the sea.

² See Note 4.

³ A mountain between Fano and Cattolica, dangerous for sailors.

⁴ Curio having been exiled from Rome sought out Cæsar at his camp on the Rubicon, and urged him not to delay in crossing 'it. Hence on account of his punishment he "had rather fasted" from looking on that land, as above.

Cried out, "Remember Mosca¹ also here
 Who said, alas! 'Deed done has got a head!'
 Which did for Tuscan folk ill seed prepare."
 "And death unto thy race," thereto I add,
 Then he accumulating woe on woe,
 Went off as 'twere a person crazed and sad.
 But I stayed looking at the troop below,
 And saw what I should fear to tell as sure,
 Without more proof, since I sole witness go,
 But that my conscience me doth reassure,
 That good companion which makes man so bold,
 Beneath the hauberk of its feeling pure.
 I truly saw, and seems I now behold,
 A trunk without a head proceeding go,
 As went the others of that mournful fold.
 By the hair he held his head dissevered so,
 Hanging from his hand, as 'twere a lantern quite,
 Which gazed upon us, and then said, "Ah woe!"
 He of himself unto himself gave light,
 And they were two in one and one in two;
 How it can be He knows who rules thus right.
 When just in front of the bridge's foot in view,
 He raised the arm with all the head on high,
 To bring its words more closely us unto,
 Which were, "See now the troublous penalty,
 Thou who goest breathing looking at the dead;
 Say whether any is great as this to see.
 And that some news of me by thee be said,
 Know thou that I am Bertram de Born,² the same
 Who for the young King evil comfort made,
 Through me both sire and son rebels became :

¹ Mosca dei Lamberti, who counselled the murder of Buondelmonte, who had been faithless to his betrothed; and this occasioned the strife between the Gueff and Ghibelline parties which so long divided Florence.

² The Troubadour, who stirred up Prince Henry against his father, Henry II. of England. The Prince is called in cotemporary history *Re Giovine*, because he was crowned King of England at the age of fifteen, during his father's lifetime. Most texts have *Re Giovanni*, or "King John," but this seems to be erroneous.

Ahithophel no more made Absalom,¹
 And David, when base goadings he did frame.
 Because folk joinèd thus I parted from
 Each other, parted alas ! I bear my brain,
 From its beginning which from this trunk doth come :
 See thus in me the counterpoise obtain.

 CANTO XXIX.

Dante sees a relative in the Ninth Pit.—In the Tenth Pit False
 Coiners and Alchemists are punished with pestilences and diseases.
 —D'Arezzo and Capocchio.

The many folk, the wounds of diverse kind,
 Mine eyes had so intoxicated made
 That they to keep on weeping were inclined.
 “Why still dost gaze ?” to me then Virgil said,
 “Why dost thou down there fix thy vision so,
 Upon each sadly lacerated shade ?
 At the other pits such care thou didst not show ;
 Consider, if their number thou'dst repeat,
 The valley turneth twenty miles and two :
 Already too the moon is 'neath our feet,
 That little time is granted to us here,
 And that there's more to see than thou'dst think yet.”
 “If thou had'st noted,” I to him 'gan say,
 “The reason why I kept on looking there,
 Perchance thou'dst longer suffered me to stay.”
 My Guide now partly on his way did fare,
 And I behind him went, making reply,
 And yet more added, “In that cavern where
 I held my eyes long time so steadfastly,
 I think a spirit of my blood doth weep
 The guilt which down here costs so terribly.”
 The Master said, “Henceforward do not keep
 Thy thought a-stumbling on him any more,
 Attend elsewhere, and leave him in that deep.

¹ 2 Samuel xvii. 1, 2.

For him I saw the small bridge foot before,
 Pointing his finger, threatening fiercely thee,
 And Gire del Bello¹ heard his name called o'er :
 Then wast thou so impeded verily
 By him who Hautefort held² some while ago,
 Thou lookedst not that way, so gone was he."
 "O Leader mine ! his violent death I know
 Which ne'er hath been avenged to him," I said,
 "By any who in the shame consorted go,
 Made him disdainful, so away he sped,
 Without a word to me, as I suppose,
 And hence the more to pity him I'm led."
 Thus spake we far as where the first space shows
 The other valley of the rock adown,
 Far as the bottom if more light arose.
 When we of Evilpits were right upon
 The final cloister, and its converts were
 Able to show themselves to us, each one,
 The diverse lamentations shot me there
 With arrows which their barbs from pity gain,
 Whence with my hands I closed up either ear.
 If all Valdichiana's³ spitals' pain
 'Twixt July and September, Maremma's too,
 And all the ills that in Sardinia reign,
 Together in one ditch were brought to view—
 Like that, 'twas here, and such a stench it sent
 As putrefying limbs are wont to do.
 Down the last bank we now descending went
 Of the long rock, and held we leftward still :
 Then was my sight more vividly intent
 Towards the base, where Justice infallible,
 The mistress of Him the lofty Sire,
 Forgers afflicts, and registers the while.
 I think the sight could not more grief inspire

¹ Dante's great-uncle murdered one of the Sacchetti, and a kinsman avenged his death.

² Bertrand de Born, in the preceding Canto.

³ In Dante's time the Val di Chiana, near Arezzo, was marshy and pestilential, especially during the months named.

Of the people in Egina¹ all infirm,
 When that the air was so replete with ire,
 That the animals down to the little worm
 Fell all (and afterwards the ancient seed,
 According as the Poets well affirm,
 Became restored from seed of ants indeed,)

Than languishing along that valley dun,
 The shades in divers sheaves it was to heed.
 One on the belly, on the shoulders one
 On the other lay, while this one all acreep
 Along the dismal road was moving on.
 Thus without speech we went on, step by step,
 Looking and listening to the sick ones there,
 Who all erect their persons could not keep.
 I saw two seated, one 'gainst the other bear,
 As bakepans lean on bakepans to get hot,
 From head to foot with scabs they spotted were ;
 And carrycomb so plied beheld I not
 Ever by groom, when that his lord doth wait,
 Or who unwilling waking fit hath got,
 As each of these plied oftentimes the bite
 Of his nails upon him for the mighty rage
 Of itch, where other aid is banished quite.
 Down drags the scab when it the nails engage,
 As with the bream beneath the knife the scale,
 Or of a fish of larger parentage.
 "Oh thou whose fingers do thyself unmail,"
 My Leader unto one of them began,
 "And now and then like pincers do assail,
 Say unto me, is any Latian man
 Mong those within, so may thy nails to thee
 Sufficient for such labour aye remain."
 "Latians are we thus wasted thou dost see,
 Both of us here," thus he in weeping said,
 "But thou who questionest, who mayst thou be ?"
 The Leader said, "I'm one who down have sped,
 From crag to crag, with this man who doth live,
 And Hell to show him I have purposèd."
 Their mutual support then way did give,

¹ See Ovid, *Metamorph.* vii. 518.

And turned to me trembling the while each one,
 With those who by rebound¹ his words receive.
 Then the good Master drew to me alone,
 And said, "What thou desirest to them say."
 And I began, so as he'd have it done :
 "So may your memory not steal away
 In the former world from out of human ken,
 But may it live, 'neath many suns have sway ;
 Say who ye are, and of what people then ;
 Let not your foul and troublous penalty
 Prevent your telling who ye were as men."
 "I of Orezzo was," one made reply,
 "Whom Albert of Siena² sent to the fire ;
 But I'm not here for that which made me die.
 'Tis true I said, as did the jest inspire,
 That I could raise myself to fly in air ;
 And he, whose fancies with small wit conspire,
 Desired I would the art to him declare ;
 And since no Dædalus I made him then,
 By him, whose son he was, I was burnt there.
 But to the lowest pit among the ten,
 Minos, who may not err, condemnèd me
 For Alchemy I practised among men."
 Whereat I said to the Poet, "Can there be
 So vain a people as the Sianese ?
 Not e'en the French by far, for a certainty."
 The other Leper, hearing such words as these,
 Replied to them thereat, "Save Stricca,³ who
 Took care the expenses should be borne with ease.
 And he who invented first, 'twas Niccolo,
 The costly custom of the spice of clove,
 In the garden where such kind of seed will grow ;

¹ That is, passing from mouth to mouth.

² Albert, Bishop of Siena, sentenced Griffolino to be burnt as a heretic.

³ Stricca, Nicolo, and the other spendthrifts, formed a company known as the *Brigata Godereccia*, or "Pleasure Brigade." One of them invented the costly mode of cooking by means of a fire of cloves. They got together a large sum of money by the sale of woods, vineyards, &c., and fell into poverty in the course of a year. Some of the expressions used by the Leper must be taken ironically.

Save the brigade, where ruin wasteful strove
 With Caccia's vineyards and his plenteous wood,
 And Abbagliato did discretion prove.
 But that who seconds thee be understood,
 'Gainst the Sianese, turn sharp on me thine eye,
 So that my face may answer thee for good :
 Thou'lt see in me Capocchio's¹ shade hereby,
 Whose alchemy the metals falsified ;
 And thou wilt know if well I thee descry,
 How a good ape of Nature I did bide."

CANTO XXX.

In this Canto three sorts of Falsifiers are treated of : those who pretend to be other people, those who falsify money, and those who falsify the truth in words.—Dispute between Adamo and Sinon.

What time that Juno was so wrathful made
 For Semele against the Theban blood,
 As she at one and other time displayed,
 When Athamas² did hold such crazy mood,
 That seeing his own wife with children twain
 On either hand encumbered, as she strode,
 Shouted, " Let's spread the nets so that I gain
 The lioness and the cubs in the pass alone : "
 Extending then his pitiless claws amain,
 The one he seized, Learchus was that one,
 And whirled him round and dashed him on a rock,
 And she with the other load herself did drown :
 Also when Fortune hurled with downward shock
 The Trojans' loftiness, which all things dared,
 That crushed was king with all the kingdom's stock ;
 Then Hecuba³ sad, wretched, captive fared,

¹ Capocchio (who calls himself "a goodly ape," that is, a good imitator of natural objects) is said to have instructed Dante in science ; he was burnt at Siena for alchemy.

² See Ovid, *Metamorph.* iv.

³ *Ibid.* xiii. 400.

When Polyxena dead she gazed upon,
 And when her Polydorus had appeared
 Cast up on shore of sea, the dolorous one
 Reft of her senses, barked as dog she were,
 With so much woe her mind awry had gone.
 But Theban furies, or the Trojan, ne'er
 So cruel against any one were seen,
 In stabbing beasts, still less men's members there,
 As I death-pallid, naked shades saw twain
 Run biting, in like mode as when doth 'scape
 The pig which loosened from the sty hath been.
 One reached Capocchio¹ and within the nape
 Of his neck he set his teeth, and dragged him so,
 He made the solid ground his body scrape :
 The Aretine,¹ who trembling stayed, said now,
 " Gianni Schicchi is that impish sprite,
 Who rabid, treating others thus doth go."
 I said to him, " So mayst thou 'scape the bite
 Of the other one, as it fatigue not thee
 The telling who it is, e'er it take flight."
 " That is the ancient Ghost," he said to me,
 " Of wicked Myrrha,² who was intimate
 With her own father, loving lawlessly :
 And how she came into such sinful strait
 Was that another's form she dressed her in ;
 As he, who yonder goes, did operate
 That he the lady of the stud³ might win,
 Donati he himself did counterfeit,
 His will testating in due form each line."
 When the two rabid ones away had flit
 On whom I kept mine eye, I turned it back
 To scan what other ill-born ones there wait.
 I saw one somewhat like a lute in make,

¹ The Alchemists of the preceding Canto.

² Ovid, *Metamorph.* x.

³ Buoso Donati wished in dying to devote his property to pious uses. His uncle, Simon, instigated Schicchi to conceal himself in the bed-curtains, and by imitating the voice of the dying man, to dictate a will in which he made himself his heir, and so acquired possession of a valuable mare, "the lady of the stud."

If that the groin had been but severed so,
 Just at the point where man the fork doth take.
 The heavy dropsy that makes limbs to grow
 So disproportionate with lymph, ill bred,
 That face with belly nought in common know,
 Compelled him so apart his lips to spread ;
 Such as the hectic, who by thirst is spent,
 Turns one to chin, while the other's upward led.
 " O ye ! who are without all punishment,
 And why, I know not, in this world of woe,"
 He said to us, " Look ye, and be intent
 Unto the pain I, Master Adam ¹ know.
 In life I had enough to please my will ;
 Alas ! I crave a drop of water now.
 The rivulets that from the verdant hill
 Of Casentin descend, Arno to gain,
 And all their channels with cold moisture fill,
 Ever before me stand, and not in vain,
 Because their image dries me even more
 Than the disease that strips my face flesh-thin.
 The rigid Justice, that doth search me o'er,
 Takes matter from the place where sin did bide,
 To make my sighs with greater flight to soar :
 There is Romena, where I falsified
 The coin that bears the Baptist's effigy,
 For which I left my body burned outside.
 But could I Guido's tristful soul here see,
 Or Alexander's or their brother's,² ne'er
 Would Branda's Fount be worth such sight to me.
 One is within already, if I hear
 The truth from those mad shades that go around,
 But what avails it me with limbs tied here ?
 If I were only light by thus much found
 That I an inch in a hundred years could take,
 I had already started on this round
 Among the squalid people him to seek,
 Although eleven miles the circuit be,

¹ Adam of Brescia, who was induced to make false coin, for which he was burnt.

² Three counts of Romena who induced Adam to falsify the coin.

And half a mile across at least doth make.
 Because of them am I in such family :
 Florins I coined as they advised me to,
 Which had three carats of impurity."¹
 And I to him : " Who are those wretched two
 That steam as doth a hand in winter wet,
 Who at thy right-hand side lie closely so ?"
 " I found them here ; no turn they've made as yet
 Since I was rained into this fall," said he,
 Nor such I think they evermore will get.
 The false one who accused Joseph, she,²
 False Sinon,³ Greek of Troy, the other one,
 And the sharp fever makes the fumes we see."
 And one of them who vexèd perhaps thereon
 Because his name was thus obscure become,
 Struck with his fist the hardened paunch upon,
 Which sounded quite as though it were a drum,
 And Master Adam smote him in the face
 With his arm, which seemed not much less hard to come,
 Saying, " Though ta'en from me all power of pace
 By reason of my limbs which weigh so sore,
 I have an arm unfettered for such case."
 Whence he replied, " When thou didst go before
 Unto the fire, so ready it was not,
 But when a coining ready enough and more."
 The dropsical : " In that the truth thou'st got,
 But as a witness, thou wast near a lie
 At Troy, when for the truth they question put."
 " If I spoke false, thou coin didst falsify,"
 Said Sinon, " and for one crime I am here,
 And thou for more than other demon nigh."⁴
 " Recall to mind the horse, thou perjurer,"
 Said he to whom swollen belly did belong,
 " Thy torture be't that all the world's aware."

¹ Some translators render *tre carati di mondiglia* by "three carats pared away;" but "alloy" or "impurity" seems rather to be the meaning.

² Potiphar's wife.

³ The Greek who persuaded the Trojans to admit the wooden horse within their walls.

⁴ He reckons every false coin to be a separate sin.

"Thy torture be the thirst that cracks thy tongue,"
 Replied the Greek, "and the water putrid so
 Thy paunch before thine eyes hedging so strong."
 The Coiner then : "Thy gaping mouth doth grow
 In speaking evil, as by custom led,
 For if I thirst, and humour stuff me through,
 Thou hast the burning and the aching head ;
 And to lick up Narcissus' mirror¹ there
 Need'st not the inviting many words be said."
 In listening to them was all my care
 When unto me the Master said, "Look now
 That I to quarrel with thee scarce forbear."
 When thus I heard him speak with angry brow,
 I turned me round to him with so much shame,
 That still my memory it eddies through.
 And like to him who of some harm doth dream,
 And dreaming wishes it a dream may bide,
 And craves what is as 'twere not what doth seem,
 So I incapable of speech abide ;
 I wished to make excuse and all the while
 Excused myself, and thought not that I did.
 "Less shame will wash a greater fault out still,"
 The Master said, "than that which thine hath been,
 Therefore unload thyself of sorrow's ill,
 And think that always at thy side I'm seen,
 If e'er it happen Fortune bringeth thee
 Where people in a similar brawl remain,
 For wishing that to hear, base wish must be."

 CANTO XXXI.

Entrance to the Ninth and lowest Circle, where Dante sees three Giants ; Nimrod, Ephialtes, and Antæus.

One and the selfsame tongue had bitten me
 At first, so that it tinged my either cheek,
 And then had offered me the remedy.

¹ A surface of water.

Thus, as I hear, Achilles' spear¹ and eke
 His father's, that same one, did so prevail
 As first a sad, then a good gift to make.
 Our back we turned upon the wretched vale,
 Up by the bank which girds it round alway,
 And without speaking, crossing it we steal.
 Here it was less than night and less than day,
 So that my sight advanced but little on ;
 But I could hear of a loud horn the bray,
 Such that all thunder would as hoarse be known,
 And then against its path were straightway led
 Mine eyes unto a single spot alone.
 After the dolorous rout, when so it sped
 The sacred Geste was lost by Charlemagne,
 Orlando sounded not with so much dread.²
 As I my head raised somewhat, view to gain,
 A many lofty towers I seemed to see,
 Whence I, "Say, Master, what land here is 'seen ?"
 "Because thou'rt peering now," he said to me,
 "Across the darkness from too far away,
 Imagination so misleadeth thee.
 Thou'lt well perceive, if thither thou make way,
 How much the sense by distance is misled ;
 Then prick thee on a little more I pray."
 Then he so kindly took my hand and said,
 "Before we further get, I'd have thee know,
 That so the fact to thee less strange be made,
 Not towers these, but giants yonder show,
 And they are in the well the bank around,
 From navel downward each and all are so."
 As when the fog a-vanishing is found,
 The sight, by slow degrees, reformeth there,
 What the mist hid by which the air is bound,
 So piercing through the dense and murky air,

¹ Achilles inherited from his father Peleus a spear which had the virtue of healing the wounds it gave.

² The Sacred Geste, or Holy Emprise, was the expulsion of the Moors from Spain ; and at the battle of Roncesvalles, Orlando blew his horn with such force that the Emperor is said to have heard it at the distance of eight miles.

As we the edge approachèd more and more,
 The error fled me, and came o'er me fear.
 As Montereggion¹ with many a tower
 Upon her rounded girth, herself doth crown,
 E'en thus the horrid giants towered o'er
 The bank which circles round the well, each one
 With half his body; whom Jove still, not less,
 From heaven threatens, when he thunders down.
 And I of one already marked the face,
 Shoulders and breast, of the belly too great part,
 And down the flanks both of the arms could trace.
 'Tis certain Nature, when she left the art
 Of animals so made, did well indeed
 Such ministers from Mars so to dispart :
 And if of elephants and whales the breed
 She not repents, who looks with subtlety,
 More just and wise will think her for that deed.
 For if to the argument of mind, there be
 Conjoined the evil will and power also,
 The people were defenceless verily.
 His face to me seemed long and big to show,
 As may be seen at Rome Saint Peter's pine,²
 And the other bones the like proportion know ;
 So that the bank, which forms a cincture's line,
 From the midst down, so much of him displayed
 Above, that to reach up his hair to join
 Three Frieslanders had with vain boast essayed :³
 For there of him, thrice ten great palms we see
 Down from where men have their cloaks' buckles made.
Rafel mai amech zabi almi,
 Began that same ferocious mouth to howl,
 For which not meet that sweeter psalms there be.
 And toward him turned my Leader, " Foolish soul !
 Hold to thy horn, relieve thyself thereon,
 When rage or other passion thee control.

¹ A fortress on a height near Siena.

² The bronze pine-cone found in Hadrian's mausoleum is now in the gardens of the Vatican.

³ That is, three tall men standing one upon the other.

Search at thy neck, thou'lt find the thong thou'st on
 Which keeps it fastened, O thou soul confused,
 See where it crosses thy great breast upon."
 Then unto me, "Himself he hath accused :
 This one is Nimrod by whose evil brain,
 One language on the earth is still not used.
 Here let us leave him, and not speak in vain,
 For even so to him is every tongue,
 As his to others, which none can explain."
 Therefore our passage we did much prolong
 To the left, and far as crossbow's shot can flee,
 We found a bigger one, more fierce and strong.
 For binding him who might the master be,
 I cannot say, but he was tightly bound,
 Right arm behind, in front the other he
 By a chain, that held him from the neck around
 And passed down, so that on the uncovered part,
 To the fifth coil it so entwined was found.
 "This proud one would make practice of the art
 Of his own power against the mighty Jove,"
 My Leader said, "which doth such prize impart.
 His name is Ephialtes, he well strove
 What time the giants made the gods to fear ;
 The arms he wielded he no more will move."
 And I to him, "If so it might be, here
 Of Briareus¹ who's measureless, I'm told,
 I would mine eyes might have experience clear."
 When he replied, "Antæus² thou shalt behold
 Near to this place, who speaks, and is unbound,
 And he will place us in sin's lowest hold.
 He whom thou'dst see much further on is found,
 And he is fettered and like this in make,
 Save that more savage must his face be owned."
 Never did earth with so much vigour quake,
 That it could shake a tower so violently,
 As Ephialtes him did promptly shake.

¹ Virgil, *Æneid* x.

² Antæus had not taken part in the strife of the giants against the gods; hence he is not bound like Ephialtes; and he does not speak gibberish like Nimrod, so that Virgil can converse with him.

Then, more than ever, fear of death held me,
 And there had been no need, except the fright,
 But that the manacles I there did see.
 We then proceeded further on, and light
 On him Antæus, who, without his pate
 Five ells from out the cave issued in sight.
 "O thou, who in the valley fortunate,¹
 Which Scipio the heir of glory made,
 When Hannibal and his troops all backward set,
 A thousand lions hast for prey displayed,
 And hadst thou come unto the mighty war
 Of these thy brothers, it were haply said
 The Sons of Earth had gained the victory there,—
 Place us below (nor hold it in disdain)
 There where the cold doth the Cocytus bar.
 We would not this from Tityus or Typhon gain;²
 This man can give of what is longed for here,
 Therefore stoop down, nor with curled lip be fain.
 He still can bring thee fame in the world up there,
 Seeing he lives, long life expecteth still,
 Unless untimely he to grace must fare."
 Thus spake the Master, the other with quick will,
 His hands extended and took up my guide,
 With pressure Hercules had felt erewhile.³
 Virgil who felt him thus securely tied,
 Said to me, "Come, that I may thee enfold,"
 Then of himself and me one bundle made.
 As is the Carisenda⁴ to behold,
 'Neath the incline, when o'er it goes a cloud,
 So that on contrary side it seems to hold,
 Such did Antæus seem to me who stood
 Watching to see him bend, and at that hour

¹ The valley of the Bagrađa, where Scipio conquered Hannibal at Zama. Antæus had his cave among the neighbouring hills. Lucan, *Phars.* iv.

² Two other giants.

³ In the contest between the two, Hercules could only overcome Antæus by lifting him off the ground and crushing him, seeing that Antæus received new strength when in contact with his Mother, the Earth.

⁴ One of the two leaning towers of Bologna.

I could have wished to take another road.
 But lightly in the abyss which doth devour
 Judas and Lucifer, he put us down,
 Nor there thus bent delayed he any more,
 But rose as doth the mast the ship upon.

CANTO XXXII.

Ninth and last Circle divided into four spheres ; in the first of which, Caina, are punished in a frozen lake, Betrayers and Murderers of relatives ; and in the second, named Antenora, Traitors to their country.—Dante meets Camicion de' Pazzi and Bocca Abati.

Did I of sharp and clucking¹ rhymes possess
 A store adapted to this dismal seat,
 Upon which all the other rocks do press,
 I would express the juice of my conceit
 With greater fulness ; but I have them not,
 Hence, not unfearing, I on talking get.
 For 'tis no enterprise to take in sport,
 The base of all the universe to rehearse,
 Nor for a tongue that's "Mama," "Papa," taught.
 But may those Ladies² help of mine the verse,
 Who when Amphion³ shut up Thebes, gave aid,
 That from the fact the talk be not diverse.
 O rabble, who 'rt above all else ill-made,
 And art in this place of which 'tis hard to tell,
 'Twere better ye as sheep or goats here strayed !
 When we were down within the murky well
 Under the giants' feet, but much more low,
 And I the lofty wall was noting still,
 I heard one say, "See how thou steppest now ;

¹ *Chiocce*, "clucking." The same word is applied to Plutus's voice, Canto vii. 2.

² The Muses.

³ According to the Poets, when Amphion played his lyre the stones moved of their own accord to form the wall of Thebes.

So do, that thou trample not beneath thy feet
 The heads of the sad brethren, wearied so."
 Then turning round, mine eyes in front did meet
 Beneath my feet, a lake by frost so bound,
 Its semblance was to glass, not water fit.
 The Austrian Danube, when the frosts abound,
 Ne'er had its course covered by veil so thick,
 Nor e'er the Don, where frigid skies are found,
 As it was here; so that if Tambernich¹
 Had fallen upon it, or Pietrapana,²
 It would not e'en at the edge have given a crick.
 And as to croak the frog doth place him where
 His muzzle's out of water, when doth dream
 The peasant girl full oft of gleaming's care,
 Livid as far as where appeareth shame,³
 There in the ice the doleful shades were pent,
 Setting their teeth to storks' notes, it would seem:
 And every one his face held downward bent,
 From mouth the cold, from eyes the heart so sad
 'Mong them did witness of itself present.
 When I around me some survey had made,
 I turned me downward, and saw two so near,
 The hair upon their heads commingled had.
 "Say, ye whose breasts thus strain together there,"
 I said, "Who are ye?" and their necks they bent,
 And when to me their faces they upbear,
 Their eyes whose moisture first within was pent,
 Gushed over on the lips, and the cold so froze
 The tears between, it locked again the vent.
 Clamp never wood to wood so strong as those
 Could bind; whereat like two he-goats 'gan they
 To butt each other, mastering rage so rose.
 And one from whom both ears had gone away
 For very cold, still with his face held down
 Said, "Why in us dost mirror thee such way?
 If thou desire these two to thee be known,
 The valley whence Bisenzio doth fall

¹ A mountain of Slavonia.² A mountain near Lucca.³ The face.

Their father Albert and themselves did own.¹
 They from one body came; Caina² all
 Thou may'st search through, and shalt not find a shade
 More fit in jely to be fixed withal.
 Not he whose breast and shade were broken made
 At one and the same blow by Arthur's hand;³
 Focaccia⁴ not; not he who with his head
 Cumbers me so, that I see nought beyond,
 And Sassol Mascheroni⁵ had for name:
 If Tuscan, who he is thou'lt understand.
 And that not further speech of me thou claim,
 Me for Camicion de Pazzi⁶ know:
 I wait Carlino, me to free from blame.
 Then I beheld a thousand faces so
 Doglike⁷ by cold become, I shudder still,
 And ever shall, near frozen ponds to go.
 Towards the middle moving on the while
 Whither all heavy things united be,
 And I was shivering in the eternal chill,
 Whether 'twere will, or chance, or destiny
 I know not, but as among the heads I go
 My foot in the face of one struck heavily.
 Weeping he cried, "Why on me tramplest thou?
 Unless thou com'st to increase the vengeance great

¹ The two brothers Alessandro and Napoleone, sons of Alberto Alberti, lord of Falterona in the valley of Bisenzio, quarrelled after their father's death respecting the property and treacherously slew one another.

² So called from Cain.

³ Mordred, son of King Arthur, laid an ambush for his father, but was so transpierced by him, that according to the legend the sun shone through the wound.

⁴ Focaccia, belonging to the Whites of Pistoja, treacherously murdered his relative Detto, of the opposite party.

⁵ One of the Toschi family of Florence murdered his nephew in order to get possession of his property.

⁶ He murdered his kinsman Ubertino, but thinks his crime was as nothing compared with that of Carlino, who by treacherously giving up the castle of Piano, in Valdarno, led to the death of many Florentine exiles.

⁷ Some translators suppose *cagnazzi* to refer to the blue appearance produced by cold; but it seems rather to mean that doglike or pinched-up expression arising from the same cause.

Of Mont Aperti,¹ why molest me so?"
 And I, "O Master mine, here for me wait,
 So that through him I may escape from doubt,
 Thou then may'st hasten me at thine own rate."
 The Leader stayed; to that one I cried out
 Who was blaspheming mightily the while,
 "Say who thou art that others thus dost flout."
 "Now who art thou that goest smiting still
 Through Antenora,"² said he, "others' cheek
 So hard, thou living could'st not smite so ill?"
 "Living I am," I thus to him did speak,
 "And dear to thee it may be, if thou seek'st fame,
 To put thy name 'mong other notes I take."
 And he to me: "The contrary of that same
 I seek; go hence, nor trouble me again;
 For in this vale thy flatteries are lame."
 Then 'hind his head I seized on him amain,
 And said, "It needs thou name thyself to me,
 Or not a hair upon thee here remain."
 "Though thou unhair me," straightway answered he,
 "I will not tell thee, nor myself unfold,
 Though thou a thousand times my head dost fray."
 Already I his hair thus twisted hold,
 And more than one lock of it had pulled out,
 He barking, with his eyes adown controlled,
 When, "What doth ail thee, Bocca?" one did shout,
 "Is't not enough thy jaws go chattering on,
 But thou must bark? what devil hast thou got?"
 "Now of thy speech," said I, "I care for none,
 Thou wicked traitor, be it to thy shame
 I will report true tidings of thee soon."
 "Begone!" he said, "what pleases, tell the same,
 But be not silent, if thou get out whole,
 Of him whose tongue just now so ready came.
 Here for the Frenchman's money grieves that soul;

¹ Bocca degli Abati was bribed to cut off the hand of the Gueff standard-bearer in the battle of Montaperti, 1260, so that the colours sank, and the soldiers, thinking the battle lost, took to flight.

² So called from Antenora the Trojan, who betrayed his country to the Greeks. *Aeneid* i. 242.

He of Duera,¹ thou canst say was there,
 There where the sinners are put out to cool.
 If questioned as to others who are here,
 Him of Beccheria² thou hast there by thee,
 To slit whose gorget Florence had the care.
 Gianni del Soldanier³ I think may be
 Beyond with Ganellon,⁴ and Tribald⁵ who
 Faenza oped while folk slept peaceably."
 Already were we gone from him when two
 I saw together frozen in one hole,
 So that one head as the other's hat we view.
 As bread's consumed when hunger doth control,
 So he above set teeth on him below,
 There where the brain is joinèd to the pole.
 Not otherwise did Tydeus⁶ gnaw than so
 The temples of Menalippus in disdain,
 Than he the brain and other things also.
 "O thou who showest by such bestial sign,
 Thy hate of him, whom thou devourest fain,
 Now tell me why," I said, "with this design,
 That if with reason thou of him complain,
 In knowing who ye are, and his injury,
 I may repay thee when the world I gain,
 If that with which I speak become not dry."

¹ Buoso da Duera, leader of the Ghibellines, 1265, was bribed to betray the position of his party to the General of the French.

² Abbot of Vallombrosa, beheaded in 1258 for plotting against the Guelfs.

³ He betrayed his party.

⁴ He betrayed the Christian cause at Roncesvalles by persuading Charlemagne not to go to the relief of Orlando. See Canto xxxi. note 2, p. 161.

⁵ Tribaldello di Manfredi betrayed Faenza by night, by opening one of the gates to the enemy.

⁶ Tydeus, one of the seven before Thebes, being mortally wounded by Menalippus, killed him; and while dying ordered his head to be brought to him, which he gnawed for rage.

CANTO XXXIII.

The story of Count Ugolino.—Third sphere called Ptolomea, where are punished those who betray benefactors; amongst whom is Fra Alberigo.

That sinner raised his mouth from the fierce repast,
 Wiping it on the hair of that same head,
 Of which the hinder portion he did waste.
 "Thou wilt that I renew," he answerèd,
 "The desperate grief that presses on my heart
 E'en in the thought, ere I to speak am led.
 But if my words be seed whence fruit dispart
 Of infamy to the traitor whom I gnaw,
 Of speech and tears thou'lt see of both a part.
 I know not who thou art, nor how therefore
 Thou hast descended here; but Florentine,
 Truly in hearing thee, I take thee for.
 Count Ugolino,¹ know, that name was mine,
 Archbishop Ruggieri this erewhile,
 And now I'll tell why him thus close I join.
 That by the effect of his malicious will,
 Confiding in him, I was prisoner made,
 And thus was put to death, I need not tell.
 But that which thou canst never have heard said,
 That is, how cruelly did death ensue,
 Thou'lt hear, and know if wrong from him I've had.
 A narrow aperture within the mew
 The which, for my sake, Famine's name doth own,
 And where 'tis meet that others be locked too,

¹ Count Ugolino de' Gherardeschi, Podestà of Pisa, was of a Ghibelline race, but inclined to the Guelf party. He played a prominent part in the battles of Pisa with Genoa, in which he was aided by Archbishop Ruggieri, or Roger, a Ghibelline. The bishop, however, stirred up the people of Pisa against the Count, accusing him of having delivered up certain castles to the Florentines; and got him shut up in a tower with his two sons and two grandsons, where they were starved to death.

Already through its opening had shown
 Me many a moon, when dreamed I that ill dream,
 Which of the future rent the veil adown.
 Master and Lord this one to me did seem,
 Hunting the wolf and whelps upon the mount,¹
 Whence Pisa sight of Lucca cannot claim.
 With lean and eager hounds, trained to the hunt,
 Gualandi, Sismond, and Lanfranchi he
 Before him had sent out into the front.
 After short course, outwearied seemed to be
 Both sire and sons, and with tusks sharpenèd,
 Their flanks seemed ripped asunder visibly.
 And when before the morrow, sleep had fled,
 I heard my children weeping in their sleep,
 Those who were with me there, demanding bread.
 Cruel indeed art thou if dost not weep,
 Thinking what did in my heart foreboding lie,
 And weep'st thou not, for what thy tears dost keep?
 Already were we awake, and the hour drew nigh,
 When they on us our customèd food conferred,
 And for his dream's sake each looked doubtingly;
 When locking of the lower door I heard
 Of the horrible tower, whereat I gazèd so
 In my sons' faces, but I spoke no word,
 Nor wept, like stone I grew within me now:
 They wept, and the dear little Anselm mine
 Said 'Father! how thou lookest, what hast thou?'
 But still I did not weep, nor aught rejoine
 All of that day, nor yet the after night,
 Till on the world another sun 'gan shine.
 As now there came a little gleam of light
 Into the doleful dungeon, I could see
 My face in their four faces mirrored quite.
 Both of my hands I bit in agony,
 And they, supposing I could not restrain
 My wish for food, upraised them suddenly,

¹ Monte San Giuliano, standing between Pisa and Lucca, and so preventing the inhabitants of one town from seeing the other. The wolf and whelps are Ugolino and his sons; the hounds are the Pisan mob; Gualandi, &c., Pisan noblemen, the hunters sent out by the Archbishop.

And cried out, ' Father ! 'twill give us less pain
 If thou do eat of us ; from thee we're clad
 In this poor flesh, then strip it off again !'
 I calmed me then, not to make them more sad :
 Silent that day, and all the next were we :
 Ah ! cruel earth, why didst not ope thy bed ?
 Gaddo, when we had come to the fourth day,
 Threw himself down stretched out before my feet,
 Saying, ' My Father ! why dost not help me ?'
 And then he died ; and as thou seest me yet,
 I saw the three downfalling, one by one,
 'Twixt fifth and the sixth day ; then did I get
 A-groping o'er each one, I blind and lone,
 And three days called them after they were dead ;
 Then hunger did what sorrow had not done."
 When thus he'd spoken, on the wretched head,
 With eyes distort, his teeth again he bent,
 Which strong as a dog's were on the bone to feed.
 O Pisa ! of that people thou'rt the taint
 In the fair country where the *Si*¹ doth sound,
 Since slow thy neighbours for thy punishment.
 Let now Capraia and Gorgona² bound
 To make to Arno 'gainst the gorge a dam,
 That every one within thee may be drowned.
 For if Count Ugolino had the fame
 Of dealing with thy forts so traitorously,
 His sons thou should'st not to such cross condemn.
 Their youth, new Thebes !³ made innocent to be
 Uguccion, Brigata, and the other two
 Who in my song above are named by me.
 We passed beyond, there where the icy mew
 Another folk in rugged swathes doth keep,
 Not downward turned, but all reversed in view.
 Weeping itself there hinders them to weep,
 And grief that finds obstruction in the eyes
 Turns inward, and thus makes the pain more deep ;
 Because a crust from the first drops doth rise,

¹ The Italian for " Yes."

² Two islands in the Arno, near Pisa.

³ Ancient Thebes was renowned for horrid and cruel deeds.

And as it were a crystal vizor worn,
 Fills all the cup that 'neath the eyebrow lies.
 And notwithstanding that, as from a corn,
 Every sensation had for very chill
 From its seat in my face already gone,
 Yet as it seemed some wind was blowing still :
 Whence I, " My Master, say who moves this so,
 Doth not this lower place all vapour kill ?"
 Whence he to me, " Soon shalt thou thither go
 Where the answer thou wilt get from thine own eye ;
 By seeing, the cause which rains the blast, thou'lt know."
 And of the frozen crusted folk 'gan cry
 One unto us, " Of souls ! so merciless,
 That the last post ye now must occupy,
 Take from my face the hardened veils that press,
 So that I vent my grief-impregnèd heart
 Somewhat, ere freezing tears again oppress."
 Whence I to him, " Would'st have me aid impart,
 Say who thou wast, and if I thee not free,
 Let me now go to the ice's lowest part."
 " The Friar Alberigo,"¹ answered he,
 " And he am I of the bad garden's fruit,
 Who here must take a date for fig as fee."
 " O," said I, " must I thee as dead salute ?"
 And he to me, " How may my body fare
 Up in the world my knowledge is quite mute.
 Advantage such this Ptolemeë² doth share
 That oft the soul downfalleth to this place
 Ere Atropos³ could give it motion there.
 And that thou mayst remove from off my face
 With a much better will these glassy tears,
 Know that when any one (and such my case),

¹ Alberigo was one of the Godenti Friars (Canto xxiii.). He quarrelled with a relation, and invited him to his garden for a meal, at the end of which he called for the fruit, and the assassins rushed in and killed the guest. The "date for the fig" is in the sense of "a Rowland for an Oliver."

² The third sphere, named either from the Ptolomee mentioned in 1 Maccabees xvi. 11 ; or from Ptolemy who murdered Pompey.

³ One of the three Fates whose business it was to cut the thread of life.

Betrays, a demon thereupon appears
 And takes his body, thenceforth is its guide,
 Till have revolved all his remaining years.
 In such like cistern it falls down to hide :
 And still the body's seen above, may be,
 Of the shade that wintering 'hind me here doth bide.
 If thou'rt just down, he should be known to thee,
 He is Ser Branca d'Arià,¹ and many a year
 Has fled, since him thus locked up here we see."
 And I to him, "Thou cheatest me, I fear,
 For Branca d'Aria is by no means dead,
 But eats and drinks and sleeps, and clothes him there."
 "To the fosse above, of Evilclaws," he said,
 "Where the tenacious pitch doth boil apace,
 Had Michael Zanche not yet thither sped,
 When this one left a devil in his place
 In his own body, and in a kinsman's he
 Who made with him of treachery a case.
 But hither stretch thy hand forthwith to me
 And ope mine eyes." I opened not his eyes ;
 For to be rude to him was courtesy.
 Ah Genoese ! ye men who're enemies
 To every virtue, but of vice are full,
 Why are ye not dispersed from 'neath the skies ?
 For with Romagna's spirit the most foul,
 I found of you one such,² who for his deed,
 Already in Cocytus bathes his soul,
 Yet seems above his body lives indeed.

¹ Branca d' Aria of Genoa, in conjunction with his nephew, murdered his father-in-law, Michael Zanche. (See Canto xxii.)

² Friar Alberigo.

CANTO XXXIV.

Fourth and last sphere of the Ninth and Last Circle, called Judecca, where are locked up in transparent ice those who have betrayed benefactors.—Description of Lucifer, and the three punished by him, namely, Judas Iscariot, Brutus, and Cassius.—The Poets, taking advantage of Lucifer's position, make their way out of the infernal regions.

“ *Vexilla Regis prodeunt Inferni* ¹

Towards us, therefore do thou look before,”

My Master said, “if thou canst him espy.”

As when a heavy fog is breathing o'er,

Or when our hemisphere darkens to night,

Appears far off a mill the wind doth stir,

Such building seemèd then before my sight ;

When for the wind, I drew myself behind

My Guide, on other shield I could not light.

Now was I, and with fear in verse 'tis joined,

There where the shades were all so closely pent,

And showed them through, like straws in glass confined :

Some lying down, others erect present

Them, this with the head, and that one with the feet,

Another, bow-like, face to feet is bent.

When we, proceeding onward, so far get

That it my Master pleased to show to me

The Creature once of beauteous form complete,

He from before me moved, and bade me stay,

Saying, “Now Dis behold, behold the place,

Where it behoveth fortitude arm thee.”

How frozen, speechless, then I grew apace,

Reader, ask not, for I've no verse contrived,

Seeing all language would the theme disgrace.

I did not die, nor can I say I lived ;

Think for thyself now, hast thou flower of wit,

¹ “The banners of the King of Hall come forth,” a parody on the first line of a Latin hymn of the sixth century, sung in Passion Week.

What I became, of one and both deprived.
 The Emperor for such dolorous kingdom fit,
 From 'midst the breast forth issued from the ice,
 And with a giant more compare I might
 Than do the giants with each arm of his :
 Now look thee what should be of him the whole,
 Which corresponds to such a fashioned piece.
 Were he as fair as now he is so foul,
 And 'gainst his Maker lifted up his brow,
 There well must come from him all kind of dole.
 O marvellous to me it seemèd now,
 When I beheld three faces¹ on his head,
 And one in front that did vermilion show.
 Two were the others that to this were led
 Above the mid part of each shoulder there,
 And joining at the crest their union made.
 The right one might 'twixt yellow and white compare,
 The left was such to look upon as those
 Who come from where the Nile doth downward bear.
 From 'neath each one, two ponderous wings arose,
 Like as beseemèd well so great a bird,
 Such sails at sea were never seen I suppose.
 They had no feathers, but their mode preferred
 Like to a bat, and them he waved about,
 So that from out of him three winds were stirred,
 Whereby Cocytus was congealed throughout :
 With six eyes did he weep, three chins adown
 Trickled the tears, and bloody slime to boot.
 At every mouth his teeth were grinding one,
 A sinner, in the fashion of a brake,
 So that he thus made three tormented groan.
 To him in front the teeth as nothing make
 Like to the clawing, for sometimes the spine
 Remained all stripped of skin adown the back.

¹ Some Commentators suppose the three heads to be symbolical of Ignorance, Hatred, and Impotence; others of the three parts of the then known world—Europe, Asia, and Africa—over which Satan had rule: the Vermilion head for Europe, Yellow for Asia, and Black for Africa. Cupidity, Pride, and Envy, are also assigned to them as represented by Judas, Brutus, and Cassius.

"That soul above, that hath the greatest pain,
 Is Judas Iscariot," the Master said,
 "Whose head's within, outside his legs do strain.
 Of the two beside that downward have the head,
 Who from the black mouth hangs, Brutus is he ;
 See how he twists, no sound by him is made.
 Cassius the other, who seems robust to be.—
 But night once more ascendeth, and time's pace
 Moves us to go ; there is no more to see."
 As him it pleased I did his neck embrace,
 And that of time and place he vantage gain,
 Whenas the wings were opened to wide space,
 He seized upon the shaggy ribs amain ;
 From tuft to tuft he then did downward hie,
 'Twixt the thick hair where frozen crusts remain.
 When we had come to where revolves the thigh,
 Exactly on the haunches' thickness there,
 The Leader with fatigue and agony
 Turned round his head to where his legs did bear,
 And gripped the hair like one who doth ascend,
 So that to Hell I thought we back did fare.
 "Now hold on well, for by such stairs to wend,"
 The Master said, panting like one outspent,
 "It needs from so much ill ourselves we rend."
 Then through the opening of a rock he went
 And down upon the margin seated me,
 And then towards me his wary step he bent.
 I raised my eyes and thought that I should see
 Lucifer so as I'd left him of late,
 But upward now his legs extended he ;
 And if I were in a bewildered state
 Let dull folk think, who do not call to mind
 What point it was beyond which I did get.¹
 "Rise on thy feet," the Master now rejoined,
 "The way is long, and rugged is the road,"

¹ Mr. Rossetti says: "Dante had just passed the very centre of the globe coincident with the centre of Satan's body. Consequently to pass from his middle to his head would be going upwards ; and to pass from his middle to his feet is also going upwards."

And now the sun the middle tierce doth find."¹
 'Twas not a passage that we now bestrode
 Fit for a palace, but a natural cell
 With floor uneven, where the light ill showed.
 "Ere from the abyss I do escape me well,
 Master," I said, when I had gained my feet,
 "To draw me from my error something tell.
 Where is the ice? and why this one I meet
 Thus upside down? and how in a time so short
 The sun from evening unto morn doth get?"
 And he to me, "It still is in thy thought
 That thou'rt that side the centre, where the hair
 Of that fell worm, that mines the world, I caught.
 As long as I descended, thou wast there,
 But when I turned, the point thou passedst by,
 To which all heavy things from all sides bear.
 Now 'neath the hemisphere art thou hereby
 Which is opposed to that which covers in
 The vast dry land, and 'neath whose cope² did die
 The Man whose birth and life were free from sin.³
 Thou hast thy feet upon the little sphere,
 Of Judecca's⁴ other face the origin.
 Here it is morning when 'tis evening there,
 And this who makes a stairway with his fell
 Is planted now as he did first appear.
 In this part downward he from heaven fell;
 And all the land projecting formerly,
 For fear of him, made of the sea a veil,
 And came unto our hemisphere: may be
 To flee from him, what's seen upon this side

¹ This does not contradict line 68, "But night once more," &c., for they are now at the Antipodes, where it is day when it is night with us; there it was six o'clock in the evening, here an hour and a half after sunrise, that is, half-past seven in the morning. *Terza* is the first division of the canonical day in Italy, and at the equinox would be from six till nine; so that *mezza terza* would be half-past seven.

² Jerusalem.

³ Christ, whose name is never mentioned in Hell. Dante always refers to Him indirectly.

⁴ The fourth and last division of the Ninth Circle named after Judas.

Turned up, and left the vacant space we see." ¹
A place there is below, its distance wide
Is from Beelzebub as the tomb ² extends,
To which not sight, only the sound doth guide,
That is by a rivulet ³ made, which here descends
Through a rocky hole itself did so corrode
In a winding course which gradually propends.
My Guide and I into that hidden road
Entered, that we the clear world once more gain,
And caring not to take repose, we strode,
He first and I behind, upward amain,
To where an opening round the way unbars,
Through which I saw fair things the heavens contain,
Thence we came out to see again the stars. ⁴

¹ The fall of Lucifer produced an upheaval of the earth, and formed the Mount of Salvation, Jerusalem. Another portion of the earth was upheaved in the opposite hemisphere, and formed the Mountain of Purgatory, an island in the South Pacific Ocean.

² The tomb, or hollow space of Hell, is as deep as the passage from the other hemisphere to the centre of the earth.

³ Lethe, the source of which is in the Mountain of Purgatory, and descends to mingle with Acheron, Styx, and Phlegethon, and form Cocytus. See Canto xiv.

⁴ It is now the early morning of Easter Sunday.

THE END.

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